ELIZABETH FRY

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B-Fry
Richards
Elizabeth Fry

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Elizabeth, Mrs. Fry

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THE ANGEL OF THE PRISONS

BY

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ILLUSTRATED

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TO

KATHERINE P. LORING

WITH AFFECTIONATE GREETING

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ELIZABETH FRY

CHAPTER I

LITTLE BETSY GURNEY

I KNOW no pleasanter reading than the lives or memoirs of good people; fortunately, literature is full of them. When we learn of the marvelous work of So-and-so, we naturally wonder (if we are of an inquiring turn of mind) what manner of man he was; how he lived, looked, spoke; how and why he was able to work his wonders. Then we go to the nearest library, and commune with the card catalogue, or—if we are of the mousing kind—mouse about among the shelves dedicated to biography. We are pretty sure to find a life or a memoir, or at least a memorial sketch; now and then we have the luck to light on an autobiography. Then we find out about the good great man, and thenceforward we take a new and far more lively interest in his work, because we can

see him doing it; we know how he felt, what he said, what his family and friends said, when he painted the picture or won the battle, built the cathedral or wrote the novel or led the reform.

Thinking these things, I am minded to tell, briefly and simply, a life-story which has been told many times before, yet which is not today as well known as it deserves to be: the story of the Angel of the Prisons.

We know her as Elizabeth Fry, that being her married name, and the one she bore during two-thirds of her life; her maiden name was Elizabeth Gurney. She was born in 1780, a year of many notable happenings. In America, that year, Major André was hanged as a British spy, and the Count de Rochambeau arrived in Rhode Island with a French army. In England, the manufacture of cotton cloth was begun at Manchester. In France, the use of torture in public trials was abolished by the King, Louis XVI, who was to lose his life a few years later in the terrible French Revolution.

Among all these notable events, the birth of one girl baby more or less may seem a small matter; but "great oaks from little acorns grow," and thou-

sands of people all over the world were to rejoice that this particular baby had come into the world.

Little Betsy Gurney knew nothing about all this; never dreamed that she would ever be called an angel, in this world at least. She was a pretty, rosy child, one of the twelve children of John Gurney of Earlham, in the county of Norfolk.

A word about John Gurney himself, before we begin upon his children. As a boy, he had bright red hair, and the other boys used to tease him about it. One day a party of them followed him in the streets of Norfolk, crying, "Look at him! he's got a bonfire on top of his head!" John said nothing, but went straight to a barber's, had his head shaved, and went home in a wig!

He grew up a handsome fellow, and married "the lovely Kitty"—Catherine Bell, a great-granddaughter of Robert Barclay of Ury. Those of us who know and love our Whittier remember his noble ballad "Barclay of Ury"; this was the same Robert Barclay, who, together with his friend William Penn and others, suffered imprisonment and many other indignities on account of his religious belief.

John Gurney, when he married, was a woolstapler and spinner of worsted yarn. It was not till many years later that he became a partner in

the Norwich Bank (founded by his uncle, Henry Gurney) which laid the foundations of the great wealth later to be associated with the family name. "As rich as the Gurneys" became almost a proverb in England. It is pleasant to think that along with the wealth grew a reputation for virtue, honor and integrity, which was to make the name golden in men's mouths in the higher as well as the lower sense.

And now for the children. Catherine, Rachel, Elizabeth; these three were classed together; then came John, succeeded by Richenda, Hannah, Louisa and Priscilla, known in the family as "the four girls"; then Samuel, Joseph John, and Daniel. (The twelfth child had died in early infancy.) This is the family, headed by its honored father, which came to be known far and wide as "the Gurneys of Earlham."

And they were *all beautiful!* They lived before the days of photography, but fortunately they were able to have portraits and miniatures painted, and silhouettes snipped. Looking from one lovely face to another, one cannot tell which is the most beautiful. If we could only go back a matter of a century and a half (more or less) it would be well worth a voyage across the water to see the Gur-

neys of Earlham together. Then perhaps we could tell whether Louisa was the greatest beauty, or Hannah, or Richenda—to say nothing of Joseph John and Samuel, two of the handsomest men of their time.

Hannah, writing eighty years afterward, thus tells of the birth of "little Dan," the youngest child:

"We, the younger girls, were spending the morning at the farther end of the kitchen-garden, old nurse with us. Becky came to say a boy was born, and I remember the party of children allowed to go in to see the baby, holding on to each other's frocks in an orderly line. Not two years after, I remember them in a similar line walking past their dying mother.

"Our grandmother, Elizabeth Kett, used to come to Earlham with Molly Neale, and bring us finger-cakes and sugar-plums. She was a stout old woman in a Friend's dress. She gave her grandchildren a half-crown each, engraved with their initials and the date—October 12, 1786. Cousin Henrietta Gurney also used to come—in a very stiff stately dress—and sit in great formality on the sofa. She also always brought her little box of sugar-plums."

Elizabeth and Rachel were like twins in their

close intimacy and affection. They played together, read, studied, worked together. "We had," says Elizabeth, "our pretty light closet, our books, our pictures, our curiosities, our tea things, all to ourselves; and as far as I can recollect, we unitedly partook of these pleasures, without any of the little jealousies, or the quarrels of childhood."

(The "light closet" was a playroom, no doubt; in those days a small room was often called a closet.)

Earlham was a large house, with plenty of room for the eleven children inside, and plenty of ground outside. A beautiful park surrounded the house, with great trees dotted here and there. The river Wensum, a clear winding stream, flowed near by; there were lawns and flower beds, shrubberies and gardens, enough to delight the heart of every child, little or big.

Betsy was a timid child. She would sometimes cry if anyone looked at her, and then say that her eyes were weak. She was so much afraid of a gun that she once gave up a pleasure trip with her father and mother because there was a gun in the carriage. But her worst fears were of the dark and the sea. She suffered agonies of terror when the light was taken away at night. When the fam-

ily went to the seashore, she wept bitterly at sight of the ocean, knowing that she would be forced to bathe in the cold water she so dreaded.

Even the Bible lessons from her tender mother were sometimes a source of terror. Reading of the sacrifice of Isaac, she was so frightened that she "always dreaded going to Meeting, lest her parents should sacrifice her there!"

Think of it! The grave, kind, loving parents, sitting wrapped in silent prayer or pious meditation; between them the little silent child, palpitating with terror, dreading from moment to moment to see the kind eyes grow stern and awful, a knife flash in the strong hand!

The parents never knew this; she told a friend in later years.

No one seems to have thought of making things easier for the frightened child; yet her mother loved her most tenderly, and would not for the world have hurt her little daughter knowingly. The mother's devotion to all her children appears in her letters as well as her journals. She writes to a cousin:

"I am glad to find that thy thoughts are sometimes engaged in my affairs, and that my children are more particularly the object of them. . . . I

think thou wilt not be pleased to find that I am so poor an economist of time, that I scarcely make any progress in the education of my elder girls, yet I console myself—perhaps improperly—that although we make no rapid advances, I endeavor, and I hope with success, to secure their minds from injury. . . . I can scarcely resist now an inclination to introduce my little ones. Kitty's good propensities by no means fail her, and, I hope, increase. My lively Rachel has an ardent desire to do well, yet cannot always resist a powerful inclination to the contrary. But my dove-like Betsy scarcely ever offends, and is, in every sense of the word, truly engaging. Our charming boy has a violent inclination to be master, but his extraordinary attachment to me gives me a tolerable share of power, which, be assured, I by no means mean to resign. If my sweet Richenda were not so much teased by her eyes, she would be, in my opinion, as lovely an infant as I have ever yet reared. . . ."

Mrs. Gurney was fond of all outdoor things, and she taught the children to love them; flowers and shells were her special delight. Betsy remembered all her life the beds of wild flowers at Earlham, and in her many journeyings it was a never-failing pleasure to her to observe the wild flowers along the

way. Her cabinet of shells and curiosities, too, was a life-long interest, and this too she owed to her mother. In later years, when cares and anxieties pressed upon her and she was weary with overmuch work, she could always turn to her cabinet, and forget her troubles for a time in admiration of the wonders of nature.

This careful and tender mother drew up a set of rules for her own guidance which is still preserved. Her whole day was portioned out; so much time for the children, so much for household duties, so much for reading, prayer and meditation. Here is an extract from it:

"The introduction of the children after dinner generally affords my husband and myself an opportunity of the united enjoyment of our domestic comforts. A short afternoon may either be devoted to the company of my dear husband, or to writing letters, reading, or instruction to the children alternately, particularly in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Before tea, or immediately after, I should assemble the little ones, to take particular and individual leave of each other, and the remaining hours of the evening may be devoted to the promotion of my husband's enjoyment, and, if possible, to blend instruction with amusement for

the elder children, who are our constant companions till the time of rest. Then, being quiet and uninterrupted with my best friend, let me not be unmindful of the religious duties of life; which consideration may, I hope, lead to that trust in Providence which gives spiritual tranquillity and spiritual support."

What did little Betsy wear, playing about the Earlham park, or coming down to the parlor after dinner, with her six sisters and four brothers (or as many of them as could walk)? I fear her dress was not very comfortable. When she first began to walk, she probably wore a "pudding and a pinner," as all proper children did in those days. The "pudding" was "a thick roll or cushion stuffed with wool or some soft filling." It was tied round the child's head, so that in case of a tumble there would be no harm done; some children wear them even now, I am told. The "pinner" was simply a pinafore or "tier"; I wonder if Betsy's were yellow! There seems to have been a great fancy about that time for dressing children in yellow. We hear of two little boys, who were in time to be friends and to become great and famous men, dressed entirely in yellow, until they went into trousers. Little Thomas Carlyle wore yellow serge, little Ralph

Waldo Emerson yellow flannel "by night and by day."

When Betsy came down to the parlor after dinner with her brothers and sisters, she doubtless wore an apron instead of a pinner; everybody wore aprons then, babies and grandames, men and women. They were of every material, from calico to brocade and point lace. I have seen some beautiful aprons of white silk, edged with gold lace, and embroidered all over with tulips, roses, and so on, in the natural colors; the prettiest things you can imagine. The Gurneys were Quakers, as we know, but at this time the "Quaker gray" was not universally worn except by the stricter sort of "plain Friends."

By this time Betsy and Rachel had outgrown "puddings," but I fear they were still uncomfortable, because of stays and collars. The girls of today, running, jumping, playing tennis and basket-ball, their bodies swaying freely as branches in the wind, ought to be sorry for the girls of one hundred and fifty years ago. Mrs. Earle, in her delightful "Two Centuries of Costume," says:

"One of the worst instruments of torture I ever beheld was a pair of child's stays worn in 1760. They were made, not of little strips of wood, but

of a large piece of board, front and back, tightly sewed into a buckram jacket and reënforced across at right angles and diagonally over the hips (though really there were no hip-places) with bars of whalebone and steel. The tin corsets I have heard of would not have been half as ill to wear. It is true, too, that needles were placed in the front of the stays, that the stay-wearer who 'poked her head' would be well pricked. The daughter of General Nathanael Greene, the Revolutionary patriot, told her grandchildren that she sat many hours every day in her girlhood, with her feet in stocks and strapped to a backboard. A friend has a chair of ordinary size, save that the seat is about four inches wide from the front edge of the seat to the back. And the back is well worn at certain points where a heavy leather strap strapped up the young girl who was tortured in it for six years of her life."

Well! well! we know that Nelly Custis and Dolly Payne (afterwards Dolly Madison) wore not only stays, but *masks* in order that no ray of sunlight might reach their faces; Betsy and Rachel Gurney were spared that torment at least.

When Betsy was twelve years old her mother died. This brought a great change into her life.

Mr. Gurney was a most kind and affectionate father, but he was very busy, and had little time to give his children compared with the constant attendance of their mother. Catherine, the eldest, assumed at once the care of the younger ones, and became one of the loveliest examples of the mother-sister, a woman of rare nobility, sweetness and strength of character. *Mrs.* Catherine she was called, through a great part of her life; a title of respect and courtesy only, as she never married. At the time of her mother's death, however, "Kitty" was only seventeen, a gay, beautiful, high-spirited girl, full of high thoughts and ideals of duty, but also fond of pleasure, as every normal girl is. So, when grief had softened into tender memory, there were gay times at Earlham. Never was there a more united and affectionate family. Catherine's rule was firm but gentle, a rule of loving influence, not of strict repression. She has been compared to the beloved president of a harmonious republic. No one enjoyed more than she the game of hide-and-seek with the younger children in the winding passages and the "eighty cupboards" of the old house at Earlham. It was she who planned the picnics and expeditions, encouraged the singing of duets, rounds and glees, and got up the merry, in-

formal dances which were the delight of the whole family. We are told that:

"The sisters enjoyed themselves immensely. They scoured the country on their ponies, in scarlet riding-habits. On one occasion it is recorded that the seven linked arms, drew a line across the road, and stopped the mail-coach from ascending the neighboring hill." [1]

Scarlet was a favorite color with the Gurneys. In their walks and rambles about the wide grounds, they wore little scarlet cloaks, over which their fair hair (most of them were blonde beauties) flowed free with neither hood nor cap to restrain it.

There is no doubt that for a time the girls ran rather wild, living a far freer life than Quaker maidens were wont to do. *Friends:* let us use the sweeter, *friendlier* word; though we must not forget that the name "Quaker" came from the fact that George Fox and his followers "bade the people tremble at the word of the Lord."

George Fox! I wonder how many of my readers know the story of that strange and wonderful man, the founder of the Society of Friends. He was born in England in 1624, the son of a poor weaver, Christopher Fox, called by the neighbors

[1] "The Gurneys of Earlham." Augustus J. C. Hare.

"Righteous Christer." Both his parents were deeply religious, and George began while still a child to care more for the things of God than for the things of man. He was apprenticed to a shoemaker, and worked at his trade till he was nineteen years old. He says of himself, "A good deal went through my hands. . . . People had generally a love to me for my innocency and honesty." In 1643, going to a fair on business, and accompanying some friends to the village public house, he was deeply distressed on seeing youths of his own age drinking, and being called on to join them. He "departed in great grief of spirit." "When," he says, "I had done what business I had to do, I returned home, but did not go to bed that night, nor could I sleep, but sometimes walked up and down, and sometimes prayed and cried to the Lord, who said unto me, 'Thou seest how young people go together into vanity and old people into the earth; thou must forsake all, both young and old, and keep out of all, and be a stranger to all.' Then, at the command of God, on the ninth day of the seventh month, 1643, I left my relations, and broke off all familiarity of fellowship with old or young."

