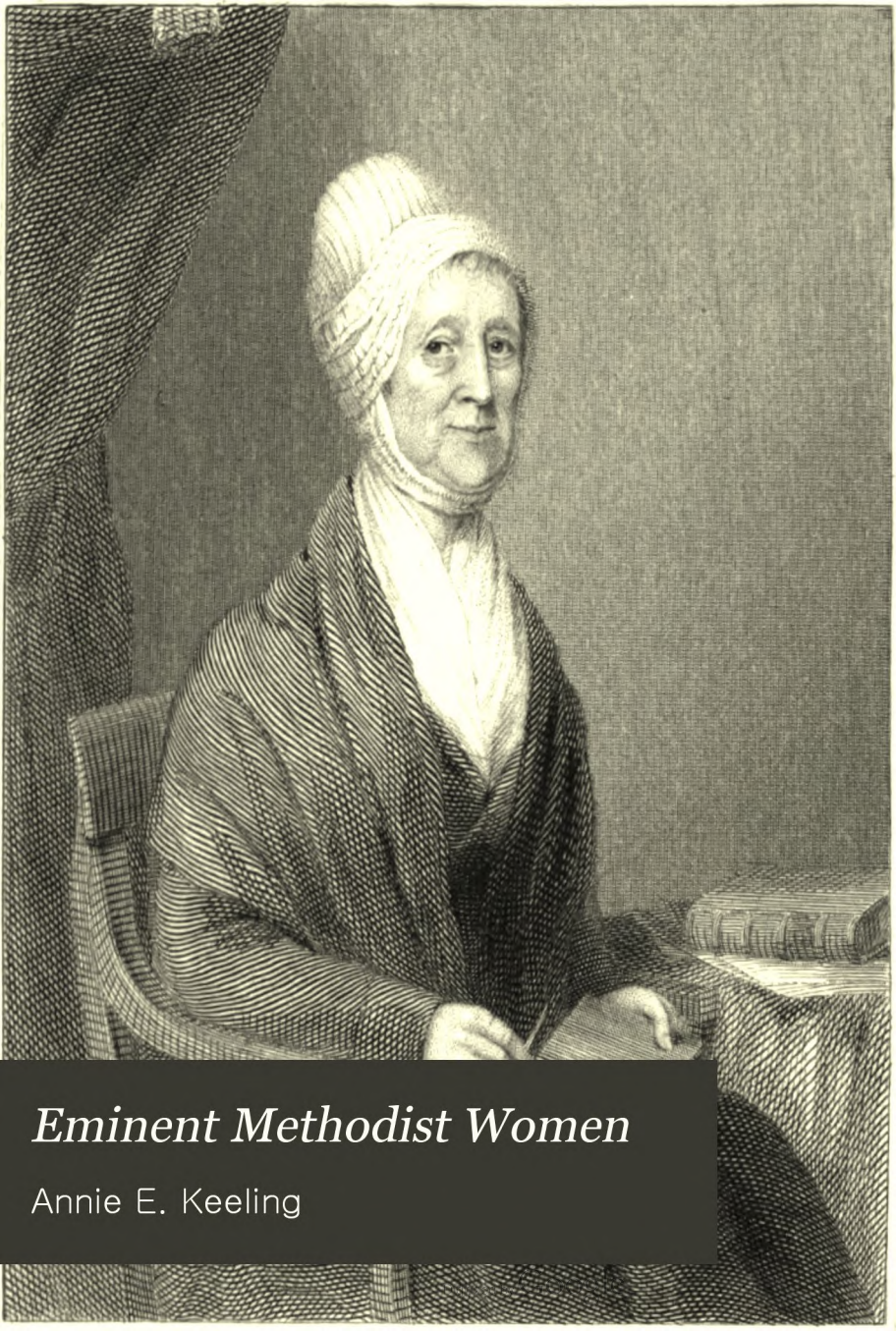
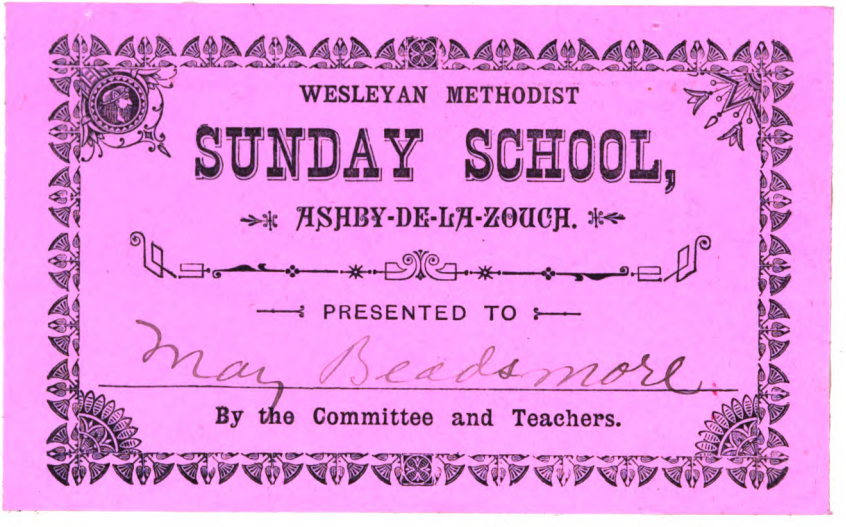


Eminent Methodist Women

Annie E. Keeling



EMINENT METHODIST WOMEN.

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Mrs. Susanna Wesley.

EMINENT METHODIST WOMEN.

BY

ANNIE L. MULLINER.

LONDON:
C. V. 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.;
PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1889.

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BY

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AUTHOR OF

"GENERAL GORDON, HERO AND SAINT," "THE NINE FAMOUS CRUSADES OF THE MIDDLE AGES," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

CHARLES H. KELLY, 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.;

AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1889.

PREFACE.

In compiling the lives of holy women that appear in the following pages, the writer has found material as abundant in some cases as deficient in others. So much attention and research have been devoted to the elucidating of almost every point relating to the noble Susanna Wesley, that the lack of any contemporary record is hardly felt; Dr. Adam Clarke in his *Wesley Family*, the Rev. John Kirk in his *Mother of the Wesleys*, and Mrs. Eliza Clarke in her exhaustive little volume contributed to the "Eminent Women Series," having supplied almost all that can now be hoped in illustration of Mrs. Wesley's life and character.

The well-known writings of Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Rogers are also sufficiently full of incident and of autobiographic information.

On the other hand, a story so striking and pathetic as that of Lady Mary Fitzgerald can only be told in outline, and the imagination must fill in the details

which no trustworthy eye-witness of her life has recorded for us; the annals of Agnes Bulmer's shy and retired existence have to be gleaned from her own *Letters* and *Poems*, and from two or three graceful sketches written by admiring friends, by Mrs. Rowley, Mrs. Collinson, and the late Rev. W. M. Bunting; while the writer of the ample volume recording Lady Maxwell's career, aiming entirely at spiritual edification and finding abundant material for it, has indicated few of those trivial details that add life-likeness to a picture.

Later biographers have better understood the importance of little things, witness the finished picture given in the recently-published life of Anne Lutton,[1] of a character attractive and beautiful at every point; witness also in their degree the deeply interesting Memoirs of Mrs. Tucker[2] and Mrs. Walker.[3]

However diverse the sources of our information, and however different in natural character and outward circumstances the various heroines of our volume, one story is always unfolded, one characteristic is stamped on all. Whether lofty or lowly in birth and station,

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whether greatly gifted in mind or not excelling beyond the average of womanly intellect, these saints all bowed in humble penitence before the Cross of Christ, sought and found conscious forgiveness of sin; and all, in righteousness and true holiness, in lives of unblameable but most humble purity, exemplified the possibility, and therefore the imperative duty, of obedience to the command,—

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

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EMINENT METHODIST WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOTHER OF METHODISM.

SUSANNA WESLEY—BORN, 1669; DIED, 1742.

"The Wesleys' mother was the mother of Methodism in a religious and moral sense; for her courage, her submissiveness to authority, the high tone of her mind, its independence, and its self-control, the warmth of her devotional feelings, and the practical direction given to them, came up and were visibly repeated in the character and conduct of her sons."—ISAAC TAYLOR.

IF, during the early part of the eighteenth century, some deep-thinking, sagacious English observer, brooding sadly over the fallen state of his native land,—its coarse profligacy, its unredeemed brutality, its Heaven-daring godlessness,—had been bidden to point out the quarter whence deliverance might arise for the corrupt nation, the persons through whose action it should be lifted high above its actual degradation, by the redeeming power of a faith no less fervent than that of our Lord's own apostles; such an observer, however acute, would hardly have designated an obscure parsonage,

lost in the Lincolnshire Fens, as the school in which Heaven was training up the destined agents of so mighty a moral revolution; nor would he have indicated the frail, suffering wife of a poor, debt-laden, struggling village incumbent as the person on whom would devolve the duty of preparing such champions for their work.

But God's ways not being as the ways of men, nor His thoughts as our thoughts, it was in that unpromising scene, and by those slight, womanly hands, that He willed to work for the salvation of England; and through the revived religious energy of England, for the good of how many other lands!

The end of that vast movement is not yet; but to some extent we are able to trace it from its beginning until now. No historian of Methodism can afford to pass lightly over the character and the life-work of Susanna Wesley. For had this woman been other than she was, had her mind been of lower quality, her sense of duty less imperiously strong, there might indeed have been some great revival of religion in the eighteenth century; but the shape it assumed would almost certainly have been less noble, and the influence it exercised less deep, practical, and permanent. Restricted as her action was within the limits of purely womanly service, the fashion in which she walked that "trivial round," the spirit in which she discharged that "common task," made of her a benefactress of her kind, not inferior to any great woman-saint canonized for successful efforts directed immediately to the reform of the visible Church.

Mrs. Wesley has therefore evidently the right to

the foremost place in any notice of the women of Methodism.

No little interest attaches to the ancestry from which the rare qualities which she transmitted to her famous sons were derived. Her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, the dignified patrician man, near of kin to the Earl of Anglesea, pious and courageous, much given to plain speech and to following his own independent courses, was one of the many honest divines who were stout Parliamentarians, till the execution of King Charles I., and the subsequent high-handed doings of Oliver Cromwell, gave too great a shock to their loyal feeling for King and Constitution.

But the rule of the great Protector, whom Dr. Annesley styled "the arrantest hypocrite that ever the Church of England was pestered with," proved less unfriendly to the bold clergyman than did the Restoration Government, which, by its Act of Uniformity, rendered it impossible for him to retain his living of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, with a good conscience. Like Baxter and Howe, he refused to subscribe; and, ejected from his living on the famous Bartholomew's Day of 1662, remained to the end of his life a Nonconformist minister of the gospel. His private means were ample enough to raise him above poverty during his years of enforced silence, and to enable him, while pastor of the licensed meeting-house at Little St. Helen's, to exercise much charity, and liberally to educate his large family.

His second wife, said to have borne him twenty-four children, was the daughter of a successful lawyer of good family, John White, a zealous, eager-spirited man,

a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, very active, as chairman of the Committee of Religion, in dealing with "scandalous and malignant priests" of the Church of England. Dying in 1644, in the midst of the strife between King and Parliament, he did not, like his son-in-law, live to see the overthrow of the cause for which he had spent his energies.

Thus, through both parents, Susanna Annesley inherited with her gentle blood great resolution, a high spirit, and a vigorous understanding; while the pure and pious lives of her progenitors, and their strong preoccupation with religious questions, had also their share in building up her character as we know it.

She was born in Spital Yard, London, January 20, 1669—the youngest, and, it is said, the favourite child of her father, among whose many beautiful and highly-educated daughters Susanna was not the least attractive, and perhaps was the most gifted. Her portrait, taken in old age, and engraved by the care of her son John, shows delicate aquiline features, eyes still vivid and expressive under well-marked brows, a physiognomy at once benignant and intelligent. It is not difficult to imagine what would be the charm that this aged matron had possessed when in the first fresh bloom of girlhood. She seems to have then produced the impression of great beauty on those who knew her, —an impression doubtless much heightened by that beauty of soul of which the fair body was only the proper clothing.

The excellent English style of which she was always mistress, shows that she had been made familiar with the best prose writers of her own day; but the study

in which she was most proficient was divinity. It is a little surprising to find the daughter of a conscientious Nonconformist like Dr. Annesley deciding for herself *against* the opinions maintained under persecution by her father, and adopting the creed and forms of the Church of England, while she was only a girl of thirteen. This Susanna Annesley did; and the views she then embraced she held till death. Her judgment must have ripened early, and her interest in religious questions must have been precociously strong.

Dr. Annesley, being happily free from the intolerant spirit of his age, did not deny to his daughter the liberty of conscience he claimed for himself. He put no restraint on her freedom of action, either at this time, or at the later day when she elected to marry Samuel Wesley, a young clergyman whose family was much better than his prospects, who was more quick-witted than wealthy, and who was the most zealous of High Churchmen, being a new recruit from the ranks of Dissent.

We may take it as certain that young Mr. Wesley's change of opinion, at the age of one-and-twenty, had much to do with Susanna's, at the age of thirteen; he being seven or eight years older than his future bride, and the friendship already begun which was to ripen into love. In later years, Mrs. Wesley put on record her gratitude to the husband whose arguments had rescued her from the Socinian heresy, to which her youthful reasonings had inclined her; and the same feeling shines in the words of the epitaph from her pen, inscribed on Samuel Wesley's tomb at Epworth:

"As he lived, so he died, in the true Catholic faith

of the Holy Trinity in Unity; and that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, and the only Saviour of mankind."

Nothing could be more natural than that the deep-thinking, fervent girl should embrace the every opinion of him by whose means she had been settled in an article of belief of such transcendent importance; nor can we wonder that the large-minded Annesley should gladly entrust his child to one who had been so helpful to her in things spiritual, and should cheerfully disregard the points of minor consequence on which his son-in-law differed from him.

In the circumstances of Susanna's marriage we see more of the bridegroom's uncalculating ardour than of her tranquil reasonableness. The pair ventured on matrimony in 1689, Mr. Wesley being twenty-seven and his bride twenty, and their available income not more than £60, whereof £30 were derived from his London curacy; the remainder he earned by that untiring, too fluent pen, which he plied industriously through life, turning out rhymed skits, religious and political pamphlets, ambitious heroic or epic poems, as the humour took him and occasion served. He was working just now for a very friendly publisher, John Dunton, sister Elizabeth Annesley's husband, whom he aided in establishing the *Athenian Gazette*,—a quaint old periodical, forgotten precursor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. No doubt high hopes were entertained as to the future of this enterprise by its energetic projectors, and especially by the ardent, sanguine, ready-witted Wesley, who never seems to have lost the hope of bettering his fortunes by his pen, and whose Celtic vivacity and undying hopefulness remind us so often

that there was no small infusion of good Irish blood in the veins of this scion of a long line of "gentlemen and scholars."

His marriage cannot be called a prudent step in the worldly sense, and Susanna's wedded life with him was beset with troubles through all its course,—troubles, however, which did but call out the full nobleness of her character. Love never lacked in their home, though poverty did more than look through their window, for pure and fervent piety reigned within. Mr. Wesley's immediate ancestors, like his wife's, had been persecuted as Nonconformists, and had suffered much for conscience' sake; but no truer faith had been theirs than that which animated their descendant, the ardent advocate of Episcopacy.

It speaks much for Mrs. Wesley's thrift, that, with such slender means at her disposal, she contrived to keep clear of debt during the two first years of her married life, spent in London lodgings. When her first-born son Samuel was but four months old, there came a change, which was doubtless hailed as an improvement in their circumstances. Mr. Wesley removed to his first living, of South Ormsby in Lincolnshire. Here, with an income slightly larger than that of the London curacy, the pair struggled on till 1697, when Samuel Wesley was presented to the better living of Epworth, on the opposite side of the county.

There was not much to regret in quitting South Ormsby, pretty picturesque village though it be, unless Mrs. Wesley felt a tender sorrow in leaving behind the graves where three of her fair babes lay sleeping; for already her long discipline of trial had begun. It

was at South Ormsby, too, while the Wesleys dwelt in the "mean hut composed of reeds and clay" which did duty as a parsonage, that there occurred an incident throwing a disagreeable light on the humiliations undergone by the English clergy of the period.

The Manor was then rented by a dissolute nobleman; and an unhappy woman, living in lawless union with him, took a fancy to the rector's charming wife, and "*would* visit her," insulting the modest, pious home with her ill-earned splendours and unfitting society. This Samuel Wesley could not bear. Finding the lady one day sitting with his blameless Susanna, he "went up to her, took her by the hand, and very fairly handed her out," says John Wesley, who adds that the spirited act was so sharply resented as to compel his father's resignation of the living. Comment is needless on the picture thus suggested.

The rectorship of Epworth was in the gift of the Crown; it is said to have been conferred on Mr. Wesley in compliance with a wish expressed by Queen Mary before her death; his zealous pamphleteerings in favour of King William III., and his recent dedication to the Queen of his rhymed *Life of Christ*, being thus recompensed.

The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 had aroused all Mr. Wesley's enthusiasm, and he was never a mute or inactive partisan. His wife could not share his views on this point; and a tradition, accepted by John Wesley, speaks of a short separation of the pair, brought about by the husband's too exacting political zeal. The story has doubtful features; yet it is characteristic that it represents the wife as keeping

silence about her own opinions, and only betrayed by her failing to respond to prayers for "the King." As a rational being, she held to her own right of judgment; as a duteous wife, she would not vex her husband by openly controverting *his* views. This touch of truth almost authenticates the tale, in spite of the obviously wrong date assigned to it, 1701–2,—proved wrong by family records.

With the removal to Epworth a fairer prospect seemed to open. The living in a *very* good year might be reckoned at two hundred pounds; the three-storied, five-gabled rectory, though timber-built and straw-thatched, was far superior to the "mean hut" near the "inhospitable Humber;" the town offered a wider field of usefulness than the little cluster of houses composing South Ormsby. Yet in this new promising sphere the family were destined to know much wretchedness; and Mrs. Wesley, who came to it a mourner for the recent death of her dear father, might have held that loss as a just foreshadowing of coming sorrow. Mr. Wesley, already embarrassed through the vain effort to provide for a fast-increasing family on an income of fifty pounds, found that his new preferment, instead of freeing him from his difficulties, at first increased them. There were heavy fees to pay, there was new furniture to buy for the larger house, cattle and farming implements for the glebe, which he proposed to cultivate himself—poor town-bred book-lover, with what prospect of success!

It was bitter to the upright, honourable pair to find themselves thus hampered at the outset; but there were greater distresses awaiting them. The Isle of

Axholme, where Epworth is situated, was then as uncivilised as any part of rural seventeenth-century England. The people were too often rough, clownish, godless, sometimes savage and sensual. They resented the new rector's zealous efforts to reform their vices, they repaid with hate and outrage his too-eager political partisanship. Vainly might he or his look for congenial society anywhere outside their own home.

We have then to think of Mrs. Wesley, wedded to a loveable but rather unpractical husband, struggling year by year with straitened circumstances and hostile surroundings; and, amid constant privation, and sufferings which often held her helpless on her couch, setting herself to secure for her children the priceless boon of a good education. She herself, with such help as the father could spare time to give, must suffice for their instruction; her poverty forbade her to employ another teacher.

It still remains a wonder how, with all the cares of the household on her shoulders, and with one maid-servant to assist her, she managed during twenty years to contrive that every child needing her teaching should have it, during six hours of every working day. For it was no small family that was thus cared for; nineteen children were born to her, of whom ten reached maturity. And during Mr. Wesley's absences from home, at one time long and frequent, Mrs. Wesley, in addition to her common household tasks, had to keep the books, look after the glebe and the parish matters, and maintain such a correspondence with the rector as left him ignorant of no necessary

point. All was well and punctually done; and her sons long remembered how serenely she sat among her child-scholars, balancing accounts, writing letters, attending to the lessons; never ruffled and never perplexed. Her secret lay in the well-devised plans she had framed for herself, in the unflinching firmness with which they were carried out. Method presided over all her household arrangements, and ruled supreme in her little school.

The peculiar mode of elementary instruction, from which she never willingly departed, seems to have been in part suggested by circumstances. Her eldest-born, Samuel, did not attempt to speak until he was more than four years old; but *then* he spoke at once, intelligibly and clearly. "Here am I, mother!" the little fellow, ensconced under a table, called to his mother, who was anxiously seeking him. He had not previously been heard to utter a syllable, and of course no effort had been made to teach him the alphabet; this, however, he acquired perfectly during the first day that was devoted to his instruction.

Mrs. Wesley was thus quite naturally led to defer the instruction of her other children till the age of five years was reached in each case; and she endeavoured, with success all but unvarying, to make each little pupil acquire its letters within one day. The next step was to master every word of the first verse of Genesis, also in a single lesson; and so with the following verses. Pursuing this unique plan, with mild, steady perseverance, day by day, she found her scholars able, in a quarter of a year, to read better "than most women can as long as they live."

It may be doubted if this plan would answer equally well with children whose intelligence was less precocious and their memories less tenacious. But the untiring patience of the instructress in enforcing it, can be confidently recommended to general imitation. "I wonder at your patience," said the hastier husband one day; "you have told that child the same thing twenty times." "If I had satisfied myself by mentioning it only nineteen times," she replied, "I should have lost all my labour. It was the twentieth time that crowned it."

The anecdote is so characteristic that it well bears repetition. The same firmness, the same mildness, gentleness combining with justice, pervaded all her government of her little kingdom. She contrived to make infants, too young to apprehend the reasonableness of obedience, well aware of its necessity; she succeeded in producing in them such an obedient temper as rendered severe punishments quite needless. "That most odious noise, the crying of children," was never heard in her house; the reason being not merely that the little ones had learned "to cry softly," but that their gentle sovereign would allow no oppression of one child by another. Perfectly understanding, with one of our best-known modern child-lovers, that in the child's little world "there is nothing so finely perceived and finely felt as injustice," she carefully dealt out even justice herself, and exacted just dealing from the little people. They must respect each other's property; they must keep promise faithfully with one another; they must not bestow a gift and then crave to have it back.

Thus she impressed deeply on each opening mind the sense of moral duty; and she had her reward. None of her children as they grew up were betrayed into "that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world." Faithful in little things, they were faithful also in great things.

She had noticed also how sensitive to fear was the childish mind; she would not have her babes become liars through cowardice. Therefore, if a little offender honestly confessed his fault and promised amendment, she always pardoned him freely, nor would she permit that the penitent should be taunted with his former wrong-doing, nor that any fault should be twice reproved, twice punished; one offence should have one chastisement and no more.

This lovely justice of hers does much to explain the loving reverence with which her children regarded her. But she merited it by a higher title, by her earnest efforts for their spiritual welfare; strenuous, love-inspired efforts, continued day by day and year by year, in sickness and in health, in poverty and straitness and sorrow. She associated her children with family worship before they could speak; their first lispings were in words of prayer; they quickly learned to honour the Lord's own day; and the elder were enlisted in the work of instructing the younger in Scripture truth.

Being stirred to enthusiastic delight by a story of missionary effort in the far East, she characteristically began to consider what she could do in emulation of such effort; and, resolving that it was best to strive for the conversion of the souls nearest to her, she set apart

a weekly hour for private spiritual conversation with each child, dividing the days of the week among them. Only "the day shall declare" what harvest of world-wide missionary endeavour has sprung from this humble, quiet beginning.

When the days came that child after child must leave her side, she did not intermit her efforts; she contrived to find time for constant correspondence with the absent ones, chiefly on religious subjects. In what remains of these letters, and of other papers written by her with a like intention, we find impassioned earnestness co-existing with the clearest, calmest, most persuasive reasoning, and with such a masterly handling of Divine Truth as to justify Dr. Adam Clarke in styling this lady "an able divine." This fervour, combined with perfect reasonableness, can be seen strikingly reproduced in the writings of Mrs. Wesley's most famous son, who derived from her also that *methodizing* faculty, born of clear, practical good sense, to which the movement he initiated owed much of the success that has made the Oxford nickname of *Methodist* an honourable title.

Mrs. Wesley's peculiar educational methods have been subjected now and then to unfavourable criticism; her best justification lies in her success. Rarely has it been seen that of a numerous family, very brilliantly gifted and very severely tried by fortune, not one has made shipwreck of faith and good conscience, not one has used those dangerous gifts to evil end; but this boast can be made of the Wesley family; and some of them rose to heights of heroic excellence not commonly attained: witness the life-stories of the two noble

brothers, John and Charles, and the less known but most pathetic history of their sister Martha, Mrs. Hall, which furnishes a beautiful commentary on St. Paul's description of the greatest grace, Charity. For angelic endurance and sublime forgiveness of the cruellest wrongs, this lady is worthy to be canonized as the patron saint of injured wives.

Susanna Wesley—wife of a country parson who was poor, and more than poor—understood thoroughly that, to secure to her children the perfect up-bringing she desired, it would behove her to "renounce the world" as completely as any nun. The four walls of her home must shut in her world; neither pleasure nor variety nor excitement must be sought outside of that enclosure. She made the renunciation gladly and freely; but we find, unsurprised, that her bodily powers were often unequal to her self-imposed task, and that there were long and frequent periods of weakness and sickness. And other interruptions were not wanting.

Many and severe calamities befell the Wesley household during their first years at Epworth; it seemed, indeed, as if "hungry ruin" had them "in the wind." The fire which in 1702 broke out in the old rectory, and did no little damage before it was subdued, seems to have been an accident; it was not so with the long train of misfortunes that followed, and which can clearly be traced to the agency of "certain of the baser sort" in Epworth, whose malignity became active under the irritation of their rector's aggressive zeal.

The first fire, above referred to, was occasioned, in the rector's opinion, by "some sparks which took hold

of the thatch," unusually dry because of the summer heat; it broke out while he was absent in the parish, and was extinguished, by the aid of the neighbours, before irremediable mischief had been done, so that he was greeted on his arrival with the cheering news that his wife, children, and books were safe, as well as most of his goods. The then Archbishop of York, his constant friend, came generously to his aid, and he was not crushed under his losses.

But the friendly feeling which his parishioners showed on this occasion was quickly alienated. A contested election for the county of Lincoln took place in 1705; Mr. Wesley was active against the popular and successful party, believing that its ascendency would be hurtful to the Church for which he was so heartily zealous. He was threatened as to what he might expect in the way of retaliation; and the threats were not idle ones, though he did not allow them to affect him.

Susanna Wesley and her innocent children had now to bear the burden of unpopularity; the men of the Isle of Axholme would not distinguish between a man and his family. While Mr. Wesley was away at the election, his parishioners assembled under the parsonage windows, where lay the frail wife, just recovering from her confinement; they made night hideous for her with drum-beatings and yells and the firing of guns and pistols. The uproar did even more mischief than they could have expected. The new-born babe had been given to the care of a nurse who lived over against the rectory; and she, who was kept waking all through the night by the savage din, fell heavily asleep in the

morning watch, and waked to find the child dead and cold; she had overlaid it. In her distraction she snatched it up and ran to the rectory; there the servants, terrified out of their wits, ran up to their mistress, and, before she was well awake, threw the little corpse into her arms.

"She composed herself as well as she could, and that day got it buried."

Little cared the Epworth mob, who greeted the rector when he returned with a repetition of the midnight drummings, shouts, and gun-firings; and, hailing his children as "devils," promised to "turn them all out of doors a-begging shortly." They did their best to keep their word. Not twenty days passed before Mr. Wesley was lodged in Lincoln Castle as a debtor.

"The sum," said he, "was not thirty pounds; but it was as good as five hundred." He was unable, as his adversary knew, to pay the whole sum at once; and nothing less would be accepted.

In his enforced absence the cows, which were the chief subsistence of his family, were stabbed, and, though not killed outright, were disabled from giving milk; and in the same night an unknown hand twisted off the iron latch of the house door, and hacked the wood in order to shoot back the lock. The loud barking of the house-dog disturbed the midnight ruffian at his work; next day but one the poor brute was found cruelly maimed. What outrage had been prevented by his means we know not.

No one could have wondered if Susanna Wesley's heart had fainted in her before such proofs of a deadly malice against her and hers; but she retained her lofty

composure of spirit. "She is less concerned with suffering these things," her husband wrote to the Archbishop, "than I am in the writing, or than I believe your Grace will be in reading them."

His hopes of being set free lay in the liberality of his friends and patrons; for two recent injuries had greatly sunk his own means and credit. That busy pen of his had rhymed him at last into one little bit of fresh preferment; a poem he had written in honour of Marlborough and Blenheim, being brought to the great Duke's notice by kindly Archbishop Sharp, had earned for the poet the chaplaincy to Colonel Lepelle's regiment.

But the new chaplain derived very little profit from the post: the enemies raised up for him by his conduct in the election soon had him deprived of his chaplaincy; and, in addition to this loss, his crop of flax was destroyed by a fire that he could not consider accidental. To consummate his ruin, it only remained to prejudice him in the minds of the friends in whose power and goodwill he trusted, and this also was attempted by busy slander; but, happily, in vain. Scarce three months of his imprisonment had passed away, when we find him writing with joyous gratitude to the Archbishop, acknowledging the generosity of sundry benefactors, who chose to keep their names concealed from him, but whose intervention evidently availed to procure his freedom. The ensuing Christmas found him restored to the family who had suffered so keenly in his absence.

Something there is in the story of stout old Samuel Wesley's imprisonment, that vividly recalls the picture drawn half a century later by the charming pen of

Oliver Goldsmith, whose "Vicar of Wakefield" is similarly imprisoned by the malice of an enemy. Like the good parson of fiction, Wesley regarded the gaol into which he was thrown as a "new parish," in which perhaps he might do more good than in the old one; he obtained leave "to read prayers every morning and afternoon in the prison, and to preach once a Sunday," preferably in the afternoon, when was no sermon at the minster.

"I am getting acquainted with my brother gaol-birds as fast as I can," he wrote; he designed to distribute useful books among them, which the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge would supply; and, happy in knowing that thus he was still serving the Master who would never forsake him, declared that the gaol was "a paradise in comparison of the life he led before coming thither." He met much more gentle usage within the walls of Lincoln Castle than in the island prison of his own Epworth, which seemed to him a haunt of unconvicted felons.

These philanthropic toils of the elder Wesley, as a prisoner among prisoners, do more than justify the truthfulness of Goldsmith's exquisite portrait of an eighteenth-century clergyman, humane and pious amid brutality and injustice; they remind us, too, of that benevolent effort on behalf of the outcasts of society and the victims of hard and roughly-administered laws, for which both John and Charles Wesley and their immediate followers were conspicuous: mindful of the Master's word, "I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Samuel Wesley returned to his family with spirit unabated and energy untamed, to renew his campaign against vice and irreligion. Nor was the old enmity

against him dead; ere long it found a dreadful way of expressing itself.

In a dark February night of 1709, he and all his family being quietly asleep, their fire and candle long since extinguished, the house broke again into flames; and the inmates, escaping half naked and scorched, were greeted with curses and revilings by some who were standing by. There was no room to hope that the fire was an accident; and it casts its own lurid light on the inhuman degradation of the populations, who were to be lifted and redeemed from their brutishness so largely through the agency of the little child, the last to be rescued from that burning home.

Two or three vivid accounts of this catastrophe remain, John Wesley's own recollections supplementing the letters written by his parents at the time. Through their help the whole scene is called up before us. We see the little Hetty, gayest and prettiest of children, startled out of sleep by the sparks falling from the roof upon her feet, and flying, a little half-clad white figure, to waken the father, who, snatching up in his arms as many children as he can hold, alarms the whole house. We see, awakened by his frenzied call, the faithful maid and the feeble but dauntless mother, with the children running beside them, stumbling down the stairs through whirling smoke-wreaths to the hall door, only to fall back before the flames which the strong north-easter drives in upon them. Children and maid are dragged out through the windows; the mother, thrice driven back from the door, at last, imploring the blessed Saviour's aid, "wades through" the fire to safety and the bleak midnight air. Then rises the cry that one child,

the five-year-old darling, "Jacky," is still within the burning walls; his father, failing in the effort to reach him, kneels down in anguish to commend his soul to God.

"I believe it was just at that time I waked," says John Wesley. Climbing up to the window, the little fellow was espied, and rescued by the people gathered in the yard. "One of them, who loves me," writes the rector, "helped up another to the window, and poor Jacky leaped into his arms and was saved. I could not believe it till I had kissed him two or three times."

"Let us give thanks to God!" cried the father, when he could realize that his living child was in his arms. "He has given me all my eight children; let the house go, I am rich enough." It was a noble faith and love that inspired these words. The speaker thought it a thing worth noting, that the one relic of his loved library, now blowing in ashes on the wind, was a blackened leaf of his Polyglot Bible, which he picked up the next day as he walked in his wasted garden, and on which he read the words: "Go; sell all that thou hast, and take up thy cross, and follow Me." In that strange saying he accepted a Divine intimation that his calamity came not on him alone by human malice or by accident. Neither he nor his brave wife failed in submission, or showed anger against the authors of this evil, which left them absolutely destitute, all their remaining goods being half their year's barley, and "a little silver, melted into a lump" by the heat.

Now the beggary that had often threatened the

courageous pair seemed to have come upon them in truth. Perhaps this was the darkest of all their dark moments.

Once before, when their stock of fuel was exhausted, they could muster only six shillings between them—too small a sum to supply their instant need; and again, when Wesley's pitiless creditor arrested him for a debt of thirty pounds, the husband and wife possessed scarce one pound between them. That her husband might not starve in his prison, Susanna had stripped the rings from her fingers, and sent them to him. He had refused her love-offering then; *now* she could not make it; *now* they had neither roof to shield nor clothes to cover them and their children from the wintry cold.

Heart and hope failed them not, however; nor was help lacking. Rough but kindly homes opened to take in the young people, while their parents sought refuge in hired lodgings; the eldest daughter Emilia, now a highly-educated girl of seventeen, remaining with the suffering mother as nurse and companion. "That was the happiest year of my life," Emilia would say; for she had the precious mother all to herself, could tend her, guard her, talk with her. And their great calamity had aroused sympathy, had softened hard hearts. No new outrage followed; on the contrary, circumstances soon gave Mrs. Wesley great influence for good with her half-heathenish neighbours.

Mr. Wesley did not dally with the work of rebuilding the destroyed parsonage, and at the year's end his scattered family were reunited in the new homestead. It was time. The elder children were doing well.

Samuel was a King's scholar at Westminster; Suky and Hetty were enjoying great advantages in the homes of two prosperous London uncles. But the little ones, deprived of their mother's mild, firm governance, were fast learning the rough, coarse ways of the neighbours among whom they had been dispersed, and forgetting the sweet, pure, wholesome thoughts and habits of their home. To find them thus degenerated seemed to Mrs. Wesley the saddest result of that disastrous fire. To remedy the evil, she encouraged them in new religious observances, causing them to engage more frequently and regularly in prayer, in praise, in private study of the Scriptures. With special love she watched over the soul of the boy whose narrow escape from death had more endeared him to her. Surely he had been spared that he might do some great good work, for which it might be her privilege to prepare him. Her toil was not wasted.

The substantial red-brick rectory—which, amid its pleasant, fruitful gardens, still proves how thoroughly the hard-pressed rector did his work of restoration—was not yet ready for habitation, when Mr. Wesley, obeying what he held for the call of supreme duty, left his family to his wife's care, and his parish to a curate, and went up to London, his clerical brethren having chosen him to represent them in Convocation,—a post better suited to his powers than to his means. This, happening seven successive winters, must have seemed a serious injury to his home-work; the more, since one at least of the curates whom he put in charge, a Mr. Inman, proved both an incompetent and an ill-spirited substitute for the rector, who was one of the readiest

and best preachers of the day. Inman had but one theme, on which he harped till his hearers were weary, —the imperative duty of paying one's debts. There appeared a hint of malice in this choice of a subject, when we call to mind the embarrassments with which the rector was struggling, as most of the parishioners knew—and some with a guilty consciousness of having added to his difficulties.

Under Providence, these unfavourable circumstances resulted in unhoped-for good. Mrs. Wesley thought it needful during her husband's absence to pay especial attention to the children, who were deprived of their father's teaching. They could not learn much from the discourses heard at church; she resolved, however, to make the Lord's day really profitable to them. There being no afternoon service at the church, she read prayers with her family, and a sermon, and engaged them in religious conversation.

A boy employed in the house told his parents of these family services; the good people begged leave to be present; they were admitted, they came again, and more with them, until a score or two of persons assembled weekly at the parsonage. The next winter, that of 1711–12, Mr. Wesley being again absent, his wife resumed her ministerings, to a greatly-increased company, something like two hundred assembling, while others had to go away for lack of room. Writing to her husband, in explanation of such unusual doings, Mrs. Wesley accounts in her own way for this increase.

Her mind, as we have already noted, had been deeply moved by the story of Danish missionary effort

in India; and, desiring to emulate such zeal, she resolved to pray more for the people, to speak to them with more warmth as she found occasion. Beginning wisely with her own children, she also "discoursed more freely and affectionately" with the neighbours who came to join in her family worship; she read to them "the most awakening sermons," and did not hurry the time of closing. The good results of her prayerful effort soon appeared. The people gave up their Sabbath-desecrating ways; their attendance at evening church increased tenfold; some who for years had shunned God's house now began to worship there; and "the greatest amity imaginable" grew up between the once hostile people of Epworth and the family of their injured pastor.