So, very simply, he describes the great change that came upon him. For four years he wandered

up and down the country, troubled and perplexed in spirit, not knowing what he should do. He asked advice of many wise men, but none of their counsels satisfied the need of his spirit. At length, from within, he seemed to hear the voice of Christ, telling him what he should do. He was to preach, and to teach; to give earnest heed to the *inner* light, the light of Christ, which God had placed in every human heart. After this, all was clear to him; yet, from time to time, he received new revelations, directly, as it seemed to him, by this inner light. He was not to take off his hat to any person, high or low; he was to say "thee" and "thou" instead of "you"; he was not to bid people good morning or good evening; he was not "to bow or scrape with his leg to anyone." If smitten, he was not to return the blow. God was to be worshiped in the spirit only, and he grew to abhor all formalities in religious services. Hearing the great bell of Nottingham Cathedral (he called it the "steeple-house") ringing for service on Sunday morning (he called it "First Day") the inward voice bade him enter and cry against the temple and the worshipers in it. So he did, and refused to be silent. He was not unnaturally arrested and carried off to prison as a disturber of the peace. This was the first of

his many imprisonments. Wherever he went, "the voice said 'cry'," and he cried aloud against pride and display, against hypocrisy and spiritual wickedness in high places, against every evil thing he saw about him.

He would have people live together as Friends, simply, in brotherly love; dressing for warmth and modesty, not for show; eating for nourishment and strengthening, not for tickling the palate; maintaining in all their dealings with men a sober gravity of speech, action and bearing, and in their approach to God a humble, silent adoration.

For preaching and teaching these doctrines George Fox was imprisoned nine several times; was flouted and jeered at, called madman and rascal. He did not care much. When they shut him up, he wrote letters and exhortations, besides his famous Journal; when he was free, he preached and taught; always and everywhere he delivered the message as he received it, fearing nothing that man could do. Truly a man of God.

And now we must return to Earlham.

CHAPTER II

THE GURNEYS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

SISTER CATHERINE expected all the children to keep a journal, and most of them did. Unfortunately, Elizabeth, in later life, destroyed her childish journals, preserving only those written after she was seventeen years old; but those of the other children have been kept, volumes and volumes of them. Turning their pages, yellow with time, we can almost feel ourselves at Earlham, the playmates, for a few hours, of the seven lovely sisters. Louisa writes:

"April 3d, 1796.—I am eleven years old. I love my father better than anybody except Kitty; she is everything to me. I cannot feel that she has a fault, and I am sure that I shall always continue to love her as I do now. To dear Rachel I feel differently. I should love her more if I thought she loved me half as much as I love her. To Betsy I feel a particular sort of attachment: her ill-health and sweetness draw my heart to her entirely. John,

I love very much. To Chenda [Richenda] how odd I feel! I often long to be intimate with her, but can't; I am so sharply repulsed. I think Hannah a superior girl in many respects, but she has some disagreeable qualities. I love the three dear little boys heartily; they will be charming men. I love dearest Elizabeth[1] truly, and am more intimate with her than with anybody in the world. I like all the Enfields very much; I think they are a most delightful family.

"I stayed at home from Goat's, which I was most glad of. In the morning I was very low, but seeing Kitty quite revived me; she always brings joy into my heart. She talked to us in the afternoon, and it did me good."

"Goat's" was the Friends' Meeting-house of Norwich, in Goat's Lane, a quaint, Dutch-looking building, with high roofs and many windows. Mr. Gurney was a liberal Friend, but he expected all his children to go once, and generally twice, to Meeting on Sunday. The Meeting would often last three or four hours. Sometimes the whole time would be passed in silence; sometimes there would be sermon or exhortation, of which the younger

[1] Elizabeth Gurney, a cousin, who afterward married John Gurney.

children probably understood little or nothing. Small wonder that they dreaded the weary silence, the tedious preaching! The Meetings are often described in the journals as *"dis,"* the Gurney abbreviation of "disgusting." "A long, *dis* meeting at Goat's," is a frequent entry. Yet, as we shall see, in time they came to value deeply in their turn the stillness which to their mature and awakened minds was full of holy and blessed thought, the words which to their now open ears burned with sacred fire.

The children had many quaint expressions of their own. If not quite well, they were "off their centre"; if nervous or troubled, they "had their hurries." "A family settlement" meant the gathering of the girls around Catherine, she reading aloud while they worked.

Louisa shall take up the story again.

"April 5th.—Stayed at home today and had a pleasant morning. I am always so happy to escape from the claws of Goat's. We went on very nicely in our lessons; this morning has really improved me, and how nice it is to feel oneself improved."

"April 7th.—Dear Kitty was poorly. All my thoughts were centred on her. If she was to die,

I think I could not bear it; we should lose a mother, for I am sure she is one to us."

"April 8th.—I have done nothing today to please anybody, nor the least good. I am really a most disagreeable common character, and the reason why people love me can be only from habit."

"April 14th.—I do not know what we shall do when Betsy comes home, for we are all afraid of her now, which is very shocking.[1] Dearest Betsy! she seems to have no one for her *friend,* for none of us are intimate with her. I had a cloud over me in the evening, but Kitty soon dispersed it; she is to my mind as the sun on a rainy day."

"June 1st.—I will write about Earlham. My father is master, Kitty is mistress. Governess, disliked by most of the family, sits in the drawing-room almost all day. Rachel and Betsy have their own employments. Rachel and Kitty sleep together in the Blue Room, the closet is entirely Rachel's. The nursery is where Betsy, Hannah, Cilla [Priscilla], and I sleep. The night-nursery is the boys' room and nurse's. Chenda sleeps with the gov-

[1] Then, and for long afterwards, Betsy was subject to great fits of depression. Her expression for this, being in a "valley"—a sinking—was long used in the family.

erness. The first maid is Judd, a convinced friend and trustworthy old servant. Nurse Sarah Williams comes next, and is very particular about us: her greatest happiness is to see us neat: she often tires me by scoldings about keeping my clothes neat. . . . Scarnell is a worthy man, who has had the greatest concern to be a Friend, and is now going to be one. . . . We have lived in this sweet place ten years.

"Kitty and Hannah went to Goat's; we three have been blessed with staying at home lately because of our coughs. Governess is going away: I am most glad she is, I dislike her so very much. I think it must do harm to the heart to feel such dislike as I do. . . ."

The governess did go, and Catherine and Elizabeth seem to have had charge of the teaching for a time.

"June 13th.—In the afternoon we walked about instead of lessons—I do so like my liberty. I think it most silly to bring children up to be always at work. I am sure I should be better and happier if I did not learn much; it does try my temper so much."

"June 21st.—Today is the great day of the Yearly Meeting. All Friends come that like it. We had

not so many as usual, only twenty-seven. We went to a long *dis* Meeting after breakfast."

These meetings were held at Norwich; but as Earlham was only a few miles away, its hospitable owner kept open house at these times, after the pleasant custom of Friends.

Norwich, which George Borrow thought "perhaps the most curious specimen extant of the genuine old English town," was the scene not only of all religious meetings for the Gurneys, but of all their gayeties, except the informal ones at home. I should like to devote an entire chapter to Norwich Town; at least it must have a paragraph to itself. The Britons owned it first, then the Romans. There was a Saxon *burh* (castle or tower) there in 767. The town was sacked again and again by the Norsemen; in 878 it was Guthrum's headquarters. Perhaps—who knows?—it was into this fortified camp that a certain harper stole one night and played and sang the Danes to their ruin! By 1017 Canute was living there. William Rufus built the castle, whose frowning keep still remains, and is used as a jail. Henry I gave the town its charter. In 1348 the Black Death swept away two-thirds of its inhabitants. Under Mary Tudor, Protestants were burned alive in Norwich

marketplace; under Elizabeth, Catholics met the same fate. The town was fortified by Cromwell, did homage to Charles II at the Restoration. What a story!

Many good and famous people have lived in Norwich; among them stout old Sir Thomas Erpingham, who led the charge at Agincourt, and Sir Thomas Browne, the beloved physician, author of the "Religio Medici" and other delightful books. Amelia Opie was born there, and Harriet Martineau, and that eminent painter known as "Old Crome" (as if he had been born ancient like the *Precocious Baby*).

I apologize to the reader for the length of this digression, and to Norwich town for its brevity; also to Louisa, whose journalizing I have thus interrupted.

"Rachel has begun to teach us our lessons. I like her teaching very much, though not nearly so much as Kitty's; she treats me as other girls are treated, but Kitty treats us as though we were reasonable creatures. I hate the common way of teaching children; people treat them as if they were idiots, and never let them judge for themselves."

"July 31st.—After breakfast I picked most of the servants some gooseberries, and Judd's mother

a whole basketful. How very good of me! I have the greatest pleasure in doing things to please others; it is one of my best qualities. . . . Another of my qualities which people call most bad, but which I think rather good, is that I cannot bear strict authority over me. I do from the bottom of my heart *hate* the preference shown in all things to my elders merely because they have been in the world a little longer. I do love equality and true democracy."

"August 14th.—Betsy is so ill, I look forward with the most gloomy ideas concerning her. . . . A great many Friends came to tea. I did all I could to please them. How charming it is to feel one is giving pleasure! Though I never can say how stupid they were to me. . . . After tea Kitty chose we should work again; this was rather a *tug* to me, but I bore it pretty well, only Kitty *did* provoke me by making me give up something to Chenda, merely because she was the eldest; there is nothing I hate so much as this sort of partiality; it *does* provoke me so. We read a little Sacred History; I like the New Testament amazingly."

"August 24th.—I got up early and made a pincushion for nurse's sister. I think it quite right to pay these sort of attentions to servants, and if

we do it out of kindness, it is more virtue to give a present to a person who has been rather ungrateful to you. I hate Betsy's management of our lessons. Now that Kitty is away at Northrepps, Betsy does it, and is quite disagreeable, she is so soon worried."

"August 27th.—After breakfast, Betsy, Madge, Danny and I went to the Herings'. We went in the chaise, and as there was not room for us all on the seat, they set me on the head of the chaise. I never had such a jostling uncomfortable ride. We had a nice little dinner, and afterwards went into the garden and picked cherries and plums. At tea officers and gentlemen came in; they were most *dis* and flirtatious. At supper I ate so many brandy cherries that I was half tipsy; so Madge and Betsy took me into their room, and stuffed some salts and rhubarb down my throat."

After a while, little Mother Catherine evidently found that the journals were taking too much of the sisters' time; that they were going into minute details which were not worth preserving. Moreover, she probably realized that the constant self-examination was tending to make some of them morbid. Soon after a long outpouring of such details, Louisa writes:

"Kitty has forbidden us now to write more than six lines in our journals. I entirely see that it is now her plan to treat us as babies; I am very, very sorry."

"Nov. 26.—How glad I am to be at Earlham again. We have romped most of the morning. In the afternoon we read a novel. In the evening a blind fiddler came, and we had a most merry dance, and ended with a violent romp. I like Mrs. Freeman vastly. I do think she will answer."

Mrs. Freeman was a Quaker lady-help, afterwards called Grandmamma Freeman; she came to Earlham for a fortnight, and stayed thirty years!

"Dec. 16.—We dined at Keswick today. I have been reading the 'Vicar of Wakefield' and Robertson's 'History of America.' How I do like a good romp. Elizabeth dined with us today; she is most sweet; how I do love her! A fiddler came in the evening, and we had a charming dance. How delightful it is to dance to music!"

The six-line rule seems to have been soon relaxed, and the journals flow on once more unchecked.

"When I had a sore throat and was poorly on Friday, Kitty nursed me most kindly: I never saw so kind and sweet a nurse. Nothing particular has

happened lately, but I have been most happy, most interested in my own improvement. It is now settled that we are to buy and take care of our own clothes. I am very glad of it, for I think it is a very good plan. I do geography in the afternoon, which does not improve me as much as my other lessons. I now spell, write, and cypher as well as most children—very useful things, but not very pleasant. All the dear boys are home for the holidays. They are most sweet. We have been out a great deal; we jumped in the barn, and sat at the top of the high stack."

"Feb. 24, 1797. I shall relate what has passed in my mind lately. I think that I am improved altogether. I have been extremely busy, and have got into a good way of gaining knowledge, but I think I have grown rather vain, which is a most disgusting fault. Rachel has done me the greatest good. I admire and love her more than I can say. Being parted from dearest Kitty for some time has not the least abated my love, but it has increased my fear of her. I do not feel in the least intimate with her, which often vexes me. She now and then takes us up, and does not allow us to have any opinion. These things would not be observed in anyone else, but she is usually so kind, so good, and

so charming, that even a cool word seems odd in her. And her present plan of treating us as children rather hurts me, being of a somewhat forward disposition. Pitchford has been here twice since Kitty has been gone, and we have had most delightful days. He brought us four a box of Portugal plums. I never knew anything so kind. We had a most charming walk in the afternoon, when we all quarreled for Pitchford's arm; we are so perfectly free with him. I can't say how I admire him. After dinner we talked very pleasantly till tea; after that we acted pantomimes, and then read poetry and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. After supper was the most delightful time of any; I did feel so happy. They sang, 'Come, ye lads and lasses fair.' "

This is the first mention of John Pitchford, who seems to have been a delightful person. Catherine felt, in later years, that at this period of their youth, the sisters and brothers were not only growing careless in matters of religion, but that they were fast drifting toward "infidelity." Curiously enough, the first influence that tended to restore their religious balance was that of this young Roman Catholic gentleman. He made the acquaintance of the Gurney sisters in 1797, and soon became an

intimate friend of the family. The religious, or rather irreligious views of some of them, troubled him greatly, and he constantly urged upon them the truth of Christianity and the beauty of religious faith, though never trying to convert them to the special doctrines of his own church.

About this time the girls' journals are much concerned with "the Prince." The Prince is coming; the Prince is going; the Prince danced with Betsy, sang with Rachel, smiled at Richenda. This *Prince Charming* was William Frederick, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, a younger brother of King George III. He was a gay young officer then, and quartered with his regiment at Norwich, only two miles from Earlham.

"My father has been to dine with the Prince; he likes him very much, and is delighted that he is coming here on seventh-day week. Uncle Joseph, and Hannah, and Jane have been here, and Uncle Joseph spoke to Rachel about going out to dances. He took her into the study, and when he was gone she burst out crying. I did pity her so much. I am afraid she must give it up. All our hope is now laid upon her having a pianoforte at home. They are trying this grand point with my father; may they succeed, but I much doubt it."

"April 26th.—I have been but middling in mind lately. I have not entirely dropt all my good resolutions, but I do not keep up to them sufficiently. My principal plan was industry and perseverance; these are virtues that I think it is almost impossible to be anything without. . . . Prince William has been here with a great deal of company; I like him vastly. There was amazing fuss made about his coming. He is coming again next Sunday to meet the Gurneys, who have made a scolding about it. . . . I never felt in so happy and comfortable a state as I do now. I think I will write down how I spend my day.

"I always get up at five or six, which I call late. I read till breakfast, which I enjoy amazingly; the breakfast is a little after eight. I am most busy all the morning at lessons. I have about half an hour for play. We dine at three. In the afternoon I write my French exercise and journal, and study botany, which I think is a most charming employment; to study nature in any way is delightful. We drink tea about six, and have the most pleasant evenings. We all sit and work while Kitty reads to us. We have been reading Hayley's 'Triumph of Temper,' which I only like tolerably. I went to Keswick yesterday. Elizabeth and I had a large

syllabub, and sucked it through straws. I think my mind has been in a very good state. I am improving. It is very pleasant to think so sometimes. One of my chief faults is speaking unkindly to Betsy: she does provoke me so. She behaves in some things so aristocratically because she is the eldest, and nothing makes me so angry as that. How very pleasant is Pitchford's company! We had a charming walk, and then we came in and sat round the fire with Pitchford. He talked most interestingly, principally about religion. I can't say how much I admire what he said—the happiness he had in prayer, and he showed what a *most* delightful thing real religion is, and what a comfort and support religion is to the mind. He spoke so charmingly, and became so animated about it, it was enough to make one religious. I am determined I will be religious—*really* so, I mean. When Pitchford was gone, I went to bed, and lay awake till Kitty came. What Pitchford had said had got so completely into my mind, that I thought about it the whole time, and somehow Kitty and I fell into talk about it. She said that it was only very lately that she had felt *real* devotion, and that it had made her far happier. I now intend to make it my aim to follow Pitchford and Kitty; I never saw such per-

fect characters as they. The last time I was at Keswick, Elizabeth told me she wondered we were not all more charming than we are, living with Kitty. It rather hurt me; I don't know why, but it did. I believe it was because I felt it was true. I am determined I will try to make myself worthy of the pains that such a person as Kitty takes with me. . . ."

"Oct. 19.—I am afraid I shall be a flirt when I grow up. I really do think I shall. It is rather odd for me to begin talking about flirting; to be sure I am not a flirt yet, but then I think I shall be. Flirtationing arises from vanity and too great love of admiration, particularly from men. Last night the Hoares and Ketts were here; we had a fiddle; it would have been more delightful with a pleasant party, but I enjoyed it thoroughly; nothing hardly can be disagreeable with a *dear, darling, elating fiddle.* I really am fit to jump out of my skin at the sound of it. Young Sam Hoare[1] was most disgusting; we were on most good terms for the first part of the evening, but at last he went so far as to give me a kiss; it was most disgusting. Still I was very agreeable last night; I felt so both in mind and body; how seldom can I say this of myself."

[1] Her future husband.

"Nov. 16.—Betsy went to the assembly last night, and danced a great deal. How most droll! quite a new excursion!

"I am most vexed, for I have often lately been discontented with what Kitty has fixed for me to do. How wicked it is to treat a person, and *such* a person as my own dearest Kitty, with the least degree of unkindness—and after all she has done for me. There is not one in ten thousand that would have done the same in her case. Has she not almost entirely devoted her life to us four, and is it not the least we can do to treat her always with the greatest affection, even if what she wishes be disagreeable?"

Richenda was fifteen at this time, and her journal also speaks of "the Prince."

"Dec. 23, 1797.—Went to the Hemings' in the evening to meet the Prince and a large party. It was very entertaining seeing everybody flirt and look so silly. There were a great many people, and our three did look delightful and superior amongst them all, especially dear Kitty. . . . I could not help thinking of it for some time after, and as Kitty says, 'red coats and fine ladies glittered before my eyes.' "

"Dec. 24.—I shall not say much of this day, as

indeed it is not worth saying much about. It was flat, stupid, unimproving, and Sundayish. I spent *four* hours at Meeting! I never, never wish to see that nasty hole again!"

"Dec. 25.—I have a pleasant association towards Christmas day; nice turkey and plum-pudding bring a train of such pleasant ideas to my mind."

"Dec. 28.—Yesterday was a day of glittering pleasure. Such days are glowing for the time, then they vanish like a shadow. Though His Royal Highness was to come, we did not on that account neglect the improvement of our minds, but worked hard at lessons all morning. After dinner was most pleasant. All of us eleven got round the Prince, and sang and were very merry. The pleasantest part, however, I think, of the whole, was when the gentlemen came up to tea, and we sang a good deal more. Then His Royal Highness departed, after having kept his coach two hours waiting at the door. I went to bed in a most good mind, but very tired."

"Dec. 31.—This is the last day I shall spend in 1797. To this year, adieu for ever! How pathetic!

"I had a truly uncomfortable cloudy sort of Meeting. It was real bliss to hear the clock strike twelve. What an impatient disposition is mine! I

sometimes feel so extremely impatient for Meeting to break up that I cannot, if you would give me the world, sit still. Oh, how I long to get a great broom and *bang* all the old Quakers, who do look so triumphant and disagreeable. . . . I rather enjoyed my afternoon, Rachel played so sweetly and Betsy sang."

Richenda had been seeing a great deal of some charming neighbors with views strongly opposed to Quakerism; hence perhaps the tone of her journal at this time. She never became a Friend, but later, as the wife of a clergyman of the Church of England (Rev. Francis Cunningham), her faith was no less deep and sincere than that of her sister.

"Jan. 12.—The Prince has been here again, and we have had a gay, pleasant, bustling time. I really don't know which of the days he was here was the pleasantest. . . . He does so admire Rachel. After dinner we began to sing. Rachel sang delightfully: I don't know when I have heard her sing so well. . . . Betsy had *an offer* from one of the officers; I never knew anything so droll as the whole thing was. After the Prince was gone we had a dance; the finest dance I ever had; all joined, single and married, old and young, little and great. I had no idea that gay company could be as pleasant as

it was. I do like the Prince for liking Kitty so much; I am sure it shows his taste, and I don't wonder at it. Rachel did look beautiful, and talked so cleverly all day, and she enjoyed it as much as any of us, which I am very glad of, as she seldom enjoys those sort of things.

"It was droll to have a dance on Wednesday night, and Thursday and Friday, and on Saturday we went to Dr. Alderson's and had a most pleasant evening indeed. We danced from seven to twelve. I don't know when I enjoyed dancing so much, there were such beaux, so superior to the bank boys. What a surprising difference rank and high life make in a person's whole way and manner: it is most pleasant being with people who have been brought up in that way. I am very glad to have seen a little of what high life is, for I think everybody who can should be acquainted with all ranks in society. We had a most merry time, I really did enjoy it."

"Jan. 27.—I have been in one of my very best minds; how I do enjoy being in those minds. We were very happy walking together, Kitty and all of us. I cannot help also just mentioning my dinner, which was particularly delightful to me: I really felt true pleasure while I was eating excellent

apple-pudding and partridge; how I did enjoy it."

"Feb. 6.—I spent most of my morning most pleasantly—I may say most charmingly, for they were all gone to Meeting, and I walked by myself about the fields, with the most melancholy delightful feelings reflecting on the future state. I came in full of these thoughts and in a most comfortable mind, when they came home cross and bordering upon disagreeable."

Louisa was not troubled with doubts, but her religious impulses sometimes came at singular times. She writes:

"April 26.—Yesterday we had a most delightful dance. John Taylor, Pitchford, and F. Bevan came here. I was in ecstasies after supper with dancing Malbrook. Two things raise my soul to feel devotion—nature and music. As I went down the dance yesterday, I gave up my soul to the enchanting Malbrook. I thought of Heaven and of God. I really tasted Heaven for a minute, and my whole heart thanked God for the blessings I enjoyed. These moments were delicious."

Richenda and Louisa have much to say in their journals about Pitchford, who seems at this time to have been very much in love with Rachel; her heart, however, was given to Henry Enfield, and

thereby hangs a sad tale to be told hereafter. Pitchford, too, kept a journal, and describes in it a day spent at Earlham.

"July 27, 1797.—This is a day which I shall ever remember with delight. I have spent seventeen hours with my seven most enchanting friends. I rose at 4 A. M. and walked slowly to Earlham, as I did not wish to disturb them too soon. I had partly made up my mind not to throw pebbles at their windows (the preconcerted signal of my arrival) till six, but I found them already risen. Rachel saw me first and knocked at the window. Then Richenda and Louisa came down, and soon all the rest except Betsy, who does not rise so soon on account of her health. After a short walk, the four were sent to the schoolroom to do their lessons. Kitty, Rachel, and I seated ourselves in the shade. I had brought 'Peregrinus Porteus' in my pocket, and read the beautiful description of the farm at Pitane, and the glowing language in which the Christian preacher enlarges on the character and manner of our Blessed Saviour; they completely enjoyed it. Rachel left Kitty and me alone together for a few minutes, when we talked of her brother, and concurred completely in our opinion of him—that he is at present very amiable and interesting,

but that he is in great danger of receiving bad impressions.

"We enjoyed a charming breakfast together, Betsy having joined us, and then we went into the kitchen-garden to eat fruit. After this, we selected a shady spot on the lawn, where the whole party reclined upon a haycock, while I read to them part of my journal, omitting certain passages which avowed my attachment to Rachel. Three or four times, however, I stumbled on passages of this kind, and was obliged to interrupt myself. I am not clear whether the sharp-sighted Rachel did not suspect the truth, but her behaviour during the rest of the day was full as kind as ever. They were all interested with my journal. 'Now we really know you,' they exclaimed; 'let us join hands and vow an eternal friendship.' This we did with rapturous feelings and glowing hearts. Rachel now read some of Henry Enfield's journal, which he regularly sends her, and Betsy read part of her journal, in which she acknowledges all her faults with the most charming candor. Finally, Kitty read part of her journal, which consisted chiefly of reflections. We talked afterwards of my visits. They thought I might come once a week, but on consideration it was agreed to limit it to once a fortnight. . . .

"After dinner we went to the pianoforte, and Rachel and I practised some songs. I taught her the 'Stabat Mater,' which she much liked. We then went in the boat, and had some most interesting conversation, and after tea chose a delightful spot in the garden facing the setting sun, where Kitty read the poetry of 'The Monk,' and I 'The Deserted Village.' Then we went to the village church, where I read Gray's 'Elegy' by twilight with great effect. Kitty said, 'We will be your seven sisters.' When we got to the river-side, we again had enchanting singing, finishing by 'Poor John is Dead,' and, as we returned, promised each other that any of us in danger of death should be visited by the rest. Then we extended our views beyond the grave, and enthusiastically sang till we reached the house 'In Heaven forever dwell.' It was with difficulty that I tore myself away after supper. It was a day ever to be remembered with transport."

The closeness of this intimacy relaxed with time, but John Pitchford remained through life the warm friend of the Gurneys.

CHAPTER III

GIRLHOOD

MR. GURNEY, though he held Quaker principles, was not a Plain Friend; that is, he and his family did not wear the Quaker dress, did not keep the stricter rules of the Society of Friends. Betsy and her sisters wore bright colors; they loved music and dancing, neither of which the Society allowed. Some of them sang delightfully, we are told. "The sweet and thrilling pathos of their native warblings are still remembered with pleasure by those who heard them, especially the duets of Rachel and Elizabeth." So wrote Elizabeth's daughters, many years after. We can see the beautiful sisters gathered round the piano in the great drawing-room of Earlham; Elizabeth, tall, slight and graceful, with a cloud of soft fair hair, "very sweet and pleasing, though perhaps not so glowing and handsome as some of her sisters," Catherine, Richenda, and the rest. I wonder what they sang! Many "psalms

and hymns and spritual songs," no doubt; the beautiful hymns of John and Charles Wesley, two of which at least are familiar to us all today: "Jesus, lover of my soul," and the Christmas Hymn. (The first two lines of the latter have been altered, it must be confessed for the better. We sing

> Hark, the herald angels sing
> Glory to the new born king!

but Charles Wesley wrote

> Hark! how all the welkin rings
> Glory to the King of kings!)

Robert Burns was living in those days of Elizabeth Gurney's girlhood. I am not sure whether his songs would have been known at Earlham; the girls may possibly have sung "Bonny Doon," and "Highland Mary," but they would be more likely to sing Lady Nairn's "Land o' the Leal," or Cowper's "Boadicea," if that noble ode was set to music.

When they danced, it was "occasionally, in the large anteroom leading to the drawing-room, but with little of the spirit of display so often manifested on these occasions. It was more an effusion of young hearts, which thus sought and found

an outlet for their mirth." [1] Elizabeth danced extremely well, and consequently loved dancing; she was an excellent horsewoman, too, rode fearlessly and well, and delighted in it. In short, she must have been a very charming and attractive girl.

Through the greater part of her life she kept a journal. As has been said, the early volumes were destroyed: what a pity! But those from her seventeenth year on have been preserved, and give us a picture of the girl that nothing else could supply.

Before beginning to quote from them, I should say that for some time before the first entry, her religious consciousness had been awakening, partly through the growth and development of a deeply religious nature, partly through the influence of friends. She was seeking for light, and not always finding it.

"January, 1797.—My mind is in so dark a state, that I see everything through a black medium."

"April.—Why do I wish so much for the Prince to come? Pride, alas! is the cause. Do such feelings hurt my mind? They may not, in this instance, but if given way to, they are difficult to overcome. How am I to overcome them?"

[1] "Memoir of Elizabeth Fry," by her daughters.

ELIZABETH GURNEY

We can easily imagine how the girls' hearts fluttered at thought of seeing a Royal Highness in the flesh. Yet one can hardly think the brother of George III was a thrilling personality. He was twenty-one years old at this time. Whatever he was, the Prince evidently made an impression on Elizabeth's mind, if not her heart. She writes a few days later.

"I met the Prince, it showed me the folly of the world; my mind feels very flat after this storm of pleasure."

"April.—Without passions of any kind how different I should be. I would not give them up, but I should like to have them under subjection; but it appears to me, as I feel, impossible to govern them, my mind is not strong enough, as I at times think they do no hurt to others. But am I sure they will hurt no one? I believe by not governing myself in little things, I may by degrees become a despicable character, and a curse to society; therefore, my doing wrong is of consequence to others, as well as to myself."

Poor Betsy! if only she would shut up her journal, and go and read a story to the children, or take the dogs for a walk, how much happier she would be!

"April 25th.—I feel by experience, how much entering into the world hurts me; worldly company, I think materially injures, it excites a false stimulus, such as a love of pomp, pride, vanity, jealousy, and ambition; it leads one to think about dress, and such trifles, and when out of it, we fly to novels and scandal, or something of that kind, for entertainment. I have lately been given up a good deal to worldly passions. By what I have felt I can easily imagine how soon I should be quite led away."

"May 16th.—There is a sort of luxury in giving way to the feelings! I love to feel for the sorrows of others, to pour wine and oil into the wounds of the afflicted; there is a luxury in feeling the heart glow, whether it be with joy or sorrow. . . .

"I like to think of everything, to look at mankind; I love to 'look through Nature up to Nature's God.' I have no more religion than that, and in the little I have I am not the least devotional, but when I admire the beauties of nature, I cannot help thinking of the source from whence such beauties flow. I feel it a support: I believe firmly that all is guided for the best by an invisible power, therefore I do not fear the evils of life so much. I love to feel good—I do what I can to be kind to

everybody. I have many faults which I hope in time to overcome."

"Monday, 21st.—I am seventeen today. Am I a happier or a better creature than I was this time twelvemonth? I know I am happier; I think I am better. I hope I shall be much better this day year than I am now. I hope to be quite an altered person, to have more knowledge, to have my mind in greater order; and my heart too, that wants to be put in order as much, if not more, than any part of me, it is in such a fly-away state; but I think if ever it were settled on one subject it would never, no never, fly away any more; it would rest quietly and happily on the heart that was open to receive it, it will then be most constant; it is not my fault it now flies away, it is owing to circumstances."