"I have no other way of conversing with this people," said the devoted wife and mother, whose engrossing home-duties shut her out from common social intercourse. The people now learnt what manner of woman she really was; and, won by her gracious words and the great and noble charity she showed in her care for their souls, they began to follow her in the path of life.

She had not failed dutifully to apprise her absent husband of her proceedings; he had a few objections to urge: the thing "looked particular"—it was hardly woman's work—he himself was in a public station, and men might reflect on *him* for allowing any irregularity. She had her well-reasoned, modest answer to every objection; and he was won to hearty approval. But anon his fears were again excited; the unprofitable Inman, with "two or three of the worst of the parish,"

began to speak against the work. Mrs. Wesley, they said, was turning the rectory into a conventicle, and a great scandal was being caused thereby. These murmurs alarmed the rector, with his High Church horror of "conventicles," and he wrote hastily requesting that the meetings might be abandoned.

His wife replied, not hastily, but with resolute calmness, setting forth what good reason she had to deem her efforts honoured and approved by Heaven; and we may thank Mr. Wesley for his fears and scruples, since to them we owe the two admirable letters which contain all our information as to this evangelistic work of hers, foreshadowing not very dimly the methods followed in days to come by her sons. Her own character comes out very clearly as she writes: her high sense of duty sustained by firm reason, her scorn of irrational opposition, her willingness to submit to the command of a lawful superior, even when the command appeared unwise,—all combine to give us the fair image of the "perfect woman, nobly planned." Very womanly she was in her modesty, since she had never dared "positively to presume to hope" to be made an instrument of doing good; but resolute not lightly to renounce the work which *had* done good already, she winds up her argument thus:—

"If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you

and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We have not the reply which Mr. Wesley made to this appeal; but it is hardly open to doubt that he would shrink from "the positive command" required in words of such inspired solemnity—words which do not appear too serious for the occasion. It is well to note that in Mrs. Wesley's decried "conventicle" we have the miniature portrait of Methodism, which also grew, undesignedly and most naturally, from the fervent desire to supply a conspicuous lack of effectiveness in the authorized ministry of the Church, from a yearning pity for souls perishing for lack of knowledge. It is well to remember that John Wesley, still a child, made one of the little congregation at the parsonage, and that he had so responded to his mother's special care, as to be accounted worthy to become a communicant at the age of eight. Those early impressions of his might be, and indeed were, overlaid by other impressions, when he passed out into the boy's world of school; but they were only hidden, not erased; and time was to reveal them again, fresh and clear.

The whole incident shows us that Mrs. Wesley was entirely consistent with herself, when, in the days of her widowhood, she addressed a mild rebuke to John, who, in the midst of his own "irregular" ministrations, learnt with dismay that his lay-agent Maxfield had been preaching, and showed himself disposed to put down such innovations.

"My son, beware what you do," were her memorable words; "Thomas Maxfield is as much called to preach the gospel as you were. Examine what have been the fruits of his teaching, and hear him yourself."

The wise counsel was taken, and with world-famous results for good. Just as in her own case, years before, Susanna Wesley's one question was: Has Heaven stamped its approval on this work in blessing? are men being saved by it? The affirmative answer settled the matter for her: she could not believe that the Almighty would bless and prosper a thing contrary to His own will.

Her son saw and accepted the reasonableness of her position. Having convinced himself that Maxfield's preaching had unmistakeably been fruitful of good, he remained satisfied that men not episcopally ordained might lawfully preach the gospel; and the system we call Methodism became possible.

The thirty years of maturer and declining life, which for Mrs. Wesley followed on the ministrations we have just recorded, were eventful enough for her, though no such distressful vicissitudes of worldly fortune chequered them as her earlier womanhood had known. Her mother's heart was to know now its keenest griefs and highest joys, and, compared with these, the malice of the outer world, or its approval, were but as a feather-weight in either scale.

Samuel Wesley's fortunes never became prosperous. One more piece of preferment came his way in 1724, —the small living of Wroote, worth fifty pounds a year. The parsonage was a poor, thatched, half-dilapidated house, the parishioners the lowest of rustics, the land a mere swamp; every way the place was inferior to Epworth, from which it was distant only four and a half miles. Sanguine as ever, Mr. Wesley now thought he saw the end of his difficulties. "With God's ordinary

blessing," this addition to his income, he hoped, "would make him a rich man in a few years." The peculiar trials of riches, however, were just those he never was to know.

The family removed to Wroote, and lived there some years. Motives of economy would dictate the step, and it has been supposed that a tenant had been found for the better house at Epworth. How indifferently the scheme succeeded appears in the letters of Emilia Wesley, the gifted eldest daughter, who writes the family news to John, with something too much of young severity where her father is concerned, but with undoubted truthfulness.

She, who had for five years maintained herself in credit and comfort at a Lincoln boarding-school, had come home to Wroote at her mother's request, to share the improved fortunes of the family, and be a comfort to her much-suffering parent. Only the latter part of the prospect was realized. Whatever moneys came to Samuel Wesley through favourable harvests or new sources of income, must needs go, says his daughter, "to pay some part of those infinite debts he has run into. Fine prospect of his growing rich!" But then the dear mother was "so very good" to Emilia, and had "so little comfort in the world beside," it would be barbarous to abandon her.

"Could I lay aside all thought of the future," says eager, anxious Emilia, "and be content without three things, money, liberty, and clothes, I might live very comfortably." At Wroote there was at least "plenty of good meat and drink, fuel, etc.; *no duns*, nor any of that *tormenting care* to provide bread," which this poor family had known at Epworth.

And, indeed, if we take the evidence of young Samuel Wesley, who saw the place in its holiday aspect, put on to greet him as a visitor, life at Wroote was pretty and pastoral in fine weather; and his verse dwells gaily on the toils of his sisters in the "sweet and cleanly dairy," and on their fireside attentions to the old father; brushing his cassock, reaching down his hat, drawing ale for him, lighting his pipe, darning his "russet hose." It is no unpleasing picture. But the young hearts were too often full of disquiet and unrest. Gladly would they have made every effort to push their own fortunes and relieve their parents; but means were lacking even to fit them out with clothes, much more to give them the necessary start in the world. And when "the waters were out," Wroote was no paradise for any one, and the journeys which the rector of Epworth had to make between the two places were wet and wild and not without danger; sometimes they must be made by boat. Malaria fever seized on Emilia, and drove her back to find health and work in Lincoln; while her mother remained, suffering from damp and anxiety and frequent privation.

It was from Wroote also that Hetty Wesley was married, much against her will, to William Wright; an incident in the family history connected with such anxiety and such misery to the mother as surpassed all previous afflictions, and so deserves some notice among the many griefs of her life, though it must be of the slightest.

The Wroote experiment came to an end in 1734, when, Mary Wesley marrying John Whitelamb, her father's *protégé* and curate, Mr. Wesley resigned the

living in his son-in-law's favour; and the diminished household removed to the old home at Epworth.

Amid all these weary, wearing troubles, these wounding griefs and irritating small anxieties, it is surprising to note the freshness and vigour of Mrs. Wesley's intellectual and spiritual life, as manifested in her correspondence with the absent sons who were the joy and pride of her heart, and whose rising fortunes were the brightest star in her cloudy sky. Neither father, mother, nor sisters would seem to have grudged any sacrifice that could aid the advancement of those who were the family hope. This, perhaps, is no very uncommon thing; many an English home could tell a like tale. What is less common is the steady influence for good, exerted from her distant, narrow, and secluded sphere, by the mother over the boys in whom she was never disappointed.

She had the delight of seeing all her three sons becoming ordained ministers of the Church of her own preference. Samuel, indeed, did not much exercise that ministry, being, first at Westminster School, and then at Tiverton, where he was headmaster, chiefly engaged in the work of education. His blameless, honourable career, however, caused her only satisfaction, and his true if somewhat narrow piety did not ill reward the faithful counsel she had sedulously given him.

"I could almost wish *myself* accursed, so I were sure of *your* salvation," she wrote to him in the fervour of her affectionate anxiety; and some passages from her long correspondence with him, while they no less breathe the "tender and peculiar love" she cherished for her first-born son, reveal other traits in her character,

and show how it was she met all the storms of fortune without much discomposure.

"A Christian," she said, "ought to converse with the world like a stranger at an inn. He will use what is necessary to him, and will cheerfully enjoy what he innocently can; but at the same time he knows it is but an inn."

In that spirit, then, Susanna Wesley tranquilly bore the various annoyances of her passing stay in the "poor hostelry of human life," holding nothing of real moment but that which had to do with the true eternal home of the soul.

"I exhort you, as I am your faithful friend, and I command you, as I am your parent, to use your utmost diligence to make your calling and election sure, to be faithful to your God; and after I have said that, I need not bid you be industrious in your calling."

Something there is in this exhortation of the mother to the son out of the common fashion: it is stately and noble in its unworldliness; the tone is that of a Roman matron of the great old days, but imbued with the spirit of Christianity instead of that of patriotism. It is nowise surprising that all the sons whom she sent forth into the battlefield of life should have proved themselves men of mark—that there should be "not one feeble person" in that family who drew their life from her.

When John and Charles in their turn left her one after the other for school and college, their mother followed them unweariedly, as she had done their elder brother, with those beautiful, wise, affectionate, and admonitory letters of hers. There we may yet read how delightful to her heart were the unusual

efforts after Christian holiness which earned for the two brothers the mocking enmity of not a few of their fellow-students at Oxford.

"It is the free-thinker and the sensualist," she writes, with a noble scorn, "not the despised Methodist, who will be ashamed and confounded when called to appear before that Almighty Judge, whose Godhead they have blasphemed, and whose offered mercy they have rejected and ludicrously despised."

Both parents cordially encouraged the youths in their endeavours after piety and usefulness: the father blessing God, who had given him two sons resolute to "turn the war against the world and the devil," and bidding them not desist from any good work for fear of a little suffering; the mother "heartily joining with their small society" (the first society stigmatized as *Methodist*) "in all their pious and charitable actions;" and endorsing their renunciation of "horse-races, and all light and vain diversions;" since she could not see "how a lover of God could have any relish for pursuits that only confirmed and fed 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.'" Only, her good sense made her enter her protest against the excessive abstinence and excessive study by which both brothers were then injuring their health.

A peculiar tender intimacy marked the mother's relations with John Wesley. She was his most trusted *confidante;* he found her counsel equally helpful, whether he sought it when caught in the common heart-troubles of youth, or when perplexed between the stern creed of Calvin and the gentler Arminian opinion; or when, strongly drawn by the beautiful mysticism of

à Kempis, he was inclining towards a recluse and contemplative mode of life as the best for a Christian man. She encouraged him in his acceptance of the gospel of full and free salvation, she helped him to shun the snares of a self-pleasing asceticism, she taught him to think that some better thing than a life of pious retirement might be in store for him, and instilled into his mind her own most reasonable, most fervent spirit of piety.

Her darling wish long was to have this dear son always near her, and it is touching to see her often-foiled endeavours to secure this. When he was about to take orders, she suggested that he might come and serve his father as a curate, and John made the offer accordingly; but the rector for some reason disapproved, and would not entertain it. Ere long the young man attained that Fellowship of Lincoln which was the cause of such frank exultation to his much-burdened father, while the mother thanked God with a full heart for this delightful gleam of success. More was to follow: the new Fellow was soon chosen Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes, and could give seasonable help to his younger brother Charles at Christchurch. Meanwhile, for one little summer, that of 1726, Mrs. Wesley saw her son in temporary occupation of the post she had designed for him; he was daily at her side, doing duty for the rector, who was temporarily disabled by a slight paralytic seizure, and comforting his mother under this new and ominous trouble.

He had to leave her, however, and follow his own fortunes, which became always more closely associated with his University; and thus there was prepared for

Mrs. Wesley the final disappointment of her hopes: his refusal to enter into his father's charge at Epworth, when the old father, conscious of failing powers and approaching death, would fain have resigned his living in favour of one of his sons, and preferably John. An accidental injury, the being thrown out of a waggon, had shaken the rector's health not a little; sanguine and cheerful by nature, he now became, it would seem for the first time, the prey of forebodings as to the future of his wife and daughters, and this, he thought, might be secured by the scheme he suggested. His thoughts first turned to Samuel, but, on his declining the proposal,—no very tempting one to a man whose career was already otherwise determined,—the elder Wesley now fixed his hopes on John; and before long we find both father and elder brother engaged in urging John to fall in with the plan.

There can be little doubt which way the mother's wishes pointed; but they were again to prove futile. To John Wesley it appeared for many reasons undesirable and wrong that he should leave his larger sphere of usefulness at Oxford, and its utter freedom from worldly care, for the narrow scene in which his father and all his family had been so long tormented with anxieties as to mere food and clothing. The memory of those early miseries, amid which he had seen his mother's strength consume away, had sunk deep. Yet he made some inquiry as to the likelihood of the Lord Chancellor's sanctioning the proposed change; being told there was little or none, he definitely refused to move in the matter.

It is not possible now for us to regret this refusal,

so blessed in the sequel; but at the time it must have seemed a hard thing to old Samuel Wesley that none of his three sons should work in *his* vineyard; it must have seemed a hard thing to the mother, whom her husband describes as "aged and infirm," that her future lot and that of her girls should be so little assured. Yet no bitterness was felt, and no querulous complaint uttered by either parent.

We must not so dwell on the never-ending difficulties that encompassed this family, as to give an impression of unbroken gloom and discomfort. There was in their home much of the heart's sunshine. A brave hopefulness, an unconquered, gallant spirit, breathe in every utterance of the hearty old rector, and have their counterpart in the energy and the loving faithfulness of his wife, who constituted herself his bold champion when officious relatives reproached him for the poverty involving his family. Herself the greatest sufferer by the errors of judgment into which a guileless, trustful heart betrayed him, she defended him ably from every unjust imputation; she declared herself ready and willing to share a prison with him if his hard fate led him thither, and protested that she would not change conditions with any rich man in the world. The words, addressed to her unhelpful brother, Samuel Annesley, have still in them the ring as of a silver trumpet; there is a noble pride in them, almost a solemn exultation, though their theme be all of care, privation, and woe.

The children were like-minded with the parents. In some of the sportive poems written by Samuel, and in much of the family correspondence, we get glimpses of their active, joyous, innocently fearless ways at home;

notably in the curious collection of letters, chiefly written to the absent Samuel by his mother and sisters, which tell the famous tale of "disturbances, supposed to be preternatural, at Epworth parsonage."

That mysteriously troubled house could be no abode of sadness, when brightened by the cheerful, keen-witted creatures, who write so merrily of the disquietude caused by the "groans, squeaks, tinglings, and knockings" of their invisible disturber. However we may conjecture as to the origin of these yet unexplained annoyances, there can be no doubt as to the gay, dauntless temper of the young people who boldly experimented on the mystery, trying conclusions of strength with the "tricksy sprite," hunting its knockings from room to room, and speaking of it with easy irreverence as "Jeffrey." Happily for themselves, all—except the grave and gentle Martha, "too wise to be witty"—were endowed with that precious gift of humour, which can lend some brightness to all but the darkest circumstances, and which we find often lighting up with its electric sparkle the manly, serious pages of John Wesley's *Journal*.

"Spirits are not finely touched, but to fine issues." There were not many members of this family who did not need all their native cheerfulness, and in addition the greater grace of a Christ-like calmness and equanimity, in face of the varied trials through which they had to pass.

The keenest troubles of Mrs. Wesley's later years were connected with the ill-fortune of her daughters, whose natural gifts of mind and person availed them but little at either Epworth or Wroote. Emilia, who

was successful as a teacher, was the only one who felt the pleasure of making her powers really useful to herself and her parents. It was "miraculous" when one of the younger girls contrived to earn a little money, which she straightway invested in comforts for her mother.

They escaped one after another from the straitness and irritating helplessness of their home life, by the only gate open to them—that of matrimony; but not to anything much brighter. Two, Susanna and Hetty, made singularly unhappy marriages; Emilia, on whom fairer prospects opened only to be clouded, neither advantaged herself nor her family by her unlucky match with Harper, the Epworth surgeon; there was much domestic misunderstanding and distress arising from the betrothal and marriage of Martha to the Rev. W. Hall, whose after career too well answered the promise of his early vacillation and deficiency of principle. Before Mrs. Wesley died, he had begun to show some signs of the moral depravation resulting from strange heretical opinions, which had too much commended themselves to the weak head and the corrupt heart of this apparently pious clergyman.

There was anguish in all this for the mother,—such as has found only a partial expression in the letter addressed to her brother, Samuel Annesley, wherein she dwells with a peculiar mournfulness on the privation and disappointment that had driven her daughter Susanna into her ill-starred marriage with Richard Ellison. Worthy of a better fate, this poor girl, says her mother, threw herself away upon a man "little inferior to the apostate angels in wickedness;" who proved himself "a constant affliction to the family."

In happier circumstances, and in a better social sphere, Susanna would not have rushed upon a fate so miserable, nor would Emilia have so mismatched herself; probably Hetty would not have been driven into her supremely wretched union with Wright, the coarse-minded, drunken plumber.

"It is better," said Mrs. Wesley, "to mourn ten children dead than one living; and I have buried many."

When she wrote these words, she had not yet experienced what it would be to lose children who had out-grown infancy and reached maturity, who could return her maternal love a full recompense of duty and tenderness. This also she was to know. Her eldest son Samuel, her youngest and only unwedded daughter Kezia, both predeceased her; and Mary, the gentle, deformed daughter, lovely in face and soul, died in less than a year after her marriage with the Rev. John Whitelamb, while still both her parents lived.

But none of these bereavements could be so bitter to the mother as the self-made misery of Susanna and of the brilliant Hetty, whose superior powers and high cultivation only seemed during many a year to heighten the wretchedness of her lot.

Such a frustration of motherly hope and aspiration might have poisoned the faith of a feebler soul. But Susanna Wesley could not despair of God's justice and mercy; and her pious confidence in Him was rewarded. Her dearest wish was fulfilled for all her children. Not one but passed away "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life;" nay, there was hope in the end even of the least worthy of her sons-in-law.

The years as they ran on, with all their changes, brought added infirmity to the rector of Epworth, but never abated his hopefulness. The year before his death, 1734, saw him journeying up to London, to superintend the production of his *magnum opus*, the fruit of many years' toil, his *Dissertations on Job*. Three hundred subscribers had been found for the book, and his dutiful sons did their best to obtain more. It was to be the last effort of that indefatigable pen, from which he had hoped so much and realized so little. "Worn out with labours, old age, and infirmities," he sank to rest at last on the 25th of April, 1735, in the seventy-second year of his age.

It was a saddened, much-diminished household that was broken up by his death, and it was but a gloomy prospect that opened before his widow. No care and thrift had availed to free him from his difficulties, and he had to rely on the piety of his children to make good his engagements, and protect their mother from want. But he was happy in three sons who were glad to share that "glorious burden" between them; and he died in fearless trust, set free from care for this world and from terror at leaving it.

With no less courage, Susanna Wesley faced her altered lot. The spectacle of her husband's dying sufferings had tried her cruelly, the news of his release calmed her.

"Now I am heard," she said, "in his having so easy a death, and in my being strengthened to bear it."

Having received this supreme satisfaction, she remained tranquil in view of an old age of dependence and comparative poverty; and soon she had such high

cause of rejoicing as would have made her heedless of greater deprivations than were hers, as an honoured guest, who could not be too much loved and served, in the home now of one child, now of another.

Something of a prophetic spirit had breathed in the dying words of the old rector of Epworth. Often he had said, "The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not;" and, comforting his daughter Emilia, he added, "Do not be concerned at my death; God will then begin to manifest Himself to my family." And the accomplishment of the prediction did not tarry.

In less than a twelvemonth after Samuel Wesley's death, his sons John and Charles, having agreed to take part in General Oglethorpe's philanthropic scheme of settlement in Georgia, had sailed from England on that memorable errand; their mother, to whose comfort they seemed so necessary, bidding them depart to their missionary labours in the memorable words:

"Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more."

Amid the undreamed-of difficulties and snares and bitter disillusion of that Georgian mission, John Wesley learned to know himself as never before—learned that he, who had gone forth to convert the heathen, himself needed conversion. And when he returned to England, after that brief, searching experience, it was to seek and find, side by side with Charles, that full and free and present salvation which through their ministry was made known to thousands upon thousands; nor were their own kinsfolk shut out from the gracious influence

So did God begin to manifest Himself to that family; so did the Christian faith begin to revive in this kingdom.

For a very short time Mrs. Wesley endured some distress of mind on account of the new opinions and the consequent behaviour of her two younger sons, accused to her, after their return to England, of "extravagances" in religious matters, which were deemed very alarming by her informant. This was Samuel, the first-born son on whom she had built high hopes, not to be realized for him, but for the younger brother whose doings so dismayed him.

Yet Samuel Wesley was faithful, kindly, pious; very early in life he took a man's part in the world and in the Church, and made the position that he secured there serviceable to his family, doing much to smooth the path of John and Charles at the University.

But his rigid High Churchmanship made him regard their aggressive evangelism, and the religious views they had embraced, with a sort of terror that now appears all but ridiculous; and he so misunderstood and misrepresented their cherished doctrine as to the witness of the Spirit, that he even infected the clear mind of his widowed mother with his own mistaken alarms.

Better information soon disabused *her*, though it could not satisfy *him*. On the contrary, new dismay possessed him when he found she was won to the views of his brothers.

"Is it not enough," he wrote, with a passion that for once made him half-oblivious of filial reverence,—"is it not enough I am bereft of both my brothers, but must

my mother follow too? I earnestly beseech the Almighty to preserve you from joining a schism at the close of your life, as you were unfortunately engaged in one at the beginning of it. They boast of you already as a disciple."

He who wrote thus intemperately was upright and conscientious, an affectionate son, and one of whom any parent might be proud; but not for his sake, good and gifted though he was, do men remember his mother's name and hold it in reverence. Her title of honour, her claim on the world's gratitude, is derived from the younger sons, whose "burning charity," ardent as her own, led them to overstep the conventional limits of pious action, which she herself had overstepped many years before, in her "irregular" ministerings to the dark souls at Epworth.

And now on her own noble soul there shone a new light of consolation. "Two or three weeks ago," she said,—speaking of the time when a great grief, the loss of her son Samuel, was about to befall her,—"while my son Hall was pronouncing these words, in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee!' the words struck through my heart, and I knew that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins."

This blessing of *conscious* forgiveness was one she, in her humility, had scarce hoped to realize, though to her knowledge it had been enjoyed during forty years by her father, Dr. Annesley; it was not denied to the last days of her much-loved eldest son; it came now to brighten the serene evening of her life's day, so full of faithful Christian endeavour.

She had lived long and with much comfort under the roof of her daughter, Mrs. Hall, whose husband held a curacy at Woolton; but the last few months of her life were spent, as she could have wished, beside her son John. The famous *Foundery* at Moorfields, which Wesley had taken for the centre of his evangelistic work, and where he had made for himself a very modest home, now became the haven of rest for his mother's old age. He had doubtless hoped to keep her with him for years, his most faithful and loving counsellor; but the trials of a lifetime had too much undermined the aged pilgrim's strength, and she did not long struggle against the final attack of illness, which proved fatal to her in the July of 1742.

Immediate danger had not been feared, and Wesley was absent in Bristol on one of his innumerable journeys, when the news came that she was failing fast. He rode off homewards on the Sunday evening, and reached London the following Tuesday—just in time.

Her daughter Anne, Mrs. Lambert, who with the other surviving sisters stood watching by the deathbed of this saint, wrote to the absent Charles of the "great trials of mind and body" that had afflicted the dear mother awhile; but "about twelve hours before God took her to Himself" all the conflict ceased.

"She waked out of a slumber; and we, hearing her rejoicing, attended to the words she spoke, which were these: 'My dear Saviour! are you come to help me in my extremity at last?' From that time she was sweetly resigned indeed; the enemy had no more power to hurt her. The remainder of her time was spent in praise."

"Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God," was Mrs. Wesley's farewell injunction to the son and daughters gathered around her bed. And when, "without one struggle, or groan, or sigh," her happy spirit escaped from its tenement of clay, John Wesley and his sisters obeyed her command, following the parted soul with no dirge-like notes, but with a song of solemn joy. It was a fitting end for a life which, while unceasingly beset with outward affliction, had always had a heart of dauntless constancy and hope.

And it was fitting, too, that her last days should be spent where they were, in the very midst of that young Methodism which but for her might never have come into existence.

Full of years and honour, her life's work well done, she passed away to her reward. Susanna Wesley has not been a prey to "dumb forgetfulness." For wherever the Methodist system, founded through her sons, and now extended into many a land hardly known in their time, has brought light and joy and peace to those who sit in darkness, there is working yet the very spirit of Susanna Wesley, who in the largest and truest sense may well be styled "The Mother of Methodism."

CHAPTER II.

A SISTER OF THE POOR.

MRS. FLETCHER (MARY BOSANQUET)—BORN 1739 ; DIED 1815.

THREE years before Susanna Wesley's death, there was born at Leytonstone, in Essex, a child whose name was to be closely associated with the annals of early Methodism, and whose life of seventy-six years, extending from 1739 to 1815, covers a period of extraordinary growth and development, very momentous in Methodist as in European history.

Mary Bosanquet, better known as Mary Fletcher, belonged by birth and inheritance to a class which held itself aloof, in conscious superiority, from all "enthusiasm" in religious matters; and the story of her girlhood and its trials, related by herself with delightful honesty and frankness, shows conclusively how strong and wide-spreading was the new wave of spiritual fervour which, as it swept over England, reached even such families as that from which she sprang; families proud of position and of cultivated intelligence, and regarding with well-bred wonder the unfashionable and incomprehensible proceedings of men who took Christianity

M. Fletcher.

seriously, and proposed to carry out literally the difficult precepts of its Founder.

The gentlemen of England might have looked with more favour on such teachers, could they have known that to their influence the country would largely be indebted for its immunity from the storm of revolution which convulsed France within the lifetime of Mary Fletcher. But foreknowledge was denied them, and they remained, as a rule, contemptuously apart from the ill-understood Methodist movement. Not in one of *their* households, therefore, should we have looked to find a girl who would renounce the world and her own dear home also, that she might cast in her lot with the followers of Wesley, and whose life of utter self-denial and consecration to the service of God and man would be cited, from generation to generation, as the fairest proof how intensely practical was the religion of the early Methodists.

There were, however, favourable predisposing circumstances in the case of Mary Bosanquet, which make it less surprising that in earliest youth she should have turned from fair opening prospects of earthly prosperity, choosing rather to "suffer affliction with the people of God." Her grandparents were persons of rare saintly excellence, and their lives were sufficiently prolonged for their example strongly to influence Mary. She dwells fondly on their simple, abstemious mode of life, their large and tender charity, and records with approval her grandfather's opinion that it was a reproach to any man to die very rich; "it showed he had not made a good use of his income."

Her own parents were more in love with the world,

yet they were no violent enemies to godliness, and her father was wont on the Sunday evening himself to instruct his little ones in the Church Catechism, deeming it, no doubt, a very safe manual of devotion, from which only a comfortable rational piety could be learned. There were expressions in it, however, which roused strange questionings in some of those childish minds; and, though he was a man of "deep reason, calmness, and condescension," he failed in dispelling their perplexities.

Did any one ever love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves? Does God really command this? Does the Bible mean what it says? for if it does, how is it with me and mine, who are not obeying its precepts?

Questions like these often arose; and however lightly they were met, and however often put aside, they recurred again; and Mary, with a sister some five years older than herself, sought for a real answer to them with real earnestness, even while both were but children.

There came to them a messenger of comfort in a simple maid-servant, who, having learnt "some little of the power of inward religion, among the people called Methodists," tried to impart her happy knowledge to her young mistresses, whose trouble of mind she had noticed. By conversing with this poor girl, and by reading the little books she lent them, the sisters began to understand the way of salvation. The maid was soon dismissed, and the religious books taken away; but not so easily was the impression that had been made effaced; and the young ladies remained very desirous of better

instruction. Becoming acquainted with some persons of their own rank in life, who were connected with the Methodist movement, they anxiously cultivated their society, and with no little profit.

We need not at all doubt the perfect truth of Mrs. Fletcher's statement, that, when only a child of seven or eight, as she was musing "with anguish of soul" on the question, "What can it be to know my sins forgiven, and to have faith in Jesus?" a sudden light streamed in upon her, and she cried out with joy, "I do, I do rely on Jesus; yes, I do rely on Jesus, and God counts me righteous for what He hath done and suffered, and hath forgiven all my sins." Such a precious glimpse into the nature of true Christian faith is very possible to the childish heart, of which she truly says that its reflections are deeper, its feelings keener, than we are apt to imagine; and the memory of this moment remained as a sustaining joy with Mary Bosanquet during the years of unrest, when, deprived of her one home *confidante* by her sister's marriage, she continued a trembling seeker after holiness and peace.

Finely strung and imaginative, endowed with a half-poetic fervour and sensibility, she passed through strange crises of nervous misery as she grew towards womanhood. Her parents were irritated with what they took for perverse irrationality; they blamed her strong religious feeling as the cause of all that displeased them in their daughter, and sometimes talked of shutting her up as a lunatic; while she fluctuated between seasons of radiant trust and of sad despondency.

How it might have gone with her had she been deprived of all congenial society, all friendly aid, it

would be hard to say. Happily, during a visit to Bristol, she became intimately acquainted with some of the more eminent Methodist women, whose sympathy and counsel served her well. Health of body and mind returned to her, with a fervent settled faith, a glad consciousness of acceptance with God for Christ's sake. Thenceforward her great trials came from without only.

Her parents, people of good family and considerable wealth, were in the full current of fashionable society, and she had very early been made to share in its pleasures; she had danced at Bath, attended the theatres in London, and dressed habitually in the rich, cumbrous, and costly style proper to a fine lady of that day. These things had long disturbed her conscience. At last, strengthened by her intimate friendship with Sarah Ryan, one of Wesley's most devoted women-helpers, she resolved no longer to conform to modes of life which did not seem proper for an earnest follower of the Saviour; and she summoned courage to announce her resolve to her parents.

Their annoyance was very great. They had probably hoped that their daughter's "fancies," as they styled them, were merely girlish whims that would pass away with her emancipation from the nursery; now it seemed that these fancies were really strong, unchanging opinions that would colour and shape her whole life. She had already put away from her an eligible offer of marriage, and was contemplating the dedication of her entire existence to works of Christian usefulness.

The parental opposition was not violently expressed,

but it was very real; and Mary's position at home became daily more difficult. Matters came to a crisis when her father tried to exact from her a pledge that she would never attempt to make either of her brothers "what she called a Christian."

"I think, sir, I dare not consent to that," she replied.

"Then," said the father, "you force me to put you out of the house."

"Yes, sir, according to your view of things, I acknowledge it," was the child's answer; "and if I may but have your approval, no situation will be disagreeable."

Perhaps this was an unexpected sort of answer. Mr. Bosanquet said something about the discomfort of his daughter's present situation; and when she went on to speak of securing apartments for herself, and asked for his sanction to the plan, her tranquil acceptance of his sentence on her disturbed him. "She had never wilfully disobliged him," he owned, "except in these *fancies;* his children should always have a home in his house;" and the matter of her banishment was left in abeyance for another month or two.

But Mary Bosanquet knew her own resolution to be fixed, and did not think that her father's was shaken, in despite of the tenderness he expressed towards her. Persuaded that a separation would soon come, she thought it prudent to take the lodgings of which she had spoken to her father, and she also engaged a servant to wait on her. She spoke of these steps to her mother, who expressed a kind of approval, and gave her daughter a couple of beds towards the furnishing of her two rooms; but there all preparation ended. Neither side

seemed willing to take irrevocable action: the daughter was loth to go unless she was bidden, the parents hesitated to dismiss her; and some very painful days passed. Twice she received a message, "You must go to-night;" but not till the second time was it confirmed by word of mouth. Then the carriage, which was taking the rest of the family to some evening entertainment, was put at her disposal, "to carry her to her lodging" while they should be absent. Silently she accepted the command; and the same night she left her childhood's home for ever.

She was twenty-one years of age, and possessed of a small independent fortune. Destitution, therefore, did not threaten her; and the change from the ease and abundance of her paternal home to the emptiness and discomfort of her cold, unfurnished lodging had little power on her mind; but her loneliness at first dismayed her, and she trembled at the dangerous independence she had achieved.

A very touching picture is suggested by her simple narrative of her doings on that first strange evening. She had "no candle nor any convenience;" she was fain to borrow a table and a candlestick from the people of the house—decent good folks, but only known to her by reputation. Betaking herself to the window-seat for lack of a chair, she sat musing over her position, and framing resolves as to her future conduct, until her maid arrived, kindled a fire for her, and persuaded her to comfort herself in its warmth.

"Some bread, with rank salt butter, and water to drink," made a meal for her that she ate with a kind of glad exaltation; her hard renunciation accomplished,

"all about her seemed a little heaven." And now the story shows us the solitary girl, laid to rest on a bed spread for her on the floor, and gazing at the bright moonlight that streamed in through her curtainless windows, while high and tender musings filled her mind, as the first night of her new life rolled away.

"I am brought out from the world; I have nothing to do but to be holy, both in body and spirit," was the thought which dominated all, and which indeed ruled her every action thenceforward.

For a year or two Miss Bosanquet remained in her London lodging, being intimately connected with the London Methodist Society, and spending herself and her means in charities to its poorer members,—not always remembering her own needs sufficiently, in her anxiety "to be the Lord's, and to spend all she had to His glory." But she was not allowed to suffer; when some special necessity arose that she could not meet, her want was always supplied as if by invisible angel-ministry.

"It seemed," she says, "I could hardly think of a thing but it was brought to me. Oh, how true is that promise, 'What is given up for God, shall be restored manifold in this present life'!"

In London she came immediately under the strong inspiring influence of Wesley himself, and of his assistant Maxfield; but there were some compensating disadvantages in her position as a young unmarried woman, compelled to live away from her natural protectors, and obliged, therefore, to the utmost circumspection of conduct.

Solitude was not good for her loving, social spirit; and there was an ever-recurring pain in her periodical visits, as an invited guest, to the home where she had long been a cherished daughter. There was misery for her, too, in the sad spectacles that met her in London streets. The sight of childhood neglected or oppressed, of burdened poverty, of animals cruelly used, caused her an exquisite anguish which she hardly knew how to bear.

Happily for her, a new sphere of usefulness opened before her, and amid its engrossing duties the morbid sensibility bred by her anomalous and lonely position disappeared.

Leytonstone, the place of her birth, was very often in her thoughts, and she longed that its inhabitants should be brought into the light wherein she walked. When a house that she possessed there became untenanted, it occurred to her that she might occupy it herself, might make it a centre of evangelization, and a home for destitute orphans. Yet there were circumstances that made her hesitate. Her parents' house was only a mile away from that she proposed to inhabit; would they not take it ill that she should bring "the preachers, whom they so much objected to," into their immediate neighbourhood?

Then she had not yet a sufficient income for living in that place; and "God," she reflected, "does not require impossibilities." She prayed that He would clearly show her His will; and her mind fixed itself on two things that might indicate the right path.

She would ask her father's sanction for her plan; if he absolutely refused it, she would desist. There was

a way in which her income might be sufficiently increased; it would be enough if an affair were settled "which kept me," says she, "out of part of my fortune, occasioned by a flaw in the making of my grandmother's will." She had tried vainly to have this question put at rest before; now she "slightly mentioned it again, and it was settled directly."

One difficulty was now removed; the other did not prove more formidable. Miss Bosanquet laid her plan fully before both her parents, and asked her father's consent. "He made not the least objection, only added, with a smile, 'If a mob should pull down your house about your ears, I cannot hinder them.'" Persuaded now that her enterprise would have the Divine blessing, she proceeded to carry it out, being much aided by the practical wisdom of her friend Mrs. Ryan.

This good woman had acted as housekeeper at Mr. Wesley's "room" in Bristol, until disabled by ill-health. Miss Bosanquet tenderly nursed her into recovery, and then persuaded this "sickly, persecuted saint" to take up her lifelong abode with her.

They began their joint life at Leytonstone in 1763. The new home was lonely enough, looking towards the forest; the scattered population about it was unfriendly to Methodism; and the small company of women who came as avowed representatives of that cause had some reason to remember Mr. Bosanquet's warning as to mob violence. "The beasts of the people," however, did not pull down the house; they contented themselves with pelting the worshippers at the Sunday meeting with mud, with damaging any property they could find in the yard, and with howling at the windows after dark.

The gentle evangelists were not to be daunted by any such tokens of savage ill-will, which were indeed a kind of tribute to the success that already crowned their efforts. Within the first fortnight, twenty-five members were gathered into a Society; and Mr. Wesley, duly applied to, sent a preacher to minister to the people. The household gradually increased in numbers; several "serious women" offered themselves from time to time as inmates of the pious community, and shared in its varied labours. These were not light. Orphan after orphan was received, to be cared for with anxious, unsleeping love. The poor little creatures came sickly, filthy, often tainted with vicious habits; to heal and cleanse their bodies and souls, to re-create in them some sweet image of the Christ-Child, was a work that needed much time and toil, much skill and patience.