"Monday, June.—I am at this present time in an odd state; I am like a ship put out to sea without a pilot; I feel my heart and mind so over burdened. I want someone to lean upon. . . ."

"July 7th.—I have seen several things in myself and others I never before remarked; but I have not tried to improve myself, I have given way to my passions, and let them have command over me. I have known my faults, and not corrected them, and now I am determined I will once more

try, with redoubled ardor, to overcome my wicked inclinations; I must not flirt; I must not ever be out of temper with the children; I must not contradict without a cause; I must not mump when my sisters are liked and I am not; I must not allow myself to be angry; I must not exaggerate, which I am inclined to do. I must not give way to luxury; I must not be idle in mind; I must try to give way to every good feeling, and overcome every bad; I will see what I can do. If I had but perseverance, I could do all that I wish; I will try. I have lately been too satirical, so as to hurt sometimes; remember, it is always a fault to hurt others."

"July 8th.—A much better day, though many faults."

"10th.—Some poor people were here; I do not think I gave them what I did with a good heart. I am inclined to give away; but for a week past, owing to not having much money, I have been mean and extravagant. Shameful! Whilst I live, may I be generous; it is in my nature, and I will not overcome so good a feeling. I am inclined to be extravagant, and that leads to meanness, for those who will throw away a good deal, are apt to mind giving a little."

"11th.—. . . Company to dinner. I must be-

ware of not being a flirt, it is an abominable character; I hope I shall never be one, and yet I fear I am one now a little. Be careful not to talk at random. Beware, and see how well I can get through this day, without one foolish action. If I do pass this day without one foolish action, it is the first I ever passed so. If I pass a day with only a few foolish actions, I may think it a good one."

"25th.—This book is quite a little friend to my heart; it is next to communicating my feelings to another person. I would not but write in it for something, for it is most comfortable to read it over and see the different workings of my heart and soul."

"30th.—Pride and vanity are too much the incentives to most of the actions of men; they produce a love of admiration, and in thinking of the opinions of others, we are too apt to forget the monitor within. We should first look to ourselves, and try to make ourselves virtuous, and then pleasing. Those who are truly virtuous, not only do themselves good, but they add to the good of all. All have a portion entrusted to them, of the general good, and those who cherish and preserve it, are blessings to society at large; and those who do not,

become a curse. It is wonderfully ordered, how in acting for our own good, we promote the good of others. My idea of religion is, not for it to unfit us for the duties of life, like a nun who leaves them for prayer and thanksgiving; but I think it should stimulate and capacitate us to perform these duties properly. Seeing my father low this evening, I have done all I can to make him comfortable. I feel it one of my first duties; I hope he will always find in me a most true friend and affectionate daughter."

I cannot well imagine anything worse for a sensitive and impressionable girl of seventeen than this kind of self-tormenting. Can you not see Betsy, sweet, pretty creature, sitting in the Blue Room, bending painfully over the big quarto volume? The window is open, through it comes the song of a thrush, and the perfume of violets and of

> Mid-May's eldest child,
> The coming muskrose, full of dewy wine.

Betsy shakes back her curls, listens, draws in a deep breath of fragrance; then down goes her head again. "Pride and vanity are too much the incentives," etc. Poor Betsy!

"August 1st.—I have done little today, I am so

very idle; instead of improving I fear I go back; I think I may improve, being so young, but I also think there is every chance of my disimproving; my inclinations lead me to be an idle, flirty, worldly girl; I see what would be acting right; I have neither activity nor perseverance in what I think right. I am like one setting out on a journey; if I set out on the wrong road, and do not try to recover the right one before I have gone far, I shall most likely lose my way for *ever,* and every step I take the more difficult I shall find it to return, therefore the temptation will be greater to go on, till I get to destruction. On the contrary, if now, whilst I am innocent of any great faults, I turn into the right path, I shall feel more and more contented every step I take, and if I do now and then err a little from the proper path, I shall not find it so hard to return to it, for I shall by degrees find the road to vice more and more unpleasant. Trifles occupy me by far too much, such as dress, etc., etc. I find it easier to acknowledge my vices than my follies."

"6th.—I have a cross tonight. I had very much set my mind on going to the Oratorio, the Prince is to be there, and by all accounts it will be quite a grand sight, and there will be the finest music;

but if my father does not like me to go, much as I wish it, I will give it up with pleasure, if it be in my power, without a murmur.

"I went to the Oratorio, I enjoyed it, but spoke sadly at random. What a bad habit!!"

I am glad she went to the Oratorio; it was one of Handel's doubtless, perhaps "The Messiah" or "Judas Maccabaeus." Norwich was always musical, though its famous triennial festivals had not begun in Betsy's girlhood.

"12th.—I do not know if I shall not soon be rather religious, because I have thought lately what a support it is through life; it seems so delightful to depend upon a superior power, for all that is good; it is at least always having the bosom of a friend open to us (in imagination), to rest all our cares and sorrows upon; and what must be our feelings to imagine that friend perfect, and guiding all and everything, as it should be guided. I think anybody who had real faith could never be unhappy; it appears the only certain source of support and comfort in this life, and what is best of all, it draws to virtue, and if the idea be ever so ill-founded, that leads to that great object, why should we shun it? Religion has been misused and corrupted; that is no reason why religion itself is not

good. I fear being religious, in case I should be enthusiastic."

"15th.—For a few days past, I have been in a worldly state, dissipated, a want of thought, idle, relaxed and stupid, all outside, no inside. I feel I am a contemptible fine lady. May I be preserved from continuing so, is the ardent prayer of my *good* man, but my *evil* man tells me I shall pray in vain. I will try. I fear for myself, I feel in the course of a little time I shall be all outside flippery, vain, proud, conceited; I could use improper words at myself, but my *good* man will not let me. But I am good in something, it is wicked to despair of myself, it is the way to make me what I desire not to be; I hope I shall always be virtuous; can I be really wicked? I may be so, if I do not overcome my first weak inclination. I wish I had more solidity, and less fluidity in my disposition. I feel my own weakness and insufficiency to bear the evils and rubs of life. I must try by every stimulus in my power to strengthen myself both bodily and mentally.

"19th.—Idle and relaxed in mind, greatly dissipated by hearing the band, etc., etc. Music has a great effect on me; it at times makes me feel almost beside myself."

"December.—A thought passed my mind, that if I had some religion, I should be superior to what I am, it would be a bias to better actions; I think I am, by degrees, losing many excellent qualities. I am more cross, more proud, more vain, more extravagant. I lay it to my great love of gayety and the world. I feel, I know I am failing. I do believe if I had a little true religion, I should have a greater support than I have now; in virtue, my mind wants a stimulus; never, no never, did mind want one more; but I have the greatest fear of religion, because I never saw a person religious who was not enthusiastic."

"16th.—My mind is in a state of fermentation. I believe I am going to be religious, or some such thing."

"18th.—I am a bubble, without reason, without beauty of mind or person; I am a fool. I daily fall lower in my own estimation. What an infinite advantage it would be to me, to occupy my time and thoughts well. I am now seventeen, and if some kind and great circumstance does not happen to me, I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust. They will lose their brightness, lose their virtue, and one day they will prove a curse, instead of a blessing. Dreaded day!

"I must use extreme exertion to act really right, to avoid idleness and dissipation."

Poor Betsy! these were troubled times for her. She was tossed hither and thither, and felt a constant strife within her between her "good man" and her "evil man." But a change was at hand. In February, 1798, at the Friends' Meeting at Norwich, she met William Savery, an American Friend who had come to England on a "religious visit," heard him preach and pray, and received an impression which was to influence all her future life.

Richenda Gurney thus describes the occasion:

"On that day we seven sisters sat as usual in a row, under the gallery, at Meeting; I sat by Betsy. William Savery was there; we liked having Yearly Meeting Friends come to preach; it was a little change. Betsy was generally rather restless at Meeting; and on this day, I remember her very smart boots were a great amusement to me; they were purple, laced with scarlet.

"At last William Savery began to preach. His voice and manner were arresting, and we all liked the sound; her attention became fixed; at last I saw her begin to weep, and she became a good deal agitated. . . . The next scene that has fas-

tened itself on my memory is our return home in the carriage. Betsy sat in the middle, and astonished us all by the great feeling she showed. She wept most of the way home. The next morning, William Savery came to breakfast, prophesying of the high and important calling she would be led into. What she went through in her own mind I cannot say, but the results were most powerful, and most evident. From that day her love of pleasure and of the world seemed gone."

How many of my readers have ever seen a Quaker Meeting? The expression itself is familiar to all: when we see boys clustering together at one side of a room, and girls at the other, we say, "Quaker Meeting!" and think no more about it. Yet to those who know, the phrase is full of sweet and gracious associations. We see in thought the meeting house, with its plain white walls and unadorned benches. We see the Friends gathering, in their quaint, dignified dress; the women with full skirts and round waists, snowy kerchiefs and caps, and over all the Quaker bonnet and shawl; the men in full-skirted coats and low-crowned, broad-brimmed hats; everything, except kerchief, cap and shirtfront, of that dove-color which is all their own. (I remember how when I was a child,

spending the summer at Newport, the town would one day seem suddenly to blossom in dove-color. Every other person one met on Thames Street was in Quaker dress; for it was Yearly Meeting, and the Friends were gathering from all parts of the country.)

The Friends sit down on either side of the aisle, men on one side, women on the other. For a few minutes the soft rustle of garments is heard; then silence falls. It is not an empty silence; far from it. Thought and prayer seem to brood with folded wings over the hushed assembly; it is a time at once solemn and sweet. By and by perhaps some brother or sister feels moved to speak, in prayer or exhortation; the rest listen reverently. Others may follow; but often the whole time passes in this deep, brooding silence. Then the elders shake hands; meeting is over, and the doves rustle quietly out, exchanging sober, friendly greetings as they go.

This is Friends' Meeting, the very name of which calls up calm and lovely thoughts.

But in a meeting like this, what, you may well ask, was Betsy Gurney doing in purple boots with scarlet lacings?

CHAPTER IV

LONDON

SISTER RICHENDA thought that after hearing William Savery preach, Elizabeth cared no more for pleasures and the world; this was not quite the case. After all, Elizabeth was not yet eighteen years old. Strong though the religious awakening had been, it had to contend with many impressions natural to any young girl, especially to one who had grown up amid scenes of luxury (sober and God-fearing, but none the less luxury) one who loved pleasure, and was surrounded by others who loved it. There were to be many struggles before Elizabeth found her bearings entirely.

Two days after the memorable Sunday of William Savery and the purple boots, she writes:

"My mind has by degrees flown from religion. I rode to Norwich, and had a very serious ride there; but meeting, and being looked at with apparent admiration by some officers, brought on

vanity; and I came home as full of the world as I went to town full of heaven.

"In hearing William Savery preach, he seemed to me to overflow with true religion, and to be humble, and yet, a man of great abilities; and having been gay and disbelieving only a few years ago, makes him better acquainted with the heart of one in the same situation. If I were to grow like him, a preacher, I should be able to preach to the gay and unbelieving better than to any other, for I should feel more sympathy for them, and know their hearts better."

Soon after this, her "mind is in a whirl." She was going to London, with her father's consent, to see for herself all the fascinations which the gay world had to offer; to "try all things," and choose for herself that which appeared to her "to be good." She dreaded leaving home, yet looked eagerly forward to the visit, as any girl would.

"I shall see William Savery most likely, and all those plain Quakers. I may be led away; beware! my feelings are far more risen at the thought of seeing him than all the playhouses and gayeties in the world. One will, I do not doubt, balance against the other; I must be careful not to be led away; I must not overdo myself. I dare say it

will not be half so pleasant as the Earlham heart-felt gayeties in the Prince's time [a year ago]; I must be very careful not to get vain or silly, for I fear I shall. Be independent, and do not follow those I am with, more than I think right. Do not make dress a study, even in London. Read in the Bible, when I can; but if I see William Savery I shall not, I doubt, be over fond of gayeties." (There seems *no* doubt that sweet Elizabeth was very fond of William Savery!)

I spoke of some of the things that happened, some of the famous people who were living, in the year of our heroine's birth. Let us look about a little, and see who was in London in this year (1798) of Elizabeth's visit.

Mrs. Siddons, the great actress, was in her prime, and all the fashionable world was wild over her. Mrs. Barbauld was there, the author of many poems now forgotten, and of one which will be remembered so long as English poetry is read. It is so perfect, and so short, that I cannot refrain from giving it, especially as we may be sure that Elizabeth Gurney knew it by heart.

LIFE

Life! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;

And when, or how, or where we met
I own to me's a secret yet.

Life! we've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night—but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning.

Mrs. Opie was in town, the charming wife of a charming husband—Opie the painter. She was a warm friend of all the Gurneys, and it was doubtless through their influence that she in time became a Plain Friend. She had not written her novels when Elizabeth Gurney saw her, "Father and Daughter," "Illustration of Lying," "Detraction Displayed," and the rest; but she was recognized as a woman of brilliant parts. I have my doubts as to the interest of the novels for us today.

These were some of the famous people whom Betsey met; but what of those she might have met, and did not? Dear Charles Lamb, sweetest and most patient of men, was living in Chapel Street then, with his helpless old father and aunt and his beloved and unfortunate sister Mary; taking care of them all, working all day long, and at night—

in this very year 1798—writing the best known of his few poems.

> I have had playmates, I have had companions,
> In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days,
> All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

The brother and sister had not yet begun to write the "Tales from Shakespeare," which were to make them the friends for all time of all English-speaking children; but Charles was already studying Shakespeare, making a collection of extracts from the plays, talking them over with Robert Southey, Samuel Coleridge, William Wordsworth, all his friends, all young, ardent men, pouring out their souls in their various ways. In 1795 Southey wrote, "After Blenheim," and "The Well of St. Keyne"; and Coleridge, "The Ancient Mariner."

How pleasant if Betsy could have met these delightful people! Or if she could have met Madame d'Arblay, formerly Miss Fanny Burney, who came to London this year to see her many friends and admirers, bringing her little boy Alexis with her! The author of "Evelina" and "Cecilia" (have you ever read them? People used to sit up all night and cry their eyes out over them!) was now a middle-aged woman, but no less sprightly and charming than when she won the hearts of Dr.

Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds and all the great people of that generation. She was received with open arms at Court, King George, Queen Charlotte and all the royal princesses vying with one another in showing the warmth of their affection.