To give Mrs. Fletcher's own interesting account of the methods employed would consume too much space. Suffice it to say that her success, which was really extraordinary, was attained by a system worthy of Susanna Wesley herself, and administered with equal firmness and tenderness. The household moved by exactest rule; all its members wore the same modest dress, ate the same simple, wholesome food; the day was carefully planned out, divided between instruction and recreation; and the education given included a thorough training in domestic arts, in housework and cookery, since it was designed to fit each child for earning her living. Religion blended with everything; it hallowed and sanctioned everything; but there was no unwise austerity; and the real healthfulness of the arrangements is manifest when we consider Mrs.

Fletcher's statement, that, though neither old nor young were refused admission on the ground of ill-health or infirmity, yet all recovered who were sick or infirm when admitted.

Such an enterprise was then something novel and startling. Mrs. Fletcher does not seem to have found an exact English precedent for it, referring occasionally to the work of Professor Francke in Germany as a model she sometimes imitated, *e.g.* in putting up in her hall a box to receive contributions from visitors, when the expenses of her work began to overpass her means. The name of "Orphan House," which Wesley gave to his own institution at Newcastle-on-Tyne, shows that he had intended to set on foot a similar work; but the intention was never fully carried out, and the modest establishment over which Mary Bosanquet presided, first at Leytonstone in Essex, and then at Cross Hall in Yorkshire, for a period of eighteen years, may be called the real parent of the numerous orphanages and refuges by which so many devoted persons have striven since to remedy some of the vast and growing miseries of our English civilisation.

The new undertaking attracted much hostile notice, but it attracted sympathy too; and "the reception of numbers of strangers who visited us on spiritual accounts" has its place in the list of cares with which Miss Bosanquet and her helpers had to struggle. "A good deal of labour and suffering" was unavoidable when the entertainment of many guests was added to the tending of the sick, the education of a score of children, and the attention needed by a new-raised Society. Heavy expenses, too, were incurred, which Miss

Bosanquet's income, though increased at the death of her parents, was inadequate to meet; and, acting under advice which her own good sense did not fully endorse, she removed from Leytonstone to Yorkshire, with the hope of increasing her means by engaging in farming,—a hope destined to disappointment, for the history of her life at Cross Hall, where she finally settled, is a continuous tale of struggle and embarrassment. Her resolute faith sustained her inwardly, and by many unlooked-for aids she was preserved from the temporal ruin which seemed often ready to fall on her, and no regret for the step that led to so much outward annoyance can be traced in her candid narrative.

In one chief motive for the change of abode there was a mournful deception. It had been confidently said that Mrs. Ryan's failing health would be restored by the journey; she did not outlive it three months. Her loss was bitter to her bereaved friend, who hardly knew how to live without the wise and faithful counsellor who had so long aided her, and who loved her all the more tenderly for the troubles they had borne together.

These had been severe. They had mourned together over associates of their enterprise who had failed them, over others who had been snatched away by death. One of the latter, Margaret Lewen, a wealthy young Methodist lady, resident at Leytonstone during her last illness, has been remembered through the touching account of her penitent yet triumphant death-scene, which, in compliance with her last request, Miss Bosanquet wrote, and through Wesley's commendation of her

as "a pattern to all young women of fortune; a real Bible Christian."

But sorrows like these were not all that the friends had had to meet. Both could claim the blessedness promised to those whom men revile and slander for Christ's sake and the gospel's. To the unkindly criticisms of hollow Christians were added the shameless misrepresentations of open enemies, who did not scruple to bring charges of gross fraud and hypocrisy against those whose real offence was that, heedless of their own interest, they sought only the material and spiritual good of others, and by a too unselfish devotion shamed the callous indifference of the worldly to their perishing neighbours.

It was much easier to sneer at such an example than to imitate it; much pleasanter to hint that the good Samaritan had a discreditable motive for his charity than to "go and do likewise." Therefore sneers and slanders, sly depreciation and open accusations of iniquity, were lavished both on Miss Bosanquet and her helpers, and found surprisingly wide circulation.

"If you had gone to such a town" (a hundred miles from Leytonstone) "at such a time," said a friend to Mary Bosanquet, "I think the people would have stoned you."

Such were the attacks, worse than the hooting and peltings of the brutal mob, to which those who dared to be singularly good were exposed in the earlier days of Methodism. It was Mrs. Fletcher's happy fortune to live calumny down, to silence it by long years of utter purity and self-devotion, and to die

revered and beloved by the very classes who at one time held her in murderous hatred; the good in her having conquered the evil in them.

The falsehoods busily circulated by strangers were not the only evils that beset Miss Bosanquet's early days in Yorkshire; she had to contend with murmuring discontent in some unworthy members of her own household, whose unthankfulness taught her the hard, needful lesson, that such loving work as hers must be done for love's sake purely, without hope of the reward even of gratitude. But, aided by two excellent women of humbler rank, Sarah Crosby and Anne Tripp, she faced every trial, and so ruled the house of which she was mistress, that Wesley, who visited it regularly, as he had done at Leytonstone, described it as "a pattern, and a general blessing to the country,"—praise not inferior to that he had bestowed on the former home, which under Sarah Ryan's superintendence had become a true "house of God."

It was during her abode at Cross Hall that Miss Bosanquet, already a band-leader and a class-leader, was led, little by little, into the work of a public preacher of the gospel; work for which she possessed many natural qualifications. Her voice was of such a quality, and her management of it so skilful, that, even when speaking in the open air on the moorside or in Huddersfield streets, she was heard distinctly by the hundreds who thronged to listen; she had the rare art of using the exact words which most simply and most forcibly conveyed her meaning; a supreme good sense and nicety of taste kept her vivid fancy within the limits where it told best, while the intensity of single-hearted zeal

which inspired her words made them "a fire, conveying both light and heat to the hearts of all that heard her."

"Her manner," continues Wesley, whom we have just quoted, "is smooth, easy, and natural, even when the sense is deep and strong;" and this *calm fervour* of hers often wrought singular effects. Yet she shrank, with natural modesty, from the broadly public exercise of her powers sometimes forced upon her, dreading lest godless hearers might esteem her a shameless woman. But there was that majesty of virtue in her look and bearing which compelled respect, even from the scoffer and the sot; insult and contumely came not near when she spoke.

The union of such gifts with such discretion, and the evident blessing of Heaven on their exercise, seemed to Wesley an adequate reason why the Pauline rule forbidding "a woman to speak in the congregation" should be relaxed in the case of Miss Bosanquet and some few other Methodist women, such as Miss Crosby and Miss Tripp, who, like her, while never usurping the pulpit, gave exhortations and expositions to mixed audiences. He held that theirs was "an extraordinary call," not falling under the ordinary rule, but forming such an exception to it as St. Paul himself had tolerated and even sanctioned in practice; and in that light it is wisest and best to regard it, not as an example to be indiscriminately followed.

Thirteen years of life, full to overflowing of varied toil for others, passed over Miss Bosanquet at Cross Hall; then a new scene opened to her. She had not escaped many solicitations to enter the wedded state;

and the hopeless attachment of one faithful friend, in particular, had been a long pain to her who could not requite it. But the very high ideal she had formed of Christian marriage concurred with a strong, half-acknowledged predilection to keep her single. Sometimes, as she artlessly tells us, it had been "presented to her mind that she should be called to marry Mr. Fletcher," and, when pressed by grievous worldly difficulties, the thought would come that he might be her appointed deliverer.

In truth, the "seraphic Fletcher," the apostolic vicar of Madely, Wesley's holiest and ablest fellow-worker, who first saw Mary Bosanquet about 1756, and met her occasionally during the ten following years, had been strongly drawn towards the pure-hearted, fervent girl, but had fought against his affection, being as much repelled by her wealth as attracted by her character.

He had not quite succeeded in disguising his preference, which was fully reciprocated; and their mutual attachment, at last divulged in 1781, was crowned the same year by their marriage. Some unusual circumstances connected with this union point to a deep spiritual sympathy between them during their separation; Fletcher making his offer by letter, in the manner and with the terms which she whom he was addressing had determined could alone convince her that she would do right to accept him.

All obstacles to their union vanished when it was once decided on; pecuniary difficulties were cleared away, and the bride found herself able to provide duly for the inmates of Cross Hall, when that house passed

into other hands. From one of her adopted children she could not part; Sarah Lawrence, niece to Mrs. Ryan, who had come to her as a little child, followed her to Madely, and was the joy and solace of her patroness's later years, till removed from her by death; Miss Bosanquet's two most trusted helpers, Miss Crosby and Miss Tripp, continued, while life and strength lasted, to be engaged in evangelistic work in other and wider spheres.

Nearly four years of singularly perfect wedded happiness followed, for Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher, the day when in the old parish church of Batley they "covenanted to bear each other's burdens, and to become one for ever." Fletcher's testimony to the true keeping of that covenant is contained in a letter to Charles Wesley, who had said something as to this union "exemplifying the love of Christ and His Church."

"My wife," wrote Fletcher, after fourteen months of wedlock, "is far better to me than the Church is to Christ; so if the parallel fail, it will be on my side." That the parallel did not fail on his side, many passages in the wife's diary show convincingly.

She found in him a spiritual guide of almost faultless wisdom, whose quick response to the pure fervour of her affection never failed; her unerring sympathy upheld him, her delicate, unceasing care for his bodily welfare enabled him to make the most of the slender strength which ill answered the demands of his ardent soul. Thus the religious activity of the pair seemed rather doubled than diminished. Their pious liberality multiplied places of worship in Madely and its neighbourhood; nor places of worship alone; one of the earliest and most successful

Sunday schools was set on foot by Fletcher in Madely. Foreseeing that his successor in the parish might not see things with his eyes, the vicar erected a chapel and school in Madely wood, to supply the needs of his spiritual children the Methodists, in case of their being debarred from worshipping in the church. It is melancholy to add that thirty years after his death his prevision was justified.

The influence of the devoted couple told very powerfully; the tone of the whole neighbourhood became raised and purified; travellers approaching the place found a new strange air of holiness breathing on them, even the speech and the looks of the people being sweeter and more winning, more humane, than elsewhere.

But Fletcher's zeal could not bound itself within a single parish. Accompanied by his wife, he made preaching tours in other parts of the kingdom, and on one occasion crossed to Dublin, where the good effect of his ministrations long remained perceptible. To Mrs. Fletcher's untravelled imagination the voyage to Ireland was a really formidable thing, not to be undertaken except at God's bidding. "I am naturally inexpressibly fearful, with all sorts of fear, beyond what words can paint," is her frank confession; but she preferred to share every peril with her husband rather than to let him go alone.

Their three months' absence on this mission was delightful to themselves as well as profitable to others; they met with no little Christian sympathy, they made new and true friends, and remained little disturbed by some curious instances of narrow intoler-

ance which chequered their Irish experience. Mr Fletcher, on his first arrival in Dublin, had preached with great power and success to a crowded congregation in the parish church, attended by his host, Mr. Smyth; some of his hearers were so moved that they felt as if the preacher must be something angelic, superhuman.

"But, alas! it was soon known that Mr. Fletcher preached that same evening at the Methodist preaching-house." Immediately all the pulpits of the Establishment in Dublin were shut against the beneficed clergyman who dared thus to act; only the "French church," the church of the persecuted Huguenot refugees, remained open to him. These exiled victims of intolerance would not share in the bigoted intolerance even of Protestants, and to them Fletcher spoke in his native language and theirs, making strong his appeals to their consciences by apt references to their by-past trials, to the "great fight of afflictions" they had endured for the faith. Some English hearers, ignorant of French, nevertheless went to hear Fletcher preach in that language.

"Why did you go?" they were asked, not unreasonably; and they replied, "We went to look at him, for heaven seemed to beam from his countenance!"

Already half in heaven, he was nearer his final removal thither than either friend or opponent dreamed; at the time of his return from this Irish journey he had scarce two more years to live.

"It seems as if I had never suffered anything; there is not a comfort I can wish for which I have not," wrote Mrs. Fletcher, from the fulness of a grateful

heart, in the July of 1785. But the next entry in her diary is little more than a heart-broken wail. Her husband, after a very brief illness, had passed triumphantly away on the 14th of August.

With an artlessness that is beyond art in its pathetic simplicity, the widow tells of the anguish that she endured in "that awful night," the last of his life, while she hung over her beloved one, expecting every breath to be his last. For twenty-four hours he had remained in a kind of sleep, unable to speak or to take any notice of the watcher, who, overwhelmed as with a flood of sorrow, could scarcely believe herself to be in her right senses. And when that sleep passed into the deeper sleep of death, heavier woe, not to be expressed in words, seized upon her, darkness came even between her soul and God.

"When formerly I have read accounts like this," says she, "I have thought, 'Those persons have a strong way of expressing themselves;' but, alas! no expression appears to me strong enough for what I felt."

Yet "an unshaken belief that Christ would bring her through all" was her great support; and, in what seemed to her *the hour and power of darkness*, she could think of the Saviour's agony endured for her, and feel that she was admitted to the fellowship of His sufferings in her degree.

Slowly the cloud passed away, and the hidden light again shone out. Her first effort to shake off the numbness of despair was characteristic. Hearing, the day after the funeral, that reports were being circulated not consonant with truth, as if her husband "had been

delirious and expired in great agonies," she felt called on to check such falsehoods, and wrote accordingly that exquisitely touching account of his last days, conveyed in a letter to Mr. Wesley, which is familiar to all students of Methodist biography.

The fever under which he sank was probably contracted, as she says, by his diligent visitation of the sick; the incessant toils to which the ardour of his soul impelled him had left him no strength to resist it, and the invincible resolution which made him persevere in conducting the entire service on the Sunday preceding his death, when the fever was strong upon him, almost certainly precipitated the fatal event, so that not unjustly his widow spoke of the "martyr's death" which had concluded his twenty-five years' service of his people at Madely, and appealed to that flock — who, amid universal weeping, had beheld him "take his last leave of them, with dying lips and hands" —not to disappoint him of the fruit of all his efforts, but to "meet him at God's right hand in that day."

"They mourn the dead who live as they desire;" and when Mrs. Fletcher had seen her dead laid in his last earthly resting-place, she set herself straightway to carry out his known wishes. He had desired that his wife should "marry his parish;" he had begged her, for her own sake even more than his people's, to remain in Madely. Happily, by arrangement with the new vicar, who did not reside, she could still live in the parsonage, which she rented; and she was long deferred to in the nomination of the curates put in charge of the parish, so that Fletcher's work in

Madely was during many years carried on as he could have wished.

"Those who are religious in the parish are a simple, quiet people, all of one mind; they know nothing of dispute, nor think of any jarring doctrine. The dove-like spirit of my precious husband still rests on his flock," wrote Mrs. Fletcher in the seventh year of her widowhood. That dove-like spirit dwelt in her own breast. The same delicate skill by which she quieted the scruples of a newly-appointed curate, uneasy at the complete blending of Church and Methodist usages in Madely, served her well in all her dealings with the bereaved congregations, whom she held dear as her husband's "orphans," and who found in her a mother indeed, a mother who cared equally for their bodily and spiritual wants.

The vicarage, while she dwelt in it, was a home to the poor and the devout, a centre of ungrudging hospitality, a House Beautiful for Christian pilgrims in the midst of their arduous way, whether they were enrolled in Wesley's army of itinerant preachers or not. Its mistress continued her own evangelistic labours even to old age, in spite of failing health, with unfailing success. Her charities were incessant and most noble, directed by loving wisdom, and aided by a self-denial almost too rigorous, and by an exactness of method without which self-denial might be vain. Owing to her accurate account-keeping, it was discovered after her death that her yearly expenditure on dress never rose above five pounds, and once sank below one pound, while her alms-giving at the same period required one hundred and eighty pounds in the

year. The greatest joys and the greatest grief of her life being alike past, it might have seemed that no personal sorrow would again be the lot of this busy and self-devoted philanthropist. But her affectionate nature, that must needs specialize its love on some dear fellow-pilgrim, had yet another trial to endure. Sarah Lawrence, the niece of Mrs. Fletcher's friend, Mrs. Ryan, the "dear Sally," the "dear child," who became the darling of her adoptive mother's heart, and who long was her right-hand helper in all good works, was taken from her by a lingering consumption, which proved fatal in the December of 1800.

The blow had been long expected, but was none the less severely felt. "With her," Mrs. Fletcher had written, in anticipating it, "I can consult about every circumstance; to her I can tell every temptation; and her watchful attention over each infirmity of my body is uncommon. Her skill in managing all the affairs of my family is very great; she takes off all burdens from me, and leaves me wholly free. Her help in the work of God also is unspeakable."

Of such a friend and helper the loss could not but be heavy; yet the bereaved one was able to say,—

"I am amazed at the resignation I feel. Yes, I do, I will adore Him, for taking away my all from me. I fear I hung too much on her. I did nothing without her counsel, and truly I was dearer to her than herself. I must remember her words, 'We are both waiting for the Lord; and it is good to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.'"

Thus she submitted herself to the stroke which took

from her the filial friend on whose entire devotion she might have counted to soothe her own dying hours; and her patience had its reward. Erelong we find her writing, "The tenderness of Miss Tooth, whom the Lord hath sent to me, is very great," and this lady, who remained with her to the last, rendered to the aged saint all those offices of a childlike duty which Mrs. Fletcher's "dear Sally" so loved to discharge.

The story of the last years is full of tranquil beauty.

> An old age serene and bright,
> And lovely as a Lapland night,
> Did lead her to the grave.

Across that mild sunshine, the tremendous events which shook all Europe during the last decades of her life threw only passing shadows. It cannot be said that her journal makes no reference to the convulsions that filled so many hearts with fear; but such references are very few, and betray no apprehension. In the last year of her life, the Waterloo year, 1815, an event occurred too near at hand, which did deeply disturb her, to the point of calling forth a solemn protest. The curate newly appointed to Madely insisted that the Methodists of the parish must cease their connection with the Church; "he always thought it best for the Church people and the people called Methodists to move in distinct lines."

The division resulting from this unwise resolve was bitter to Mrs. Fletcher. Nothing could shake her determination to die among "the people united to Mr. Wesley," with whom she had lived in fellowship for more than threescore years, but she had an inbred

love for the Church of England, from which she was now in a manner banished by the harsh act of its minister. "I have always," she said, "considered myself a member of the Church, and so have the united friends in Madely. In some measure we are now pushed out!"

Fletcher's saintly widow might well have been allowed to linger out her last days undisturbed by intolerant folly of this kind. Happily she was able to rest in the conviction that "the Lord would order all," and to see in the continued prosperity of His work a pledge that her trust was well founded. But this thing which befell in Madely is worthy of notice, being a typical instance of the separation effected in many a quiet parish, by clerical action, between Churchman and Methodist, who had asked nothing better than still to worship together as they had done of yore, but who, once divided, have never been reunited, and in human likelihood never will be.

This trial, peculiarly painful as it was, proved the last which Mrs. Fletcher was to undergo. The sands of her life were rapidly running out. A childless widow, aged and infirm, and far removed from her early home and her own kinsfolk, she yet knew nothing of neglect or isolation. She reaped, in her days of feebleness and decay, the harvest of love sown in youth and vigour; reverent, watchful affection surrounded her to the last, and guarded her up to the very moment when, tranquilly as a tired and trustful child, she passed away in slumber, rejoining him from whom she had never been parted in soul, with whom she believed herself to have frequent and helpful spiritual intercourse

through all the years of their separation. And who, that can repeat with full acceptance the words of the creed of Christendom, "I believe in the communion of saints," will venture to say that this persuasion of hers was delusive?

MRS ELIZABETH MORTIMER

CHAPTER III.

TWO FRIENDS OF MRS. FLETCHER.

LADY MARY FITZGERALD—ELIZABETH MORTIMER

It would be no hard task to point out, in the two noble lives we have already considered, so many contrasting circumstances, that we might justly regard the two heroines as presenting quite distinct types of Christian excellence, though agreeing in respect of the complete victory over self, the fruitful consecration exemplified in both.

The calm, lofty mood of Susanna Wesley's piety, the masculine strength of her intelligence, find their complement in the impassioned devotion of Mary Fletcher, in the quick, imaginative intuition by which she divined the truth instead of reasoning herself into it. To the latter, guidance came through dream and vision; to the former, through hallowed, reverent use of God-given intellectual power; but the one did not act out her convictions more nobly and wisely than did the other.

Not less diverse than the quality of their minds, were the circumstances of their lives. It was the strong, self-sustained woman who lived always hidden in the sanctuary of home, who would have conscientiously

refused to step out into the glare of publicity; it was the tremblingly sensitive creature who in early womanhood was thrust outside the charmed domestic circle, and lived thenceforward in the eye of the world, exposed to all its malice, while she engaged in labours outside the common duties of womanhood. Finally, and it is on this point that we wish to dwell, Susanna Wesley's invaluable work was wrought in isolation. She and her husband needed no external help in their task of training up glorious servants for Christ, but had it been needed, there was for them no helper outside the circle of their home to give it.

It was far otherwise with Mary Fletcher, whom we find from the very outset of her career receiving counsel and help from other devoted women, while her peculiar work could not have been successfully carried on without the assistance of friends like-minded with herself. Accordingly the names of various persons eminent for piety and usefulness are associated with hers.

Some of these have been already noticed in our narrative. The two of whom we propose next to give a brief account, alike in their sanctity and in the bond of helpful friendship that united them with Mrs. Fletcher, differed widely in outward circumstances, in early training and later fortunes. Their strongly contrasted lives, contemporary through great part of their course, form a link between England as Wesley found it and England as he left it—two Englands surprisingly distinct from each other, whether we consider them under the moral, the religious, or the political aspect.

LADY MARY FITZGERALD—BORN 1725; DIED 1815.

Those who know something of the disclosures made in the terrible Memoirs of John, Lord Hervey,—first published in the earlier part of this century, a hundred years after the death of the writer, and since freely used by all historians of his period,—will understand better than others how astonishing it is that there should be found in Lord Hervey's family, and in the Court which he describes, one of the saintliest of Mrs. Fletcher's friends.

Pope's bitter description of Hervey, that man of femininely fair face and of cruelly sharp tongue, as a being all the more repulsive for his attractiveness—endowed with

> Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
> Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust,

is almost justified by Hervey's Memoirs. There the favoured confidant of George II.'s Queen, Caroline of Anspach, has carefully recorded all his trusting patroness's faults and all her humiliations, has represented all her conduct in its ugliest light, ascribed to her the meanest motives, and held up herself, her husband, her son, and her courtiers, to the mockery and loathing of after ages.

Yet the man whose cynical heartlessness led him into this silent treason, and who in addition was stained by the common vices of the bad high society that he depicts with a brush dipped in black colours of contempt, was by no means the most disreputable member of the

brilliant, wicked family to which he belonged, some of his nearest relatives far outdoing him in scandalous profligacy.

Among this circle the Lady Mary Hervey, by marriage Fitzgerald, shines like a star amid black storm-clouds, conspicuous by her meek virtues and her true practical piety. Her life, which began about 1725, and ended in 1815, was darkened by many sorrows, which to her pure spirit must have been bitter as death.

Daughter of John, Lord Hervey, and granddaughter of the Earl of Bristol, she had the misery of seeing two out of her three brothers, who successively inherited that title, sink even below the level of tolerated and ordinary vice, and become the mark of general contempt. Of these, Frederick, fourth Earl of Bristol, was most eminent in infamy; during more than thirty years he was Bishop of Derry, and he so discredited his spiritual and temporal dignities, that he found it well to retire to the Continent, spending his later years at Naples, not in honour. His career merits this amount of notice, for the light it affords on the peculiar manners of the time, when such a man could hold high office in a Protestant Church.

Thus unhappy in her own relatives, Lady Mary found little more comfort in the husband of her youth, George Fitzgerald, or in the distinguished Irish family with which her marriage connected her. That family was torn by furious discord, and that husband, by persistence in conduct well described as "outrageous," compelled her to obtain by course of law a separate

maintenance, her position as his wife having been rendered quite intolerable.

It is after this separation that we have a glimpse of Lady Mary visiting Ireland in the same year—1783—as Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher; enjoying their society in Dublin, and returning in their company to England. She had need of the consolations of Christian fellowship. Very shortly before, her eldest son, George Robert Fitzgerald, one of the most brilliantly accomplished men of his day, had been tried and convicted for a twofold offence against his own father,—assault and false imprisonment,—and had been sentenced to be imprisoned three years, and to pay a fine of one thousand pounds.

This younger Fitzgerald, a thorough Irish gentleman of the period, wild, reckless, and fascinating, had already scandalized the world, then not easily scandalized, by publishing, in "a large octavo volume," an elaborate account of the wretched family quarrels in which he took his full part. He caused a still greater scandal a few years later, when, in a fit of ungoverned passion, he shot his coachman dead, and was tried, convicted, and publicly executed for murder.

Such were the manners and morals of the great society into which Lady Mary's high birth introduced her, and such the trials from which she fled to find a refuge at the foot of the Cross.

She had the same opportunity as the writer of the Hervey Memoirs for estimating at their real worth the hollow splendours of the Court; she too had to play her part as one of the brilliant figures in its pageantries,

for she long occupied the post of Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess Amelia Sophia. And she did not fail to judge those false glories truly; but her honest and good heart remained untouched by cynical despair. Having seen for herself the black reality of evil, she did not therefore lose faith in goodness, but was inclined gladly to hear the servants of God who could show her the way, not merely to escape the punishment due to all sin, but to be saved from sin its very self.

Having been attracted in the prime of life towards the despised Methodists, who yet counted some few adherents among the ranks of her social equals, and having joined herself to one of Mr. Wesley's Societies, she maintained her connection with it unbroken to the close of her long life; her affectionate confidence in the teachers who had first shown her the way of salvation being not at all shaken by the sharp controversies that arose between the Calvinistic and the Arminian Methodists.

The example and the influence of Lady Huntingdon, who took so prominent a part in those disputes, were powerless in this matter on the gentle Lady Mary. Her close intimacy with Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher no doubt aided in determining her to espouse Mr. Wesley's cause in that dissension; the saint-like conduct of those two excellent persons strongly recommending the gospel of larger hope and freer love which Fletcher supported with all the weight of his masterly logic, and which his noble wife not only embraced but entirely obeyed.

Letters from Lady Mary, introduced in the Memoirs

of Venn, of Fletcher, and of Mrs. Mortimer, witness to her high regard for all these Christian friends, and to the pure fervour of her own piety; while all contemporary references to her produce the same impression of a character at once sweet and noble, marked by great meekness and humility, joined with a quiet firmness which enabled her to abide faithfully by the principles she had once embraced.

The truth and reality of Lady Mary's conversion were at once evidenced by the changed tenor of her life. "As far as her situation in the attendance of a princess would permit, everything splendid or expensive was wholly renounced." Court trappings had still to be worn at Court; but in private life an austere simplicity replaced the sumptuousness affected by persons in her rank of life; and on the poor and the suffering she now lavished the means once employed, without a thought of wrong, on mere luxury and pomp.

The employment of her time, like that of her wealth, was also totally changed; she devoted both, now and for ever, to the service of God and of man.

"Her conduct and converse in all the relations of life, and towards persons of all ranks and character, were altered." The stately bearing of the great lady, which was her birthright heritage, disappeared, and in its place was seen the loving, humble spirit of the Christian, claiming no superiority for herself, and seeking only with a holy ambition to be yet more lowly before God and more serviceable to her fellow-creatures.

"She was an incarnate angel," said the good

physician who attended on her in her dying moments, and who had had full opportunities of noting the "kind, gentle, and affectionate spirit which predominated in all her conduct" during her life. "There was a sort of heavenly atmosphere around her," says another witness, who found conversation with her more impressive and more convincing as to the truth of religion than "any book or sermon, however excellent." This charm of single-hearted goodness was owned by many who were not in the least favourable to her religious views, but who could not deny that she was "an example of meekness, affection, and propriety of conduct, in all the relations of life," difficult as those relations had been made to her.

To-day we can hardly estimate the value of such a work of Divine grace appearing so manifestly in such a person; so remote are we in thought from the period when the higher classes, standing proudly aloof from their inferiors in station, could hardly admit that a fallen human nature was common to both, while yet they themselves exemplified most glaringly some of its darkest vices.

Lady Mary, who outlived her unhappy husband, continued in her course of steady piety and cheerful benevolence until extreme old age. Her attachment to Methodism and to its founder impelled her to direct, in her will, that her body should be buried in that City Road Chapel burying-ground where she had seen Wesley himself, whom she long survived, interred, and where others of her dear fellow-believers lay, choosing rather to await the resurrection day amid her spiritual than her natural kindred.

Benson, the Methodist commentator, visiting her not long before her death, found her "in age and feebleness extreme," but with her mind clear as ever, her faculties, save that of hearing, not failing at all, and the beauty of her soul shining only more brightly as the body decayed.

A painful accident befalling her in her ninetieth year cut short the slow process of decline, and dismissed her to heaven a little sooner than was expected. On an April evening of 1815, as she sat alone, her clothes caught fire, and, despite the efforts of her servants to extinguish the flames in which they found her wrapped, she was so severely burned that death ensued in little more than six hours.

The injuries she had sustained destroying acute sensation, she suffered not much pain; her mind was never clouded, and she was her own gentle self, full of peace through believing, to the last. Her end was thus really far easier than that of her friend, Mrs. Fletcher, who passed away the same year, having suffered long and severely before her release; and reason requires us to clear our minds entirely and at once from the sort of horror which such a conclusion of a beautiful, devoted, and deeply-afflicted life might at first inspire. "Sudden death," in this case as in many others, was only "sudden glory."

A monumental tablet to Lady Mary Fitzgerald, placed in City Road Chapel by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas George Fitzgerald, her grandson, testified that her beautiful example was not altogether wasted on her descendants; and there was at least one other person found in the large circle of her family con-

nections who was not ashamed of listening to the gospel of Christ. But her most sympathetic friends were not found in that circle. And though there are not wanting instances of persons in her own rank, her contemporaries, who put off all class prejudice as she had done, and became distinguished for piety, it does not appear that these were so helpful to her as some in a humbler station.

Her intimacy with the Fletchers has already been noticed. The lady with whose life we have next to deal, an intimate friend and valued correspondent of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, could claim no aristocracy of birth, though belonging unquestionably to the better aristocracy of piety and intellect.

ELIZABETH MORTIMER—Born 1754; Died 1835.

"Even in this frail and corrupted world," says Alexander Knox, writing of John Wesley, "we sometimes meet persons who, in their very mien and aspect, as well as in the whole habit of life, manifest such a stamp and signature of virtue, as to make our judgment of them a matter of intuition, rather than a result of continued examination."

Such an impression as is here set forth do we receive in looking on the calm, dignified, gentle countenance of Elizabeth Mortimer, which, set off by the soft austerity

of the old Methodist costume, the close high cap and spotless kerchief, gazes serenely on us from the portrait engraved as a frontispiece to her Memoir, written by the like-minded Agnes Bulmer. The impression is no misleading one. The tenor of this lady's life, from youth to age, was one of such purity and such piety as her mild and noble aspect witnesses.

Under her maiden name of Elizabeth Ritchie, Mrs. Mortimer is repeatedly mentioned in Mr. Wesley's later Journals; his numerous letters addressed to her bear witness to the fatherly interest he took in her spiritual and temporal welfare; and it is to her pen that we owe the well-known and most touching account of his last hours.

Her early history is interesting, for it shows us Methodism already firmly established as a religious power in the land, and attracting to itself a second generation of converts from among the children of its first adherents, in spite of the contempt in which it was held by many well-meaning but ill-informed persons.

Elizabeth Ritchie was the daughter of a retired naval surgeon, a man of high character and much piety, who in 1754, the year of her birth, was residing at Otley in Yorkshire. Here the child's early years passed happily, with no restraints but those imposed by wise affection; her parents, devoted adherents of Wesley, were fully alive to the immeasurable importance of first impressions, and their religious teaching sank very deeply into the mind of little Elizabeth. But when she was twelve years old a new scene opened. The gay engaging girl drew the attention of a certain Mrs.

H——, a lady of some position and wealth, to whom her father was known professionally, and by whom she was in a manner adopted. This lady, spotless as to her moral character, was no lover of Methodism or of religious "enthusiasm" in any shape; and the educational advantages she secured to Miss Ritchie were counterbalanced by the love of the world and its pleasures which the society of her house inspired in the young girl, whose dawning powers of mind soon attracted flattering attention.

She became ashamed to own that her parents were so unfashionable as to attend the ministry of the Methodists, and tried all her girlish powers of persuasion to make them desist, urging them at least not to "receive Mr. Wesley into their house." Meeting no success, she became half alienated from her home, and more in love with such gaieties as her extreme youth allowed her to share; "plays, cards, and company" were increasingly dear to her. These joys, however, could not satisfy the longings of an immortal spirit; her mind was full of a vague unrest, an increasing trouble, which would not be quieted. Unconsciously she was proving how true was the utterance of the great Augustine:

"Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our heart is ever restless, until it find rest in Thee."

Struggles such as those which Mrs. Mortimer herself has with rare candour depicted for us, have been often, and will often again be, undergone by the children of pious parents, when first they become alive to the charm which this world's pleasures possess for young creatures just blooming into the fulness of physical life.

Happy is it when parental care has so deeply impressed eternal truth on the opening mind that the imprint can never be done away; then the conflict will end as it did with Elizabeth Ritchie.

Her strong prejudice withheld her from hearing Mr. Wesley preach, even when she could not help acknowledging the attractive beauty of his character; but his doctrines had now many other exponents, and from the lips of a pious clergyman, then curate of Otley, they reached her heart and convinced her reason. Fully realizing her need of the Saviour, she sought Him, and she found Him.

And now her example can be well commended to all those who try with anxious care to ascertain how *little* of this world's distinctive enjoyments they need renounce if they would gain heaven, and who cling fondly to every amusement which is not too plainly stamped with the brand of sin. Such care and such yearnings found no place with her. She saw at once that her new views and feelings were not compatible with the enjoyments and the hopes that had been so dear to her; and she found courage and resolution to renounce these last for ever. Peace and joy such as she had never known rewarded the decision, and, remaining with her always, left her no room to regret it.

Thus, at the age of eighteen, she gained the victory over the world; for her tastes and desires became so completely changed, that she could not find in herself any longing after the pleasures once so enthralling; on the contrary, they seemed to her "mean and trifling, unworthy the pursuit of a rational and immortal being."

Her prejudices against Wesley had vanished like a thin hoar-frost at noon; she heard him with joy, and thought herself happy in his fatherly notice and counsels. She was soon enrolled in that list of female correspondents whose progress he watched over and directed with unwearied care; and his many published letters to her, like all the vast body of his correspondence, show him bent always to attain one end, "consummate virtue in every temper and in every action."

On her his sedulous care was not thrown away. She became one of the most intelligent and active of the many female assistants who worked with him in his great enterprise of spreading "scriptural holiness" in every corner of the land. At the age of twenty-one she was appointed to the office of class-leader; and it was also her lot to share in many of Wesley's own evangelistic journeys, and at a late period to undertake many similar expeditions herself. She did not, like Mrs. Fletcher, who soon became her intimate friend, attempt to address mixed congregations as a preacher of the Word; but, having been introduced by Wesley into his own wide circle of friends, and developing special faculties for instructing the ignorant, ministering to the sick, and consoling the sorrowful, she passed very much of her middle life in these offices; more particularly after the death of her beloved father, in loosening her home ties, set her free to engage in wider activities. Then, during several years, "she was chiefly occupied in visiting, at the solicitations of her large connections, the several Societies and neighbourhoods, for the purpose of spiritual improvement."

In early womanhood her health had been delicate,

so much so that at one moment it seemed as if she must pass away in lingering decline; it is some support to Wesley's theory that a life of incessant activity and incessant change of scene was the most healthful, when we find this fragile young lady developing into a comparatively vigorous womanhood, and retaining her mental power unimpaired, or nearly so, till the ripe age of fourscore.

The most interesting period of her life is undoubtedly, as far as the general public is concerned, that when, at Wesley's request, she took up her abode at the "Chapel-house" in London, remaining there during the last two months which the venerable man, whom she now always affectionately called her father, was to spend upon earth. The saintly Hester Ann Rogers, a dear friend of Miss Ritchie's, had been taking charge of the "City Road Chapel-house," Wesley's last earthly home; but her frail health made her unequal to the work, and her friend's arrival was welcome both to her and to Wesley, who had earnestly sought to obtain Miss Ritchie as an inmate and a helper.

"Believing it to be my providential path," she says, "I entered on my new engagement, and found sufficient business on my hands. The preacher who had usually read to Mr. Wesley being absent, he said to me, 'Betsy, you must be eyes to the blind;' I therefore rose with pleasure about half-past five o'clock, and generally read to him from six till breakfast-time. Sometimes he would converse freely, and say, 'How good is the Lord to bring you to me when I want you most! I should wish you to be with me in my dying moments; I would have you to close my eyes.' When the fulness

of my heart did not prevent reply, I have said, 'This, my dear sir, I would willingly do; but you live such a flying life, I do not well see how it is to be accomplished.' He would close the conversation by adding, 'Our God does all things well; we will leave it in His hands.'

"During the two months I passed under his roof, which proved to be the last he spent on earth, I derived much pleasure from his conversation. His spirit seemed all love; he breathed the air of paradise, adverting often to the state of separate spirits. 'Can we suppose,' he would observe, 'that this active mind, which animates and moves the dull matter with which it is clogged, will be less active when set free? Surely, no; it will be all activity. But what will be its employments? Who can tell?'"