"The Princess was seated on a sofa, in a French gray riding-dress, with pink lapels, her beautiful and richly flowing and shining fair locks unornamented. . . . Lady Albinia announced me, and she received me with the brightest smile, calling me up to her, and stopping my profound reverence, by pouting out her sweet ruby lips for me to kiss. She desired me to come and sit by her; but, ashamed of so much indulgence, I seemed not to hear her, and drew a chair at a little distance. 'No, no,' she cried, nodding, 'come here; come, and sit by me here, my dear Madame d'Arblay.' I had then only to say 'twas my duty to obey her, and I seated myself on her sofa. . . . Lady Albinia soon after left the room; and the Princess, then, turning hastily and eagerly to me, said, 'Now we are all alone, do let me ask you one question, Madame d'Arblay, Are you—are you—(looking with strong expression to discover her answer) writing anything?' "

Girls were not so different then from what they are now, after all.

This was the sweet Princess Amelia, the favorite child of King George III. She died while still young, "after long suffering, patiently endured"; and her father's long and hopeless insanity dates from the day when her death was announced to him. During her illness, the poor child wrote these touching verses:

Unthinking, idle, vain, and young,
I laughed and danced and played and sung,
And, proud of health, of freedom vain,
Dreamt not of sickness, care, nor pain;
Concluding, in those hours of glee,
That the whole world was made for me.

But when the hour of trial came,
When sickness racked this trembling frame,
When folly's gay pursuit was o'er,
And I could laugh and sing no more—
It then occurred how sad 'twould be
If the whole world were made for me!

London is a large place, and England a larger. I must not make my list of celebrities too long; yet I must just say that in this wonderful year 1798 (but all years are wonderful!) Walter Scott was twenty-seven years old and only just beginning

to write: that Byron was ten, and perhaps already at Harrow School,

> Dreaming poetry, all alone,
> Up atop of the Peachey Stone:

that Shelley was a child of six, playing about in the Sussex meadows, hearing the skylark, watching the clouds; while little John Keats, only three, was in London, poor glorious child, playing—very likely—in the stable-yard, where his father was employed.

But now we have kept Betsy Gurney waiting quite long enough.

Her journals give the story of this eventful visit.

"February 24th.—At last, landed safely here; it is very pleasant in some things, very unpleasant in others. On Monday I do not think it unlikely I shall go to the play. On Wednesday I hope to see the Barclays, and to have a dance. On Thursday, I expect to be with Amelia Opie, and so on for different days."

"February 25th.—Although I told William Savery my principles were not Friendly; yet I fear I should not like his knowing of my going to the play. I think such religion as his must attract an

atheist; and if there were many such Quakers as he is, the Society would soon increase."

"February 26th.—I went to Drury Lane in the evening. I must own I was extremely disappointed; to be sure the house is grand and dazzling; but I had no other feeling whilst there than that of wishing it over. I saw Banister, Mrs. Jordan, Miss Dechamp. I was not at all interested with the play, the music I did not much like; and the truth is, my imagination was so raised that it must have fallen, had the play been perfect."

"February 27th.—I went to the play at Covent Garden, I still continue not to like plays."

"February 28th.—We were out this morning; I felt proud, vain and silly. In the evening we had a dance."

"March 1st.—I own I enter into the gay world reluctantly. I do not like plays. I think them so artificial that they are to me not interesting, and all seems so—so very far from pure virtue and nature. Tonight I saw Hamlet and Bluebeard; I suppose that nothing on the stage can exceed it. There is acting, music, scenery to perfection, but I was glad when it was over; my hair was dressed and I felt like a monkey. London is not

the place for heartfelt pleasure, so I must not expect to find it."

"March 4th.—I feel uncharitably towards—— I said uncharitable things of them, and give way to inclination, for I own I love scandal, though I highly disapprove of it; therefore it is the more commendable if I overcome it."

"March 5th.—I took a lesson in dancing, and spent the day quietly."

"March 7th.—I went to Meeting in the evening. I have not enough eloquence to describe it. William Savery's sermon was, in the first part, very affecting. . . . How well he hit the state I had been in; I trust I may not remain in it; his prayer was beautiful, I think I felt to pray with him."

"March 17th.—May I never forget the impression William Savery has made on my mind. As much as I can say is, I thank God for having sent at least a glimmering of light through him into my heart, which I hope, with care, and keeping it from the many draughts and winds of this life, may not be blown out, but become a large brilliant flame, that will direct me to that haven, where will be joy without a sorrow, and all will be comfort. . . ."

"March 26th.—This morning I went to Amelia Opie's and had a pleasant time. I called on Mrs.

Siddons, who was not at home; then on Dr. Beatty; then on Mrs. Twiss, who gave me some paint for the evening. I was painted a little, I had my hair dressed, and did look pretty for me. Mr. Opie, Amelia, and I, went to the Opera concert. I own, I do love grand company. The Prince of Wales was there; and I must say, I felt more pleasure in looking at him, than in seeing the rest of the company, or hearing the music. I did nothing but admire his Royal Highness; but I had a very pleasant evening indeed."

I wonder how Betsy's hair was dressed on this pleasant evening. She had not yet taken to a turban: perhaps she wore it rolled high in front, and hanging at the side in long curling locks, such as we see in Gainsborough portraits. The days were happily past—though not long past—when a lady's head was adorned with a vast powdered structure, balloon-like in shape, plastered with pomatum, powdered thick with flour, bedizened with lace and artificial flowers. Of this disastrous headdress we are told that the labor of erecting it was so great that it could only be done once in two or three days. At night it was covered with a huge cap, fastened by many pins, to keep it smooth. Sometimes, we are further told, a mouse, attracted

by the smell of pomatum and flour, would get inside the cap, and gnaw its way inside the structure itself, thereby, on one occasion at least, sending the unfortunate wearer into convulsions. We may be very sure that whatever fashion Betsy Gurney followed, it was not this.

"March 27th.—I called with Mrs. H—, and Amelia, on Mrs. Inchbald. I like her vastly, she seems so clever and so interesting. I then went to Hempstead, and stayed at our cousin Hoare's, until the 18th of April. I returned to Clapham. My uncle Barclay, with great begging, took us to the Opera. The house is dazzling, the company animating, the music hardly at all so, the dancing delightful. I was most merry; I just saw the Prince of Wales. Tuesday.—My dearest father came to London, we dined at the ——, and went to a rout in the evening. Friday.—I had a pleasant merry day with Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcot). Monday.—I went with my father and the Barclays to Sir George Staunton's."

She saw a great deal of the London Barclays, the family of David Barclay, her mother's uncle. They, like the Gurneys, were of the "gay Quakers"; people of solid character and great wealth, not at all averse to a sober kind of gayety. Here I must

pause to pick up one of those little threads of memory which so often bring us into living touch with the past. When I was a child, my mother sang a great deal to me and to all her six children: songs of all kinds, in many languages; her singing was one of our chief delights always. Among the songs were various scraps of old ditties learned in her own childhood. Among these, again, was one which told (to a very lively tune) how

On Surrey Bridge, by Suffolk side,
A widow lived who lacked man,
Whose lily-white hand had long been sought
By one John Brown, a black man.

Now this John Brown was five feet six,
But her thoughts were another way, man,
For her heart and affections had long been fixed
On Barclay and Perkins's drayman.

I always longed to know more about the widow; whether the "black man" (probably he was only of dark complexion!) won her lily-white hand, or she won the heart of the drayman; but I never did; nor did I dream, what I have only lately discovered, namely, that Mr. David Barclay, founder of the still famous breweries of Barclay and Perkins, was Elizabeth Gurney's great-uncle, and that his brewery

was formerly that of Mr. Thrale, the good friend of Fanny Burney and Dr. Johnson.

On April 16th, Betsy returned home with her father. Thus ended her first visit to London, which thirty years later she recalls as "like the casting die" in her life. She returned to Earlham, where she found herself less and less in sympathy, though never less in affection, with the rest of her family.

Harriet Martineau, then a child in Norwich, speaks of the Gurney sisters in her Autobiography:

"A set of dashing young people, dressing in gay riding-habits and scarlet boots, and riding about the country to balls and gayeties of all sorts. Accomplished and charming young ladies they were, and we children used to hear whispered gossip about the effects of their charms on heart-stricken young men."

A few short months ago, Betsy had been perhaps the gayest and most dashing of the band; now, she was to lay aside all gayeties, even the most innocent; was to put off scarlet and purple, and little by little assume the outward and inward aspect of a Plain Friend.

This was very trying to her father and sisters. Mr. Gurney felt perhaps that Betsy, not yet quite eighteen, was over young to make such a momen-

tous decision; he wished her to have every opportunity to see life in its broad aspects before she definitely joined the strictest branch of the Society of Friends. He therefore in the summer after the London visit, took his seven daughters on a journey through Wales and the south of England. They visited many famous places, and Betsy enjoyed to the full most of the beauties of Nature. I say "most"; she did not enjoy the sea, which still terrified her.

"Weymouth, July 29th.—We dined here, and after dinner went on the sea. I always feel rather afraid when there, for I consider that if the least accident were to happen, I should be drowned; and I do not know if it be right only for pleasure to run the risk of one's life. I always feel doubtful of ever seeing land again; but I believe it to be partly unwise cowardice; if duty led me to it, I do not think I should fear."

We shall see by and by how duty did lead her, and how she fearlessly obeyed the call.

On the same evening she writes:

"This evening, I am sorry to say, I feel a hankering after the world and its gayeties: but what real satisfaction is there in being admired? I am uncertain about my going to the rooms tomorrow. I

should not object, I think, if no expense follow it; but if I can keep away I will do so; I have been considering, and believe this subject requires real thought. I hear there is to be a ball, and I don't doubt we may go: if I go, I shall enter the world and fall very likely into some of its snares. Shall I feel satisfied in going, or most satisfied in staying at home? I believe in staying at home. The worst of all will be, I shall have to contradict the will of all the others, and most likely to disappoint my father by not going: there is the rub; if I don't go, perhaps he will not let the others go. I think I shall leave it on these grounds: if I can stay at home in any way, do: but if I cannot without vexing my father I must go, and try not to be hurt by it."

Now came the question; was she to give up dancing entirely?

"Aberystwith, August 23d.—Is dancing wrong? I have just been dancing; I think there are many dangers attending it. It may lead to vanity and intemperance. But I think, in a family, and in an innocent way, it may be of use by the bodily exercise; it animates the spirits, and produces good effects. I think dancing and music the first pleasures in life. The more the pleasures of life are

given up, the less we love the world, and our hearts will be set on better things; not but that we are allowed, I believe, to enjoy the blessings Heaven has sent us. We have power of mind sufficient to distinguish the good from the bad; for under the cloak of pleasure, infinite evils are carried on. The danger of dancing, I find is throwing me off my centre; at times when dancing, I know that I have not reason left, but that I do things which in calm moments I must repent of. I went and bathed, which required much exertion of courage."

Soon after, she begins to feel that music too is "wrong" for her; that she would be less subject to temptation if she said "thee" instead of "you" in general conversation. Poor Betsy! "Scruples" about this or that occupy the greater part of her journal in these days.

By far the most important episode in this journey was a visit made to some Quaker cousins at Colebrook Dale. They were Plain Friends, lovely and gentle people. Mr. Gurney, still anxious that his dear Betsy should see every side of the matter which he knew so absorbed her thought, left her for a few days with Cousin Priscilla and the rest; cautioning her beforehand to "beware of passion and enthusiasm, which I hope I do most earnestly pray

I may be; for truly they are snares of the enemy."

I wish—the kind of wishing that is as pleasant as it is unprofitable—that instead of going to Colebrook Dale at this time, Betsy could have been whisked by some fairy wand or magic carpet to Steventon, in Hampshire, and have spent a week with a girl who was then living there in a quiet country vicarage. Jane Austen was five years older than Betsy Gurney; a demure, bright-eyed young woman, a good deal like Miss Elizabeth Bennet, I have always supposed. She had already begun to write those novels which were to delight all succeeding generations of English readers, those novels written in the family sitting-room, where the manuscripts must be hastily covered, with "a large worked muslin cover" when visitors appeared, because it was not considered "quite nice" for a young lady to have literary pursuits; was constantly making notes for them, seeing everything with those singularly bright hazel eyes, weighing, analyzing, sifting. Jane Austen would have been very good and wholesome company for Betsy Gurney just at this time.

Now came another incident which was like a clear light thrown upon the path before her. At Colebrook she met Deborah Darby, an aged Friend

who seems to have been both preacher and prophetess. One would like to have seen their meeting: the ancient woman, full of years and wisdom, almost ready to rest after a life of toil and preaching; the girl, lovely and ardent, looking forward to see what life was to hold for her.

Deborah Darby saw that here was no ordinary sweet maiden, pious and gentle, but a spirit of fire and a mind capable of great things. At their second meeting she felt called to speak, and in the course of her address turned to Elizabeth Gurney and spoke directly to her. Awestricken, yet with trembling hope and rising fervor, Elizabeth records the words in her journal:

"A light to the blind; speech to the dumb; and feet to the lame; can it be? She seems as if she thought I was to be a minister of Christ. Can I ever be one? If I am obedient, I believe I shall."

The next day she took an important step.

"This day I have said *thee* instead of *you.*"

This was her first definite step toward the communion of the Plain Friends: it was not an easy one. For several days she felt "in a state of darkness and discouragement" about it, but she dared not draw back. "I felt saying *thee* very difficult today to Mrs. ——, but I perceived it was far more

so after I sang to them. I altogether got on pretty well, but doubts came into my mind this morning. How shall I say *thee* to H—— in Norwich!"

She saw H—— (his name was Henry) and at sight of him "took to her heels and ran away." Collecting herself, however, she came back and addressed him in the plain language, and did it without much difficulty. Altogether, she decided that it would be an advantage to her to use it in future. "It makes me think before I speak, and avoid saying much, and also avoid the spirit of gayety and flirting."

Returning to Earlham, Betsy took up the work she had already begun before the eventful trip to London; visiting the sick and poor, and teaching their children.

"One day, in walking up the park, Betsy Gurney fell in with a girl about her own age—Molly Norman by name—carrying a bag of flour. She talked to the girl, and asked her what she thought it cost to clothe her. The girl replied, she thought it cost ten shillings a year. Upon which Betsy obtained her father's consent to adopt this girl. She was admitted into the house, and became her entire charge, pupil, and attendant." [1]

[1] "The Gurneys of Earlham."

She began her school with one pupil and few books. It grew and grew, the children flocking eagerly to join her classes. Finding the room she had chosen too small, she begged her father to let her use a vacant laundry, and here every day she taught seventy scholars, "without assistance, without monitors, without even the countless books and pictures of the present day; how she controlled the wills and fixed the attention of so many unruly children, must ever remain a mystery to those who have not the gift she possessed, of influencing the minds of others."

Betsy had not yet put on Quaker dress. She still wore the scarlet riding-habit, but it carried her now on errands of mercy. We hear of "a beautiful lady on horseback, in a scarlet riding-habit" not scouring the country with merry parties of brothers and sisters, but soberly, followed by a sedate groom, carrying chickens and jellies to the sick, the lonely, the forlorn. Resolved to give her dear ones no pain that she could avoid, Betsy made the alteration in her dress a gradual one, laying aside first jewels and ornaments, then gay colors; little by little dropping the fashions of the day, and having her dresses made more and more simply. As late as the spring of 1799 we hear of her wear-

ing "a plain slate-colored silk dress, but a black lace veil twisted in the turban fashion of the day, with her long blonde hair, the ends hanging to one side." The journal says, "I am much of a Friend in my principles at this time, but do not outwardly appear much so. I say 'thee' to people, and do not dress very gay, but yet I say 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.,' wear a turban, etc. I have one remark to make: every step I have taken towards Quakerism has given me satisfaction."