"The future world has been somehow painted to our mind as a place of continuous praise;—one cannot help feeling that, if thus, it would prove monotonous. It cannot be thus. It must be a life of activity, for happiness is dependent on activity; death is cessation of activity; life is all movement."

In these words, written by Charles George Gordon in the fulness of life and strength, there is a curious resemblance to the words just quoted, uttered by the venerable Wesley when bending under the weight of eighty-seven years; there is something beautiful and touching in seeing these two valiant soldiers of Christ, in circumstances so different, arriving at an absolute oneness of opinion with regard to the blessed life to come. To both, indeed, the inactivity and the death of the soul would have been synonymous.

Miss Ritchie had no reason, during those memorable months of 1791, to complain of insufficient employment; her hands were very full, and she could not be content without surrounding "her father" with every possible comfort. He must "want no attention she could possibly pay him."

"I loved him," she says, "with a grateful and affectionate regard, as given by God to be my guide, my spiritual father, and my dearest friend; and was truly thankful to be assured that these attentions were made comforts to him."

Privileged to witness with what unclouded peace and joy this good and faithful servant of God passed through his mortal conflict into glory, Miss Ritchie was for a little time too much raised above herself in solemn sympathy with the departed saint to be sensible of "her own or the Church's loss." That state of exalted feeling could not last; and from the deep depression which naturally succeeded it, her health for a time suffered. Change of scene, however, and the society of such friends as the widowed Mary Fletcher, did much for her; and she soon resumed, and for seven or eight more years continued with little interruption, her evangelistic and philanthropic toils.

"As a ministering angel," says an eye-witness, "she goes about doing good to the bodies and the souls of her fellow-creatures. She has a rare talent; an equal capacity for usefulness in spiritual and temporal things; a ready hand for all the concerns of life, while her spirit soars above."

There had not been wanting eyes which had seen "fair foreshown," in this union of sweet and strong

qualities, a wife worth winning. So early as the year 1786, Miss Ritchie had been sought in marriage by Harvey W. Mortimer, a gentleman apparently well suited to gain her affections. She refused him then, though esteeming him "a sensible, good man," who wished her aid "to help him to live to God," and acknowledging that, as to outward things, the match would be quite beyond her expectations; for her pious suitor was in very affluent circumstances. Her avowed motives were the desire to consecrate *all* her time to her Divine Master's service, and the absence of any such "particular conviction" as could, she thought, justify her in accepting the tempting offer of a position which would in some respects increase her power to do good. But when, after the lapse of fifteen years, the same gentleman, by renewing his offers, showed how constant was the attachment she had inspired, her views had altered in his favour. In 1801 she rewarded his perseverance by the gift of her hand; and thenceforth her life was no longer spent in the conspicuous toils of a female evangelist, but in the not less momentous duties of a Christian matron; and its events are the simple joys and sorrows of domestic life,—motherhood, with its grave responsibilities; the death of one child, the marriage of another; the failing health of a beloved husband; bereavement, and a long but not hopeless widowhood, borne with cheerful and hopeful patience; and at last, in the fulness of years and honours, death, regarded and hailed as a friend, who came to summon her to realms of light where all earth's losses would be much more than recompensed.

Her residence during her married life was fixed in

London, where, at the headquarters of Methodism, she found "ample scope for her talents and zeal," and whence she kept herself carefully in touch, by an unremitting correspondence, with her numerous religious friends in other parts of the realm. She outlived very many of those whose society had been most precious to her; she died in 1835, fully twenty years after Mrs. Fletcher and Lady Mary Fitzgerald, twenty-five years after Darcy, Lady Maxwell, and forty-one years after Mrs. Rogers, beside whom she had knelt by the dying bed of Wesley. Like him, as she felt death approaching, she mused much on the world to come; her loving soul dwelling most fondly on the prospect of reunion with the friends whom "she had loved long since, and lost awhile." There was even an attractive grace about the spectacle of her slow and gentle decline: the slender, delicate figure "moving so lightly you hardly heard her tread;" the aged features lighted up with a sparkling intelligence, or arrayed in the "mild lustre" of smiling benevolence. This beautiful old age had an appropriate conclusion in the gentlest and most peaceful death; without a struggle, without a groan; without one faintest wish to linger a little longer upon earth, "absent from felicity" so long desired, Elizabeth Mortimer passed away to join the spirits of the just made perfect.

Her long and useful life forms a link between the old Methodism and the new. The days of Wesley seem to draw much nearer, when we remember that she who in mature womanhood watched over his dying bed, was still living in honoured age when our present sovereign was a princess of fifteen. Three lives thus

cover all the space between the dawn of the momentous Evangelical Revival and the present hour; it is a task almost beyond one's power, to recall how many and how varied are the forms in which the awakened religious energy of the nation has made itself manifest, since the first of those three lives began.

CHAPTER IV.

A LIFE HIDDEN WITH GOD.

HESTER ANN ROGERS—BORN, 1756; DIED, 1794.

A TYPE of character quite distinct from any we have yet noticed is offered by Hester Ann Rogers, who, by means of her widely-read Memoirs and Letters, exercised an influence equal to Mrs. Fletcher's over the women of Methodism. For very many she became the ideal Christian lady whom they sedulously tried to imitate. She was perhaps all the more fitted thus to act as an example, because her abilities and attainments were not so remarkable as to make it seem impossible to emulate her. Endowed with a good natural understanding, candid and reasonable, and carefully though not highly educated, her chief distinction was an energy and intensity of nature, which was transfigured by Divine grace into such a "pure flame of love," such an inexhaustible fervour, that no one can read the story of her life without feeling it to be noble and beautiful and worthy of all reverence.

Her own artless account of her early years is full of interest, both for its picture of a young, eager, much-tempted soul, victoriously choosing the better part in defiance of strong inclinations for a mere worldly life,

and for its revelations of the bitter contempt and dislike with which the religious world at large greeted early Methodism—a movement as much slandered and misjudged as early Christianity itself.

The home into which, in 1756, this saintly soul was born, might be well deemed a model household of that day, and her father, Mr. Roe, the model country clergyman. "He was a man," says his daughter, "of strict morals, and, as far as he was enlightened, of real piety." Many years he ministered at Macclesfield, being honoured for his spotless life and the good example of his family. Hester was duly trained in habits of prayer, of rigid truthfulness, of reverence for the Almighty. She was led to study the Scriptures, to listen attentively to the sermons and lessons at church, to repeat all she remembered of them, and to learn by heart the Catechism and the Collects. "All was conscience and tender heart" in the little maiden, who performed these pious duties with great sincerity and delight, though her vivid fancy, not yet controlled by reason, mingled a kind of superstition with her devotion. An accidental omission of her evening prayer appeared to her as a sin heavy enough to put her in the power of the Evil One, whom she thought she saw at her bedside ready to seize on her, and her terrified screams called her parents up to comfort her.

No tenderest parental care can quite save the imaginative child-soul, with its vast apprehensiveness and scanty knowledge, from night fears as grim as these; therefore we may not too lightly blame the strict discipline under which Hester grew up for the special form assumed by her tormenting fancy.

When only nine years old, it was her ill-fortune to lose her father, who, during the last year of his life, seems to have risen into a higher spiritual state than he had before attained. His dying illness, though short, was long enough for him to give proof with what tranquillity, what peaceful hope, he awaited the moment of his departure; and his parting counsels and benedictions remained deeply impressed on the mind of his little daughter. Having sent for *her* especially, and taking her hand in his "very affectionately," the dying father said,—

"My dear Hetty, you look dejected. You must not let your spirits be cast down; God hath ever cared for me, and He will take care of mine. He will bless you, my dear, when I am gone. I hope you will be a good child, and then you will be happy."

Then, laying his hand on her head and lifting his eyes to heaven, he added, "Unto God's gracious mercy and protection I commit thee. The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace; and make thee His child and faithful servant to thy life's end!"

Those touching accents fell on a sensitive ear and tender heart, and their memory was strong and clear with her while life lasted.

Thus the earliest impressions, always the most important, which Hester Ann Roe received, were such as strongly to predispose her to a religious life. Yet, just as in Mrs. Mortimer's case, it seemed for a time as if far different influences would become dominant with her.

Her grief for her father was excessive; and its very excess was used as a pretext for initiating her into

pursuits which that father had strongly disapproved. It would seem that he had been the one exceptionally serious member of his family circle; for, in order to raise Hester's spirits as well as to improve her carriage, dancing lessons were recommended by her friends and relations, who soon succeeded in overcoming her mother's objections; and the girl was not long in learning to excel and to delight in dancing, to place her ambition in fashionable dress, and her joy in parties of pleasure; while the novels and romances of the day, strictly prohibited by her father, became her darling secret study. We need not here do more than allude to the good reasons which men of Mr. Roe's stamp could adduce for their dislike to the popular fictions of that day. The "novel," then just rising into importance, showed itself at first with all its worst sins upon its head; it was more than a dissipating unprofitable literary product; it was often far indeed from purity and sweetness, both in thought and expression. The few surviving romances of the period which were written with noble intention, and which were approved by such men as John Wesley, Samuel Johnson, and William Cowper, have defects that would now be thought intolerable.

Such as they were, Hester's ardent, hopeful fancy found congenial food in them; and it was not long before she added playgoing to the list of delights which seemed to enthral her, and which she pursued with a growing eagerness that at last alarmed her mother, who "began to fear the consequences of her living so much above her station in life," but these prudent fears did not affect Hester. She was much with her godmother,

a wealthy lady, who apparently meant to provide for her handsomely, and whose frequent gifts enabled the girl to meet the expenses of her headlong pursuit of pleasure.

The memories of very different aspirations still, however, clung to her, and sometimes were sharply re-awakened: as, during her preparing for the rite of confirmation; and again, when, being seized by a fever, she believed herself at point to die. Then she trembled and prayed, and in feverish dreams of the great last day passed from deep despair to a rapturous confidence of salvation. These impressions did not quite pass away with her peril; but after her recovery she expended much thought and care on the attempt to combine a moderately devout life with the amusements dear to her. The experiment succeeded as wretchedly as such experiments generally do.

It is a little surprising to find that all this varied experience was crowded into the first seventeen years of Hester Ann Roe's existence. Evidently there was great precocity of thought and feeling, in addition to a premature release from the usual restraints that hedge in the ways of a growing girl. She who was to die when only thirty-eight, was making haste to live in that little span as much as many people do in threescore years and ten.

In her eighteenth year the advent of a new clergyman to Macclesfield heralded in the greatest change of Miss Roe's life. The Rev. Mr. Simpson was said to be "a Methodist," which title "conveyed to my mind," she says, "as unpleasing an idea of him as if he had been called a Romish priest; being fully persuaded that to

be a Methodist was to be all that was vile, under the mask of piety."

Her beloved novels and plays might help her to this conclusion, by their gross caricatures of religious professors; but slanderous gossip was the chief source of her information. The poor Methodist preachers were said to be false prophets, deceivers of the people, little better than common pickpockets, expounders of the blackest Antinomian heresy, and base pretenders to miraculous powers. Such were the representations by which the fury of the mob was raised against them, and by which decent people were induced to treat them like lepers. Miss Roe fully believed these tales.

Mr. Simpson, she learned, preached against all her favourite pursuits, and this was another motive for dislike. Yet the preaching of this good man, its reasonableness and fervency, by little and little produced a deep impression on her. She acknowledged the truth and justice of his views; she felt herself sinful, a lost, despairing soul. She struggled vainly to disguise from herself, as well as from others, the change that was being wrought in her; and at last, half hoping, half desponding, no longer desiring anything but full salvation from her sins, she went to hear one of Wesley's preachers, Mr. Samuel Bardsley, and under his ministry was taught to see, as never before, how the Lord Jesus Christ could be her own personal Redeemer.

Miss Roe's impulsive and eager nature would not allow her to be half-hearted in any pursuit. She resolved at once to cast in her lot with the people whom she now justly regarded as God's messengers, the men who showed the true way of salvation, at whatever

cost. "I knew," she says, "that if I persisted in hearing the Methodists I must literally give up *all*. My mother had already threatened, if ever she knew me to hear them, she would disown me." But the prospect did not daunt her. It seemed to her that the Saviour's voice spoke to her heart, bidding her "take up her cross and follow Him," and with feelings not far from rapture she welcomed the thought of bearing something for One who had borne *all* for her.

Her anticipation of violent opposition was fully realized. The intervention of her Uncle Roe—who had brought Mr. Simpson to Macclesfield, and who apparently esteemed him much—prevailed on Hester's mother not to turn her daughter out of doors. But short of this, almost every weapon was tried to wean her from associations which were held to be quite disgraceful. Tenderness and severity; the reasonings of friends, relations, divines; close confinement at home for eight weeks; and a long visit, in her mother's guardianship, to her godmother's house, with all its gaieties, were alternately employed. The last means used was the most distasteful to Hester, who in the first fervour of her renunciation of the world had pulled to pieces "all her finery, her high dressed caps, etc.," cut her hair short, so that the laborious fashionable dressing of it should be impossible; and "in the most solemn manner vowed never to *dance* again:" trifling details these, perhaps, but full of interest for the insight they give into the resolute, ardent soul of the girl, who wished to set impassable barriers between herself and her perilous amusements. She remained quite unshaken by the now unwelcome pleasures at her godmother's,

and by the intimation that that lady would confer no further benefit on "a Methodist." "None but Christ!" was the instant answer of her heart to this threat.

Returning home with her mother, Miss Roe resolved on a singular step. She pleaded with her parent to impose no more restraints on her, to let her be free to seek salvation where alone, as she believed, she could find it. For this she was willing to forsake her home and go out as a servant.

"But I would rather be *your* servant," was the touching plea with which she concluded. "I will undertake all the work of the house, if you will only suffer me to attend preaching."

Mrs. Roe took this remarkable proposal into consideration. She consulted with her friends: all agreed that a short trial of the rough, unfamiliar housework would quite sicken Hester of her plan; and doubtless they hoped through this means to break her resolution. She was therefore allowed to enter on her strange new employment; and during eight months she performed all the menial work of the house, no other servant apparently being kept.

There is no reason to suppose that her servile position was made easy for her; nor is there any reason to think that its difficulties were purposely increased. The hardships she endured in it did indeed injure her health, and not improbably they shortened her days; but we must remember that, in addition to her unaccustomed toils, this softly-nurtured girl "used rigorous fasting."

Whatever suffering, however, her own imprudent zeal or the hardness of others inflicted on her was, she felt,

fully compensated by the overflowing peace and joy in believing which she soon attained, and by which she seemed transformed into a new creature, radiant with gladness, and full of patient good-will to all around her. This happy change in her soon began to soften the opposition of her relations, and some of them learned to follow her in the way of peace.

Finally, a serious illness of Mrs. Roe's, through which her daughter nursed her with a devotion that greatly hurt her own health, put an end to the sort of persecution from which Hester had borne so much. She was restored to her proper place in her home, and allowed unmolested to worship where and how she would.

"It was nearly too late," she says. Very soon it seemed as if she were passing into a deep decline, and, far from dreading the approach of death, she absolutely courted it, refusing to make any effort for the re-establishment of her health.

She had had her young romance of the affections, a romance to which her new religious views were fatal; and this goes far to explain the curious exaltation, the longing to have done with earth, which now possessed her. It needed some sharp, wholesome words from one of her cousins, who bade her remember that her wilful neglect of the proper means to preserve her life was no better than self-murder, to bring her down from her dangerous heights, and make her willing to live or die, as might be most pleasing to her heavenly Father.

It pleased Him that she should live, and that she should live to bless others.

Up to this time she had walked much as her own impetuous spirit and her imperfect experience bade her;

now she was to have the help of a spiritual guide on whose well-tried wisdom she could fully rely. Following her candid narrative, and admiring the transparent honesty which led her to unfold the story of her mistakes, no less than that of her sins, — a harder matter for human pride,—we cannot help seeing how rapidly she matured for heaven after that April day of 1776 when she first met with Mr. Wesley, who then came to visit Macclesfield.

Hester Ann Roe was then just twenty years of age, while Wesley was seventy-three; yet it seemed as if the young convert's life would end before that of the aged saint, so much had her recent hard experience told upon her constitution. She was destined, however, to outlive him a very few years. The friendship which at once sprang up between them was deep and lasting.

Miss Roe had anxiously studied and had finally mastered the much-misinterpreted teachings of Wesley and Fletcher on Christian perfection; she could not rest content in the divided state of imperfect love and conflicting longings, vividly set forth by the great apostle of the Gentiles. Heart-sick with the consciousness that she practised "the evil that she would not," and did not "the good that she would," she aspired to become entirely dead to sin, that she might live to God. Her unwearied prayer and aspiration did not fail of their reward; her biographers could confidently say that "through the remainder of her life she was one of the brightest examples of this doctrine that the modern Church has afforded." Her views of the perfection attainable by a mortal creature remained conformed to reason and to humility. "Sin," she said,

"is the wilful transgression of a known law;" from such transgression she trusted the Almighty goodness to preserve her, moment by moment. "I am nothing, and Jesus is all," became no mere lip-phrase with her; and her faith and practice won for her the joyful blessings of the "seraphic Fletcher."

Wesley's published letters to this spiritual child of his, while they expressed full sympathy with her ardent devotion, witness to the wisdom and practical good sense with which he regulated her eager, self-sacrificing mood. "We have no right to kill ourselves; our lives are not at our own disposal," he writes. "Remember this, and do not carry a good principle too far." It is to be regretted that no pious adviser, speaking with authority like Wesley's, had been at Miss Roe's side during those early trials which broke down her constitution.

She now abounded in ministerings to the sick in body and mind, and had the joy of guiding into the way of peace many inquiring souls, among them some of her best-beloved relations. Her mother long remained half alienated; but Hester's unwearied filial devotion by slow degrees overcame Mrs. Roe's prejudices, and won upon her at last to believe and hope with something of her daughter's hope and faith; so much so that when, in 1784, this loving child gave herself in marriage to James Rogers, one of Wesley's most devoted and effective preachers, the mother does not seem to have offered any opposition to a step which once she would have deemed nothing less than disgraceful.

This marriage, which Wesley had approved and promoted, was an entirely happy one, and did much to

widen the sphere of Hester Ann Rogers' influence for good. Already in her maiden days she had been "a leader of classes and bands, and a mother in Israel to the young believers committed to her care;" but after her union with the zealous James Rogers her toils of this kind multiplied instead of lessening.

Her husband's plan on entering a new circuit was to entrust her, not so much with the care of classes already formed, as with the creation of new ones, which her unwearied gentle efforts always effected; so that in one city alone — Dublin — some hundreds of conversions were brought about by her agency; while sometimes three classes at once would be under her charge. Like Mrs. Fletcher, who with her saintly husband was numbered among her most intimate friends, Mrs. Rogers did not shrink from the unusual task of addressing public meetings, her discourses being marked by "good sense and quiet moral power;" and, like Wesley himself, she exercised a strong influence, by her highly spiritual letters, on many correspondents out of the reach of her spoken words.

All this was not achieved without much suffering; her constitution had never really recovered from the injuries inflicted in extreme youth; and when we remember that to the every-day toils and trials of married life were added these exhausting mental exertions, and that during her husband's ministry in London, where he was stationed after removing from Ireland, she had to help him to bear something not unlike persecution during three weary years, it is no matter for wonder that the bright, pure flame of her life flickered and went out, just when the tenth year of

her happy but arduous married life had come to a close.

The sacred joys and griefs of those ten married years, the sufferings which her own fragile health and that of her children imposed on her, the happiness which the sight of their infant sweetness and promise inspired, touching as they are, present nothing so striking as to call for special notice from us. There was, however, something far from commonplace, though happily not unexampled, in the exalted, tender friendship and the thorough comradeship, as of fellow-workers for one great cause, which subsisted between herself and her husband.

As already noticed in the account of Mrs. Mortimer, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers were residing in the "Chapel-house," City Road, at the time of Wesley's death. Five months before that event, at his earnest wish, these beloved friends had taken up their abode with him, to soothe and watch over his last days. The extreme delicacy of Mrs. Rogers' health, however, which soon made it necessary that her friend Miss Ritchie should come to her assistance, rendered her very unfit to bear the loss of her spiritual father, painless and glorious as his departure was.

"A cloud of the Divine presence," she says, "rested on all; and while he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance. No language can paint what appeared on that face! The more we gazed upon it, the more we saw of heaven unspeakable. Not the least sign of pain, but a weight of bliss!"

That which was a "weight of bliss" for the dying

Wesley, imposed a weight of grief and care on those who remained orphaned of his presence; the position of Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, in particular, was "trying and critical" during the remainder of their term of residence at City Road—the wife suffering much from the troubles that beset her husband.

The haunting apprehensions with which she awaited the birth of her fifth child, in the year 1794, were too well justified. It had been hoped that her health might benefit when in that year she removed with her husband to Birmingham; but her own hopes did not rise high. Very touching is the account of her last moments, shadowed as they were by the "saddest anguish" of much-suffering womanhood.

The hour of peril seemed past; her eyes had looked on her babe; and in happy feebleness she "lay composed, with heaven in her countenance," holding her husband's hand, and whispering "how good the Lord was!" promising "I will tell you more by and by."

But she was never to redeem that promise. Soon she was convulsed with agony, and bathed in a cold, deathly sweat. Leaning her head on her husband's breast, she murmured, "I am going."

"My dearest, is Jesus precious?" he asked; her faint answer came, "Yes, yes; oh yes!"

"My dearest love," he said again, "I know Jesus Christ has long been your all in all; can you now tell us He is so?"

"I can—He is—yes—but I am not able to speak," gasped the dying saint; and, her husband saying, "Oh, my dearest, it is enough," she tried to lift her face to his, and kissed him with her quivering lips and latest breath.

That last effort of affection exhausted all her strength; yet a moment, and she lay lifeless in his arms.

So passed one of the whitest souls known to the annals of early Methodism; one whose power for good, reversing the usual rule for those whose influence is more personal than intellectual, became wider after her death than during her life.

She died on the 10th of October 1794, in the thirty-ninth year of her age and the tenth of her marriage. In the story of her life, with its earlier love of the world and its later consecration to heaven, we may see illustrated the truth of that promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." The care, the influence, the dying prayers and blessings of her excellent father were not lost upon the child, so soon bereaved of him; they retained their power over her despite every hostile circumstance; and his hopes were yet more abundantly fulfilled for her than he could have dreamed.

CHAPTER V.

A SCOTTISH METHODIST OF THE FIRST DAYS.

DARCY, LADY MAXWELL—BORN, 1742; DIED, 1810.

AMONG the band of devoted women whose names are associated with the early days of the Methodist movement, Darcy, Lady Maxwell, is noticeable as being the person of most distinction whom Wesley could claim as a convert in Scotland, where his labours did not produce so marked an effect as elsewhere—a fact not difficult of explanation, in view of the strong Calvinistic tone of popular Scottish theology, and the consequent prejudice against the teaching of one who insisted that the Lord Jesus Christ had in deed and truth "tasted death for every man."

Lady Maxwell was by no means the only Scottish woman of rank who was deeply influenced by the new evangelical awakening; but she stands almost alone among her titled countrywomen in her firm adhesion to the views of Wesley and of Fletcher.

In mind and in character she may be not unworthily compared with Susanna Wesley. Something of high-bred self-control and of masculine reasonableness is common to both, and is not a whit more conspicuous

in the well-endowed great lady than in her much-tried, suffering sister in Christ, whose lowly position and straitened means seemed so out of keeping with her gentle birth and her large mental range.

Inevitably the chequered story of Mrs. Wesley's life, and of its hard-won triumphs over all kinds of difficulties, has more attractive variety than the record of Lady Maxwell's career, which, after one startling catastrophe, ran smoothly and unbrokenly to the end; yet this too has a quiet beauty of its own.

Lady Maxwell's maiden name was Darcy Brisbane. Her father, Thomas Brisbane of Brisbane, was a Scottish gentleman of ancient lineage, resident near Largs, in Ayrshire. Darcy, his youngest daughter, seems to have been born about 1742, some three years later than Mary Fletcher, who, however, was destined to outlive her.

Very attractive in person and in disposition, and highly educated according to the standard of the day, Darcy Brisbane was early introduced to the great world of London, under the auspices of her aunt, the Marchioness of Lothian, and was presented by her at Court when only sixteen. Her marriage with Sir Walter Maxwell, Bart., of Pollok, which apparently took place in 1759, when she was hardly more than seventeen, was one of strong mutual affection; and the long sunny prospect of happiness which lay before her on her bridal morning was made yet brighter when she became the mother of a beautiful son.

But all this bliss was quickly overcast. At the end of two years of married life she was made a widow; and just when she was recovering a little from the

first stroke of bereavement, a second and a final one fell upon her. Her only child was taken from her, six weeks after his father's death, by a sudden, fatal accident.

A young creature so terribly bereft in the very morning of life and hope, might have been excused had she fainted under her burden. But this childless widow was not crushed into despair, nor did she "charge God foolishly."

The wound went deep indeed; never, from the day that took husband and child from her, was she known to speak their names; and her most intimate associates dared not approach her sacred sorrows by any direct reference. But the first words which broke from her, when the paralysing anguish with which she heard of her second loss would let her speak, showed a true sense of the Divine love, even in that dark hour.

"I see," she said, "that God requires my whole heart; and He shall have it."

She was destined to fulfil that promise, more amply and nobly than she could perhaps have imagined in the moment of exaltation when she uttered it. For hitherto, according to her own testimony, though her understanding approved the claims of religion, her heart had not accepted them. She saw the evil of sin, she had ardent desires after moral rectitude; she had not received the Saviour, nor did she yet understand that only through Him could she rise to the spiritual freedom she desired.

"God brought me to Himself by afflictions," she said. "He saw I could not bear what the world calls happi-

ness—riches, honour, and pleasure. With a hand graciously severe, He tore all from me. Then He spoke comfortably to me; taught me, as I could bear them, the lessons of His grace;—He informed my judgment, but first affected my heart. . . . I was rather drawn than driven. . . . Having *feared* God for some years, the Sun of Righteousness arose on my soul with healing in His wings. He dispelled the cloud, removed condemnation, and for great bitterness gave sweet peace; 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.'"

The spiritual history which we have condensed into a very few of Lady Maxwell's own words covered four or five years. It was by little and little that she passed out of sorrow, heaviness, and gloom into the pure gospel light wherein she walked for more than forty years. The person to whom, under Heaven, she was most indebted for the sacred peace she attained was undoubtedly John Wesley, with whom she became acquainted in the year 1764, when he was visiting Scotland. Each at once recognised the worth of the other; and the strong and steady friendship then formed remained unimpaired to the end.

At Lady Maxwell's request, Wesley, on his departure from Edinburgh, wrote frequently to her on religious matters; and these letters, in common with all others which he addressed to his spiritual children, are but so many proofs of his extraordinary fitness for his position as their adviser and guide. Truly has it been said that "the character of these letters is uniform; they are in the strictest harmony with each other." Whatever be

the rank of his correspondent, the simplicity of his language is the same, and the same his downright plain speaking; but the striking absence of any servile "respect of persons" in his style does not preclude a certain graceful courtesy of manner; a rare combination, and one well fitted to conciliate respect. And not only does he go straight to the mark in his religious counsels, pointing out dangers and directing to means of greater attainments in grace, but he gives proof of supreme common sense in matters less obviously spiritual, but not therefore unimportant.

Lady Maxwell's parents were members of the Scottish Kirk, and her own attachment for that establishment never seems to have faltered; the religious education she had received in it was evidently of a higher order than that which her friends and contemporaries of the English Episcopal Church could generally boast. But this loyalty to the communion into which she had been baptized did not at all interfere with her uniting herself to the Methodist Societies in Edinburgh, and remaining steady in her fellowship with them until death.

Having decided, in 1764, to join "the Society," she apprised Wesley of her resolution; and the reply in which he expressed his approval contains a word of warning, quite as applicable now as then for a single-hearted convert, and therefore worth repeating.

"You will be inclined to think," he writes, "that *all* the members of Society are in earnest. And when you find that *some* are otherwise (which will always be the case in so large a body of people), then prejudice may steal in, and exceedingly weaken your soul. O

beware of this rock of offence. When you *see* anything amiss (upon hearsay you will not readily receive it), remember our Lord's word, 'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.' And I entreat you, do not regard the half-Methodists (if we must use the name). Do not mind them who endeavour to hold Christ in one hand and the world in the other. I want *you* to be all a Christian."

The counsel, so courageous in its frank honesty, was not wasted. Lady Maxwell, young and untried as she was,—save in sorrow,—never seems to have fallen into the error of judging the gospel by its half-hearted followers; and the varying course of many succeeding years showed always more clearly that she was "all a Christian."

Deep-seated grief, and the anxiety of soul which had possessed her some years after her bereavement, had told severely on the girl-widow's health; the advice which Wesley anxiously urged on her acceptance was quite as sensible in respect to her physical as to her moral welfare. Fresh air and exercise, early hours, regular habits, and sufficient sleep,—such were the medicaments he recommended, assuring his correspondent that cheerfulness of mind was very largely dependent on these being used. Here again his opinion became the rule of Lady Maxwell's conduct, and both her health was benefited and her usefulness increased in consequence.

No cloistered nun ever lived more perfectly by rule, or more completely abdicated all personal aims and ends in this life, than did this lovely and highly-gifted young lady, on whom the consecration of sorrow rested to the

end of her days, and who did not withdraw herself from the world, but, remaining in it only to bless it, was "in it, but not of it."

"Her life had a blessed monotony of being, and getting, and doing good;" her days and hours were so exactly apportioned, each having its fixed duty, that the chronicle of one week would give a very fair idea of the employment of many months and many years. Her habit was to rise very early and spend the time thus obtained in devotion; in earlier years she was wont to repair to "the five o'clock preaching at the Methodist chapel;" but advancing age made this undesirable. Noonday also had its hour for prayer and seclusion; nor did any meal pass unconsecrated by private worship on her part, before or after she sat down to the table. The intervening hours were filled with household duties, with reading, writing, exercise, and the performance of acts of benevolence to such as required it; each duty being assigned its fixed place in the day, so as to be never neglected. "The history of one day of her domestic life may be considered a fair specimen of every day, excepting the Sabbath and her more especial acts of devotion every Friday." Her biographer, who writes thus, tells also of her sedulous attendance at all the public means of grace, and her high appreciation of the weekly class-meeting which was held in her own house. The rare and solemn administrations of the sacrament in the Scottish Church were particularly valued by her, and never neglected.

A long, serene life, regulated with such exactness, and varied by no changes of fortune, but spent in easy, almost in affluent circumstances, and in the midst of a

select and congenial society, is not very rich in material for the biographer, who has chiefly to chronicle the different pious and charitable undertakings on which Lady Maxwell spent the hoarded energies of a rich nature and an ardent heart—energies that were denied the common channels of expression, even by the very depth and constancy of her affections. It was in vain that, during the earlier years of her widowhood, one suitor after another tried to win the hand of the nobly-born and well-dowered young lady, who was not only singularly winning in look and manner, but high in public esteem. Alliances that would have greatly improved her position both as to rank and wealth were offered for her acceptance; but she was only induced to take one of these offers into consideration, and she was not long in deciding against it.

She could not recall her entire consecration of herself to God's only service; she could admit no successor to the husband and child whose names she never ventured to mention. In this resolve there was no tinge of superstition or mistaken asceticism; it was the almost irresistible expression of a nature which, in Wesley's phrase, united "strength with softness, tenderness with steadiness." Her path once chosen, she would walk in no other. And she did not.

A few strong friendships, a few bereavements, the care of some philanthropic and religious undertakings make up the sum of events that can be recorded of Lady Maxwell's maturer and declining years. The full and intense inner life of those years is to a great extent revealed in the Diary, of which even such a critic as Southey could say, "It shows more of high, enthusiastic

devotion, unmingled and undebased, than is to be found in any other composition of the kind;" praise which does not, in this instance, sin by excess.

It is the inner life *alone* which this Diary records; outward events are slightly referred to in it, and veiled under general and vague expressions. Therefore we cannot in this brief notice of its writer's life make much use of it. It must suffice to say that we can trace in its pages, year by year, a deepening spirituality and an increasing joy in believing, which were the fitting reward of an existence passed between "the mount and multitude," in communion with God and unwearying beneficence towards man.

The exact economy of her time, which has been already described, gave her ample leisure for her charitable work; the extreme simplicity of the mode of life and the style of dress which she adopted, enabled her to devote large sums of money to various enterprises which otherwise would have been quite beyond her means.

Preserving something graceful and dignified in her plain, inexpensive attire, something consonant with her character and her rank, she contrived to avoid all needless outlay, and found that "she could relieve many a suffering creature, and give education to many an orphan child, with what numbers expend in useless decoration, whose income was as much below her own as was their situation in society."

Wesley's biographers have not failed to record the timely and liberal aid which he received from Lady Maxwell when he was establishing his school at Kingswood. Towards this object, as soon as it was made

known to her, she gave five hundred pounds; after a little time she inquired as to the progress of the work, and, finding that a debt of three hundred pounds had been incurred, she insisted on contributing that amount also. It was not only her grateful regard for Wesley which influenced her; she heartily sympathized with his wish to promote Christian education. Of this she soon gave further proof.

We find her, in 1770, setting on foot a school of her own in Edinburgh, "to afford education and Christian instruction to poor children," some eight hundred of whom passed through it before her own death in 1810.

Other pious persons came forward to aid her with their money in this work when its usefulness had become evident; but the credit of having perceived the existing need for such a school, and the entire care and responsibility of its management, remained with Lady Maxwell. She never relaxed her interest in it, carefully choosing the masters who taught in it, and examining the results of their teaching with an unwearied vigilance that would have done credit to a paid inspector. She had the consolation of seeing much good effected by it during her life, and at her death she left funds sufficient, in her judgment, to carry it on in perpetuity.

We find her also honourably distinguished by her quick appreciation of the novel enterprise of Sunday schools, when these were introduced into Scotland. She promptly took steps to set on foot several such schools, and, in concert with other pious Scottish ladies, promoted their general establishment.

Her charitable undertakings were marked by a practical good sense which ensured success, and in that

respect contrast favourably with the larger and less well-considered schemes of her friend, Lady Glenorchy, whose well-meant plan of founding strictly unsectarian chapels, where ministers of every denomination should preach, resulted in no little strife and bitterness between Calvinist and Arminian, connected with her chapel in Edinburgh. But a very tender friendship existed between Lady Maxwell and her more visionary fellow-Christian, which remained undisturbed even by controversial differences.

When Lady Glenorchy, whose views were strongly Calvinistic, broke off all connection with Mr. Wesley and his preachers, and declined to permit their ministrations in her Edinburgh chapel, Lady Maxwell remained firm in her attachment to Wesley and her adhesion to his opinion; she could not renounce the "larger hope" of the gospel of love which he preached. But no cloud of estrangement came between her and Lady Glenorchy; and when the latter died in 1786, it was to Lady Maxwell that she confided the onerous trust of carrying out her various pious undertakings, and managing the funds left for their maintenance. It was a task complicated with many difficulties, and involving much expense and annoyance; but Lady Maxwell carried it out with faithful, loving care, and by her methodical, clear-sighted business faculty succeeded in bringing her work to a good end.

Her interest in the schemes which cost her so much trouble was twofold—personal and philanthropic; it was heightened by association with the memory of a beloved young friend, the Lady Henrietta Hope, daughter of the Earl of Hopetoun.

This young lady, of a very engaging though retiring disposition, had become particularly dear to Lady Maxwell, who seems to have been instrumental in bringing her to a knowledge of the Saviour. "Daughter" and "mother" were the terms they loved to employ towards each other. The mother-heart which had been so deeply wounded by the loss of her only child, still lived in Lady Maxwell; it showed itself in her preference for such charities as related to the loving care of children; it poured itself out in a maternal devotion of the highest and holiest character for Lady Henrietta, as the long correspondence between them testifies.

She was to be bereaved, however, of her adopted child also. Lady Henrietta Hope died early in 1786, at Bath, whither, in a fruitless search for health, she had accompanied Lady Glenorchy. The latter did not long survive her; and among the unfinished undertakings she bequeathed to Lady Maxwell as executrix, was the establishment at Bristol of "Hope Chapel," so named in memory of her who during her short, beautiful life had become endeared so closely to both her older friends.

By Lady Maxwell the loss of her adopted child was felt more acutely than she knew how to express. As before, her grief was silent—far too deep for speech; as before, it drew her still nearer to the Great Healer who alone can bind up the broken heart; and many a forlorn and suffering soul was made the happier because she needed to find comfort for herself in consoling others.

It had been her fate, after the loss of child and husband, to tend the dying bed of a beloved mother;

now her two best beloved friends were gone. She did not, therefore, lose heart or hope; she had the courage to live on for others, not for herself, for four-and-twenty years after those dearest to her had passed away to their reward.

"As she was prepared for every good work, the subject of her charities is an almost endless one," says her biographer, who tells of "the poor she helped, the sick she relieved, the orphans she protected, the friendless she assisted, the embarrassed honest tradesmen she raised above difficulty, the modest merit she brought into notice, the youth whom she instructed and set out into the world." For these ends she not only employed her money, "but her tongue, which was persuasive—her pen, which was urgent—and her influence, which was mild but powerful."

Very much of the good she accomplished would have been impossible but for the quiet self-denial, untinged with asceticism, and for the nice economy of time, health, and money, which made the most of all her personal advantages. Add to these qualities the perfect, high-minded, "sweet reasonableness," which is perhaps nowhere more strongly evidenced than in her correspondence with such eminent Wesleyans as the Rev. Alexander Mather and Miss Ritchie, in the troublous transition period following Wesley's death; and the pure, unfaltering fervour of her devotion, her happy confidence in Christ as her Saviour from the *power* of sin no less than from its guilt; and we have the exact picture of the ideal Methodist as Wesley himself imagined it—an ideal he would fain have seen realized in all his followers.

Lady Maxwell's home continued to be the great centre of Methodist activity in Edinburgh, and her personal influence the main support of the preachers of Methodism there, for very many years after Wesley's own departure. For she lived through all the first tumults and terrors of the French Revolution, which excited in her the keenest interest mingled with some awe, but no servile terror; and she passed away only a few years before the great triumph of Waterloo concluded the long struggle of Britain against the power of Napoleon.

A dear friend and fellow-Christian, the Honourable Miss Napier, who had long been resident under Lady Maxwell's roof, watched with all a daughter's love over the last hours of her revered friend, and has recorded how "she expired without a sigh, struggle, or groan; and this was literally in answer to prayer. She did not outlive her usefulness; her faculties remained unimpaired; and she went to receive her unspeakable reward, before the days of old age arrived in which she would have found no pleasure."

Her death, which took place on the 2nd of July 1810, had been preceded by an illness of several weeks; and from the beginning she had entertained no hopes of recovery; but this fixed persuasion did not disturb the calm happiness which for many years had been her habitual mood. It was characteristic that she refrained from any allusion to her approaching departure till it was very near at hand, being unwilling to distress her friend and companion before it was needful. The atmosphere of silence in which she had lived ever since her early widowhood, thus surrounded her almost to the

last. Strong, self-contained, and self-controlled, she had lived in the world as a pilgrim and a stranger for more than forty years; it was the Angel of Death who alone could lead her into the true home of her heart.

It was probably the long habit of self-repression, quite as much as the courtly training of her youth, which invested Lady Maxwell's presence with a sort of stateliness and high-bred dignity conveying a mistaken impression to strangers; for a deep and true humility was concealed under her imposing manner, and a most affectionate heart and keen sensibilities were masked by her calm, unruffled aspect. The few who were admitted to her intimacy were not long in learning the real sweetness of nature which was united in her to high intelligence and cultivation; and thus it befell that the childless, lonely widow was surrounded through a long life by faithful friendship, and was tended on her death-bed by affection not less true and tender than her own daughter could have showed.

Thus the loving service which she herself had rendered to very many was repaid to her at the last; and that was no lonely deathbed which appeared to the anxious, tender watcher "like the verge of heaven—like waiting in the sanctuary, surrounded by angels and archangels—a place which the presence of God rendered sacred."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUNDRESS OF AMERICAN METHODISM.

BARBARA HECK—Born 1734; Died 1804.

Among all the Christian women whose names we have now passed under review—women who, much as they might differ in other respects, were all graced by the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit—there could perhaps not be found one who would have been more surprised to learn that she would be held in honourable remembrance at the present day—not one who in early life would have seemed a less likely candidate for enduring fame—than the noble matron, Barbara Heck.

The place of her birth was in a quiet rural nook of that Ireland which the most enlightened of John Wesley's English contemporaries regarded with a mixture of pity and aversion, as a half-savage, unhappy country, doubtless wronged in many ways, but no desirable abode for civilised beings accustomed to better things.

And if she did not belong to the most despised of its people, those whom Jonathan Swift scorned as "the savage old Irish," neither could she be classed with the "true English" inhabitants of Ireland, among whom the great Dean proudly ranked himself. No such social

distinction appertained to her, but a tranquil obscurity instead, removed equally from the misery that clamours for notice and the luxury that compels envy.

Her parents, honest, God-fearing, laborious people, of the name of Ruckle, belonged to a singular little German Protestant colony, settled about the year 1710 near Rathkeale, in the county of Limerick, and known to their Irish neighbours as "The Palatines."

The existence of this small colony of hard-working Teutons among the unthrifty Celts of Western Ireland, was due to one of the blackest crimes that disgrace the memory of Louis XIV.,—remembering his Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the horrors that followed, we may not call it *the* worst of his actions,—the devastation of the Palatinate on the Rhine by the armies of France under Turenne. For this deed no adequate or even plausible excuse has ever been attempted. The great offence of the Palatinate was the sturdy Protestantism of its people. Therefore it was that the Most Christian King deemed it lawful to lay waste the land with fire and sword; and the harmless peasantry, flying before the fierce soldiery of France, and taking refuge in the lines of Marlborough, were, by the orders of Queen Anne, and in shipping provided by her, transported in thousands to England, where the Government undertook to provide for their present and future comfort.

It is on record that nearly three thousand of these exiles were in one year sent to the North American Colonies, where they settled and throve, and formed a precious addition to the strength of their adopted land. About fifty families at the same time were transplanted to Ireland —a less promising field of labour than the vast Western

continent; but certain advantages that were secured to these "Irish Palatines" proved sufficient inducement to keep them settled for about fifty years amid not very congenial or hopeful surroundings. To each person, young or old, were allotted eight acres of land, subject only to a small rent to the landowner, Lord Southwell. and this rent was paid for twenty years by the Government, which conferred on them the rank of freeholders; arming and enrolling them in the county yeomanry as "German Fusileers."

The homeless, persecuted Germans received these aids and encouragements gratefully, and, being "settled contiguous to each other on Lord Southwell's estates," long maintained their original habits of cleanliness, industry, and piety. Their clean houses, neat gardens, well-tilled farms and well-kept farm-offices, their own wholesome aspect and decent clothing, testified to the presence of a superior civilisation in the midst of the squalor, the misery, and the helplessness of the surrounding peasantry. But the lapse of years brought a change for the worse. Without pastors who could address them in their own language, nominal but uninstructed members of the Irish Protestant Church, the children of these exiles for religion's sake became "utter neglecters of religion," and, being noted not only for profanity but for drunkenness, had evidently taken the first steps on a downward road, which would have quickly debased them to the level of their ill-fated Papist neighbours.

Happily a new power reached and arrested them before the work of degradation was completed.

The Methodist itinerants found their way among them, the Methodist leaven began to work; ere long a

total reformation was wrought. Wesley, visiting the little towns and villages of the Palatines,— Court Mattress, Killiheen, Balligarrane, and Pallas,—found that the profanity and the drunkenness had ceased; there was "no cursing or swearing, no Sabbath-breaking, no alehouse"—unexampled fact in England or Ireland! "They had become a serious, thinking people, and their diligence had turned all their land into a garden. How will these poor foreigners rise up in the day of judgment against those who are round about them!"

Undoubtedly this remarkable and beautiful transformation was a work of time. Wesley visited the Palatine colony and wrote of it in 1758; but Barbara Ruckle, afterwards Barbara Heck, born in 1734, seems to have been trained up from childhood in the Methodist faith, which her parents therefore had already embraced. Not improbably these serious, devout Ruckles, dwelling at "Ruckle Hill, Balligarrane," had been numbered among the earliest converts made by the Methodist evangelists in this remote nook of Ireland, where in 1758 a large Methodist chapel, occupying a central position in the little colony, stood testifying to the success of the preachers and the zeal of their flock.

Barbara Ruckle grew up to womanhood, then, under strong religious influences; she developed into a quiet, deep-thinking girl, calm at once and fervid, prone also to occasional moods of extreme depression, that contrasted strangely with a certain fiery energy which she could evince on great occasions. At eighteen years of age she joined herself to the Methodist Society, rejoicing in a bright consciousness of forgiven sin and acceptance with God—a consciousness which, according to her own

testimony in extreme old age, she never lost for so much as twenty-four hours after the day of her conversion. Her daily life, quietly and beautifully consistent, did not shame her profession; her piety, nourished by the constant study of the Scriptures in the noble, homely German of Luther's translation, and sustained by faithful prayer, was of that intensely practical yet deeply spiritual cast, proper, as we have seen, to the best of the early Methodists. Without any effort, she soon became a person of some importance in her remote, obscure sphere, one whom others instinctively consulted and relied on in religious and experimental matters.

In 1760, Barbara, now in the prime of ripened womanhood, gave her hand to Paul Heck, another faithful member of the little Methodist church among the Palatines of county Limerick; and with him she very shortly left her native land for America, in company with a little band of their fellow-Teutons, who had decided to seek the great land of hope across the Atlantic, where many thousands of their compatriots were already happily settled.

They sailed from Limerick in the spring of 1760, reaching New York on August 10th of the same year —a very long passage according to modern ideas, but to them no doubt speedy enough to be matter of gratitude; for these were the days when a voyage from England to Ireland was a formidable matter, not to be lightly undertaken, and when emigration from Ireland to America was a rare enterprise indeed. Crowds of friends and neighbours escorted this adventurous band to the quay where they embarked, and even to the vessel's side; it was like a parting for eternity—there were

some of the simple souls who had walked sixteen miles in order to see the very last of their departing brethren.

The names of all the company have been preserved: Philip Embury, Mary Sweitzer, his young wife, Peter Sweitzer, perhaps her brother; two other Emburys, brothers of Philip, with their wives; Paul Heck, and Barbara, his wife; a family called Dulmage; Valer Tettler, and Philip Morgan. Probably all were young people, not long married, or only dreaming of marriage, and anxious to begin life under fairer auspices, in the ample fields of half-explored America, than could be theirs in misgoverned, benighted, suffering Ireland. "Only a few,' we are told, "were Wesleyans;" the remainder, members in name of the Irish Episcopal Church, neither were, nor professed to be, in any sense, better Christians than the rank and file of the baptized heathenry of the United Kingdom at that day.

The most eminent among the Wesleyan emigrants was doubtless young Philip Embury, "the first class-leader and local preacher of Methodism on the American continent," who had already officiated in both capacities in Ireland, and whose departure was much lamented by those whom he left behind, so that we may justly conclude that he had been active and useful. A numbness and a frost, however, seem to have fallen on both his activity and his usefulness during the first years of his abode in America. For this we may blame the bewildering novelty of his surroundings, and the rapid dispersion of the friends in whose company he had crossed the seas. In New York, where he and the Hecks fixed their abode, there was not that congenial

religious fellowship that had upheld them in their Irish home; some among their own little band of fellow-believers lapsed into worldliness, and even into open sin. Barbara Heck remained steadfast, and so did two or three more; but they stood alone, without a place of worship of their own or means to provide one. Embury, disheartened and solitary, seems to have desisted from evangelistic work altogether, until in 1765 another little party of the Irish Palatines landed in New York, and settled there.

Of the new-comers only a few were Wesleyans, but all seem to have been nearly related either to Embury or his friends; one name is Jacob Heck; another, Paul Ruckle, Barbara Heck's brother. She, who must have rejoiced at their coming, sedulously visited her friends; it would seem she found cause to dread their falling under the temptations which had already demoralized others of the Palatines.

Paying one of these anxious, friendly visits, she entered on a scene that dismayed her—a little company of her old acquaintance playing at cards. She knew very well what danger lurked under the innocent-seeming, picturesque game, what ruin and despair could be wrought by such pretty gay bits of pasteboard as her friends held in their hands; she scented the presence of the soul-killing gambling fever among those whom she would fain have the servants of Christ. The sudden heat of anger and pity that ran through her flashed out in action. She seized the cards, she flung them into the fire, she passionately appealed to the astonished players not to destroy their own souls; then, leaving the house, she hurried to Embury, and, having found

him where he then dwelt, "in Barrack Street, now Park Place," she told him what had occurred.

Then, "falling prostrate before him," she entreated him, even with tears, not to let the souls of his brethren perish for lack of knowledge, "You must preach to us," she insisted, "otherwise God will require our blood at your hands." He objected faintly the lack of a place of worship and of a congregation. "Preach, then, in your own house and to your own people," replied she; and when she had won his promise to do so at once, she departed to gather other hearers for him.

She returned, bringing her husband, Paul Heck, his "hired man" John Lawrence, and her own African servant-maid Betty. Humbly and reverently they sat together, master and servant, white and black; they knelt side by side in prayer, joined their voices in the same hymn of praise,—doubtless one of the grand Wesleyan hymns,—and listened with one mind to the Word of Life preached by Embury. Afterwards he enrolled his hearers into a class, which he met weekly.

Such was the obscure beginning of the mighty American Methodist Church, destined to embrace in its ranks all the classes of persons represented in this first and curiously typical congregation of American Methodists. As obviously, as unmistakeably, as the parent movement in Old England, this grand Transatlantic Methodism owed its existence to the pious constancy, the faithful fervour, not to be discouraged by adverse circumstances, of a single Christian woman.

Philip Embury, long remembered as a mighty preacher, was of lowly station, winning his bread by the carpenter's craft of holiest association; the com-

pany that gathered to hear him grew too numerous for his humble house, and a larger room must be hired. Still the worshippers increased; and soon two classes, one of men and one of women, were under his charge. Then came the demand that he should preach in other places, where the new religious movement had aroused eager interest; then an unexpected helper in the person of Captain Webb, Wesley's soldier-evangelist, —a surprising apparition, when, in his military scarlet and gold lace, he first mingled in Embury's congregation, —an inspiring figure, when, with Bible and sword, like an old Cromwellian, he stood up behind the preaching-desk, and thrilled all hearts with his fervid, eloquent appeals. Webb, preaching three times a week, soon drew the attention of the whole city. Better accommodation was again needed.

The historical "Rigging Loft in William Street" was hired for a preaching-place in 1767, the year of Captain Webb's advent; it was very soon crowded out; and now the Society had to consider whether it would not be possible to erect a chapel. The prospective need for such a building occurred first to Barbara Heck; childlike, simple in her faith, she laid the matter before God, and "received with inexpressible sweetness and power the answer, 'I the Lord will do it.'" Revolving prayerfully in her mind the question *how* it could be done, a plan of the new house of prayer shaped itself in her fancy—a plan very simple, inexpensive, practicable. She hailed the idea as a Divine inspiration, she imparted it to the brethren; they approved and adopted, and proceeded to carry it out. A site was secured, and subscription lists opened, which were quickly filled up.

Captain Webb, who figures with Embury among the original trustees, was the largest subscriber, contributing thirty pounds, but others gave nobly according to their means, and the names of the leading citizens and clergy of New York on the subscription paper show that the infant enterprise had won favour where favour would avail to protect it; for the law of the colony was as yet hard upon "Dissenters," and the Methodists complied with the advice to give their chapel the air of a dwelling-house by providing it with fireplace and chimney, so as to evade the legal prohibition of unauthorized "churches."

In a year or two the Methodists were sufficiently in funds to purchase the site which they had leased in 1768. Meanwhile the chapel rose rapidly, and when once it was walled and roofed, those most interested in its progress could be seen working with their own hands at the interior details. Embury, the carpenter, himself constructed the pulpit, and helped with the other woodwork needed; the housewifely Barbara Heck took her share in whitewashing the walls.

Nothing could be homelier than the whole building. An unadorned oblong of blue-plastered stone outwardly, it was very roughly finished within: whitewashed walls, sanded floor, rows of benches without backs, a gallery ascended by a mere ladder, and unprotected by any "breastwork." The very pulpit, from which Embury, who had made it, preached the opening sermon on October 30th, 1768, had only the necessary decent finish.

But the modest sanctuary drew hundreds of worshippers twice or thrice a week; often it would be full to

overflowing. There proved to be a charm in the very simplicity of the services, devoid of any cumbrous ritual, in the devotional fervour of the entirely congregational singing, unaided by choir or organ, in the noble directness and plainness that marked the prayers and sermons uttered by Embury or Webb. Soon it was reported to Wesley that "a very great work" was being done by these two men. It was a great work truly,—nothing less than the planting in the future United States of the Methodism which was to grow as that country grew, and to spread itself farther, far over Canada.

Wesley, greatly interested in the news he heard, sent over in 1769 his own first missionaries to America. With a true and beautiful humility, Embury, whose work had made theirs possible, received them and surrendered his pulpit to them. The next year, probably at the bidding of some temporal necessity, he, with two or three friends, Paul and Barbara Heck, Peter Sweitzer, and an old Moravian acquaintance of Wesley's, named Bininger, removed farther inland, settling in "Washington County, New York," at one of the many *Salems* scattered by Puritan piety over American soil. Here, in a half wild region, the little company of believers resumed their work of building up a Methodist Society. The new church that owed its rise to their efforts had its centre at Ashgrove. Again Embury was the heart and soul of the work, and he was evidently rising into a position of great influence, being no less esteemed as a magistrate than as a preacher, when his life was cut short by accident. Mowing in his field, he injured himself fatally with the

scythe; and in 1775, when only forty-five years of age, he passed away, in the fulness of vigorous manhood and the noontide of usefulness.

At the time Embury's death was felt as a great calamity. It spared him, however, a trial which his friends shortly underwent.

The American Revolutionary War having broken out, the members of the Society at Ashgrove had to choose which party should command their allegiance. It would seem that the "Palatines" retained a grateful attachment to British rule which decided their course.

Paul and Barbara Heck, Bininger, Embury's widow, now married to his faithful comrade John Lawrence, her new husband, and Embury's children, and some at least of the Ruckles, broke up their homes and crossed the frontier into Lower Canada. For some years they dwelt at Montreal; there the two daughters of the Hecks died and were buried.

The bereavement may have alienated the parents from the town where it came on them. From whatever cause, they left Montreal in 1785, and finally settled among the pine forests of Upper Canada, near the majestic St. Lawrence, on a certain "Lot No. 4, 3rd Concession," where now stands the town of Augusta. The companions with whom they had entered Canada still accompanied them.

Here Paul and Barbara—the husband and wife who had wandered so much and so widely since the day when, a newly-wedded pair, they left green Erin, their childhood's home, and sailed down the broadening Shannon and into the great Atlantic—were at last to

find a quiet abiding-place. Here two of the three sons who were still left to them lived and throve, bringing up many goodly children in the family traditions of integrity and piety; here, up to a very recent period, their posterity were still inhabiting the homesteads reared by their fathers, dwellings of some stateliness and much convenience, of whose inmates it could be said that "the simple piety of their parents" had not ceased to be the heritage of the children, though these had greatly advanced in "knowledge and refinement."

The Hecks, however, were to do something more besides founding a family that should long offer this rare combination of simple devotion with wealth and culture. Again they and their like-minded friends were to act as the forerunners of Methodism, planting its most characteristic institutions amid the Canadian forests. They had soon organized the first class that was held in Augusta. It held its meetings in the house of John and Catherine Lawrence; Embury's son Samuel acted as its leader, while Paul and Barbara Heck, always apparently content in unofficial positions, were with their three sons enrolled on its list of members.

Thus the soil was already being prepared for the advent of "the first regular Methodist preacher in Canada," William Losee, who crossed the St. Lawrence in 1790, and visited many of the Canadian settlements, scattering the seed, the Word of God, wherever he rode. It would seem that he was eagerly welcomed. When he talked of departing, a petition, numerously signed, from the townships where he had preached, was entrusted to him for presentation to the New York Con-

ference, praying for a resident missionary. The petition was granted, Losee himself returning in the ensuing spring to pursue the great work of building up Canadian Methodism; and under his fervent leadership the enterprise was triumphantly carried on.

But our business is not now to pursue that history, but to follow to its approaching end the simple story of Barbara Heck, that heroine so entirely unconscious of greatness, so perfectly satisfied with the ordinary duties of Christian matronhood. One last trial was to be hers; she outlived by twelve years the husband of her youth, the man of plain everyday goodness and sterling piety, "upright and honest, his word as good as his bond." The widow's home was thenceforward probably with her youngest son Samuel, for it was under his roof that she died, in 1804, being seventy years of age. Her painless and tranquil end was such as befitted her life. As she sat in her chair, with her well-beloved German Bible open on her knee, the Angel of Death came summoning her to yet higher knowledge, and to the blessed fulfilment of the promises that had so often cheered her while she studied those familiar pages,—and thus her children found her dead.

She was buried beside her husband in the same graveyard, overshadowed by lofty and spreading pines, where lie almost all that faithful company of "German Irish Methodists or Palatines," to whom under Providence was due the extension of the Methodist movement to the American continent. A more singular example of widespread good effected as a direct result of cruel and bigoted oppression—such as the devastation of the Palatinate—is hardly to be found in the annals of

persecution, fruitful as these are in similar instances of the overruling hand of God compelling the very violence that would fain crush the truth, to aid in its wider propagation.

Therefore it is that the figure of the unassuming Barbara Heck, gifted as she was with no unusual abilities, nowise rich or eminent save as piety, energy, and sagacity are riches and distinction, has yet a claim to its own honourable place, not only in such a record as ours, but in others more ambitious, dealing either with the history of modern Protestantism at large, or with that of Methodism in particular.

CHAPTER VII.

A CHRISTIAN POETESS.

AGNES BULMER—BORN 1775; DIED 1836.

AGNES BULMER, the fervent, high-thoughted Christian poetess, the friend and biographer of Elizabeth Mortimer, the intimate and congenial associate of men such as Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, and Jabez Bunting, is so interesting and so characteristic a figure in what we may call the second period of Methodist history, that she is well worthy of a place in a record devoted to the noble women of Methodism.

Her life, though eminently useful, was quiet, almost retired, and its noticeable incidents few, nor were its outward trials more severe than all may reasonably expect who live beyond their first youth. But in her natural endowments, in her high mental cultivation, and in the dignity and steadfastness of her character, there was something both unusual and admirable.

Her birthplace was London, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Collinson, were well known and much respected there. Eminent and faithful Methodists of the old school, they continued "equally allied, like most of Mr. Wesley's first followers, to the Established

Church of England and to the Society which had grown up in its bosom;" an alliance which had not yet become practically impossible when Agnes, their third daughter, was born, on August 31st, 1775. She received baptism privately at the hands of Wesley himself; and the sedulous care with which she was reared "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," was consonant with such an admission into the fold of the visible Church.

Her precocious mental development made this careful training doubly needful. We may suppose that light literature would hardly be admitted in her childhood's home; but few indeed are the girls of twelve who, in default of more amusing works, would have fastened as she did on Young's *Night Thoughts* as their favourite study. That book, highly esteemed by the Methodists of a former day, was almost sure to be found in such a house as Mr. Collinson's, and to be prized by its elder inmates; but Young's chosen themes and his manner of handling them would have proved too abstruse and too elaborate to attract any child whose native bent was not for high philosophic thought.

The serious, meditative cast of mind thus indicated can easily be traced in everything she wrote in later years, whether it be prose or verse.

Agnes Collinson's formal "education," according to the simple fashion of those older days, terminated in her fourteenth year; but she carried away with her from school one precious possession—an intellectual curiosity thoroughly alive and awake, stimulated by the little knowledge she had already acquired to go on in the pleasant way of self-cultivation, and to make

vigorous use of the tools which her teachers had put into her hands for that end.

The study, however, which most enriched her mind was that of sacred Scripture, which she pursued so diligently, from day to day and year to year, that its priceless truths seemed to become inwrought with the very texture of her thought. It is not surprising, then, to find that very early she had made the great decision to be "on the Lord's side," had sought salvation, a sincere penitent, at the foot of the cross, and, rejoicing in the light which shone brightly on her there, cast in her lot with Christ's people when not fifteen years old.

In 1789 she was received into the Wesleyan Society, with which she continued in happy fellowship her life long. Her first Society ticket was given to her by Wesley's own hand; thus the venerable man, who had administered to her the symbolic rite of baptism when she was an unconscious infant, saw her, with full understanding and joyful willingness, redeeming the pledge of a consecrated life made for her in that rite.

From that time forward her allegiance to the Church of her choice remained unshaken; what she had chosen intelligently she loyally adhered to, with unblemished consistency of life. Nor did she fail in such Christian service as was possible to one whose nature was singularly modest and retiring. During more than thirty years of mature womanhood, she sustained the office of class-leader to a small company of Christian women; she visited the sick, ministered to the poor, and proved herself a tender, sympathizing friend, gentle

and strong, to all. All her varied gifts were utilized for the service of her Master. Her conversational powers were unusual; she so employed them as to exercise the happiest religious influence on every friend who enjoyed her intimacy; while she gladly employed her pen, both in private letters and in rarer published efforts, to promote the cause of true, enlightened Christianity.

Her life-story is something like the quiet record of one of those fortunate nations that "have no history;" its harmonious fulness is hardly marked by incident. When not quite eighteen, Agnes Collinson became the wife of Mr. Bulmer, a resident, like her parents, in London. This early marriage-choice appears to have been so entirely happy, that we might argue from it alone an early ripeness of judgment on the part of the girl-bride, were there no other evidence of her possessing that quality.

To Mr. Bulmer, a man of "singularly cordial, transparent, and attaching character," who commanded her heart's full affection, she proved herself in every sense a helpmeet, and in her new relation the quiet beauty of her character unfolded fast into full bloom. The careful heed with which she fulfilled every domestic duty, interfered neither with her intellectual nor her spiritual progress. Doubtless this nice balance of occupation was made easier to her by prosperous outward circumstances, such as have often proved a snare to weaker souls, but which in her case aided instead of retarding the growth of every Christlike grace.

The smooth current of her life, though broken by no mere worldly misfortune, no loss of wealth or station,

was darkened sometimes by heart-anxiety for beloved ones, by loss and bereavement. Yet even here she appears earthly happier than many of her sisters in Christ; sorrows were not given to her in such abundant measure as to some saintly women of whom we have already spoken.

What was exceptional, however, in her fortunes, appears to have been compensated, almost outweighed, by the keen sensibility of a nature tremblingly alive both to the bliss of happy human love and to our most frail and uncertain tenure of such joys, and not less exquisitely susceptible to the suffering or the peril of the loved.

The threatening shadow of bereavement, therefore, fell very dark and chill on her loving spirit; bereavement itself was felt with peculiar anguish, only chastened and controlled by a deep-felt conviction that God was in all these things, and by a devout submission to His good and perfect will.

After thirty years of rarely happy wedded life, Mrs. Bulmer had to see the husband whom every year had more endeared, and who was yet in the fulness of manhood, taken from her by a lingering illness, through which she devotedly attended him, not only as a nurse, but as a spiritual counsellor and comforter. She had the priceless consolation of seeing him manifest in his latest hours such a spirit of meek trust in the God of his salvation, as was her best warrant for deeming that their separation was but for a little moment and their eternal reunion sure.

A solitary existence in the desolate home that had been so happy, was ill suited to Agnes Bulmer's

affectionate nature, therefore it was well that she was needed to console the declining days of her venerable mother, who herself was a widow. Under her roof the bereaved daughter now took up her abode, and satisfied her heart with loving ministrations to Mrs. Collinson during the two remaining years of that beloved parent's life.

Mrs. Collinson's death was a new grief, not less keenly felt because it had been reasonably anticipated. Yet the mourner whose last home-tie was thus broken, was able to bear this second blow with calm submission, and could say sincerely, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

There were many alleviations of her lonely lot. She was happy in a large circle of friends, like herself high-minded and devoted, who regarded her with admiring affection, and in the free exercise of her mental powers, which her easy circumstances made possible. In the studies which had always been dear to her, and in the keen, intelligent interest with which she followed the progress of public affairs, she evidently found sources of consolation inferior only to those derived from her fervent religious faith and the blessed hopes and beneficent activities which it inspired.

Among her many friendships stands first in distinction and early in order of time, the affectionate intimacy that bound her to Dr. Adam and Mrs. Clarke. She was in the twenty-first year of her age, a very young and happy wife, when she first became acquainted with them. Mrs. Clarke, seeing her for the first time in "the old chapel at Spitalfields," was at once attracted by her winning looks, thinking her one of the most

interesting young women she had ever seen, and waited only till the close of the service to inquire who was that young lady, towards whom she felt so irresistibly drawn. It was love at first sight on both sides; they met the next day, not as strangers. Dr. Clarke was as much delighted as his wife, and thus began a friendship that endured unshaken for forty years.

Of one mind on the all-important subject of religion, the friends had additional bonds in community of tastes, in the love of knowledge, and in the power of acquiring it.

"That woman astonishes me," said Dr. Clarke; "she takes in information just as the sponge absorbs water. The nature of the subject seems to make little difference; for, whether it be philosophy, history, or theology, she seizes upon it and makes it all her own."

Philosophy, history, theology,—the names are well grouped: this trinity of subjects it was that commanded Mrs. Bulmer's deepest interest; and history, as her own writings make manifest, appealed to her but little through its picturesque or dramatic quality; the philosophy of history was what she delighted in, and in special she loved to note its testimony to the Divine government of the world, its tribute to the power of the Redeemer,—in other words, its intimate relation with theology.

Very helpful and delightful to her was therefore the society of the Clarkes, who sympathized with her and aided her in her darling studies.

She had the grief to outlive Dr. Clarke. Her correspondence contains a very touching account of his sudden death by cholera in 1832. "Next to his own

family, I feel myself the chief mourner," she says, while describing the funeral ceremony, which her fainting heart seemed to forbid her attending.

The next year deprived her of another most valued friend and teacher in Richard Watson, of whose character and work and dying hours an eloquent, pathetic account can be found in the letter she addressed at this period to Dr. Bunting.

With the Buntings her friendship, very long and very tender, was only broken by her own death. When that event took place, it was the unanimous wish of her family that "her most intimate friend, the Rev. Dr. Bunting, should preach her funeral sermon;" but, this proving impossible, the duty devolved instead on his gifted, spiritual, poetic son, the Rev. W. M. Bunting, who further showed his profound esteem and admiration for the departed saint in the beautiful sketch of her character prefixed to her collected Letters,—a sketch which amplifies and justifies his description of her as "one of the most intellectual and holy of women," and which cannot be read without leaving a profound impression how rare a mind and soul this woman was endowed with, and how imperfectly any of her published writings express her. Her influence was strongly personal; and doubtless it is still a living force in the world, so many were those who felt it, either when exercised in conversation, in which she had the happiest gift of associating religious truth with every subject of interest; or when in daily life she was exemplifying "Christianity in action," and encouraging younger believers to engage in every benevolent labour; or when, with her ready, graceful pen, she communicated

with distant friends, and imparted to them the guiding wisdom and the supporting, inspiring sympathy of a rich mind and heart.

> Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
> And live for ever and for ever;

therefore we may, not uncertainly, believe that her transmitted influence is active still in the lives of a generation that has grown up since she died, and in the minds of some who hardly knew her save by name.

One more friendship besides those already referred to deserves mention, since it led to one of her rare literary efforts. The venerable Elizabeth Mortimer was to her a sort of second mother. "From my childhood," says Mrs. Bulmer, "I have been in the habit of looking up to her as my Christian counsellor and friend."

This "dear, aged, venerable, early, and beloved friend," had touched that period of life when the best human strength becomes only labour and sorrow, and her steadily-increasing infirmities gradually weaned Agnes Bulmer from her filial dependence on the strength and wisdom of the older saint, and taught her the hard lesson that she must walk without that accustomed aid; but the childlike, clinging love remained, and made it a fresh grief that she must sit by the dying pillow of her childhood's friend, watching her "calmly and almost imperceptibly sink into her last sleep."

This loss befell in the April of 1835; in the December of the same year appeared the Memoir of Mrs. Mortimer by Mrs. Bulmer, a singularly finished

and perfect piece of Christian biography to have been so rapidly produced. Long familiarity with the subject of that Memoir doubtless greatly aided the writer in her work, which was eminently and in every sense a labour of love.

"I can truly say," she wrote, "that it has been begun, continued, and ended with the sincere desire that it might be subservient to the glory of God, and to the best interests of those who love and fear Him."

That desire is clearly legible indeed in every page, not only of this book, but of every one put forth by Mrs. Bulmer; it shines conspicuous in the longest and most serious effort of her pen, the poem entitled *Messiah's Kingdom*, by the production of which she soothed and occupied the first years of her widowhood. Her aim in this work, as defined by herself, was to develop "the great scheme of human salvation, by a Divine, Incarnate Redeemer; this, from its first announcement to its final consummation, pursued through its various forms of manifestation, in the patriarchal, Levitical, prophetic, and Christian revelations."

The scheme, it will be seen, was vast; and, as she carefully avoided everything that might "divert the eye of the mind from the one great object with which she wished it to be filled," desiring to make all subservient to the "majestic simplicity of the Saviour, in His hallowed teachings and in His stupendous works," her work inevitably lacked the picturesque and popular features which might have appertained to a mere "poetic version of Scripture history." On the other hand, her chosen plan enabled her to set forth fully her own views of truth in history and truth in religion;

and this she did with a rare fervour and depth of conviction, with impassioned eloquence, and a style always musical and graceful, often rising into power. The whole poem presents an attractive unconscious picture of a high, pure spirit delighting itself in the loftier regions of thought and speculation; and in the frequent lyrical outbursts which break the flow of its rhymed heroic verse there is a certain swift and fiery quality, an airy grace of flight, which suggests at once the idea that Mrs. Bulmer would have been a very successful hymn-writer; nor can we avoid a feeling of regret that her attention was so rarely directed to this sphere of literary work, for which but few are really fitted.

Her long poem found "fit audience, how few soever," as she herself says; but hymns from the same pen, that toiled on this beloved work for years, might and would doubtless have found far wider audience. Her single contribution to the Methodist Hymn-book, the noble hymn, "On laying the foundation of a chapel,"

> Thou who hast in Zion laid
> The true foundation-stone,

sufficiently shows what she might have done for the Church in this matter. This hymn, written at the request of Mr. Wood of Manchester, for the foundation-laying of "the Oxford Road and Ancoats Lane Chapels" in that city, was composed in the stage-coach which was conveying Mrs. Bulmer to Preston; and those rapidly-written verses still remain unsurpassed for strength and music among the spiritual songs proper to such occasions.

In determining to publish *Messiah's Kingdom*, Mrs.

Bulmer was animated by the wish that the sale of the book might aid in the cause of Christian missions, to which she proposed to devote all profits accruing from it. She was assisted by the judgment of the Rev. Richard Watson, who advised her on every point connected with the production of the book, and offered to see it through the press; his illness and death, however, prevented his carrying out this intention, and delayed the appearance of the poem, which was at last brought out by Rivingtons in 1833. Three years scarcely elapsed before the accomplished writer herself followed her lamented friend and adviser to the world of spirits. Perhaps, had her life been prolonged, she might have added somewhat to the slender list of her published writings, which, in addition to the two books already named, and certain contributions to the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, comprises only a *History of David*, and three other volumes of *Scripture Histories*. But she was to write no more.

Mrs. Bulmer's death might be called sudden. In the summer of 1836, she, with some near relatives, went to visit the Isle of Wight. Scarcely arrived at Ryde, she showed some slight symptoms of illness, which she attributed to a common cold. But she grew worse, and medical aid was called in. Yet no apprehension of danger until the evening of Tuesday, the third day since her arrival in Ryde. Then, even while her medical attendants, hastily summoned, were consulting how to deal with the new alarming development of her case, the spirit of the sufferer escaped from earth to heaven. So swiftly, so unexpectedly, came the summons to depart, she scarcely tasted death, and

was spared that mortal conflict which had always in anticipation appalled her quick and sensitive imagination. Yet she had been inspired to speak some words of comfort, of unshaken trust and hope, to the loving watchers round her bed. In death as in life, it was seen that she possessed her soul in perfect peace.

This beautiful nature, rich in thought and in love, shy and retiring as regarded all public manifestations, yet abounding in the beneficent activities of private life, has a right to its own peculiar place among our types of Methodist womanhood, exemplifying as it does the union of high intellectual gifts with a saintliness no less pure and true than that of any martyred and canonized virgin, though displayed in the quiet, sheltered station of an ordinary English matron.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE "LED BY THE SPIRIT."

CAROLINE ELIZA WALKER—BORN, 1795; DIED, 1881.

THERE is something of unusual interest attaching to the story of Caroline Eliza Walker,—something much beyond what is implied in the fact that her long life, beginning when the founder of Methodism had been only four years in heaven, was extended over fully four-fifths of the nineteenth century. The attraction of this life lies not in the vivid, strange variety of public events through which its quiet current flowed; it is best expressed in the title chosen for the volume narrating it, "Led by the Spirit." No more striking instance of immediate heavenly guidance accorded to an inquiring soul could be adduced from the records of religious biography, than is afforded by Mrs. Walker's singularly touching and candid account of her own youth.

Its opening sentence—"I knew, about sixty years ago, a solitary, fearful child, half-orphaned by separation from a dear mother"—indicates to us that the writer, then nearing her seventieth year, regarded the sad experiences of the little lonely being she had to speak of with something of a dispassionate, impartial pity,

and no longer with that too lively sympathy which beguiles our judgment as to our own errors. Nor is the indication misleading; the balance is held evenly, with delicate steadiness, throughout the pathetic record, and no unjust resentment is expressed towards the persons chiefly answerable for the keen sufferings of that "solitary, fearful child." Yet very vivid and distinct is the remembrance of her trials; after sixty years they still stand out, fresh and clear, an ineffaceable memory of pain.