But the steps gave little satisfaction to the gay circle at Earlham. Kitty, Richenda and Rachel, Louisa and Hannah and Priscilla, John and Sam and Joseph John were still dancing and singing and enjoying to the full their happy, innocent youth, their good father looking on well pleased. It was pain to them all to feel Betsy gradually drawing away from them in outward things, though nothing was ever to change the warmth of affection between her and her beloved family. They could not think it reasonable that she should refuse to sing duets with Rachel. When the old fiddler came in the evening, and the brothers and sisters stood up for a merry dance, it seemed hard to them that Betsy, the best dancer of them all, should sit still with her pretty feet tucked under her, and refuse Brother

John when he asked her "in such a kind way." They did not realize what the refusal cost the poor child.

"Oh dear me! I am now acting differently from them all. Remember this, as I have this night refused to dance with my dearest brother, I must out of kindness to him not be tempted by anyone else."

And she goes on to pour out her poor tormented little heart, praying for mercy and guidance, grieving for dear John and the others whom she must distress, loving them all more than ever. Poor Betsy!

Dancing was given up, and singing soon followed. This was even harder, because it was long before she could feel absolutely sure that singing was wrong. Once convinced that however innocent and lovely for others it was wrong *for her,* it was dropped forever, and Betsy's sweet voice was heard no more in the family circle until the time came when all were to cluster round her, eager to hear that voice uplifted in earnest prayer and solemn exhortation.

CHAPTER V

JOSEPH FRY COMES A-WOOING

THE year 1799 was an eventful one for Betsy Gurney; not only did she become a Plain Friend, but she met another Plain Friend who was to influence her whole life. This was Joseph Fry of London, a former schoolmate of her brother John's. The Frys were strict Quakers, people of position and wealth. Joseph was supposed to be a rich man, and was known to be one of high character and great cultivation. He sang beautifully, he knew many languages, he was good, and wise, and kind. Everything was in his favor, except his looks and his manners! He seems to have been extremely plain (we do not know just *how* plain, for no one seems to have cared to paint his portrait), and "his manners were considered by the Earlham sisters to be most uncaptivating."

This excellent and unattractive young man, while on a visit to Norwich, met the seven sisters of

Earlham, and fell deeply in love with Betsy. He asked her to be his wife, but she refused decidedly: she had no mind to marry, and especially none to marry Joseph Fry. He, however, was as persistent as he was plain, and firmly declined to give her up. Many were the flutterings of heart in the Earlham dovecot. The match was so suitable, in many ways; the Frys were such *good* people; Joseph was such a cultivated man: but—"the gentle Rachel wept constantly"; Richenda, Louisa and Priscilla expended reams of closely covered paper in written prayers that Betsy might be helped through her difficulties, and guided to do what was best (though they had great doubts whether this *was* best) for her eternal welfare. Hannah tells in her journal how she "cried all night because she thought that the marriage must be." [1]

In the spring of 1800, down came Joseph Fry to Earlham, fully determined to win his Betsy. He brought with him a handsome gold watch and chain, and after an interview with Betsy and her father, he went out into the garden, and laid the glittering trinket on a white seat which is still to be seen there. The six sisters, all a-thrill and a-flutter, had followed him. "If Betsy takes up

[1] "The Gurneys of Earlham," Vol. I, p. 110

that watch," he said, "it is a sign that she accepts me; if she does not take it up by a particular hour, it will show that I must leave Earlham."

Off fluttered the sister-doves, but not back into the house! This part of the garden was dotted with laurel bushes, tall and thick. A moment, and six bushes held six maidens, each crouching close in her leafy covert, peeping and listening, all eyes and ears. Moments passed like hours. Would nothing ever happen? At length the door opened, and out came their Betsy, tall, graceful, and lovely, her fair hair shaded by the Quaker cap, the Quaker kerchief folded on her bosom. She came slowly along the garden path, deep in thought, looking as if "on the wings of prayer she was being wafted into the unseen." Suddenly she started, and stopped. The sisters held their breath: she had seen the watch. Yes, she was looking at it: would she take it up? But Betsy, after one glance, turned, and fairly ran back into the house.

The sisters ached for her; they wept and prayed in their laurel bushes, but they did not stir; they felt sure she would return. If the moments had seemed hours, how unconscionably long must have seemed the hour that actually passed before the door opened once more. Betsy emerged from the house,

and slowly, tremblingly, with faltering step, made her way to the white seat. There lay the watch still, sparkling in the sunlight.

> . . . The maid
> Paused a while, and inly prayed;

then stretched out a trembling hand, and took up the watch. Joseph Fry had won his suit and his bride.

Betsy never regretted the step. She became sincerely attached to her Quaker lover; but it was hard to leave the dear home, to make the first break in the circle so tenderly and intimately united; hard, too, to leave her poor scholars, for whom she had done so much. A few days before her marriage she gave them a farewell party at Earlham. There were now eighty-six of them; they clung round her, and when the time came to go, they wept, and their gentle teacher wept with them. On August 19th came the final parting. Joseph Fry and Elizabeth Gurney were married at the Friends' Meeting House in Norwich. The bride "wept a good part of the time," and her father and sisters were almost as much overcome; yet she says, "the day passed off well, and I think I was very comfortably supported under it, although

cold hands and a beating heart were often my lot. . . . I cried heartily on leaving Norwich; the very stones in the street were dear to me."

After a visit to Joseph's parents at Plashet House, in Essex, the bride and groom went to London, and took up their abode in St. Mildred's Court, in a large, airy house which was to be their home through many years.

Here a new life began for Elizabeth Fry, as we must now call her; a life which must at first have seemed strange and sober to her. For the sunny gardens and wide-stretching lawns of Earlham, she looked out upon paved streets and gray walls; for the lovely sisters, flitting among the laurels in their scarlet cloaks, the hurrying throng of a business street. Indoors, for the joyous bustle of the family circle, a solitude broken only by the return at certain hours of a grave, busy man whose Quaker breeding forbade him to express other than soberly and seriously the deep love he felt for his young wife. A new life indeed! Moreover, all around her was a large circle of new connections, her husband's family and friends, who were all strict Friends. To her amazement, Elizabeth found herself "the gay, instead of the plain and scrupulous one of the family." She was ex-

pected to entertain a great deal, in a sober and dignified fashion, and when her sisters and brothers came to stay with her, it hurt her tender heart to realize that they appeared frivolous and worldly in the eyes of her husband's relatives. One can picture the large drawing-room in St. Mildred's Court filled with a motley throng. Richenda and Hannah were there, let us say, in white muslin gowns, probably with touches here and there of their favorite scarlet; a gauze or silken fillet in their bright hair, or possibly a turban of scarlet crape. I cannot believe that they wore wigs, as so many girls were then doing both in England and America. When Thomas Jefferson became President of the United States, his daughters at once wrote to Mrs. Madison, ordering wigs of the most fashionable shape, to be ready on their arrival at the White House. "They are universally worn," says one, "and will relieve us of the necessity of dressing our own hair, a business in which we are not adepts." [1]

No, I am quite positive that none of the Gurney sisters wore wigs, and that their lovely fair hair showed plainly under turban or fillet: all the more frivolous must they have looked in the eyes

[1] "Two Centuries of Costume," Alice Morse Earle.

of Cousin This or Aunt That, sitting prim against the wall, arrayed in plain net cap and black silk hood, full skirts and long-peaked waists of drab camlet. The men of the party wore coat, waistcoat and breeches of the same drab, and *they kept their hats on in company.* This was a matter of principle with them, but it was not always easy. Joseph John Gurney, writing of his own conversion to Plain Friend manners and customs a few years later, describes the trials to which a conscientious Quaker gentleman must subject himself.

"Soon after my return home, I was engaged to a dinner party at the house of one of our first county gentlemen. Three weeks before the time was I engaged, and three weeks was my young mind in agitation, from the apprehension, of which I could not dispossess myself, that I must enter his drawing-room with my hat on. From this sacrifice, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, I could not escape. In a Friend's attire, and with my hat on, I entered the drawing-room at the dreaded moment, shook hands with the mistress of the house, went back into the hall, deposited my hat, spent a rather comfortable evening, and returned home in some degree of peace. I had afterwards the same thing to do at the Bishop's;

the result was, that I found myself the decided Quaker, was perfectly understood to have assumed that character, and to dinner parties, except in the family circle, was asked no more."

I fear the Fry parties were not very gay. Chenda and Hannah must often have longed for Earlham, even though Sister Betsy had "everything very handsome about her"; but they were faithful and loving sisters, and one or other of them was frequently at St. Mildred's Court, especially when the babies began to come thick and fast. Another attraction to them was the presence of their brother Samuel, who came to live with the Frys and be trained in Brother Joseph Fry's office. Samuel Gurney was at this time a most beautiful youth, and then and always a lovely and lovable personality. Looking at his pictured face, with its large dark eyes, sensitive mouth, and look of high breeding and sweetness, one feels that "Sam" must have brightened whatever house he lived in, and that St. Mildred's Court must have been gayer, and Earlham sadder, because of his coming and going. We shall see more of him later, as the great city merchant, the man of wealth and position, but we shall find him always the same dear good Sam Gurney. Nor was Joseph John less dear and good,

as we shall presently see; in fact, my readers have probably realized that I am more or less in love with the whole Gurney family.

Poor Elizabeth suffered a great deal from toothache; turning the leaves of her journal of these times, we find toothache, dinner-parties and religious meetings weighing down her spirits almost in equal proportions.

"Third Month 17th. Every room in our house was full, and altogether, with the toothache, I have hardly had spirit to get through comfortably."

"18th. We had a large dinner-party. I felt unusually poorly and nervous at dinner, being fagged with toothache and the numbers around me."

"25th. I feel almost overcome with the multiplicity of visitings and goings out."

"Sixth Month 15th. I was rather disappointed at our having company, indeed we have now little time alone; . . . I do not think, since we married, we have had one-fourth of our meals alone. I long for more retirement, but it appears out of our power to procure it; and therefore it is best to be as patient under interruptions as we can, but I think it a serious disadvantage to young people setting out in life."

The fact is, this poor young couple was expected to keep open house for all visiting Friends, as well as for the crowd of relations on both sides. No wonder their teeth ached!

In August, 1801, their first child, a daughter, was born. On October 10th, Elizabeth writes:

"I here sit hearing the great noise and bustle of the Illuminations for Peace. . . . I am very tired, and the noise of the mob nearly makes my head ache. This is the way in which they show their joy! It does not seem to me the right manner of showing our gratitude, as it appears to lead to drunkenness and vice. I think true gratitude should lead us to endeavor to retain the blessing, or to make a good use of it by more virtue in ourselves, and encouraging others to the same."

This is the one allusion in Elizabeth's journal to events which had shaken Europe with convulsions to be surpassed only by the still more terrible ones of our own day; yet to understand the England where she lived and worked, we must cast a glance, however brief, at some of these events.

While Elizabeth Gurney had been growing up like a flower, had struggled and suffered over dancing and music, had been "wooed and married and a' ", the face of Europe had changed. The French

Revolution had come and gone, and from its seething tumult of blood and flame had arisen, like some genie or afrite of Eastern fable, the tremendous figure which for twenty-five years was to dominate Europe and terrorize Great Britain; the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. All through these years of her early married life, the fear of a French invasion hung over England like a dark cloud. In 1803, we are told:

"The fear of the French invasion, and the daily expectation of their landing, took such hold of people, that Mr. Joseph Fry was summoned by his brother, 'to be at his post.' On his return, he found preparations had been made for flooding the marshes of the River Lee, and breaking down the bridges on the Essex road; whilst his father-in-law was also prepared, as soon as the French should land, to convey his daughters into the Isle of Ely; still regarded by the East Anglian portion of England as a 'Camp of refuge'."

In these same years, Poland had gone through her death-struggle, and had now ceased to exist, save in the hearts of her heroic people; the country which since the beginning of the Eleventh Century had raised her proud head among the great powers of Europe, was now divided in three portions,

Prussia, Russia, and Austria sharing the bloody spoil.

The year 1801, to which I must now return, was full of dramatic events. January first saw the long-desired, long-resisted union of Great Britain and Ireland. At the same time, King George III renounced the title of King of France, which his predecessors had claimed since the Hundred Years' War, and the golden lilies were removed forever from the royal arms of England. Great Britain, besides the constant terror of Bonaparte, was at war with Denmark over certain questions of maritime rights: a war decided in England's favor by the famous Battle of the Baltic.

> Of Nelson and the north
> Sing the glorious day's renown,
> When to battle fierce came forth
> All the might of Denmark's crown,
> And her arms along the deep proudly shone.

I am not so sure about the glory of the day in general, but there is no possible doubt of the glory and valor of Lord Nelson. It was at this battle that, on the Admiral's hoisting the signal for retreat, Nelson "clapped his glass to his sightless eye: 'I'm damned if I see it!' quoth he." And he

ordered his own signal for close action to be nailed to the mast.

I have left Elizabeth sighing over the noise of the Peace Celebration, and have not explained that this rejoicing was for the signing, October 1, of articles of peace between France and Great Britain, to be followed a few months later, in March, 1802, by the Peace of Amiens, concluded between Great Britain, France, Spain and Holland.

CHAPTER VI

NEWGATE

THE first ten years of her married life were a time of something like bewilderment to Elizabeth Fry. She had been told that she was one day to be a light to the blind, speech to the dumb and feet to the lame. No doubt she felt that her marriage to a Plain Friend of godly character was the first step in the direction of active ministry: and so it was, but not such a ministry as she had foreseen. During these years, the blind eyes were those wide, dark blue, unseeing ones of new-born babies; the dumb lips those of the little ones whose stammering tongues must learn their first speech from her; the lame feet were not lame at all, only tottering and stumbling, and she must teach them to walk. In other words, these ten years brought her seven children, and her ministry was of necessity largely confined to them; and to the social duties already described. In 1808 she writes:

"I have been married eight years yesterday;

various trials of faith and patience have been permitted me; my course has been very different to what I had expected: instead of being, as I had hoped, a useful instrument in the Church Militant, here I am, a care-worn wife and mother, outwardly merely devoted to the things of this life; though at times this difference in my destination has been trying to me, yet, I believe those trials (which have certainly been very pinching) that I have had to go through have been very useful, and brought me to a feeling sense of what I am."

Among these "pinching" trials, not the least to poor Betsy had been the living in London, the exchange of the free, beloved country for the gray, unfriendly city. In 1809, however, this pinch was removed. The death of Joseph Fry's father caused him to remove to Plashet Manor, the family countryseat, a pleasant, ample house standing amid lawns and shrubberies, with wide park lands all about. Here Elizabeth's drooping spirits revived as if by magic. With flowers to tend and enjoy, birds to listen to, fields and brooks and all the dear wild things she had always loved, she raised her head like one of her own blossoms, became once more bright, happy, even gay. Now, too, she could feel that she was taking up, in a quiet way, the

ministry for which she longed. There were plenty of poor people in the neighborhood of Plashet, an Irish colony, a Gypsy camp, children of every age and station. She began at once to establish schools for the neighboring children, to care for the sick, the needy, the sorrowful, in her own sweet, helpful, methodical way. Long after, her daughter Rachel thus wrote of these Plashet days:

"Would that I could bring before you our mother as she was when we first lived at Plashet. The gentle firmness of her rule; the sober gracefulness of her carriage; her exceeding love and tenderness towards her little children, especially during their infancy; the cheerful invigorating influence she maintained over us; her care of her domestics, mental and bodily; her systematic attention to the poor.

"There was our school-room, where we were with the kind governess who labored in succession with us all. Then our brothers set forth upon their ponies to the vicarage, whither for some time they went daily for instruction, and after that plan was abandoned, to their tutor, at the cottage by the end of the green walk. The nursery came next, controlled by those whom our mother had herself first taught and trained at Earlham, thus in the care taken of her children, and in their singularly

happy childhood, reaping the fruit of her own early labors. Household matters, correct account-keeping, the oversight of East Ham School, regular visits to the poor, and social duties all followed in succession. Happy were we when summoned to accompany her into the village, but happier still if 'Irish Row' was to be our destination. Whether it was the noise and dirt and broad Irish accent, or the little ragged sunburnt children who crawled before the doors, I know not, but charming it certainly was.

"Invocations to 'Madame Fry' to 'step in here,' beseechings to go elsewhere; requests, petitions, wants, desires; whilst children, pigs, and poultry joined their voices to the general clamor, formed a never-to-be-forgotten scene, and all this contrasted with her gentle voice and quiet decision, either granting, or refusing, or promising to consider what was asked. Her ready sense of the droll was often excited on these expeditions. I can see her now, with a look of irresistible amusement, seated in Molly Malony's room, on a pail reversed for the occasion, dusted with the last remnant of Molly's apron, who meanwhile, with black disheveled locks, chased children and chickens, screaming and fluttering, from the potato-heap in

one corner to the pile of straw in the other, in the vain hope of dislodging them from her apartment."

Sometimes, I fear, her good deeds may not have been quite acceptable to her own family; witness the day when she lent her own cow to a poor woman who needed extra milk to sell. Joseph Fry, Plain Friend and godly man though he was, could not help exclaiming, when he saw the cow being driven out of Plashet Gate, "My dear, what *will* be lent next?"

The happy days at Plashet were saddened by the death of Elizabeth's father, John Gurney of Earlham. Full of years and of honors, this good man died peacefully in the home he had loved so long and so well, with all his eleven children around him. The reunion was sweet as well as sad for them all. Already the brothers and sisters were drifting apart in religious opinion, though never in affection or mutual understanding. Catherine had joined the Church of England, Richenda and Hannah were soon to follow; while Joseph John and Priscilla were turning toward the Plain Friends and were soon to join them definitely. These differences had somewhat troubled their tender hearts, and had sorely puzzled their good father, but now they were all forgotten, and the sisters and brothers of Earl-

ham knelt together by his bedside, and again, when his spirit had gone its quiet way, by the grave. Here, strangely enough, Elizabeth's public ministry began. Kneeling among her dear ones in the quiet graveyard, in that strange, solemn silence of a Quaker burial, she felt the spirit descend upon her, heard, clear and imperative, the call to speak; and raised her voice in prayer and supplication so eloquent and earnest that all hearts were moved. Her prayer was "to be endued with thankfulness under affliction": thankfulness for the rich treasure of her father's life, and for the peaceful benediction of his death.

After this the "command to speak" was laid upon Elizabeth at various Meetings of Friends. At first she resisted the inward voice. "I did cry in my heart for that time to be excused"; though the words she had felt impelled to utter were but the simple and familiar message, "Be of good courage, and He will strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord." It seemed impossible for her to utter these words aloud in the solemn Meeting, with the grave Quaker faces all about her; and the poor soul was sure that it was the "soul's enemy seeking whom he may devour" that prevented her. Finally she conquered what we should call simple and nat-

ural diffidence, spoke the words, and felt uplifted in mind and heart. And then she was afraid that it was the devil who made her feel pleased with herself!

Gradually these doubts and fears wore away, and she began to feel more and more at ease in "testifying," as it was called. The power and sincerity of her speech were at once recognized; and in 1811 the Society of Friends acknowledged her as a regular minister. Thereafter her sweet voice was often heard uplifted in prayer and exhortation, and none ever heard her unmoved.

So, step by step, all unconsciously, she had been preparing for the work which now lay ready to her hand.

In January, 1813, four members of the Society of Friends, all well known to her, visited some persons in Newgate who were about to be executed. These gentlemen were deeply impressed with the dreadful scenes they witnessed, and one of them, William Forster, begged Elizabeth Fry to go to the prison and try to do something for the women prisoners.

"At that time," Mrs. Fry's daughter tells us, "all the female prisoners in Newgate were confined in the part now known as the 'untried side.' The

larger portion of the quadrangle was then used as a state prison. The partition wall was not of sufficient height to prevent the state prisoners from overlooking the narrow yard, and the windows of the two wards and two cells, of which the women's division consisted; these four rooms comprised about one hundred and ninety superficial yards, into which, at the time of these visits, nearly three hundred women, with their numerous children, were crowded; tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons; without classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that given by a man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day. Destitute of sufficient clothing, for which there was no provision; in rags and dirt, without bedding, they slept on the floor, the boards of which were in part raised to supply a sort of pillow. In the same rooms they lived, cooked, and washed.

"With the proceeds of their clamorous begging, when any stranger appeared amongst them, the prisoners purchased liquors from a regular tap in the prison. Spirits were openly drunk, and the ear was assailed by the most terrible language."

When Elizabeth Fry appeared and asked permission to visit the women prisoners, the Governor

was amazed, and protested. It was dangerous, he said; the women might be abusive, even violent. In any case, if she persisted in entering, she must leave behind her purse, watch and any other valuables.

"I thank thee, I am not afraid!" said Elizabeth Fry quietly. "I do not think I shall lose anything."

So in she went, through the felon's door; through the anteroom, where chains and fetters festooned the walls, while in the centre a block and a hammer stood ready for riveting them on helpless limbs; into that place of horror, the Female Ward of Newgate. What did she see?

A crowd of women, ragged, hungry, desperate, some half naked; shut up like wild beasts in a pen; struggling, fighting, screaming, swearing, singing. Some are old offenders, with hard and brutal faces, disheveled hair, eyes red with drink or fury. Others are new to the place: they shrink into the corners, clasping their children to them; or cower on the floor, weeping and bemoaning their wretched fate. Here, perhaps, is a poor girl who has lately come from the country to seek her fortune, and has found ruin instead. She has no friends, no money, no home but the streets. When her hunger grew too sharp, she stole a loaf of bread from a baker's

shop, was arrested, and thrown in here to await trial with the rest of this drinking, swearing, raging mob. Here she is now, on this day of January, 1813. As she cowers over the spark of fire, or (it may be) fights for a scrap of food or a drop of drink, the door opens and a woman enters. Look at her! The delicate Quaker lady, all in spotless dove-color, the snowy kerchief carefully folded on her bosom, the soft shawl gathered round her, the smooth rosy face, the bright eyes: what is such a vision doing here in Newgate? May the poor girl not well rub her eyes and think she is dreaming?

But the lady comes forward. Her eyes, bright and kind, rest on one, then on another; she speaks to all, in a clear, musical voice which is like no voice ever heard before in that place.

"You seem unhappy!" she says. "You are in want of clothes. Would you be pleased if someone were to come and give you help?"

At first sight of her the noise and tumult has stopped suddenly. Now for a moment there is dead silence; then a woman says bitterly: "Certainly! But nobody cares for *us!* Where can we expect to find a friend?"

"I am come with a wish to serve you," the lady

answers; "I think, if you second my endeavors, I may be of use to you."

She has brought some clothing with her; garments of green baize, made by herself and her elder children. These she distributes with kind words and looks. When she turns to go the women, who at first had eyed her askance, crowd round her with piteous supplications. "Ah!" they cry. "You will never come again! You will never come again!"

"Yes!" says Elizabeth Fry. "I *will* come again!"

This was the beginning of her prison ministry. Soon after, she wrote to her sons, who were making a visit at Earlham:

"I cannot help longing to see you, my very dear little John and Willy, and give you each a kiss. I am so fond of my little children, and often feel thankful I have so many; and if they grow better and better as they grow older, they will comfort and please their parents. I have lately been twice to Newgate prison to see after the poor prisoners, who had little infants almost without clothing. If you saw how small a piece of bread they are allowed every day, you would be very sorry, for they have nothing else to eat, unless their friends give them a trifle. I could not help thinking when

in the prison, what sorrow and trouble those have who do wrong; and they have not the comfort of feeling amidst all their trials that they have endeavored to do their duty. Good people are, no doubt, often much tried, but they have so much to comfort them when they remember that the Almighty is their Friend, and will care for them. We may also hope that if the poor wicked people are really sorry for their faults, God will pardon them, for His mercy is very great. If you were to grow up, I should like you to go to visit the poor sad people, to try to comfort them and do them good. I hope you will endeavor to be very useful, and not spend all your time in pleasing yourselves, but try to serve others and prefer them before yourselves. How very much I love you. Let me have letters written by yourselves. Farewell, my darling children. Remember the way to be happy is to do good.—Your tender mother, E. F."

And in her journal she writes:

"Feb. 16, 1813.—Yesterday we were some hours at Newgate with the poor female felons, attending to their outward necessities; we had been twice before. Before we went away, dear Anna Buxton had a few words in supplication, and, very unex-

pectedly to myself, I had also. I heard weeping, and I thought they appeared much tendered. A very solemn quiet was observed. It was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees around us, and in their deplorable condition."

After this winter, it was some time before she could resume her ministry, except by sending clothing and comforts to the prisoners. Her daughter says quaintly, "He who 'sits as a Refiner and Purifier of silver,' saw well to exercise her in the school of affliction, before raising her up for the remarkable work she had to do." A long and distressing illness; the loss of a child, her dear little namesake Betsy, and of her beloved brother John; financial losses, too, and long periods of separation from her children: these were among the lessons in the "school of affliction." Between 1813 and 1817 three more children were born to her, bringing the number up to ten; she was brought very low in strength, but her spirit never faltered. Neither did she ever forget "the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners"; and in 1816, about Christmas time, she began once more her visits to Newgate.

On her second visit, she begged to be left alone among the women for some hours. "She read to them the parable of the lord of the vineyard, in

the 20th chapter of St. Matthew; and made a few observations on the eleventh hour, and on Christ having come to save sinners, even those who might be said to have wasted the greater part of their lives, estranged from Him. Some asked who Christ was; others feared that their day of salvation was passed.

"The children, who were almost naked, were pining for want of proper food, air, and exercise. Mrs. Fry, on this occasion, particularly addressed herself to the mothers, and pointed out to them the grievous consequences to their children, of living in such a scene of depravity; she proposed to establish a school for them, to which they acceded with tears of joy. She desired them to consider the plan, for without their steady coöperation she would not undertake it; leaving it to them to select a governess from amongst themselves. On her next visit, they had chosen as schoolmistress a young woman, named Mary Connor, who proved eminently qualified for her task. She had been recently committed for stealing a watch, and became one of the first fruits of Christian labor in that place: she was assiduous in her duties, and was never known to infringe one of the rules. A free pardon was granted her about fifteen months after-

wards, but this proved an unavailing gift, for a cough, which had attacked her a short time previously, ended in consumption. She displayed, during her illness, much patience and quietness of spirit, having, as she humbly believed, obtained everlasting pardon and peace, through the merits of her Lord and Savior. She died in this hope, 'full of immortality.'"

"My mother had three great gifts," writes Katherine Fry; "her dignified and stately presence, her exquisite voice, and her constant and unruffled sweetness of expression—the same to crowned heads and poor prisoners." These gifts she gave in full measure to the women and children of Newgate. A band of helpers gathered round her as the little school prospered. At least there was now some prospect of their saving the children, but how about the women? To many people their case seemed wellnigh hopeless. When Mary Sanderson, one of the helpers, first visited Newgate with Elizabeth Fry, "the railing was crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situation, with the most boisterous violence; and begging with the utmost vociferation. She felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts, and she well recollects quite shuddering when the door

closed upon her, and she was locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions." Later, in testifying before the House of Commons, Mrs. Fry herself thus describes these early visits:

"It was in our visits to the school, where some of us attended almost every day, that we were witnesses to the dreadful proceedings that went forward on the female side of the prison; the begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, dancing, dressing up in men's clothes; the scenes are too bad to be described, so that we did not think it suitable to admit young persons with us."

At first the only thought of the heroic little band had been to save the children; but now the women themselves begged to have some share in the improvements which, they could not but see, were doing so much for their children. They crowded round Mrs. Fry and her friends, not now with oaths and gibes, but with piteous entreaties. "Help us too!" they cried. "You are teaching the children; teach us, too!"

There was but one answer that Elizabeth Fry could make to such requests: of course she would help them, in any way she could. But there were many lions in the path. The prison officials, with one accord, shook their heads; the friends and fam-

ilies of the band of mercy chimed in with remonstrances. Impossible! The women could not be reclaimed. Bad they were, and bad they would remain. Newgate was a place for imprisonment and punishment, not for teaching and improvement. The ladies would only sacrifice their time and strength, and would do no possible good. Besides, the women would steal or destroy any materials that might be brought in for purposes of instruction: it would only put temptation in their way. And so on, and so on. Well might Elizabeth Fry write in her journal:

"My mind too much tossed by a variety of interests and duties—husband, children, household accounts, Meetings, the Church, near relations, friends, and Newgate;—most of these things press a good deal upon me; I hope I am not undertaking too much, but it is a little like being in the whirlwind and in the storm; may I not be hurt in it, but enabled quietly to perform that which ought to be done; and may it all be done so heartily unto the Lord, and through the assistance of His grace, that if consistent with His Holy Will, His blessing may attend it, and if ever any good be done, that the glory of the whole work may be given where it is alone due."

A month later she was able to write:

"I have found in my late attention to Newgate a peace and prosperity in the undertaking that I seldom, if ever, remember to have done before. A way has very remarkably been opened for us, beyond all expectations, to bring into order the poor prisoners; those who are in power are so very willing to help us, in short, the time appears come to work amongst them. Already, from being like wild beasts, they appear harmless and kind. I am ready to say, in the fullness of my heart, surely 'it is the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eyes'; so many are the providential openings of various kinds. Oh! if good should result, may the praise and glory of the whole be entirely given where it is due by us, and by all, in deep humiliation and prostration of spirit."