A girl of five years old, timid at once and excitable, strong-willed and quick-tempered, but sensitive, and besieged by a host of imaginative terrors; alone in the wealthy paternal household, where the servants, employed to tend her, frighten her into subjection by hideous stories—such a child is surely pitiable enough; but Caroline S—— had yet further griefs to bear. The beautiful, beloved mother, whose absence she so sorely felt, had not been taken from her by death; she was still living, still longing after her child—but within the walls of a lunatic asylum; and the father who remained was unhappily not only sceptical in matters of religion, but imperious and despotic in his treatment of his one child. There was affection for the poor motherless little one, but affection largely tinged with pride. Gifted himself with unusual abilities, and very willing to display them in the heated political controversies of that day, when all the air was still aflame with the volcanic outburst of the French Revolution,—a movement which enlisted Mr. S——'s entire sympathy,—he desired that his daughter should do him all possible credit in the society where he himself moved;

and therefore she was very early put into the forcing-house of fashionable education, and kept there until the desired end was supposed to be attained.

Other influences, however, were at work, with which Mr. S—— did not reckon.

The first of these was probably the lingering, indistinct memory of the absent mother's words and ways. That mother's mind might be "shaken to its centre" by distresses that can be guessed but not fully divined; her once clear intellect might be clouded; but she had possessed, and still clung to, a true faith in Christ. So we find her little bereaved daughter, at a very early age, alive to the connection between sin and suffering, and making untaught efforts to approach her Heavenly Father in the only forms of prayer known to her—the "Our Father" once lisped at a mother's knee, and a few verses from Pope's "Universal Prayer," carelessly taught to her as a mere memory-exercise, but possessing the force of a real prayer as her "little soul went upward" with the words—

> If I am wrong, Thy grace impart
> To find the better way.

New religious impressions were derived, when the child, not yet six years old, was sent to her first school. In choosing that school, Mr. S—— was unwittingly consigning his daughter—whom, like most persons of *no religion* at that day, he proposed to have "brought up to the Church"—to the charge of pious Dissenting ladies. The little one, hitherto accustomed only to stately cathedral services, quite incomprehensible by her except as an agreeable show, was greatly attracted by the

simple worship at the Baptist chapel, by the sweet, humble hymns of Watts, and longed to realize such spiritual blessings as they spoke of.

But Mr. S——, much annoyed on learning the religious leanings of his child's instructors, soon removed her to another and a more fashionable establishment, where "all was grim, cold, and stern," where the religious instruction given bore a penal and repulsive character, and where the motherless Caroline's pale, sorrowful countenance soon marked her out for the special dislike of the stately mistress. Yet even here there was one gentle, pious teacher, whose sympathy soothed the poor little bruised spirit, and whose rare words of religious counsel kept the child's soul alive. Eight dreary years were passed in this school; then Caroline, now a "tall, slim girl," was transferred to a more genial centre of education in London. The heads of this establishment, good, kindly, gifted women, made their house very home-like for their pupils. Sacred things here were rightly reverenced; and when Caroline, with some of her companions, sought to be prepared for the rite of confirmation, every facility was afforded.

Very imperfectly instructed as yet, Caroline hoped that this ceremony would admit her to the better life. The result was deep disappointment. Constantly foiled in every effort after holiness, finding "evil present with her when she would do good," she began to feel as if she were chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, for the conflict between the natural and the spiritual mind had begun in earnest.

After some years, transferred to the care of a rarely accomplished woman, unusually conversant with specu-

lative theology, Caroline made a second effort to attain holiness through "the works of the law," by receiving for the first time the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. She knelt at the Table, full of joyous hope; she left it, crushed beneath a sense of unworthiness. Had she not eaten and drunk condemnation to herself? But in the mute anguish of unworded prayer that followed, a dim sense of the pitying fatherhood of God was granted her; and a little further light and hope came to her through the preaching of a faithful minister at a Dissenting chapel.

Her education was now supposed to be completed; and a visit to the house of some gay London friends preceded her final return to her father's house, and afforded her a brief glimpse of worldly amusements. Singularly enough, these pleasures appeared tasteless, almost disgusting, to the just emancipated school-girl; her secret longings after God, however blind and helpless they were, stood in the way; athirst for the living waters, she could not accept instead the polluted springs of earth.

Mr. S—— now claimed his daughter. He no longer showed himself austere and rigid, since her school-days, with their fancied need for severity and restraint, were at an end. He took his child with him on a delightful little tour through the Midlands, and subsequently permitted her the very rare happiness of a short visit to her suffering mother.

Nothing could well be more touching than the interview between the long-divided parent and child. Mrs. S——, still lovely, dignified, and gentle, though a mysterious cloud shadowed one part of her mind, was

tenderly cared for in the retreat chosen for her; and, as she entered the room where her trembling daughter awaited her, there was little in her look or bearing that could awaken alarm; there was quick recognition of her "own dear child," there were close, fond embraces. Only when the husband and father entered did the hidden malady betray itself. The visit was prolonged till the next day, and the mother and daughter were allowed to walk and talk together in the quiet garden, when the afflicted one spoke wisely and tenderly, counselling the child to do all she could to obey and please her father.

The parting moment came; and when the husband was preparing to take leave, Mrs. S—— said firmly and distinctly,—

"All my happiness in this world has been marred; but I have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,"—words that made the deepest impression on the listening girl, who already, conscious of sin and distressed at its perpetual uprisings, was longing and waiting for some guiding ray. The precious words, so unexpected and impressive, sank deep into her heart; and by them, doubtless, "the Lord answered the prayers of the hidden sufferer for many long and lonely years."

Returning from her mother's secluded retreat to the home which now seemed "more desolate than ever," Miss S—— resolved on a course of steady reading, further to improve her mind, and on daily private study of the Holy Scriptures. This, faithfully persevered in, soon became a source of keen delight, only qualified by a growing sense of responsibility—an intimation, not dim or obscure, that the duty of con-

fessing Christ before men might soon be laid upon her. Musing over the Saviour's words, "I came not to send peace, but a sword,"—"Whosoever shall deny Me, him will I deny;" and remembering that Christianity was a blissful thing, the cause of joy to its possessor, and of countless benefits to the world at large, the young student wondered that any one could be found to object to it. She was soon to learn how strongly the natural man could revolt against it, how hard the path of the confessor of Christ might be made.

At church, which she punctually attended, she found no help. Its minister was not as he should be, in word or in deed. This, we must not forget, was more than fifty years ago. The clergy in the same town are now "spiritual, painstaking, praiseworthy" in almost every instance. A great change has been wrought since the day when the first words of gospel truth that Caroline S—— heard from any of its pulpits, were spoken by a Dissenting minister. A young man of good position had died happy in the Lord, having profited by the labours of this pastor; and out of respect for his family, Mr. S——, with his daughter, attended when the funeral sermon was preached. The one heard with joy a message which fixed her determination "fully and steadfastly to serve the Lord." With great simplicity she spoke of her own impressions to her father, imagining that he must share them; but his response was such as to silence her promptly.

Still her own heart rejoiced and was glad; the more so, because of a Voice that, as she walked alone one day, spoke to her soul, saying, "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me."

Some friends with whom Mr. S—— was on terms of distant civility worshipped at the Independent chapel,—a father and daughter, known to be pious and judicious. Caroline now sought their house, to lay her own case as an inquirer before them. She was received cordially and kindly, had true religious counsel given, and was invited to share their pew. This she did gladly for several Sundays in succession; but, in the guilelessness of her heart, speaking delightedly to her father about a missionary sermon she had heard, she aroused uneasy suspicions in his mind. It was not long before, refusing respectfully to read the newspaper to him on Sunday evening, she brought down on her head a storm of wrath, and was forbidden any longer to "go to conventicles," since such were the "notions" she acquired there.

Now began a sort of domestic persecution. Her presumption in thinking for herself, her absurdity in imagining that she, a mere child, had "sins to weep and mourn over," were constantly dwelt on. She was frustrating all her father's hopes, rendering vain all the pains and cost he had bestowed to fit her for a high position. She would soon go melancholy mad, and be only fit for an asylum; and if she persisted in her folly, banishment and disinheritance were all she could expect.

To support these arguments, Mr. S—— called in the aid of an infidel friend to shake Caroline's faith in the claims of Christianity and the authenticity of the Scriptures. The young girl was incompetent to meet the reasonings he advanced; yet these did not for a moment disturb her own consciousness of the presence

and power of the indwelling Spirit of God, her true sustaining Comforter. Therefore her faith in God and in His Word stood strong; she saw Christianity from *within*, while her opponent knew it only from without, and was thus, like most of the enemies of the faith, at a hopeless disadvantage when confronted with one who has been made free of the City of God.

Left for a little while to herself, Miss S—— made a first timid essay at ministering to the sick and poor; her inexperience was imposed upon and her charity abused by an old man, once religious, but now fallen and degraded through drunkenness. This unhappy creature proved a thief, and the Bible which Caroline had lent him, with some clothes she had induced her father to give him, were discovered at the pawnshop. Now Mr. S—— found only too good a text on which to enlarge. "All these canting religious creatures," he affirmed, were equally bad; and he redoubled his efforts to reclaim his daughter from her "enthusiasm." Meanwhile increased light and blessedness flowed in upon her, enabling her to endure patiently the new severities with which she was treated. Her father, highly indignant at a fresh refusal on her part to engage in secular work on the Sunday, stooped to a sort of espionage; he surprised her at her devotions in her own room, carried off her Bible and every pious book she had been able to procure, and forbade the further use of them. His anger only just stopped short of personal violence.

But Caroline had an inward source of consolation. "A veil had been taken from her eyes, and a load from

her heart," by a Voice, speaking these words to her soul: "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and the peace thus inspired never left her.

For so young a Christian—only seventeen!—the spiritual isolation in which she was kept was terrible notwithstanding. She might not even attend any place of worship but that church where the gospel was never preached. Her awe of her father was too disabling for her to risk a spoken appeal; therefore she tried instead to soften him by a petition in writing for some small concession to her imperious sense of religious duty. Her humbly-written letter, however, produced no alteration; no notice was taken of it at all. She resolved on a bolder stroke for freedom.

Having sought guidance in earnest prayer, she felt inspired "to strive for the privilege, and test the mind of her father, by going to the chapel next Sunday." She took this prohibited step; and, though her courage almost failed her on her return, she still dared to answer truly her father's angry question, "Where have you been?" and to avow that she had been to chapel. But her own boldness so dismayed her, that the instant command to avoid her father's presence was a sort of relief.

Sitting trembling in her own room, she soon received an intimation that, until Mr. S—— could arrange for her removal from the home "made miserable by her fanaticism," she was to live apart from him. After some days of seclusion, he invited her, not unkindly,—time having softened his first anger,—to choose between

two invitations from friends: one from the worldly family she had once visited in London; and one from very differently-minded acquaintances in the north. "She lifted her heart to God," and answered, with impulse, "To the north, if you please." Accordingly, arrangements were made for her journey to Stockton,—her future married home,—where the friends in question resided.

Every care was taken for her comfort and protection by the way. It is only right to notice that nothing but their religious differences now made this father harsh to his child. Caroline loved him and honoured him; he was prepared to delight in her: but she felt compelled to resist his despotic will on *one* point; and he, believing that her credit and welfare were imperilled by her "fanaticism," felt justified in using every means to restore her, as he imagined, to right reason.

Such being his aim, it was a singular oversight on the part of Mr. S—— to send his daughter on a visit of indefinite length among people who had earned the reputation of being "rigid Methodists." Perhaps in his sceptical indifferentism he had never ascertained the views of a family that did not take rank among Dissenters.

Though Methodism had been represented to Caroline S—— under "a most distorted aspect," she had escaped being prejudiced against it, and very willingly accompanied her entertainers at Stockton to their own place of worship. Nothing offended her there; but nothing strongly impressed her, until, on a visit to Redcar, she heard the Rev. Thomas Vasey (father of the lately

deceased minister of that name) preaching from the very text which had been made the instrument of inexpressible comfort to her mind some months before. Mr. Vasey's words so exactly set forth her own experience, as to fill her with wonder, and impel her once more to seek, and once more to realize, the same blessedness.

Very soon, at her own request, she was admitted to a Methodist class-meeting—a means of grace previously unknown to her even by name; but it proved so congenial to her feelings, it met her necessities so exactly, that she quickly resolved, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God." Her resolution was rendered immoveable, when, under sermons preached at Stockton by the Rev. Dr. Coke, a new flood of joy-giving light was poured into her soul. Kneeling long in secret prayer that night, amid its darkness and silence, she beheld Jesus on the cross, "evidently set forth as crucified for her;" she heard as if clearly spoken the words: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Too happy to sleep, she outwatched the night, and seeking and finding, by the first rays of the rising sun, that passage, previously unfamiliar, in the Epistles, she rejoiced to see everything looking "new and fair and fresh" in the outer world, as if illumined by the sunshine in her heart. Reviewing the events of her brief history, she perceived how all had tended to effect the one great good, the salvation of her soul, of which from that hour she never entertained a doubt.

Now she gladly joined herself to the Methodist

Society; she received a trial ticket, and presently one of full admittance. As will have been evident, her nature was too direct, straightforward, and transparent for concealment. Her letters home soon showed the deepening and strengthening of her religious impressions; and some officious relatives supplied her father in addition with highly-coloured accounts of her attendance at meetings, her visitings of the sick and poor. A peremptory summons home was the result. She obeyed.

The journey was inevitably a sad one; the news of her mother's alarming illness, which reached her on her way, was no alleviation, but the stern refusal of her natural request to attend her mother's dying moments made her grief bitter indeed. Mrs. S—— died very shortly; but her child, fondly remembering the last words she had heard her speak, consoled herself with the assurance that the beloved sufferer was "for ever with the Lord."

On her return home, Miss S—— appears to have been treated with much greater rigour than before. No doubt it was considered that her malady of "fanaticism" required the strongest remedies to subdue it. Again she was deprived of her Bible and her other books, and was cut off from all intercourse, spoken or written, with religious friends; apparently her father's house became a kind of prison for her and indignities of many kinds were devised for her punishment. But all proved unavailing.

In writing her modest little autobiography, Mrs Walker aimed only to trace the successive steps by which she was led to find true peace with God; and

even in our abridgment that story must appear very striking, furnishing such illustrations of the immediate interposition of a merciful Providence as cannot be mistaken. The narrative had perforce to include many distressing particulars of the parental opposition, so steady and so powerful, which was only rendered nugatory by a direct influence from heaven. Now the spiritual conflict was over, and victory was sure. Therefore, from this point onward, the suffering daughter ceased to dwell minutely on the injuries she received at her father's hands; such details would be painful only, and not profitable.

Having resolved passively to submit to everything until she attained her majority and became personally responsible for her conduct, Miss S—— continued to live under her father's roof until the 18th of July 1816, when she left that ungenial shelter, taking up her abode in London with the family of her "pious, good, invaluable friend," Mr. Butterworth, who a few weeks previously had invited her to visit him. She had come of age on the eighth of April previously, and therefore it was with no unbecoming haste that she carried out the resolution she had more than once expressed to her father, of not remaining in his house long after that event. For three years and two months she had endured almost unbearable restraints and severities, being watched over with an unpitying vigilance which forbade even private prayer. Her health, her happiness, her mental vigour, were all in danger; and it would be absurd to blame one so situated for embracing the opportunity that now offered itself of escaping. Another home, and a far

different one from that where she had languished long, was ready to receive her.

On the twenty-fourth of August 1816, Caroline Eliza S—— became the wife of Mr. Thomas Walker, of Stockon-on-Tees. The attachment which was thus crowned was of long standing; the two young people had met and had been mutually attracted during Miss S——'s memorable visit to the north, about four years before; and since then both Mr. Walker and his family had been unwearied in their efforts to lighten, as far as was possible, the trials of the sweet young friend so harshly removed from their companionship.

Now the motherless girl found a mother whom she could love freely, and who could return that love without fear of restraint; the sisterless, brotherless recluse was set in the midst of a happy family circle eager to claim her, to which her best-loved girl-friend belonged; the daughter who had been ruled with a rod of iron became the fondly-loved wife of a devoted husband, in every respect congenial and sympathetic. There was only one bitter drop in her cup: her father withheld his approval, and remained austerely alienated; but she cherished the hope, which did not prove entirely futile, that she would yet live to find his heart softened towards her, and his reason convinced of the truth of the gospel. Meanwhile she found comfort in praying for him.

At this point the "Memorial" written by Mrs. Walker herself in advanced life breaks off; but the story of her life has been traced through its long, bright course, even to the hour of sunset,—largely by

the aid of the diaries and letters in which her pen long busied itself.

At the time of their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Walker were still very young in years, the bridegroom being only twenty-two, while his bride was twenty-one; but the early ripeness of character and firm religious decision possessed by each fitted them well for the battle of life. And while Mrs. Walker basked in the "sunshine calm and sweet" of her happy, peaceful home, she neglected no duty. Under better auspices she resumed the work among the poor and suffering which she had long been debarred from; nor did she forget the inmates of her own household, some entries in her diary proving the almost maternal tenderness with which she watched over and promoted the spiritual interests of her servants, who were to her "sisters beloved" in Christ, and who repaid her affectionate care with gratitude.

Before long this young matron was promoted to the important office of a class-leader, to which she devoted herself with conscientious thoroughness, while trembling under the sense of responsibility. She anxiously prepared herself for the work by prayer, remembering every individual member of her class; and thus she was enabled, in all simplicity and humility, to become an unusually successful leader; while her efforts for others turned to the profit of her own soul. In particular, she was led to follow with double zeal after entire freedom from sin. "How," she asked herself, "can I urge on those who are seeking the same blessing, if I do not possess it myself? And surely I shall be better prepared for usefulness to all, the

more I am enlightened, comforted, instructed, and guided by the Spirit of God." And since with her whole guileless heart she desired these blessings, they were granted to her. Without presumption or vain-glory, she realized in her daily experience, in the strength of God alone, the truth of that precious scripture, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin."

Her health, never very robust, broke down in the fourth year of her married life; and to severe bodily sufferings were added some hours of darkness through spiritual temptation, of which she writes with a frank and strong plainness that recalls the vigorous manner of Bunyan. That very illness and those very temptations, however, were turned to her comfort; her way was opened to her father's house, where she spent six weeks, and this she attributed to the affliction, which not improbably softened Mr. S——'s feelings towards his daughter; for she found a great difference in him during this visit, which was repeated some years later, with no little satisfaction to Mrs. Walker. "Unlooked-for goodness and mercy" met her at every step. Her father became gradually reconciled to her; whether he ever learned also to approve and to share the religion he had once persecuted in her, cannot be certainly affirmed, but may be hoped.

In the year 1826 she records the death, on the 30th of June, of her "dear affectionate friend, her father, her benefactor, Mr. Butterworth," whose protection and support had been of priceless value to her at the very crisis of her history. This loss was very severely felt; but the following winter called her to pass through a

more cruel trial. Her father was seized with his dying illness, and she, being summoned to his side, attended him during nearly two months. Then, "on Sunday morning, January 14th, 1827, at a quarter past eleven," the spirit of that poor father "entered the eternal world." Mr. S——'s illness was a time of great suffering to his anxious child, but his death plunged her into deep affliction. Apparently she was not with him at the last moment; probably she could not tell in what spirit he met the last enemy; and it is very easy to understand how the year following his departure was made one of heavy trial to her—"almost one uniformly 'dark and cloudy day;' reasonings, fears, and temptations of the most trying kind succeeding each other."

But this storm-cloud also passed away, without doing any real damage to her soul; and she remained conscious of "a continuance of the gracious goodness of God, a sensible and growing deadness to the world and all that is in it, a sweet detachment from all things here below in desire, affection, and object; a more confirmed determination to know nothing amongst men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." In the long course of her life, extended over more than fifty years beyond this painful event, there is no record of a grief so piercing; but of milder sorrows—the loss of beloved Christian friends, and also many seasons of great bodily weakness and suffering — there was no lack. All things, however, ministered together to mature and perfect in her a character of rare sweetness and strength.

One petition, not often offered in true sincerity, she

found it needful and well to appropriate for herself: "In all time of our *wealth*, good Lord, deliver us!" She who had willingly accepted disinheritance and banishment from her father's home and heart, as a price not too great to pay for the love of Christ, now found herself, as a direct consequence of her act of renunciation, in circumstances of considerable affluence. Here she did not forget the "hard saying" which troubled the minds of the disciples: "How hardly shall they which have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!"

She took comfort in the "blessed sentence" that followed: "With God all things are possible;" and, while very keenly alive to the perils of prosperity, "saw that it would be as sinful and rebellious to wish herself in any lower sphere than God had placed her in, as for one lower to wish to be raised higher."

"Prosperity," she writes, "is the natural soil for pride, self-confidence, love of the world, and a thousand nameless evils of human nature to luxuriate in; and nothing but the mighty, continued operation and never-failing communication of renewing and preserving grace can maintain the soul in its integrity." Thus tremblingly alive to the perils of prosperous circumstances, as a "fiercer crucible than adversity to prove a Christian's character and graces," she accepted them as the appointed trial of her faith; and, meeting them in this spirit, she moved unharmed amid their subtle temptations, and proved that the thing impossible with men was not impossible with God.

"In full health and prosperity, and placed in an

enlarged sphere of influence," she heard and obeyed God's voice saying to her, as her own words express it, "Give that health, and property, and influence to Me and My cause by leading classes, letting your light shine before saints and sinners, rich and poor, the Church and the world, declaring My great salvation every way."

She had her reward. Unlike some half-hearted Christians, whose chief anxiety is to determine how little of this world's pleasure they may sacrifice and retain any hope of salvation, her religion was no burden to her and no restraint, but an ever-increasing joy.

"It is impossible, as it ought to be," writes her biographer, "to say when or where Mrs. Walker was most religious. In solitude, in the household, in the congregation, in the world, she ever walked with God;" thus "wherever she arrived, the radiance of the Lord around her impressed those whom she visited."

She did not, like some feebler Christians, find it needful to bestow as much care and time on the problem of dressing with plainness, as a fashionable beauty would bestow on the task of outshining her rivals in splendid array; nor did she aim at a studied austerity of manner that should proclaim to the mocking world, "I am holier than thou." In mien and aspect she remained her natural self, "a perfect lady, whom the lowly could approach with ease, and to whom the lofty could not condescend."

After a long, honourable, and useful career in Stockton, Mr. and Mrs. Walker found it needful to leave

that town and seek another home; and in 1844 they took up their abode in Cheltenham, led thither in search of health. Many passages in the diary of Mrs. Walker —from which, following her biographer, we have derived much of our material—indicate a frail if not feeble bodily constitution, sometimes overwrought among her religious activities; and she and her husband were now alike bent on retirement, "except from the service of God." Mr. Walker, still in the fulness of manhood, and with the prospect of a great increase of wealth if he remained in business, chose now to retire from it rather; so little had the mere love of successful money-making fastened upon him.

"From the time of his conversion," says his wife, "he was more anxious to lay out systematically for the glory of God what God had given him, than to treasure it up."

After hesitating a little between Leamington and Cheltenham, the Walkers fixed on Cheltenham for their dwelling-place, and remained there during the rest of their lives, with no greater change of residence than from a house on the Promenade, occupied for twelve years, to another at Bay's Hill Lawn, where first the husband, and then the wife, passed peacefully away, "full of years and honours:" Mr. Walker in 1873, in the eightieth year of his age; Mrs. Walker in 1881, more than a month beyond her eighty-sixth birthday. Their union had been long, and singularly happy; their separation was indeed but for a moment of time, compared with the eternity of blissful reunion which so speedily opened on them.

It will be seen that the time of comparative ease and

tranquillity spent in Cheltenham covers at least half of the fifty-six full years of wedlock which these two Christians were privileged to spend together. In their new and somewhat more difficult surroundings they preserved honourable consistency.

Wesleyans, settling in Cheltenham, have been accused of yielding to the moral atmosphere of the place too much, of "throwing themselves at the feet of pretenders to superior ecclesiastical and social caste." Mr. and Mrs. Walker escaped this ignoble peril by the promptness with which both identified themselves with "the Church and society of their early choice." Both were soon found filling such offices in the Society and Circuit as they had previously held at Stockton, and continued to be class-leaders, successful and devoted, until age and infirmity forbade.

In this faithful preference for their own Church there was no taint of such narrowness or such bigotry as might have prevented their mingling in friendly intercourse or in philanthropic effort with Christians of other denominations. The various records of Mrs. Walker's later years, chiefly contained in letters to friends, show this very plainly, while they give evidence of the ripening judgment, the large, clear mental outlook, which preserved her from the illiberal prejudices into which even some sincere Christians, of smaller soul and feebler capacity than hers, are occasionally betrayed by default of "sanctified common sense." That precious quality is very apparent in Mrs. Walker's various comments on public affairs, in which her interest was quick and keen; whether the matter under discussion was the "seething restlessness in the Established Church, the agitation in

the Wesleyan community, the anxieties of the Crimean War," the progress and the causes of the appalling Indian Mutiny, or the wisest methods to adopt in attempting the conversion of the Jews, in relieving the distresses of the poor, or in winning the hearts of the young for Christ. On every point her modestly expressed opinion has weight and truth.

The words of one whose systematic benefactions to the distressed were never intermitted while life lasted, are particularly worth quoting on the difficult question of almsgiving. Written in 1855, they show how early she had realized a truth which has since been much more widely preached than at the day when she thus addressed a distant friend:—

"Your work of benevolence is of the right kind, and will not lose its reward. It is far easier to pauperize a village or town population by mere almsgiving, and sending them to the parish for relief, than persevering, as you do, in those painstaking efforts to engender self-respect in the minds of the poor, and raise them to a higher tone of moral feeling by the sobriety and economy your excellent plan induces. Faint not, my beloved friend, in your better hopes respecting their spiritual condition."

Another and not less attractive aspect of her beautiful Christian character is seen in the harmonious relations always subsisting between her and the family into which her marriage had introduced her. It was a great addition to her happiness, when settled at Cheltenham, that her sister-in-law, Mrs. Gilyard Scarth, with her husband, came to live in the same town. To this lady in particular Mrs. Walker was bound by the

tenderest friendship, and by a perfect community of feeling and pursuits.

That affection hardly less warm existed between her and others of her relations by marriage, is evidenced by her own words on a certain anniversary of her wedding day:—

"For forty-six years I have been intimately known to all the original members of the family; and for forty-two, since the solemnization of our hallowed union, to those who have been engrafted into it, and many of the dear young ones as they have risen up. I am thankful in simplicity to say that I never had a quarrel or a serious misunderstanding with any one member. If ever a little cloud appeared on any brow, or the temperature of kindliness seemed cooler, I always found the gospel rule, applied in the spirit of Christian love, effectual to make matters straight. I believe they have all loved me, and I am sure I have dearly loved them."

After having served God joyfully for many years, despite some feebleness of health, in active Christian effort, Mrs. Walker had to learn the harder duties of those "who only stand and wait."

She had borne in hallowed submission to see many of her company pass over before her, had seen the husband of her youth taken from her by a lingering affliction, which he endured with touching, prayerful patience. After nearly three years of widowhood a new burden was laid on her.

Rising one day from the sofa in her usual health, "her foot became entangled in her dress, and she fell and dislocated her hip." The result at her advanced age—

she was near completing her eightieth year — was inevitably permanent helplessness. She was never able to go out of the house again, and remained more than five years "the prisoner of the Lord;" then the Angel of Death opened the prison gates for her, and she was free.

Under such trying circumstances she showed herself something more than resigned and submissive. "A brighter Christian I never knew," says a witness who knew her only after her affliction. That fair, pure face of hers, which in the portrait prefixed to her Memoir wears a mild, suffering look, would become radiant with smiling cheerfulness for the little boy and girl visitors who delighted in their admission to her room. "I do not want the little darling to think my Heavenly Father has been unkind to me," she would say. No such bitter and rebellious thought ever cast a shadow on her brow; and the little ones, dear to her as they were to her Master and Lord, finding nothing to repel them, much to attract, came gladly about her. Hers was the true mother-heart, though she had no child of her own.

Older visitors were not less impressed with the atmosphere of ever-brightening love and light that encompassed her. "Had I never heard or known anything of Christianity before, I feel sure she would have won me for the Saviour by her simple, loving goodness," writes the Rev. E. Stanley Shelton, who, with the Rev. Edward Jewitt Robinson, Mrs. Walker's able biographer, was stationed at Cheltenham during her last illness. The latter gentleman records the unforgetable impressiveness of her appearance, her manner, her voice.

In her he recognised "a worthy successor and representative of honourable women like Susanna Wesley, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, Mary Fletcher, Hester Ann Rogers, and others, whose spotless company it was evident she would join ere long in the better world."

Her death, like her life, was full of calm brightness. Among the very last of her recorded utterances were these words of a well-known hymn,—

I long to be with Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
I long to be with Jesus,
Who bought me with His blood.
I long to be with angels,
Around the heavenly throne;
I long to be with seraphs,
Who sin have never known.
I long to be with saints above,
Who bow before the throne of Love.

Her longing was quickly gratified. Set free from pain at last,—not always unconscious, for she was able to breathe a soft, faint Amen to the prayers uttered at her bedside,—she slept and dreamed herself away, passing from death into life on the morning of May 26th, 1881.

For many a year this true "elect lady" had realized the blessing invoked by the great Apostle Paul on his Thessalonian converts: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and her example, like that of many others commemorated in this volume,

furnishes a beautiful and convincing proof that such sanctity, such blamelessness, *is* attainable by Christians, and therefore that its attainment is a fit and necessary object for the untiring endeavour of every faithful follower of Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

A TEACHER OF THE HEATHEN.

JANE TUCKER—Born, 1806; Died, 1875.

Of the heroines of piety whose lives we are studying, there are not a few who were called to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ;" and with these we have to rank Mrs. Tucker: not, however, because of such domestic opposition as embittered the youth of Mary Fletcher, Hester Ann Rogers, or Caroline Eliza Walker; nor yet because of too sharp a difference between her opinions and practice and those of the society surrounding her. Her ancestry was religious, her home was that of piety; her active life falls well within the second period of Methodism, when the first virulence of hostility and the first malignity of misrepresentation had given place to something much milder—to a certain respect among the pious of other denominations, balanced by nothing worse than scornful indifference among the worldly, and impotent dislike among the bigoted.

Thus her trials and difficulties, neither few nor small, were not experienced among English opponents; they were endured in the effort to evangelize peoples ignorant

indeed and barbarous, but hardly sunk into such brutal degradation as were some of those "Christian savages" who, under the influence of the gospel as preached by Whitefield and the Wesleys, were reinvested with the moral and spiritual dignity of humanity which they had previously lost.

Mrs. Tucker, whose maiden name was Hall, was on her father's side a Methodist of the third, and on her mother's of the fourth, generation.

Her grandfather, known as "Farmer Hall," of the Fishponds, near Bristol, must have been a very early convert, since at his death in 1798 it could be said that "he had been a laborious and successful local preacher for more than fifty-eight years;" and he took, with Captain Webb, afterwards so useful in America, an active part in the erection of Portland Street Chapel, Bristol, and probably of Ebenezer Chapel also.

He was a great favourite and a frequent companion of Mr. Wesley's, whose Journals bear evidence of the great good accomplished in the neighbourhood of the Fishponds by "that saint of God, Bathsheba Hall, and her husband;" and a family tradition shows that "Farmer Hall" was largely endowed with the "sanctified common sense" that was so conspicuous a trait of Wesley's character.

Mr. Hall's third son John and his sisters took some exception to the trade of a glazier, to which his father proposed to apprentice him on his leaving school. "It was not a *respectable* trade," murmured youthful pride; but the father had a prompt, sufficient answer that was never forgotten: "Surely you don't expect a trade to

make *you* respectable? No; you must make the *trade* respectable."

"I took the hint," said the son, in the later years of a manhood high in public esteem for well-earned, honourable success; "I accepted my father's choice; and, with God's blessing on my efforts, I *did* make the trade respectable."

Having thus early learned the lesson, to find no shame in honest work, which some youths never learn while life lasts, John Hall did not rest there; and his early consecration to God exalted his natural honesty into the fine sense of honour which made him redouble his industry instead of slackening it, when the death of the good man to whom he had been bound left his widowed mistress in a manner dependent on the good-will and uprightness of those in her service. It is not surprising that a life thus begun should be eminently prosperous in its after course.

It was this John Hall who became the father of Mrs. Tucker. Her mother was of ancestry not less honourable and pious, both *her* mother, Mrs. Gill, and her grandmother, Mrs. Amos, having cast in their lot with Methodism in Bristol when it was the sect "everywhere spoken against," and when its adherents, as they wended their way to worship in the "Old Room," were often pelted with rotten eggs and such other foulnesses as the "beasts of the people" could devise.

Philip Gill also was one of the earliest Methodist class-leaders; his house was honoured by the frequent visits of John and Charles Wesley; and the little Sarah, his daughter, destined to become the wife of John Hall, long remembered the fatherly gentleness

of the venerable founder of Methodism. She was not more than thirteen when her name was written by his hand in the Society-book as a member of the class led by her father.

This young girl's piety was not imitative, was not the mere shadow and reflection of the piety of her parents; it shaped and coloured her character, and ruled the whole course of her religious and beneficent life. Her marriage to the like-minded John Hall was altogether happy, and their home in Broadmead, much frequented by the noblest of Methodist worthies,—Wesley himself, Adam Clarke, Dr. Coke, Pawson, Benson, Bradburn, Watson, and many others,—long remained the hospitable centre of a great circle of pious friends.

Into this home Jane Hall was born, the thirteenth child of her parents, on the 1st of January 1806; and by these influences her life was moulded.

She was a fragile, delicate infant, difficult to rear; but under an education every way judicious she grew up into health of mind and body, displaying while still a mere girl considerable quiet decision of character.

She had not long left school, when the growing conviction in her mind that she must give herself fully to God, and that soon, crystallized at once into action under the touch of a few serious words addressed to her by the Rev. John Stephenson (father of the Rev. Dr. Stephenson, the much-esteemed Principal of the Children's Home). Mr. Stephenson was just on the eve of his departure from England as a missionary to the West Indies, and this might lend impressiveness to

his words; but they fell into an honest and good heart ready to receive them.

Without loss of time Miss Hall followed his counsel, joining herself the same week to a Society class; and her earnest seeking after pardon and peace found a speedy reward. Able at the first class-meeting she attended to speak of her happy trust in the Son of God, to say, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*," she never lost the sense of pardoning and redeeming love during all the fifty years of her ensuing life.

She did not relinquish the course of reading and self-cultivation on which she had entered, when at the age of sixteen she left school for home; but she now devoted much more attention to the study of Holy Scripture, reading it daily on her knees, and seeking by the best means in her power to attain a right understanding of its teachings; and by early rising, and a methodical arrangement of her time, she secured the leisure needful for prosecuting the secular studies, proficiency in which was of great service to her in after years.

With several other young Christian women, Miss Hall came under the immediate influence of a Bristol lady noted for piety and devotedness, Miss Mary Brown, afterwards married to Mr. Francis Riggall. This lady became a sort of model to the group of young believers; and, animated by her example, they resolved to avoid all worldly vanities and follies in dress and in conduct, in order to give themselves wholly to "love and good works."

The extreme simplicity and neatness of attire which

they adopted was only emblematic of the course of self-discipline and loving service to which they devoted themselves. "They formed themselves into little companies of two and three for visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, and relieving the poor. The inmates of St. Peter's Hospital, where many of the sick and aged poor were brought together, and where many fallen women found a refuge, were objects of their special care. These they visited regularly and frequently, reading the Scriptures, and praying by the sick-bed, or pointing penitent sinners to Christ as their only hope. Some of them became zealous Sunday school teachers and successful tract distributors, while others laboured as collectors for the Wesleyan missions; all showed their faith by their works."

Among this band of girlish Christians there were several who, like Miss Hall, became the wives of Wesleyan missionaries; their early associated effort had been no unfitting education for that arduous position.

No long time elapsed from Jane Hall's admission into the Wesleyan Society before she herself was put in charge of a class. She was not more than twenty years of age at the time, but the early ripeness of her Christian character was deemed a sufficient warrant for her assuming this responsibility; and the expectation of those who imposed it on her was not disappointed. The class prospered very much under her care, and its numbers so increased that before long it became needful to divide it.

Several instances are also recorded of her success in Christian work outside the common routine of duty.

Now it is a poor dying woman, trained up in Calvinism, whose mind is darkened by the ghastly fear that she herself is foredoomed to perdition, and who, being persuaded by Miss Hall to put her trust freely in the Saviour of the whole world, passes away not in despair but in blissful hope. Now it is a stranger met during a journey, a young lady who has strayed from Christ's flock, and is vainly seeking happiness in the wilderness of the world's pleasures; to her Miss Hall is made the messenger of mercy who leads her back to the fold. And now it is a lad found at play in the street on a Sunday afternoon, and won by her mild persuasions to follow her to the Sunday school—a step which long years afterwards he declared had proved the turning-point in his career and the salvation of his soul.

The inner life of which such actions were the spontaneous expression, could not but flow with a full, steady current; the habit of frequent earnest prayer was the spring that fed it. In addition, she, like most of the eminent early Methodists, regularly practised abstinence, believing that fasting was a religious duty, inculcated in Scripture, and very helpful to watchfulness.

That she carried no such pious practice to hurtful excess, may partly be imputed to the counsels of many Christian friends, older and more experienced than herself; among these, the name of the Rev. G. Cubitt, stationed in Bristol from 1825 to 1828, is noticeable. Some letters addressed by him to Miss Hall after his departure for another field of labour, must have been very serviceable to their young recipient, so clear is their insight and so healthy and bracing their practical wisdom. Her character as it developed answered his

expectation and desire: in it there showed nothing of the "affected humility, the affected self-denial, the affected simplicity," sometimes developed in the young convert by a too great "wish to please the religious world;" there was apparent in it instead, the true, unpremeditated simplicity, "the grace whereby the soul is delivered from unprofitable reflections on itself," and which is only possible to the spirit that desires "nothing but God—His love and His approbation."

It was in the year 1830, during the course of a summer visit to South Wales, that Jane Hall became engaged to Mr. Charles Tucker, who was then just on the point of entering the Wesleyan ministry, and had offered himself for the mission work. Very soon attracted to Miss Hall, he divined in this slight girl, with the fair face and fair hair, the very qualities essential for a missionary's wife; and she was ready to share all the perils that might attend the work to which he aspired. Miss Hall's parents, applied to for their consent, would not refuse it; Mr. Tucker's own character and that of his family, well-known and much-esteemed Methodists living at Gower, seemed to offer the fairest guarantees for their daughter's happiness; nor dared they withhold her from the hard and noble service to which she proposed to consecrate herself.

For some time the prospects of the betrothed pair remained unsettled. Mr. Tucker, accepted as a probationer by the Conference of 1831, was appointed during the ensuing year to the Pembroke circuit, there to gain a little experience in ministerial duties, before removing to a distant, solitary scene of toil. No theological institution existing as yet for the training of

accepted candidates, this was the plan commonly adopted for missionary aspirants.

The period of suspense passed for Miss Hall in trustful waiting on Providence, while she endeavoured to qualify herself for her future post, beginning the study of medicine and surgery, which she afterwards followed up and found very useful. The "marching orders" came at last, so close on the time proposed for departure that after all they were a surprise.

Mr. Tucker had expressed a preference for the South Sea Islands, then just attracting attention; and he was accordingly, with the Rev. D. Cargill, put down for the Fiji Islands at the Conference of 1832.

"I expected," wrote his bride, "that we should be kept very long waiting, and should have much time for preparation." She was therefore a little startled to learn from the Rev. John James, missionary secretary, that her place and Mr. Tucker's were taken in a vessel bound for New South Wales, and that in three weeks' time they must be in London ready to sail.

All her preparations had to be hurried on; the marriage took place on the 12th of September 1832; and on October 22nd, with her husband, and three other missionary families, she set sail from London on the *Caroline*, bound for Sydney.

"It will not do to dwell on the parting; to look forward to a happy meeting beyond is far better," she had written. It was a heavy parting indeed, especially to the beloved father, already suffering from the long, painful malady that cut short his life. He could entertain little hope of seeing his child again in this world; nor was there another daughter left him to step into

her vacant place in the home. But though the sacrifice was made with weeping, it was made ungrudgingly.

Some few days were passed by the newly-married pair in Bath, under the roof of the bride's sister, Mrs. Shum; but the short interval before their sailing was chiefly spent in London in completing their arrangements. That hurried, anxious period left Mrs. Tucker a precious memory of the Rev. Richard Watson, no new friend, whom she now met for the last time. "Look up—look up," were the words with which he took leave of her—words uttered with the strangely impressive tone and look of one very near his heavenly home, and already half loosed from earth. Many times afterwards, in danger and in difficulty, those brief words recurred, and their counsel was followed.

Twenty-one weeks brought the voyagers to Sydney, where they had to wait six weeks before they could secure a passage to New Zealand. Arrived there, they took on board the Rev. J. Hobbs and his family, and went on to Tonga, landing there in June 1833, eight months after leaving England.

The journey, though happily uneventful, was, it will be seen, long and tedious to a degree almost impossible at the present day. Mrs. Tucker, however, put the monotonous hours of the voyage to Sydney to profit, spending them in study; in particular, she endeavoured to improve her medical and surgical knowledge, as far as possible by the aid of books; while the time of waiting in Sydney for a vessel was much lightened by the friendship of the Rev. Mr. Orton, in whose house the missionary party was entertained.

A scene full of interest and novelty opened on the

voyagers in Tonga. Fifty years ago there was not the faintest hint that this beautiful land would attain its late unhappy notoriety as the scene of discord and oppression and undeserved suffering. The great natural loveliness of all the rich and fruitful group among which Tonga stands pre-eminent, the gentle, intelligent, inquiring character of the natives, and the surprising triumphs which Christianity daily gained among them, combined to make the Friendly Isles one of the most attractive and most promising of fields for missionary effort.

Here, and not in Fiji, as they had expected, the Tuckers were destined to labour. To the ministers already at work in the Friendly Isles, the home authorities had accorded full liberty of choice as to where and how the newly-arrived missionaries should be employed, and as to the best time and way of beginning the projected Fijian Mission. It was decided that the claims of the Friendly Isles were too pressing to be set aside, and that Mr. Tucker must join Mr. Watkin at Lifuka, the chief island of the Haabai group.

Here it may be well to recall that the Friendly Isles comprise three groups of islands, of which Tonga lies most to the south, Haabai is central, and Vavau more north. Lifuka, though the largest island of Haabai, is scarcely more than one tenth the size of Tonga, from which it is distant a hundred miles. Mere dots they all appear on the map, like a handful of minute emerald fragments loosely flung on the wide rolling ocean, for the island most important in size does not exceed thirty miles in length and ten in breadth.

But in these clustering isles and islets, so many

earthly paradises, for the lavish luxuriance of their vegetation and the seductive sweetness of their climate, there existed a large native population, now newly awakened to far higher needs than those of the body, and anxious to learn the way of life eternal. Heathenism was practically abolished in a large proportion of the islands, and the people, who had learned to despise their old idolatries, were in great need of the instruction which the ministers already settled among them were all too few to give. Such were the circumstances which determined that the scene of Mr. Tucker's labours must be Haabai and not Fiji.

Five months had to be spent in the capital of Tonga, Nukualofa, before the weather would allow of the journey to Haabai, open canoes being the only mode of transit. The time was not wasted; Mr. and Mrs Tucker gladly employed their compelled leisure in acquiring the language; and when they were safely landed in Lifuka, no long space elapsed before both were in full work.

All Mrs. Tucker's native ingenuity and acquired skill were now called into play. Her home, a mere framework of timber latticed with woven reeds, thatched with leaves of the sugar-cane and the cocoa-nut palm, and floored with hardened earth, depended on her ability for its every comfort. The baking of bread, the curing of bacon, the cultivation of the garden, the superintending of all household work, had to divide her time with pursuits not quite so familiar; "shoemaking, tailoring, straw bonnet-making, upholstering," alternating with the drawing of maps for the mission school and with the sedulous study and practice of medicine. Her deft fingers and shrewd mother-wit secured for her no mean

success in all these varied occupations. Perhaps her proficiency in the craft of healing is the most noticeable. "For two years," we are told, "she had under her care nearly all the sick in the Haabai group, some of them coming to her from islands thirty or forty miles distant;" and her treatment appears to have succeeded well.

It is a strange thing, in these days of swift, easy communication, to read of one of her trials—the remaining during more than two years in absolute ignorance as to the welfare of friends in England. She herself had written many and many a letter before a line of reply reached her. At last came a canoe from Tonga, bearing "fifty letters, and newspapers without number;" also portraits of the father and mother in Bristol, taken after their child's departure. It helps us to measure what had been the heart-longings of the voluntary exiles, when we read that that night they could not sleep for joy, and spent all the rightful hours of rest in reading these blessed letters.

Greater joys awaited them. Among the natives who had already acknowledged the truth of the gospel its saving power now began to work mightily. There was a great and general awakening, beginning in Vavau, where the king himself and his queen were among the penitents who sought and obtained salvation; and very soon the same influence was visible in Haabai.

On two memorable days, Saturday the 9th and Sunday the 10th of August 1834, the chapel in Lifuka was seen filled with men, women, and children, weeping, praying, crying for mercy, or rejoicing in the sense of pardon. Many hundreds were thus converted, and the work went on through the ensuing week, and spread to

the adjoining islands, increasing rather than lessening in power, so that Mr. Tucker was able, in his letter to the missionary secretaries, to express his reasonable belief that "upwards of two thousand were truly converted to God in the course of a fortnight." The genuineness of their conversion was made very evident in its results; a spirit of brotherly love reigning among the people, and the old heathen vices being put away.

The simplicity of these poor islanders showed itself in various strange or pathetic ways. While the great revival was in progress, "some ran away from the chapel, under the idea that a fearful disease had broken out, and that the people were dying in great numbers;" and when, under its immediate stimulus, the native teachers added a large and commodious meeting-room to the mission premises, the opening services were marked by such impulsive, irrepressible utterances of a boundless joy and excitement, as taxed all the resources of Mrs. Tucker's modest pen to set forth.

"To say there was not a dry eye in the place"—when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was being administered—"would be saying little;" strong men, utterly overcome while they thought on the sufferings of the Lord whose death they now commemorated, wept and wailed until they fell senseless on the floor. There was even something of tropical exuberance in every undisguised feeling which these children of nature could not master, and must needs express. Happily their European teachers, while rejoicing in their joy, retained the full power to guide the new converts with the right tact and judgment.

It was not long before the zeal of the Christians in

Lifuka led them to erect a new chapel, which was the pride and admiration of all Haabai, the labour of building it having been shared by the whole population. Mrs. Tucker's letters describe it with loving minuteness —its reeded walls adorned on the inside with plaited cocoa-nut fibre wrought into many-coloured patterns; its communion-rail formed of beautifully-carved war-spears that had seen much service, royal heirlooms, presented by the king; and its pulpit-stairs ornamented with two splendid war-clubs once adored as gods. At the opening services King George himself preached the first sermon, taking for his text the noble prayer of Solomon. Larger congregations than the chapel could accommodate crowded about and overflowed it, weeping for the fulness of their joyful hearts.

The king, who became one of the most efficient among the native lay-agents of Christianity, showed his high opinion of Mrs. Tucker's mental powers in a rather embarrassing fashion, insisting on her rendering him her aid in making a sermon on a certain text from which he wished to preach. His pertinacity, which would take no denial, bore down her reluctance to engage in such a task; and, as he was not silent on the source whence he had obtained help, his example was followed by many other native preachers, to whom she could not well refuse the aid that had been first given to their king.

That these simple people should have formed a very exalted estimate of their missionary's wife and her wisdom, is in no sense surprising, in view of the various channels of usefulness that her ability and energy had found. Mr. Tucker, by the removal of his colleague,

Mr. Watkin, to Tonga, had been left the only minister in the Haabai group, charged with the oversight of about three thousand four hundred church members, including one hundred and sixty-one class-leaders, and seventy local preachers; and for sixteen months no European came near the Isles, either to help or hinder the mission work. It was now that the full value of Charles Tucker's "true yoke-fellow" became apparent, and every day gave him new reason to rejoice in having secured such an helpmeet.

Not content with her daily visits to the public schools that had been established, Mrs. Tucker had set up a mental improvement class in her own house for the benefit of adults. The class met twice a week, and among its fifty members might be found the king and queen, many local preachers and class-leaders, and male and female teachers. The difficulty of teaching *without books*, which had struck her in her very first entry on mission work, was successfully met. She wrote out for her pupils questions and answers on geography, Scripture history, and astronomy; she prepared copy-slips for them, and drew maps, which they copied; she gave dictation and arithmetic lessons. With the aid of such simple apparatus as a terrestrial globe of inflated paper, a lighted lamp, and an orange, she succeeded in making the true system of the universe intelligible to her pupils; and to half a dozen of the most advanced she gave instruction in the English language, being herself by this time a proficient in Tonguese.

Many portions of Scripture had been translated into the latter tongue; they were eagerly bought up; and when a native convert had acquired a complete collec-

tion, he would apply to the missionary's wife to *bind* them. Neat-handed and accurate, but quite ignorant of the book-binding art, she did her best, and always pleased the applicant.

The sewing school, which she managed personally, also took up much of her time; and her innocent pride was great when some of her scholars added straw bonnet plaiting to their other acquirements, and appeared at the Sunday morning service in finely-braided headgear manufactured by their own lissom fingers.

Even the Sunday evening hours had their own task: she would then gather about her the boys and girls who had attended the services, to catechize them about the sermons they had heard; their intelligent answers often delighted her.

So far our picture has been all brightness, all encouragement and success; it is time to indicate some of the darker shadows with which that brightness was chequered. The Friendly Isles to the splendour of the tropics added the terrors of the tropics also; the glowing skies would often be black with wind and rain, the brilliant verdure would be withered by showers of sea-spray, driven right across the land by the raging storm. On a thunderous April night of 1834, the missionary family were awakened by a sound like rushing waters. In three minutes a whirlwind struck their frail house and overturned it; and the inmates, saved from death as if by a miracle, when the roof crashed down over them, escaped into the outer darkness, where a wild tempest was raging, the flashes of lightning showing them how they might creep through their shattered roof. At this time, happily, Mr. Watkin,

who had not left the island, was at hand to render help.

Other such midnight alarms were not wanting in later years; but, warned by experience, Mr. and Mrs. Tucker always hastened out of their dwelling and took shelter in the little hut that served as a kitchen; and the timely help of the natives availed to save the mission premises from total ruin. A kind of famine, however, too often followed these destructive hurricanes, which blighted all the promise of orchard and garden, and the missionaries shared the suffering of their people, until supplies could be obtained from Vavau and Tonga.

Another trouble, which was personal to Mrs. Tucker, was unhappily less transitory, though equally due to climatic conditions. One wind that blew over the Friendly Isles had a peculiarly painful effect on European eyes; no English child escaped its bad influence; and Mrs. Tucker, who on her first arrival suffered from incessant inflammation of the eyes, found her sight sensibly weakened even when the pain had abated. A little reading by candle-light, the writing of a longer letter than usual, invariably brought on a return of suffering.

Up to the fourth year of her missionary life, no heavier trials fell to Mrs. Tucker's share; but in 1837 a new scene opened, and new perils had to be met.

Heathenism was still alive and strong in some parts of the Tonga group; and, during the absence of King George in his Haabai dominion, its vitality was evidenced by a war that broke out, the Tonguese chiefs who were yet heathen having risen in arms

against their Christian fellow-countrymen, intending to root out the new religion with fire and sword. The king hastened to the aid of his faithful subjects, and drove the heathen foe to take refuge in their fortresses; yet they remained unsubdued, and the issue of the conflict hung doubtful.

At this juncture the only missionary in Tonga itself was compelled to join his family in Haabai, and the war-distracted land remained without a pastor. A letter from the king, entreating the presence of one missionary at least, reached Mr. Tucker; it was Mrs. Tucker's faith and courage which decided that her husband and herself would answer the call in person.

The missionary might have hesitated on his wife's account to carry her into the midst of hideous dangers; but she, having sought Heaven's guidance, and obtained a clear light as to the course that ought to be taken, came to him strong in resolution, and persuaded him to brave all peril and at once to go to Tonga. There was heroism in the act, and it did not go unrewarded.

Having left Lifuka, amid the weeping of its people, and taken up their abode in the fortress, where the king gladly received them, the self-devoted pair soon had the joy of witnessing the submission of the revolted chiefs.

A singular ceremonial was enacted within the walls of the fort: one by one the heathen chiefs entered, their proud heads bowed, their warrior hands clasped to signify harmlessness, and garlands of leaves on their necks to betoken submission; meanwhile their armed followers encompassed the walls, ready to avenge any treachery to their defeated leaders,—a precaution very

significant as to the ancient state of morals in Tonga. Submission having been formally made, the chiefs of both parties were seated on the ground in a circle several ranks deep, to drink together in sign of reconciliation.

The most hopeful feature about the peace now concluded was the pact into which Ata, the heathen chief of Hihifo, entered with the king, consenting to allow the presence of a missionary in his domain; this had been hitherto resisted, and the two hundred native Christians in Hihifo had been without a pastor. Now, with the help of Mr. Rabone, the missionary deputed to this difficult post, their numbers soon increased, and lasting good was effected.

The storm that was now lulled to rest was destined to break out again with new fury; but good use was made of the quiet interval. Mrs. Tucker resumed in Tonga the work in which she had succeeded so well in Haabai. Again her chief attention was bestowed on education; and the noticeable success that crowned her efforts has honourable testimony from various witnesses.

Commodore Wilkes, of the United States Exploring Expedition, visited the mission at Tonga, and noted with admiring surprise the excellence of the schools and the remarkable intelligence of the lady who superintended them, and who "for some time had been the principal instructress of young and old." As not a few of Mrs. Tucker's scholars could speak very fair English, the American inquirer was able to measure their acquirements to a certain extent. "Shadrach, a great chief," a scholar of Mrs. Tucker's.

surprised the visitor by his intimate acquaintance with recent events in the great world's history; and the school of three hundred under his care was judged to "equal, if it did not exceed, in order and regularity any in our own country,"—a statement which has its value, when we remember that at that time the citizens of the United States had just reason to boast of a system of popular education greatly superior to that of England.

The evidence of the Rev. John Waterhouse, at this time General Superintendent of the Australasian and Polynesian Missions, carries the record a little further. Examining a thousand scholars in Tonga, he found them not only well acquainted with Christian truth, but possessing a fair rudimentary knowledge of geography and astronomy, — studies which had greatly enlarged their thoughts, and added much zest to their readings of Scripture history. Mr. Waterhouse found that to Mrs. Tucker was due all the credit of these acquirements; and it is very evident that her plan of bestowing special care on the training of native teachers had borne good fruit in the proficiency attained by so many hundreds of younger pupils.

Education, however, though her chief, was not her sole care; she constantly aided her husband in his evangelistic and his pastoral work, and not rarely accompanied him in his visits to the outlying places in his wide circuit; as, for instance, to half-heathen Hihifo, fifteen miles away from the Tuckers' own home in Nukualofa. Great progress had been made in Hihifo, and there was much hard work to do: the pastor found three hundred and twenty-nine

candidates for baptism, of whom more than half were adults, awaiting his coming; and there were also sixty-eight couples, some aged and infirm, recent converts from heathenism, whom he must unite in Christian wedlock. While he moved from place to place as the needs of his flock bade, his wife sat encompassed by native teachers, solving their difficulties and answering their inquiries. Not till midnight was it possible for the wearied-out visitors to seek a little rest in sleep.

To these incessant toils there were soon added new afflictions. The end of their first year's residence in Tonga was signalized to the Tuckers by a really heavy calamity — the destruction by fire of their slight, timber-framed and leaf-thatched dwelling. In this conflagration, caused by mere carelessness on the part of the native servants, the missionary and his wife lost everything they possessed in the world; books, translations, MSS. of all kinds, cherished relics of dear home-friends, stores for barter and for use, food, clothes—nothing remained to them but life, and the garments in which they had fled, late in the evening, from their flaming dwelling.

This misfortune meant not only loss and discomfort to themselves, but a serious interruption to their work. Happily, they were not all alone among the heathen. Their immediate distress was relieved by the prompt kindness of their colleagues, the Rabones; and the king himself hastened to their help, bringing with him from Vavau three canoe-loads of stores and plenishings. It fell out fortunately that certain articles of furniture, provided for a missionary since

removed to New Zealand, were lying unclaimed in Vavau at the time of the fire, and that a consignment of provisions also was there awaiting removal. Thus the evil admitted of a speedy, if a partial remedy.

Heavy as was this trouble, it was erelong cast into the shade by a greater one; the smouldering fires of heathen hate broke out once more into flame, and a fierce war again ravaged Tonga in 1840. This time also it was the heathen chiefs who were the aggressors.

The king, compelled to put down the revolt, as before, by force of arms, was bent on avoiding bloodshed as far as possible, and exhorted his people "to fight as Christians ought to fight," not to destroy, but to save, if it might be, the foe who must be overcome. It might seem an unequal conflict, between heathen, to whom all treachery and all ferocity appeared lawful, on the one hand, and, on the other, Christians whose humanity and piety forbade them to push matters to the last extremity. But now, as ever, the heavenly triumphed over the earthly wisdom; and victory remained with the merciful.

While the issue was yet uncertain, it went hardly with the non-combatant missionaries; six months of anxious suspense, in the midst of war and confusion, almost exhausted their strength; and the arrival of a small British man-of-war—H.M.S *Favourite*, Captain Croker, commander—was hailed with delight. The assistance which the captain willingly rendered to King George went far to turn the scale against the heathen.

Unhappily the brave Captain Croker fell in an

attack on one of the heathen strongholds, and was laid in the grave at the very spot where, with a strange instinctive foreboding, he had requested to be buried, should he chance to die in Tonga. The officer who remained in command of the *Favourite*, sharing the kindly feeling of his superior, offered a passage to the imperilled missionary families, and carried them safely to Vavau.

Here, however, Mr. and Mrs. Tucker were not long content to stay; and hostilities had scarcely ceased, before, in the company of the king, they returned to Tonga and to their beloved work. Fresh troubles awaited them, in hurricanes, and consequent dearth of food, and deficient help from the native teachers, whom the famine drove away into other districts; but fresh triumphs of the gospel were granted to cheer them. Again a great wave of spiritual influence seemed to sweep over Tonga, as before over Haabai and Vavau, and large numbers of penitents sought and found peace in Christ.

Amid these scenes of intense excitement, the aid of the native evangelists proved invaluable to Mr. Tucker, who was already suffering from overwork. "They would make noble Cornish or Yorkshire Methodists. . . . I don't know what I should have done without such helpers," wrote the almost exhausted missionary. Both he and his noble wife had now to pay the inevitable penalty for years of unflagging toil amid the alternate heats and storms of a tropical climate; and so much was their strength broken, that Mr. Waterhouse, on his next visit, could entertain no doubt that either they must leave the Friendly Isles or perish there.

Rest was not possible while they remained; there was no colleague to relieve, and no doctor to advise them and save them from their own self-sacrificing zeal. When, therefore, the *Triton* carried Mr. Waterhouse away from Tonga to complete his tour of inspection, it took Mr. and Mrs. Tucker also, to the great sorrow of the people, who, however, could not but see the need for their departure.

For many following weeks they accompanied Mr. Waterhouse, touching at island after island set like gems in the warm southern seas, visiting the Christian communities, and everywhere meeting an enthusiastic welcome. Fiji, which was last visited, was still suffering from a recent war and the resulting famine; and the invalids, between anxiety and lack of suitable food and the excessive heat, were in danger of losing the little strength they had regained. A sojourn of several months at Hobart Town, which they reached in the September of 1841, did much to restore them, and they began to entertain hopes of returning to their island home. The medical adviser whom they consulted, however, pronounced against the scheme. They must no longer dream of living under a tropical sun; it would mean death. Their farewell to the many converts, who loved them as their spiritual parents, had been, they found, a lasting farewell, so far as this little earthly life is concerned.

Bitter had been the distress of many of those simple-hearted beings, in seeing their pastor depart, though but for a time; it was deepened when the news reached them that they must hope to see him no more. Pathetic letters came to Mrs. Tucker, testifying their

grief. "We were hoping much," wrote one faithful woman, "and beseeching the Lord to be gracious to your health, that you might return to us. Great was the desire of our hearts that you might return. Alas! my love to you! My remembrance of you grows exceedingly."

Mrs. Tucker might have used even such words to express her own feelings. Her remembrance of the people she had left, her interest in their welfare, diminished not at all. She kept up correspondence with the pupils she had trained, and had the joy of perceiving, by their replies, that the good work she had begun was still going on.

Already, while resting under the roof of Mr. Waterhouse at Hobart Town, she had begun a course of effort on behalf of missions in which she long persevered. Debarred from personal missionary work, she could yet aid the cause in many ways: she could awaken interest in others, writing, speaking, working, taking part in missionary sales, and acting as the most intelligent of show-women, when the large collection of curiosities which she and her husband had brought away from the South Seas was on exhibition. Her contributions to the *Juvenile Offering* and other such missionary periodicals were not few, and very valuable as the evidence of a competent eye-witness.

It was not merely in this manner, however, that she was able to serve her Master; other opportunities for work were to open before her.

It was about the end of June 1842 that the good ship *Tasmania*, on which the Tuckers had taken their passage home, brought them safely to England. Their

ten years' absence, so eventful to themselves, had been hardly less so to their English friends. The old family homestead of the Halls, in St. James' Barton, Bristol, which now again received Mrs. Tucker, was emptied of all the young joyous life that had formerly filled it.

> All were scattered now and fled;
> Some were married, some were dead.

The beloved father had long since sunk under his affliction; only the widowed mother remained to welcome the daughter whom she had "lent to the Lord," and who now came back with her husband, both exhausted and feeble, and sorely in need of rest and quiet.

They found the tranquil haven they needed with Mrs. Hall, and were themselves a source of delight not only to her, but to the new generation, the nephews and nieces, who were fast springing up, and who hitherto had known "Aunt Jane" only as a gentle memory of goodness, kept alive in their hearts by her delightful letters from a far-off land. After two years of comparative inactivity, it again became possible for Mr. Tucker to take a part in the home-work of Methodism.

During one twelvemonth he filled the post of governor at the Taunton Wesleyan Collegiate Institution, then so recently formed that it was not yet properly housed. In these difficult circumstances, Mrs. Tucker's tact and method and quick perception availed to secure for both masters and pupils an amount of comfort that would otherwise have been unattainable. The governorship, however, was a post that Mr. Tucker had never coveted,

and did not wish to retain. He resigned it at the Conference of 1845, and engaged in ordinary Circuit work instead. Here he was happy and at home, and remarkably successful; and no little share of his success was due to the intelligent co-operation of his devoted wife.

In Cardiff, whither they removed on the expiry of a three years' term in the Taunton Circuit, Mrs. Tucker was conspicuously useful, as the virtual founder, in concert with Mr. John Williams, of an adult Sunday school, which after many years still did excellent work, and which seemed in the most natural way to develop out of an ordinary Sunday school class for young women of which she had taken charge, and which became in her hands very attractive to older persons. The same sort of work again engaged her attention in Gloucester. Education, in her hands, always proved a potent means of building up the Church of Christ; and her wholesome influence over young people was noticeably great wherever she went.

Mr. and Mrs. Tucker remained in Cardiff from 1848 to 1851—years painfully memorable in Methodism, for the storm of agitation that shook almost all its Societies. It is therefore a noteworthy fact, that Cardiff Circuit during those years remained at peace, and the number of members was more than doubled, instead of decreasing. Gloucester, whither the Tuckers next removed, presented a very different scene; but there was encouragement and progress even here.

From Gloucester, after three years, Mr. Tucker moved to Devonport; and thence, having completed a full term of successful ministry, to Wednesbury. But

here Mrs. Tucker's health began to show signs of giving way. Already she had suffered much from lameness, the result of an accident, and from the inflammation of the eyes, due to the winds of Haabai, which had never really been overcome; she now became a victim to disabling rheumatism. Transferred to Birmingham as a more healthy abode, and thence after three years to Bristol, Mr. Tucker found it well in 1864 to desist from the active ministerial work to which his own strength now was unequal, while it was too evident that the full and busy working day of his noble wife was ended.

They elected to spend the tranquil evening of their life in Bristol; and their removal to the higher part of that city brought them within the sphere of Miss Lutton's influence; a friendship, mutually delightful, between that venerable lady and Mrs. Tucker was the result.

Very gently, by a process no less quiet because inflexible, had Mrs. Tucker been obliged to relinquish one form of activity after another; the office of class-leader at last had to be given up, and in Bristol she gladly joined herself to one of the three classes which Miss Lutton still conducted. By degrees it became inexpedient for her to attend the public means of grace; then social visiting had to be given up; and at last she became the blind but always cheerful inmate of a darkened room.

The very gradual decay of her powers of vision had warned her to prepare beforehand for "the days of darkness;" she had taught herself to do much delicate fancy-work with the smallest use of her eyes, even to

sew with them closed; and she had so successfully mastered the system of typography adapted for the use of the blind, that she could impart it to the similarly-afflicted Anne Lutton, some time before her own sight totally failed.

This acquirement proved a source of great comfort and delight to her, during the many days that found her sitting in darkness, but neither in solitude nor in sadness, tranquilly waiting on the pleasure of the Lord. From *her* "day-labour" was not exacted, with "light denied;" and in *her* case, too, it proved true that "they also serve who only stand and wait."

Though many of the friends of her youth had passed away, she was still surrounded in Bristol, her childhood's home, by faithful affection, which manifested itself in attentive kindness; and those who visited her found their own souls cheered and uplifted by intercourse with this happy saint, "full of love to Jesus and of compassion for needy souls," while herself oppressed by many infirmities.

Her strength, which had been greatly reduced by successive attacks of rheumatism and other ailments, showed signs of final failure early in 1875. Sometimes, leaning on her husband's arm, she could walk abroad a little in the bright sunshine; but even this form of exercise had at last to be disused. More and more her thoughts were in heaven; she would often speak of her beloved scholars in the Friendly Isles, and anticipate the day when she and they should meet again.

The close of the summer brought to her forebodings of some sharp trial awaiting her. Her mind was

impressed with the words, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Accepting the impression as a warning, she resigned herself to bear what was coming in cheerful trust; and, when her anticipation was verified in an acutely painful seizure which proved the beginning of the end, she was able to endure all, sustained by a sense of the Divine favour always "clear and sometimes even joyous."

Her dying illness, which lasted from the 26th of August to the 28th of September, was full of pain and full of peace. Touchingly grateful for all the kindness that surrounded her, her unselfish nature showed itself even here. "Oh, Charles, what should I do without you? How thankful I am you are not called to suffer as I do!" she said once to the tender husband who was always at her bedside.

But, precious as was the loving human help that was lavished on her, it was not her chief support. In the extremity of pain and exhaustion she was full of joy in believing; the Saviour whom she "supremely loved" was very precious to her. "Perhaps," said she, as the day began to dawn after a night of restless anguish, "I shall be in heaven to-day. Oh, would not that be delightful!" and the last words of her faith, as death drew near, were, "Jesus is with me."

Till within an hour of her release she remained fully and calmly conscious. Then the distressing physical restlessness ceased; still she lay, breathing

ever more faintly, till the last gentle sigh broke the fetters that held her to earth; she was "absent from the body and present with the Lord." So was her heart's desire granted her; so was the Saviour who had kept her from sin and sustained her in mortal anguish magnified in her death, even as He had been in her life.

CHAPTER X.

A CONSECRATED LIFE OF JOY.

ANNE LUTTON—BORN, 1791 ; DIED, 1881.

IN the list of devout and honourable women commemorated in these pages, we find the names of not a few who were permitted to outlive the threescore years and ten; we can find two even who touched the fourscore and ten. But of all these, whose hoary hairs were so truly a crown of glory, we can hardly point to another whose life so resembles "the long sunny lapse of a midsummer day," bright from radiant dawn to cloudless sunset, as does that of Anne Lutton.

It stands thus in the sharpest contrast to the shadowed and troubled existence of Susanna Wesley. And in comparing the two lives, and in remembering that between the rising of the one and the setting of the other there extends a space of two hundred and twelve years, we are vividly reminded how vast a change has been wrought in the social and religious conditions of our nation; how all but impossible some of the trials that beset Mrs. Wesley and her sons would be to noble men and women occupying a like position in the England of to-day; how perilously easy

A. C. Alais, Sc.

Your ever affectionate friend

Anne Lutton

From a Photograph taken at the Age of 88

the open profession and practice of Christianity have become, how free from risk or trial.

There is even too much ground for the fear, expressed in old age by the venerable Mrs. Walker, lest with the reproach of Methodism the best touchstone of Methodist sincerity may have passed away; its young people, "having nothing to give up or forego, slipping too easily into religion and the Church."

But Miss Lutton's life, unstained by inconsistency as untroubled by persecution, "unspotted from the world," though passed amid its temptations, is a cheering proof that even when "religion goes in his silver slippers, the sun shining, and the people applauding him," the true servants of Christ may yet lead lives as faithful and as self-denying as in the cloudy and dark day, when religion "wears rags, and is bound in irons."

Miss Lutton was of Anglo-Irish race, with something of that blended vivacity and ability, that warmth of heart and keenness of perception, which have been strikingly exemplified in many eminent persons of similar descent. Her family was originally of Knapton, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and not without distinction. Tradition accounted for the cross, conspicuous in their armorial bearings, as a memorial of some great feat performed by a crusading ancestor in the Holy Wars.

Two soldier-Luttons of a later date, Ralph and William, followed William III. to Ireland in 1690, and served in his army as officers through his victorious campaign against the luckless James II. When, the war being over, the conqueror returned to

England and disbanded much of his army, the brothers Lutton elected to remain in Ireland. William, who was married already when the war began, was the immediate ancestor of the Anne Lutton of our memoir.

Her father, Ralph Lutton, inherited (as the sole son of a prosperous father—another Ralph) much landed property "in and about Moira, County Down." Marrying at the age of nineteen his cousin Anne, child of his uncle, William Lutton, he became the father of a numerous and stately family, including nine sons and four daughters who outlived infancy. Anne, the youngest of these, was born on the 16th of December 1791.

"A hundred years ago," according to Miss Lutton's own statement, "the little town of Moira consisted of one long street, each side of which was ornamented by a regular row of full-grown lime-trees." Conspicuous in this pleasant leafy thoroughfare stood the spacious, lofty family mansion of the Luttons, lifting its three-storied, many-windowed front close to the sidewalk; its ample garden lay all in the rear.

It would be hard to picture a happier childhood than that enjoyed by the little Anne in this quaint old homestead. The youngest darling, the pet and plaything of her brothers, she was the delight of the household for her mirth and drollery, though sometimes these betrayed her into escapades more or less serious, which did not fail to receive their proper meed of correction. Her parents, members of a staunchly Protestant family, as became their historical origin, had in the very year of her birth been led to join the

Methodist Society; and, as faithful disciples of Wesley, they did not fall into the error of over-indulgence. Miss Lutton's mature judgment in after years entirely approved the discipline which for her was penetrated with the truest love, and never degenerated into harshness.

She was indeed exceptionally fortunate in her parentage. Mr. and Mrs. Lutton, gracious and noble in manner and aspect, were both possessed of unusual intelligence and cultivation, though partial blindness in his case, and many family cares in hers, interfered with the full gratification of their natural tastes. It is significant of their warmth and kindliness of disposition that, through their ready hospitality, they were led into connection with Methodism. A Wesleyan itinerant, Mr. John Grace, being espied dismounting at the Moira inn and unstrapping his ponderous saddlebags, excited the curiosity of the young Luttons and the sympathy of their father, who forthwith invited the stranger to dinner. His "winning manners and sweet conversation" won this family of faithful but unenlightened Church-goers, not for Methodism merely, but for Christ.

By the influence and example of the Luttons, the Moira curate, a mild, scholarly man who just managed not to starve on the poorest stipend, was drawn to hear the humble Wesleyan minister, was "blessed, and made a blessing," finding Christ crucified for himself, and zealously proclaiming Him to others, "in the church, in barns, in cottages;" while his simple, gentle, hard-toiling wife also "found the treasure of vital godliness."

The Luttons, and the little Anne also, when almost an infant, steadily attended church in the morning and

the Wesleyan preaching on Sunday evening; "Thus," says she, "I was preserved from extremes—the arrogant exclusiveness of High Church prejudices, and the contracted bigotry of hostile sectarianism."

All the children of the family were required to meet in class, and attend other means of grace, even from infancy; Anne considered that this practice in her own case was of the highest usefulness, and remained always thankful that she was "not left to choose her religion for herself." Many years, however, elapsed before her true conversion to God.

The happy little child, who in her father's house and in its pious frequenters saw religion presented under its most delightful aspect, had no prejudices to overcome, no false prepossessions against piety as a gloomy, irrational thing. But for a time other pursuits, more congenial to her youthful fancy, enthralled her by their "witching pleasures," and drew her mind away from God. The strong, decided literary tastes which were her heritage from both parents, and which greatly increased both her happiness and usefulness in womanhood, were something of a snare to her when a very young girl.

In the modern sense of the word, Miss Lutton can hardly be said to have been educated. "Reading, writing, plain and fancy work, household management, and the single accomplishment of dancing," constituted the modest curriculum thought necessary for such as she in that time and place. But the little home-bird Anne, unlike her sisters, was indebted to no school-dame for these slender acquirements. The first attempt to make her attend school failed, through her infant

dislike of the caresses of strangers; and this "youngest princess" of her family was indulged in her caprice.

It would be quite correct to style her self-educated. True, somebody must have taught her her letters; her eldest brother gave her a lesson or two in writing; and the schoolmaster paid daily visits to the house to instruct her in the rudiments of arithmetic. In addition, she learned at a Moravian school,—when she had reached the dignity of seventeen years!—a little grammar and geography, as well as "satin-stitch and embroidery." But all her really valuable attainments, from Hebrew and mathematics to her exquisitely neat handwriting, were due to her own unaided efforts.

Passionately fond of reading even at five years old, and no less eager to be herself an author, she devoured every book that fell in her way, and covered much paper with prose and verse on all sorts of subjects,—crude, ambitious efforts which she did not allow to live. When she had exhausted the supply of such standard literature as her father's bookshelves furnished, she came under the spell of fiction; and in her impressionable girlhood she became completely fascinated by plays and romances. Her parents remonstrated; but their disapproval only gave the zest of forbidden fruit to the darling study, which she henceforth pursued in secret.

The memory of this period was painful to her in after life, and this "darkest page" in her history—otherwise so free from defect of filial duty—made her think ill of the influence of works of imagination.

"Had they not come in my way," she says, "I might have sooner listened to the teaching of the Holy Word and the voice of conscience." The charm, how-

ever, was broken, not by her own effort or penitence, but by a change in outward circumstances first, and then by the superior attraction of a new intellectual pursuit.

In 1811, Mr. Lutton left Moira and settled with his family on a small estate of his, seven miles distant, called Donaghcloney. The house was delightfully situated, surrounded by lawns and gardens, and half-encircled by the swift-running river Lagan. Here few books were accessible; and Anne, now in her twentieth year, amid the sweet wholesome country scenes, found new sources of delight, purer and more elevating than the "stolen waters" of fiction, in the garden, which she learned to cultivate with skill, and in the great natural loveliness of the surrounding landscape.

The "insensible progress towards a better state" of which she speaks in her fragmentary autobiography, is evidenced by the diary she now began to keep, which shows her striving after real purity of heart and life, and eagerly ready to receive good impressions, even through the medium of "a Dissenting minister." The Luttons, who were properly Church-Methodists, had never, till the year 1813, entered a Dissenting place of worship. Larger views became the heritage of their daughter.

In the same year, Anne, who had always coveted the power of reading languages other than her own, entered on the bold enterprise of studying Latin without a teacher, incited thereto by the need of some more satisfying mental food than the "light superficial stuff of circulating libraries," and by the accidental discovery of a tattered "Lily's Latin Grammar" among the "ragged regiment" of her father's upper bookshelves.

The venerable treatise had seen hard service, schoolboys and worms had combined to outrage and deface it; but Anne Lutton put it once more into working trim, and, without other aid than her blind father could afford her, made such good use of this rusty old key to learning, that it opened for her the way to a thorough acquaintance with the great Latin classics.

Having achieved Latin, she began to dream of Greek lore, and her steady, persevering energy soon made the dream a reality. Beginning with the New Testament, she went on to Homer, to Plutarch, Longinus, and Demosthenes; her only instructor again being the Greek grammar, which she studied by herself. The great seclusion in which she lived,—the home circle, once so large at Moira, having narrowed down at Donaghcloney to herself, her parents, and her youngest brother, the only one not yet filling his own man's place in the world,—and the strong encouragement of her father, combined to favour her in the new pursuit which had aroused all her enthusiasm, and which she followed so long and so successfully that the list of her linguistic acquirements is altogether surprising.

To the classic languages she added Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac, Chaldee, Arabic, and Persian; "a little" of Æthiopic, Hindustanee, Russian, and Irish; and not a little of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and German. Her early conquest of Lily, whose grammar is anything but a "royal road" to Latin, would doubtless greatly aid her in acquiring all tongues of Latin parentage, and not be useless with the stately sister-language, Greek; but her Oriental lore would be a different matter, and its acquirement witnesses to the

strongest natural faculty, seconded by untiring resolution.

The direct usefulness of all this patiently-won knowledge was small; the indirect benefit, according to Miss Lutton's own testimony, was great indeed.

"It was a training process for higher and more hallowed duties;" it drew off her mind from "the little and the low engrossments of the world," and furnished occupation just when the lack of definite work might have been hurtful. It taught endurance, courage, perseverance, self-discipline, and self-denial; for, to win time for this beloved work, the student practised early rising and systematic application, and very conscientiously portioned out all the hours of the working day, never allowing the time marked for study to pass unused, but also never permitting study to impinge for a moment on the allotted hours for "the common drudgery of common matters."

On the contrary, to these "common matters" she now brought "a heart full of freshness, thankfulness, and hope;" for, as her mind expanded, her soul had grown also,—into a new life and new blessedness.

She, whose matured intellect found a rare joy in philosophy, to whom "the investigation of moral and religious truth was almost a passion," proved herself no half-hearted seeker after God, who most gently but irresistibly drew her to Himself.

Her early religious impressions, though strong and real, had seemed to fade out during her romantic, dreamy girlhood; they revived when her passion for fiction passed away amid the superior delights of the hard study to which she devoted herself in secluded

Donaghcloney. There, in the absence of many accustomed means of grace, her sleeping soul came awake.

Her conscience was first disturbed by the "mirthful censoriousness" indulged in by some lively young friends, at the expense of an aged crippled relative. Wishing to restrain them without offending, she imagined the plan of framing a set of "resolutions for good conduct,"—carefully including a resolve to avoid such sins against the law of love,—and inducing these friends to sign it along with herself. Doubtless inspired by Him whose blessing she implored on the work, she drew up "such a code of laws for our spirit, speech, and conduct, as might have been suitable for appending to Mr. Wesley's *Treatise on Christian Perfection.*"

Impossible as these rules would be for unaided human strength to practise, they were made the "means of much blessing" to all whom Miss Lutton induced to sign them: notably to her father and mother, to her brother Robert, to the children of one of her sisters, and to a young ploughman, once a Methodist, who was working on her father's grounds. Signing the paper his young mistress tendered him, with full purpose to keep its provisions, "by God's grace" he was led to true conversion, and to an after-career of much usefulness as a minister.

But she whose efforts had been so blessed to others long remained the person least benefited. At last she was startled into a sense of Pharisaic pride and real guilt, by finding herself offending in the matter of evil-speaking, and that against a brother. The self-revelation thus effected was terrible to her. Deeply penitent,

she first sought reconciliation with the offended one, and then, for the first time, ventured to approach the Table of the Lord.

But "the burden of her sin became intolerable," and she longed to find freedom from it in Christ. She had once been glad that, for default of other Methodist residents in Donaghcloney, there could here be no class-meeting. Now she herself became the agent in gathering together a little class, to meet in her father's house, and in persuading a simple, pious Methodist class-leader to assume its direction.

This good man did not fail in urging the anxious inquirer to seek and find pardon, without which she could have neither peace nor power; and "from that morning" she thought of nothing else. She sought incessantly, she sought with tears, but she found not; and she was almost hopeless, when her father spoke words of healing to her, pointed her to Christ, assured her that by faith in Him she should be saved. With childlike docility she received the words as very truth. Kneeling lowly before God, she cast her whole soul at His feet, solemnly vowing to "take the Lord Jesus Christ for her Saviour from that moment, for her Master and Portion for time and for eternity;" and as she abandoned herself to God, He gave Himself to her.

"Pardoning mercy, joy unspeakable, and such a love!" were at once revealed to her spirit. "All was changed, God was everywhere. It was a new life, a new world, a new Bible." From this day, the 14th of April 1815, Miss Lutton dated the commencement of "her *happy* existence." Happy it was, and destined to

become ever happier. Very early she was led to "seek full sanctification," and, having "proved the Divine faithfulness in cleansing from all unrighteousness," could say, after the lapse of many years, "I have been kept in that spirit which prefers His will to everything, and would delight to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord."

So far, her autobiography, which, like Mrs. Walker's, but with less design, acquaints us only with the deeply-interesting story of the way in which God led her to Himself. The further history of the sixty-five years of faithful service which followed this early conversion, has to be gathered from other sources.

It was well for Anne Lutton that she had sought and found the secret of true peace and strength, for now sorrow and death began to invade her family circle and her home. The first grief came with the death of the eldest son, a surgeon in Dublin, whither we find Mrs. Lutton hastening, in order to see his face once more; next it was that sweet and gracious wife and mother who was suddenly taken from child and husband, by a stroke of paralysis, in the March of 1816. Her loss was a deep grief to those who lived to mourn it; by the bereaved husband it was so keenly felt, that his lovely but lonely country home became odious to him, and he returned to Moira.

The transition was great for Anne Lutton, when she left her studious, tranquil life at Donaghcloney for the busier sphere of the little social town, and for her new duties as mistress of her father's household; but a greater change now came over her manner of being;

for she felt herself impelled to begin "proclaiming to her fellow-countrywomen the love of the Saviour, which was so inexpressibly dear to her own heart."

This conscientious obligation was a real trial to her, owing to a shrinking timidity of disposition which few would have suspected in one whose mental powers were far beyond the average, and whose outward aspect was quite imposing in its firm stateliness. Her sensitive modesty concurred with her sincere conviction in making her limit her efforts to women only, and she was resolute in excluding all hearers of the other sex from the meetings which she conducted.

Many attempts were made to set aside this rule, and some quaint incidents resulted. More than once the unfeminine height or gait of some would-be hearer, in cloak and bonnet, betrayed a masculine intruder to the keen eyes of Miss Lutton's gentlemen-friends, on guard at the chapel door while she was conducting a service within, and more than once their vigilance was deceived by a better-managed disguise. One young man, who succeeded in secreting himself within the building and in listening unseen to Miss Lutton's heart-warm appeals, was moved by them to consecrate himself then and there to God's service. He was not silent as to the mode of his conversion, and Miss Lutton was consequently invited to relax the rule she had laid down. But the knowledge of the good which she had unwittingly wrought in this instance was powerless to change her conviction as to the limitation of her mission to women only.

We have from the pen of her biographer a description of one of these services of hers, held at a much later

date in Chepstow; and this, in default of any such record of her earlier ministrations, may aid us in imagining their character. The congregation being all quietly assembled, we see Miss Lutton enter, plainly clad in a silk dress, and a high-crowned, single-bordered Quaker cap of white net; she ascends the pulpit, gives out the opening hymn, and herself commences the tune, in which all her hearers join. A fervent prayer follows; then the address, all glowing with the eloquence of the heart; the subject this time is "The Choice of Moses."

"Her appearance is dignified, her manner commanding; her voice, rich and melodious, evidencing deep emotion under strong control, is clearly heard by the congregation; a slight and graceful movement of the hand occasionally gives emphasis to some special appeal."

"The stately solemnity of her appearance and manner, and the heartfelt eloquence of her prayerful appeals to conscience, produced powerful effects on the crowds of women that flocked to hear her;" in fact, it would sometimes happen that "every face would be bathed in tears, the suppressed sobs of the whole assembly forming one sound of the strangest utterance."

Between the years 1818 and 1831 she held not less than one hundred and fifty-nine meetings, in twenty-seven places, situated chiefly in the neighbourhood of Moira, her own home; of Belfast, where dwelt her sister, Mrs. Tucker; and of Newcastle, a bathing-place on the east coast of Ireland. Evidence of her having conducted this number of services is furnished by her own memoranda—written in "the daintiest of Greek characters"—of the texts from which she spoke on each occasion. These notes show that her favourite

text was one with which her whole life was in accordance: "Rejoice evermore."

But this record of her labours is imperfect: there is proof of her having held many other meetings than are thus specified—sometimes in Wesleyan chapels, sometimes in the houses of farmers, or in any available public rooms; these were often crowded to overflowing.

"Her memory even now is fragrant over the counties of Armagh and Down; for, though few actually remember her ministrations, the generation that has succeeded has heard much of the impressions produced by them upon their parents."

Miss Lutton's new line of effort, unusual for a woman, but kept carefully within womanly limits, had the cordial sanction of her father, of her brother Robert, and of her own ministers and Christian friends. She did not, however, entirely escape opposition.

At Dromore, which is no great distance from Moira, she held several of her meetings for women during the winter of 1818–19, on the Sunday mornings, and afterwards attended the service at the church; for she had a fixed objection to preachings during church-hours. The Dromore clergyman, however, one of those unlucky beings whose lack of discernment helped on the separation between Methodism and the Church, took umbrage at the "irregular" doings within his parish, and chose to denounce from the pulpit the preaching of women as an unscriptural practice. His denunciation was hardly called for in the case of one who so sedulously abstained from "usurping supremacy over the man;" it aroused indignation in one of his own flock who had previously disliked and opposed Methodism; but it

wakened no anger or resentment in the tranquil breast of the person attacked, who gently withstood her father's desire that some notice should be taken of the matter, and neither gave up her attendance at the church nor her meetings in Dromore. These were not less numerously attended than before; and she rejoiced in finding her "love to God, His people, and the whole human family," all the greater for this trial, which she was inclined to welcome, because it exempted her from the woe "pronounced by our Lord 'when all men speak well of you.'"

At this time she was already embarked in the work of a class-leader, in which she was to be so long and so successfully engaged. Beginning in 1817 with a Sunday morning class-meeting for females at Lurgan, she formed another at Moira in 1820, which was held on the Monday evening; and, as her sense of the usefulness of this means of grace only deepened with experience, she often tried to form new classes among persons attending her meetings.

Meanwhile, she had her full share of domestic duties as mistress of a hospitable Irish home, and as "business factotum, amanuensis, reader, and companion to her blind father," to whose wants she ministered with loving faithfulness. Nor were earthly troubles wanting; nor anxieties and griefs, for the blind, honourable old father, imposed upon and robbed by the unscrupulous—for the settlement in life of one brother—for the death of another—for beloved friends summoned from earth to heaven.

Amid all this she maintained a child-like freedom from tormenting care; and her full correspondence

with various friends shows how heartily and with what unselfish interest she threw herself into the thoughts and the perplexities of others; while it is marked by a transparent honesty, and such a really surprising power of speaking plainly but lovingly on certain difficult points, as would do credit to the venerable Wesley himself.

With Wesley's views on the subject of dress Miss Lutton was in entire agreement, and her opinions on this matter, and on the sort of social intercourse and the measure of activity desirable for Christians, are set forth in some of her letters with a frankness and fulness that incline us to honourable thoughts both of the writer and the recipient of such communications.

For a life so incessantly and exhaustingly occupied no little strength was needed; Miss Lutton somewhat impaired hers by the only practice of her religious life in which good sense was not supreme—by frequent and really rigorous fastings. It was with great difficulty that she was induced to disuse this excessive abstinence in advanced age, when the affectionate urgency of friends was reinforced by the commands of physicians. Her exceptionally fine physical frame and sound constitution, however, long enabled her to undergo the deprivations she deemed needful, with comparative impunity, aided by the free use of open-air exercise and by occasional change of scene. In the homes of her married sisters, and among their young daughters, the serenely joyful "Aunt Lutton," whose radiant looks so recommended her religion, was always a most welcome guest.

The full and busy period of Anne Lutton's life that

we have been describing, lasted about twelve years; it was brought to an end by the death in 1828 of the "indulgent father," who had always been the most sympathetic and the best beloved of her many friends.

She bore this great grief and all its attendant distresses with a beautiful courage. Mr. Lutton's departure greatly changed her outward circumstances; for he had only a life-interest in much of his property, and various causes had disabled him from leaving more than a slender competency to his one unmarried daughter. This disturbed her not at all; she was content to be poor if God willed it, and her happy confidence that He would supply all her need was not disappointed.

During the nine following years her fixed home was still at Moira; she had retained sufficient furniture for two rooms that were set apart for her use in the house of her sister, Mrs. Murray. Here she gathered about her some few treasured relics of her old home, her books, her pictures, her pets; and here for some little time she lived, as her sister said, like a hermit; but hermit-inactivity could not suit her long.

Soon she was engaged, urged by the request of many friends, in preparing for publication the various poems, both original verse and translations, which she had produced from time to time. The book was well received when it appeared, and had an extensive circulation in Ireland. Owing, however, to the style in which it was produced,—much more costly than she at first intended,—and owing to the author's fixed resolve not to exceed the modest selling price originally announced, it was a source more of loss than of profit to her.

Miss Lutton wrote easily and gracefully, and her verse shows much poetic sensibility and depth of religious feeling; it lacks, however, the vigour and directness of her prose style, and this, again, is probably inferior in power and charm to the rich natural eloquence by which she so moved and delighted her hearers in public and in private. Her influence was more personal, more immediate, less literary, than that of some other highly-cultivated and pious women; and in several points it may be likened to that of Mrs. Fletcher.

She long continued the practice of writing occasional verses; but they were generally produced in aid of some pious or charitable work, and printed at her own cost without thought of profit.

While visiting Dublin in order to superintend the publication of her book, Miss Lutton made her home with a Mr. and Mrs. Booth, who had sought her acquaintance a few years before. Her intimacy with them now grew close and deep, and it was ultimately the cause of her quitting Ireland to fix her abode in Bristol. For the Booths, having repaired to Chepstow in search of health, induced Miss Lutton to pay them a long visit in their new abode; and it was on this occasion that she was first brought in contact with the Westcott family, Methodists of Bristol, in easy circumstances, under whose roof she was destined to pass the long, bright evening of her life. The mutual attraction was strong from the very first, and not many years passed before it drew them together and united them with lasting bonds.

For five or six years Miss Lutton hovered, like one

undecided, between Ireland and England; loving friends entreated her presence in both countries, and in both she found ample opportunities for usefulness. Sometimes we find her at Moira, conducting a weekly meeting for prayer and Scripture study; sometimes in Bristol, invested with the office of leading a class left accidentally without any other leader. Then the claims of Ireland again become paramount, for there is great distress among the poor people, and sickness among her own relatives. At last the balance is downweighed on the side of her English friends, who are suffering in their turn.

When Miss Lutton first met the Westcotts, their family circle, though lately broken, still boasted, besides the daughter, a son "full of hope and promise," who became a special favourite of the new friend. In 1837, this youth, who was but nineteen, was carried off by rapid consumption. He had wished to see Miss Lutton before he died, and she hurried over from Ireland, but arrived too late to find him in life—not too late, however, for her to be an angel of comfort to those who were left. The grief which she shared and consoled proved the chain that bound her and the bereaved ones together. They could not let her go; she could not endure to leave them. Henceforth their home was hers.

Other homes would have gladly claimed her as an inmate. Mr. and Mrs. Booth, now returned to Ireland, wanted her; so did her Moira relatives. At Bristol, Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, and at Clifton, two wealthy maiden ladies, offered her a suite of rooms and every comfort for life, desiring no recompense but the

pleasure of her presence in their homes. Evidently there was a rare charm about this maiden lady of middle age and slender means.

Her attraction had not been unfelt by the other sex. We read of various offers of marriage, quite suitable, which she had quietly repelled, and of which one caused her much distress when she had to reject it. Her conviction remained strong that she was called to work for Christ in a single life, that marriage must needs diminish her special power of usefulness. It must be granted that none of the noble Christian matrons in our list more adorned wifehood and motherhood than she did the maiden state, by a cheerful, energetic, and beautiful Christianity.

Her outward aspect was sufficiently expressive of her inward goodness to recall the saying of Spenser, that "soul is form, and doth the body make." Her figure was tall and commanding; her forehead broad and intellectual; her face, of firm, oval contour, was lighted by clear, full brown eyes, which in youth and middle life had "the peculiar out-gazing look that belongs to short sight," but when short sight had passed into blindness, the eyes, entirely undisfigured, lost this peculiar expression. A "singularly mobile" mouth, "indicating sweetness and tenderness with resolution," gave animation to her serene aspect; the whole impression was of a nature at once benign and dignified. Her scrupulous plainness of costume, like that of some gentle Quakeress, doubtless heightened the simple, stately grace of her appearance, though no such matter was in her thoughts. At the time when she settled down in her Bristol home, she was wont to wear a

plainly-made silk or poplin gown, a plain high-crowned cap, such as may be seen in some early Methodist portraits, and a collar, like her cap, of plain white net. Out of doors she wore a long silk cloak and cottage straw bonnet, a ribbon just crossed over it. In later years she admitted some modifications, as her portrait, taken at the age of eighty-eight, allows us to see; tulle and lace were not so rigidly abjured; but perfect simplicity of style, irrespective of conformity to fashion, was still maintained. It was with her a matter of principle, long ago reasoned out and settled; and she never saw cause to change her opinion as to the expediency, for Christian women, of avoiding "superfluity" in dress.

She was some little time in adapting herself to her altered surroundings. Methodism in Bristol struck her as being "very rich, honourable in public estimation, elegant and refined," and "not like the thing of the same name in Ireland;" and the larger society that she met in her new delightful home, the many social gatherings in which she had to mix with persons of "various intellectual attainments and of various creeds," were at first rather formidable to one who, despite her mental power and her high cultivation, had the timidity of a recluse. But the new atmosphere soon became more congenial, while she watchfully maintained in it all her consistency and faithfulness. She was destined to be not less widely useful here than in "dear old Ireland;" and she found with joy that under the quiet, well-controlled English manner there lay hidden as much warmth, tenderness, and truth as all the graceful, gracious, impulsive cordiality of Irish speech could

express. That she herself was particularly fitted to call forth these hidden treasures of feeling, never seems to have occurred to her; but evidently it was so.

Another new, and less welcome, experience was to be hers in England; she had, as she expressed it, to be kept some time in "the Master's good school of suffering." She had gladly taken charge of two Society classes in Bristol, and had entered on "a full routine of Christian and philanthropic duty," when she was laid aside by an accidental injury to the knee-joint, which made her for many weeks a helpless cripple. She bore the affliction more than patiently—almost joyfully; but as soon as practicable she returned with eagerness to her work. Her shaken health, however, long required and received the tenderest care of the friends to whom she had become so precious.

In Mrs. Westcott she found a second mother, loving and judicious and decided, whose mild authority sufficed, when nothing else could, to restrain Miss Lutton from the rigorous abstinence by which she was evidently injuring herself. So persuaded was Anne Lutton that her soul's health needed this bodily mortification, that on one occasion "even with tears" she pleaded to renew it; Mrs. Westcott, however, refused her sanction, and thus not improbably aided greatly in prolonging the useful and beneficent life of her friend.

In this connection it is worth while to quote Anne Lutton's own emphatic words on a subject which now-a-days does not exercise so many Methodist consciences as formerly. "Fasting," wrote she to a friend, "is necessary to many persons to mortify the body, to

repress imagination, to clear the understanding, to dispose for prayer; . . . it gives a vigorous tone to the powers of the soul; . . . it is a sort of military discipline, which fits us for 'enduring hardness, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Only let not fasting go to an undue extreme; let it be not too often, . . . when in weak health, not at all."

This last exceedingly needful counsel Miss Lutton found it easier to urge on a friend's consideration than to follow in her own case; yet loving deference for a mother-friend availed on this point to overcome her wish and opinion, here only in error.

Repeated and very serious illnesses, and journeys in search of health, are during long years the most marked events of her tranquil yet busy life. Sometimes she is found drinking in her native air, revisiting Moira, taking up the dropped thread of her evangelist's work there, noting with joy the excellences of a new generation of her kinsfolk; sometimes, instead of forlorn and lovely Ireland,—where the miserable cabins and the listless peasantry, seen on her way from Dublin northward, pierced her heart with pity,—it was to Cheltenham or Gloucester or Malvern, with their wealth of natural and artful beauty, that her anxious friends carried her. Their hopes of improvement were generally gratified; then with reviving strength came renewed ardour for work.

Her Bible-readings for women were now carried on in Bristol drawing-rooms, as formerly in Irish chapels, and the numbers attending her classes so multiplied as to require dividing and sub-dividing, until, in 1849,

seven classes met under her leadership. These, by later divisions of the Bristol Circuits, were afterwards reduced again to three.

When her health was at its frailest, "it was impossible to keep her from her class-room, if she were able to walk or drive there," and doubtless this determined punctuality had its share among her higher graces in the extraordinary success that attended her as a leader.

Charitable effort was added to this directly spiritual work; she was an active member of Dorcas and Misericordia societies, and always ready with her aid for other like enterprises. In the winter of 1846-47, she was impelled to take up a kind of work naturally repulsive to her—that of soliciting money contributions from others. The dreadful sufferings of Ireland at that time aroused in her an almost unbearable passion of pity: her Irish friends wrote, representing the needs of their famine-stricken neighbours, of their little starving Sunday scholars; Anne Lutton replied by gifts almost beyond her means, and only made possible by stern self-denial; then she "made the still harder sacrifice of turning beggar to others, on behalf of her starving countrymen."

Not yet content, she wrote tracts and poems to serve their cause, and, these being printed and widely circulated, she was enabled altogether to contribute £112 for the relief of the starving. Her correspondence evidences the joy with which she saw the heart of England stirred to make every effort of generosity on behalf of the sister Isle—even little children catching the flame, and eagerly practising self-denying charity.

With all this busy effort, she contrived to secure some little space daily for her beloved studies, especially that of languages, always so fascinating for her, and pursued with tireless zeal all through the best years of her life.

It was during this happy period of incessant activity that Miss Lutton finally disused the attendance at Church, which had been the fixed habit of her earlier days, and began instead to worship twice a-day at the Wesleyan chapel. No change in her feeling towards the Establishment was the cause, but a desire to show the utmost measure of respect towards her own ministers. "Dear to my heart," said she, "is England's honoured Church; may it stand as long as the sun and moon endure!" But, after coming to England—after noting "the exclusiveness of Church-goers," and "weighing the privileges of Wesleyans," she took a fixed resolve "to cling to the system she had adopted, and avail herself of the vastly superior advantages it offered," and found that, by giving herself wholly to her own people, "she experienced less distraction, and enjoyed more simple rest."

The cheerful, busy years ran on, almost eventless, till in 1849 a change came, the herald of others.

With the Westcott family Anne Lutton had removed to a new house in Cotham, Bristol, where it was hoped that the more bracing air would be of service to all, but especially to Mr. Westcott—a hope deceived in his case. Suddenly, while he was absent at Hereford, his family were called to attend his death-bed; they arrived only in time to receive his last farewell. Again Miss Lutton proved herself the tenderest and most efficient

comforter of those whose sorrow was her sorrow also. The bereaved mother and daughter were drawn yet closer to their heart's chosen friend, as by a threefold cord of love, impossible to break.

Year after year other friends departed: in 1850, Mrs. Murray, last surviving sister of Anne Lutton; in 1857, her aunt, mother of her favourite cousin, William Lutton; in 1859, her one surviving brother, Robert, died in America; and she stood almost alone in her own generation, the only one alive of a stately band of twelve or thirteen brothers and sisters. Her letters now become much fewer, and the records of her life much scantier.

We read of work done among the Jews, on behalf of the Society for their conversion: an effort was being made to circulate among them the New Testament Scriptures; Miss Lutton's excellent common-sense combined with her Hebrew lore to win for her unusual success in this field. Various journeyings also are chronicled, to London and its Great Exhibition, as well as to some beautiful health-resorts, frequented no less for Mrs. Westcott's sake than for her friend's. Both were now in delicate health; but Mrs. Westcott sank much the soonest. She died in the March of 1859. Her daughter, now left fatherless, motherless, brotherless, found her only earthly solace in the dear presence of the family comforter, and the two "grew very close to each other." Truly this Christian family had entertained an angel when they opened home and heart to the stranger from over the sea.

Anne Lutton was now entering on a period when of force she must disuse much of her active ministry to

others, and submit to be ministered to in her turn. As early as 1851 she began to be aware that her eyesight was slowly but certainly growing dimmer and dimmer; she long kept the knowledge to herself, unwilling to disturb her friends by imparting to them her own conviction that total blindness awaited her. The day came at last when this tender secrecy of hers could not be maintained.

Blindness was to her a peculiarly heavy deprivation. No longer to see the beautiful natural things whose fair colours and shapes had been to her, short-sighted as she was, one of the keenest delights, no longer to read or write letters; no longer to keep up her beloved studies, her habits of active independence; no longer to see the kindling, changing expression in the faces of those with whom she conversed, or catch "the lovelight in the eye" of the many who were dear to her: this must have seemed at first a dark change indeed. It had no lasting power, however, on her peace.

"When I first felt aware," she says, "that the shadows of evening were falling on my vision, there was a momentary pang and shrinking, but it was brief, and my soul ran to its hiding-place, and has never since come out. It is all well."

Some ten or twelve years elapsed before her growing dimness of sight merged into blindness. At first she could only read or write by a strong light, then not at all by artificial light. The delicate, clear writing grew irregular, and at last almost unrecognisable; and, the attempt which she made to use a writing-frame to guide her hand failing through the imperfection of the instrument, she was at last obliged to give up her corre-

spondence with distant friends, being unable, like not a few other facile writers, to give her thoughts full expression through an amanuensis.

She was long able to discern the large outlines of a landscape, the shape of a friend; when this power ceased, light remained awhile distinguishable from darkness; at last she lost even this measure of vision. She did not, however, to her own perception remain plunged in midnight blackness; a soft, vague light appeared to surround her. There was light in her soul also.

"Her unfailing trust in God, and her delight in His will, were not gone, and they never went till she went herself to Him."

It is quite possible that her days of complete blindness were less trying than those in which some glimmerings of vision still remained to her, for then her uncertain steps often stumbled, and several times she received injuries that shook her health. Total loss of sight, on the other hand, brought the wonted compensations of preternaturally acute hearing and exquisitely sensitive touch.

Aided by a much younger friend, who was, however, destined to pass away before her,—Mrs. Tucker, whose story we have already told, and whose sight was not yet quenched in darkness,—Miss Lutton soon mastered the raised alphabet invented by Moon, and could read in German, Italian, and Arabic, as well as English, the various portions of Scripture published in the embossed type. Keble's *Christian Year*, a part of Euclid, and sundry tracts, completed the little library which she could read for herself. She also beguiled many an

hour by knitting, which she executed with a delicate skill quite surprising.

The watchful assiduity of those who loved her would have saved her from feeling her darkened life monotonous, had she not possessed these resources. Nothing in its way could be more beautiful than the picture drawn for us of her tranquil and bright old age, surrounded by the ministering friends whom her life of unselfish beneficence had raised up for her. It mattered not that she was almost the one survivor of her own generation, that no children of her own were about her in her helpless age; the most faithful of sons and daughters could not more have prized and cherished her than did her spiritual children; and many far younger than herself delighted in her society. For religion put on its brightest aspect in her, and harmless mirth never felt itself rebuked before that placid countenance, radiant as it was with heaven's peace. Children had always delighted to sun themselves in her smile; the servants who during long years had waited on her, recognised in her the truest of personal friends. It is almost superfluous to say that the various ministers who laboured in Bristol and Clifton during her life there, or who met her in society, fully appreciated the rare worth of one who was a great power for good in Bristol Methodism to the very close of her long life. The names of the Revs. Dr. Punshon, Charles Tucker, and George Bowden occur most prominently in the record of the last years of her earthly existence.

Patient as she was under the long trial of her blindness, which could not have endured less than eighteen

years, it is evident that her heart was not in this world. In 1866 she bought for herself a grave in the Arno's Vale Cemetery, near to that of Mrs. Westcott; and, visiting it afterwards, said to a friend,—

"I should like to lie down there to-night;" while frequent on her lips were words that expressed a fearless longing for the grander after-life to which death is the entrance.

"Oh, the happy days I shall spend where there are no days! . . . It is so beautiful to be alive, and to know that you will never die—cannot die! The Lord is only teaching me how happy He can make me."

Feeling thus, she saw, without any uneasiness, rather with satisfaction, days and weeks and months passing on and making the last years of her life. "To-morrow, six months of the year will be gone; is it not awful to think of the rapid flight of time?" remarked a friend one day. "Not awful, but beautiful," she quickly replied; "is it not the will of our Heavenly Father that time should go on? Oh, to be lost in the ocean of God, in His immensity, in His purity!"

So for some years she lingered among men, troubled often, indeed, by recurring attacks of sickness and infirmity, but possessing her soul in an unclouded joy, bright as that of a disembodied and glorified spirit; yet altogether human, natural, simple. When her eightieth year was just completed, she referred to the Psalmist's saying of such long years, that "their strength is labour and sorrow," as having no fulfilment in her case. "Mine is not labour and sorrow." It might have been, but for the sunshine of the heart which glorified the last

hours of her long, devoted life, and for the resoluteness with which she continued her active service, even into the very month that saw her die.

In the previous year it had become necessary for her to give up that one of her classes which was wont to meet in an evening; a tendency to bronchial affection made it inexpedient for her to brave wild winter weather at nights, as, in despite of her blindness, she had hitherto continued to do. The members of this class, however, for the most part transferred themselves to their dear leader's morning classes; and these she continued to meet up to the second week of August 1881. On the 11th of that month, through heavy rain, she took her way for the last time to the vestry of Portland Chapel, Bristol, the scene for so many years of her labour as a class-leader, to meet her Thursday class there. It was noticed that she did not seem well. Eleven days after, she had "ceased at once to work and live."

The friend to whom she was most precious, who delighted in daily ministerings to her, whose loving care had made her old age happy, and to whose affection we owe the beautiful record of her life,—Miss Westcott,—had already great reason to be uneasy on her account; yet so often had Miss Lutton rallied from illness and loss of strength, that her last sickness and its fatal result came with something of a surprise.

"I am not prepared to part with you," this tender friend breathed, as, watching the sick-bed of her second mother, she saw that the parting was drawing near. "God will take care of you," was the reply; "I am so glad I am going before you."

There was some agonizing suffering to be passed through in her seven days' sharp illness; but there was never a murmur mingled with the touching petitions for help and for patience that sometimes broke from her lips; while "many beautiful words of holy trust were uttered. Amongst the last spoken were, 'I am going to a beautiful home.' 'I am going to heaven.' 'Blessed Jesus.' 'Lord, take me.'"

There came a short space of unconsciousness; then two or three gentle sighs; and the pure spirit passed away, to be for ever with the Lord.

The acute suffering through which she had to win her release, never had power so much as to disturb the serene and beautiful expression of her face; and in death, as in life, calm, unruffled trust and hope seemed to shine in every feature.

The tombstone erected over the "narrow house" that fifteen years before had become hers by purchase, was inscribed with such an epitaph as she herself had desired; her name, her age, the place of her birth and of her death, and the one word "Alleluia." Nothing could be more fitting for one whose life for five-and-sixty years had been an unbroken song of joy and thanksgiving to God.

"This biography," says Miss Westcott, in concluding her record, "cannot convey to strangers all that constituted the charm which attracted to its subject young and old, rich and poor, cultivated and homely;" much less, then, can a sketch like ours, necessarily lacking the detail of the larger work which has suggested it. Yet something of the "beauty of holiness" must breathe out from even the slightest outline of this consecrated life.

Her charm told upon "the little child of three or four years old, who would not be removed from her presence except by force. Her youthful friends felt it. 'I adored her,' said one of those unhappy ones whom few loved. 'I looked for her letters,' said another, 'as I would have done for those of a lover.' Young men sought her company after eighty years had rolled over her head. Her ministers loved and venerated her. The humble, the poor, the sorrowful, took refuge in her deep sympathy; and the intellectual members of her circle looked to her society for satisfaction in mental congeniality, and took pleasure in her sparkling humour." And further, "to use a homely phrase, she was 'good to live with;' she possessed that priceless treasure in a home,—

> A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathize."

Unselfish, generous, finding it ever more blessed to give than to receive, she never forgot a kindness; and she remembered injuries only to repay them with favours.

Thus her private life furnished the fairest commentary on her more public teachings. Of these, in the nature of the case, the written record is necessarily but slight, and their best memorial is in the souls that were enlightened and the lives that were raised and purified by their means. Some account, however, of the manner in which she conducted her classes and her Bible-readings, has been supplied by persons attending on them.

It would appear that she frequently took the subject of her readings from the Gospels, loving beyond other scripture "the words of the Master." She would first critically expound the chosen portion verse by verse, referring to parallel passages in the Old and New Testaments; her references being carefully followed by her hearers. This exposition being finished, "there followed appeals to the conscience, and directions for the inner life."

Here lay her great power, in the intense feeling, the eyes filling with tears, the rich and sweet voice trembling with earnestness, while she spoke of the love of Christ, and urged the listeners "to give their hearts wholly and for ever to Him." Vividly she realized the gospel narrative, and made others realize it; more intensely yet she realized the divinity of the ever-present Saviour, so that, referring to the errors of those who deny it, it would be seen that this was a grief to her, hardly to be spoken of without weeping.

It is not wonderful that these addresses made a deep and indeed imperishable impression on those who heard them. Sometimes the bread she had thus cast on the waters was found by her after very many days;—in one instance, it was after a life of sixty years, consecrated to God through the early teachings of Anne Lutton, that her convert again came into contact with her, and she learned what good she had wrought. In the class her manner was only so far different, as that service called for more variety, and for the exercise of special tact and judgment. Her opening prayer on both occasions was such as at once to "lift its hearers

into a higher and purer region." Joy and gladness characterized the hymns she chose to sing as well as the religious experience she had to recount, and shone radiant from her face as she spoke; and so exactly did she suit her words of counsel to the mood and temperament of each member, that it always seemed as if "the Lord told her the right thing to say."

As she was an assiduous visitor, and as her intimacy with her members extended far beyond the limits of the class-room, she was able to lend them aid in many ways when it seemed needful; and as the average number under her charge was not less than eighty-seven persons yearly, during forty-two years, such a leadership might have well seemed a sufficient occupation and an all-engrossing one; yet, as we have seen, her consecrated energy found many another channel of usefulness.

To complete the picture of a lovely saintliness, it needs but to add that those who knew her well and long could not "remember ever hearing her speak a word against any one." She loved much; and hers was the supreme love that "suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not; thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Such being the character and attainments of the last to pass away of the saintly women on our list, we may take courage for the future, and confidently believe that the succession, hitherto unbroken, of Christian heroines among us will not fail. The muster-roll on which the name of Susanna Wesley stands first may worthily conclude with that of Anne Lutton; but our

hope is good that coming years may furnish other names, not less eminent in holiness and usefulness, to fill nobly yet another such inspiring catalogue of women-saints dwelling among "the people called Methodists."

THE END.

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