In this very month, April, 1817, was formed the "Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate." Eleven of its twelve members were Friends. The object of this Association was "to provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety and industry, which may render

them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it." The authorities still shook their heads, but they too had heard Elizabeth Fry's voice and felt her sweet and powerful presence. They did not believe it could be done, but still they would help, so far as they could.

A set of rules, strict, but kindly, was drawn up by Mrs. Fry, requiring good conduct, cleanliness and sobriety. Calling the women about her, she talked to them a little, describing the comfort and help they would find in a better way of life; then read them the rules, and asked if they would agree to follow them. In answer, every hand was held up.

So far, so good. But if the women were to live decently, they must have a decent place to live in. By this time the prison officials were ready to do anything Mrs. Fry asked them. Have a room cleaned and whitewashed? Why, certainly! It was done in a twinkling. A short time after this, a visitor thus described what he saw in Newgate.

"I obtained permission to see Mrs. Fry, and was taken to the entrance of the women's wards. On my approach, no loud or angry voices indicated that I was about to enter a place which had long been known as 'Hell above ground.' The courtyard into which I was admitted, instead of being peopled

with beings scarcely human, blaspheming, fighting, tearing each other's hair, or gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the very clothes they wore (which often did not suffice even for decency), presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned. I was conducted by a decently-dressed person, the newly appointed yards-woman, to the door of a ward, where, at the head of a long table, sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners, who were engaged in needlework around it. Each wore a clean-looking blue apron and bib, with a ticket having a number on it suspended from her neck by a red tape. They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully, and then at a given signal resumed their seats and employments. Instead of a scowl or ill-suppressed laugh, their countenances wore an air of self-respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character, and the altered position in which they were placed. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were counterparts of the first."

Another visitor of these days says:

"There they sat in respectful silence, every eye fixed upon the grave sweet countenance of the gentle lady who was about to address them. A table

was before her, on which lay the Holy Bible. She seated herself in the chair placed for her, and after a pause for silent prayer of some minutes, she quietly opened the inspired volume. She turned to the Prophet Isaiah, and read aloud the fifty-third chapter, that wonderful and most affecting portion of the Word of God, in which the prophet realized and depicted as an eye-witness the mysterious and unspeakable suffering of the Divine Redeemer. Never till then, and never since then, have I heard anyone read as Elizabeth Fry read that chapter—the solemn reverence of her manner, the articulation, so exquisitely modulated, so distinct, that not a word of that sweet and touching voice could fail to be heard. While she read, her mind seemed to be intensely absorbed in the passage of Scripture, and in nothing else. She seemed to take in to her own soul the words which she read, and to apply them to herself; and then she raised her head, and, after another pause of silence, she spoke to the wretched women before her.

"Her address was short, and so simple that it must have been intelligible to the capacities of her hearers, and it was soon evident that it had come home to the hearts of many there by the subdued expression of their countenances, and by the tears

that flowed freely from eyes which perhaps had never shed such tears till then."

Still another record, the Chronicles of Newgate, says:

"The effect of her teaching and of her very presence was not confined to that assembly; but, as I passed with her through the different rooms of the prison, where the women were occupied with the various works she had been the means of procuring for them, the looks of tender reverence they cast on her as she moved among them, and the way in which some whispered a blessing after her, testified to the influence she had obtained among them."

So the work was begun, and so it prospered. A door was opened in the blank wall of ignorance and oppression, never to close again: a step forward and upward was taken in the long, slow, but steady progress of humanity.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONVICT SHIPS

THE winter of 1818-19 was a busy one for Elizabeth Fry. Her daughter says that none but those who lived with her can form any idea of the demands upon her time. There were the beloved husband and ten children, who must never feel any lack of her tender love and interest. There were visiting Friends, and Meetings, and troops of friends and relations, all as usual. But to all this was now added a multiplicity of new labors, new duties, new responsibilities and—I fear—new "pinching trials." The story of the reformation of Newgate had gone forth, and Mrs. Fry was deluged with letters of inquiry from all parts of the country, chiefly from women who wished to follow her example in country towns. How had she done this, and that? What would she advise in this case? How much would it cost to——? There was no end to these letters, all of which must be answered fully and carefully. Then there was the

army of begging letter writers which descended on her in force. She was one of the rich Gurneys; her husband was rich, too; she must have plenty of money. So they wrote, begging for money, for employment, for advice, for everything you can imagine; some of them were deserving, many were not; she had to read and consider all the letters, answer many of them, give time and thought and help where these seemed really needed.

"Her benevolence was of that cast, that she hardly could endure to know that others wanted the necessaries of life, whilst she was herself surrounded by superfluities and luxuries; and it was always with pain that she refused the request of any of these applicants. The cases of many of the prisoners also demanded much time and attention. The whole of this press of business was accomplished with no other help than that given her by the young people of her own family, who, constantly employed under her direction, were able to prevent its greatly accumulating; and in general the communications of each day were attended to as they were presented."

Mrs. Fry's purse, ample as it was, would never have been able to supply all the demands made on it; but Brother Joseph John and Brother Sam were

always ready to help in their own generous way. "From that time until her labors of love were ended on earth," we are told, "not one year elapsed in which they did not liberally, even magnificently, contribute to the various purposes of benevolence. Perhaps this was more especially the case with her brother Samuel, who, as he advanced in life, appeared more and more in the character of the philanthropist, ever at hand when duty called to promote any object which he considered would tend to the benefit of mankind. His was a direct mission no less than that of other members of his family more prominently before the public eye; and in much of the benevolent machinery so beautifully worked by them he might be called the mainstay." [1]

Joseph John was always ready to help, too; nor was it only the "causes" that he helped. If he thought Sister Betsy looked tired and overdone, he would go home and write her a letter like this:

"Earlham, 1st mo., 19th, 1819.

"My dearest Betsy,

" 'He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.' In the desire to fulfill this precept, I may state that

[1] "The Gurneys of Earlham," Vol. I, p. 110.

I have, on the settlement of my accounts, £500 to spare; and after some consideration, believe it my duty to apply it to the oiling of thy wheels. I therefore put it into Samuel's hands, to whom thou mayest apply for the money, as wanted. My intention is, that it should be a little stock in hand, to meet thy private and personal exigencies. My condition is, that thou wilt not say a word about it to anyone. Of course I take no refusal and can admit but very little gratitude. . . .

"In haste, thy very affectionate Brother,

"J. J. GURNEY.

"P. S.—I shall consider myself very ill used, if thou art ever detected in walking, when it is better for thy health that thou shouldst ride, or if thou art ever denying thyself the comforts of life, which are needful for thee."

Truly, I wonder whether two kinder men ever lived than Samuel and Joseph John!

But far more important than letters were the prisoners themselves, the women and children who, next to her own dear ones, were now Elizabeth Fry's chief care and interest. A volume, and a large one, might be filled with the stories of different individuals. Here is one, told by a poor

woman, once a convict under her charge in Newgate.

"We true Roman Catholics looked upon her with doubt, and this fear prevented her doing as much good amongst us as she otherwise would; for bad as we were, we looked upon it as the last fall to give up our faith. But Mrs. Fry had a remarkable way with her—a sort of speaking that you could hardly help listening to, whether you would or no; for she was not only very good, but very clever.

"Well, just to avoid listening when she was speaking or reading, I learnt to count twelve backwards and forwards, so that my mind was quite taken up. It was a pity we had such a dread. Mrs. Fry had a way of speaking to one of us alone, and I was very anxious to shuffle this lecture: the fact was, I expected she would put many questions, and as I altogether respected her character too much to tell her a lie, I kept away from the sermon, as we in derision used to call it.

"But when she was taking leave of us, she just called me on one side, saying she would like to speak a few words to me. So, says I to myself, 'I'm caught at last.'

"Well, she came close to me, and looking at me in a very solemn sort of way, she laid her hands

upon my shoulders, and yet her very fingers seemed to have a feeling of kindness towards me, and she gave me a pressure that told she felt for me; her thumbs were set firm and hard upon my shoulders. But it was no lecture she gave me: all she said was, 'Let not thine eyes covet.' No other words passed her lips, but then her words were low and awful—kind as a mother, yet like a judge. Well, when I got to the colony, I went on right enough for a time, but one day I was looking into a work-box belonging to my mistress, and a gold thimble tempted me. It was on my finger and in my pocket in an instant; but, just as I was going to shut down the box-lid, as sure as I am telling you, I felt Mrs. Fry's thumbs on my shoulders—the gentle pleading touch of her fingers—and I gave one look about me, threw back the thimble, and trembled with terror to find I was alone in the room."

This story was told in Australia, where the woman was at work; and through it we come to another and a most important phase of Elizabeth Fry's labors.

In those days, and long after them (until 1839) all English convicts were transported to Australia to work out their term of penal servitude. This system was full of abuses, and has since been abol-

ished by every civilized country. The prisoners were driven like sheep aboard the convict ship, and there, huddled together, with insufficient clothing, with wretched food, with no employment for hands or minds, they tossed on the ocean through long weeks of misery. What wonder that when they reached their destination they were ripe for any deed of violence? The Ladies' Newgate Association had no power to abolish the system, but they could and did improve very greatly the conditions of the women convicts under sentence of transportation. Mrs. Fry took the matter in hand in her own quiet, methodical way. When a company of "transports" was about to leave Newgate, it was their custom to celebrate the occasion by a riot, breaking windows, furniture, anything they could lay their hands on. Then they went off in open wagons, shouting and screaming, making all the noise they possibly could, and followed by disorderly crowds who added to the tumult. All this must be stopped, said Elizabeth Fry. She asked the Governor of Newgate to let the women go in closed carriages instead of open wagons; he consented, being by this time her fast friend and supporter. Then she told the women that if they would be good and quiet, she and the other ladies would go

with them to Deptford, and see them on board. So said, so done. Instead of the usual frightful scene of tumult and disorder, a quiet procession of cabs, followed by Mrs. Fry's own carriage, made its way through the streets to the port on Thames side. The women behaved well and went quietly and silently on board the ship *Maria,* which was awaiting them. The ladies, following them, were distressed to see how little room there was below deck, and how closely the one hundred and twenty-eight women and their children (the children went with their mothers; there was nothing else to do with them in those days) must be huddled together. The ladies did what they could, dividing them into classes of twelve, according to age and similarity of habits, and appointing a monitor, chosen from among the most decent and well-behaved, over every twelve. This was something, but what were the women to do during the long stormy weeks before them?

> For Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do.

Especially true was this of hands that had in most cases been trained for mischief. Work must be found for them; but what work? The answer

was found in one simple word familiar to all English-speaking women: patchwork! In Botany Bay (the name of the convict colony whither they were bound) there was great need of comforts of every kind: quilts and "comfortables" could be readily sold. On learning this, the way was easy for Mrs. Fry and her ladies. "They made it known that they required little pieces of colored cotton for their purposes, and in a few days enough were sent from the different Manchester houses in London fully to supply them, aided by some knitting."

This proved so successful that when, a year later, another shipload of women convicts touched at Rio Janeiro, the quilts made by the women sold for a guinea apiece!

But there were the children: what should be done for them? "They must have a school!" said Mrs. Fry. So, in the crowded ship, a small space was set apart for a schoolroom, where the children were taught to read, knit and sew, in charge of a competent convict woman who was to be paid for her services at the end of the voyage if she had performed them faithfully.

It took five weeks to fit the *Maria* for going to sea. During all that time hardly a day passed without Mrs. Fry or one of her ladies going on board.

At last all was ready, and the final day came. Mrs. Fry's daughters thus describe her parting with the women among whom she had labored so long:

"The last time that Mrs. Fry was on board the *Maria* whilst she lay at Deptford, was one of those solemn and interesting occasions that leave a lasting impression on the minds of those who witness them. There was great uncertainty whether the poor convicts would see their benefactress again. She stood at the door of the cabin, attended by her friends and the Captain; the women on the quarter-deck facing them. The sailors, anxious to see what was going on, clambered into the rigging, on to the capstan, or mingled in the outskirts of the group. The silence was profound—when Mrs. Fry opened her Bible, and in a clear audible voice, read a portion from it. The crews of the other vessels in the tier, attracted by the novelty of the scene, leant over the ships on either side, and listened apparently with great attention. She closed the Bible, and after a short pause, knelt down on the deck and implored a blessing on this work of Christian charity from that God, who, though one may sow and another water, can alone give the increase. Many of the women wept bitterly; all seemed touched. When she left the ship they followed her with their

eyes and their blessings, until her boat, having passed within another tier of vessels, they could see her no more."

I must touch briefly upon another branch of Mrs. Fry's work for the women of Newgate. In going to and fro among them she went often to the "condemned cells," where those condemned to death awaited the day of their execution. She felt them specially on her mind, and spent many hours in talking and praying with them, comforting them with the heavenly faith and hope that filled her own heart. Many a poor soul, entering the condemned cell in darkness and despair, left it for the scaffold with a heart uplifted and resigned, looking beyond death to new life, new hope, new endeavor. Through her intercourse with these women, Mrs. Fry became more and more convinced that capital punishment was an injury rather than an aid to the common good. The number of offences punishable by death in England at that time seems hardly credible to us today. Men and women—yes, and children sometimes—were hanged for forgery, for burglary, for shoplifting, and pocket-picking.

One poor woman was hanged for stealing a loaf of bread for her starving children.

It was not until 1808 that Samuel Romilly car-

ried his bill for "the abolition of death for privately stealing from the person to the value of five shillings"; in other words, picking pockets.[1]

Two years later Romilly tried to bring about the abolition of hanging for shoplifting and burglary, but without success. Again and again he brought forward his bills; again and again they were defeated. "I am against your bill!" cried a tipsy member of Parliament, reeling up to the bar of the House of Commons. "I am for hanging all!"

But Romilly did not yield an inch. In February, 1816, he came forward again to protest against the dreadful law which demanded the hanging of human beings for "stealing in a shop to the value of five shillings." He described this law as the most severe and sanguinary in the statute-book. As recently as 1785 no less than ninety-seven persons were executed in London for this offence alone, twenty suffering at one time. Many of these persons were of tender age. Even then, while Romilly was speaking, there was a child in Newgate, not ten years of age, under sentence of death for this offence. Readers of "Oliver Twist" will know something of the way in which in the "good old days," children were trained to pocket-picking, the

[1] "Popular History of England." Knight.

only schooling they ever had. I need not go into that sad and terrible story, more than just enough to show what Elizabeth Fry had to contend with in her work among the women and children of Newgate.

In 1818 a young woman named Harriet Skelton was sentenced to be hanged and was placed in the condemned cell at Newgate, where Mrs. Fry visited her. She was quiet and well-behaved, with a countenance "open, confiding, expressing strong feeling, but neither hardened in depravity, nor capable of cunning." Her offence was having passed forged notes at the request of the man she loved. Elizabeth Fry felt as if she *could not* let this girl be murdered, for a legal murder it would be. Earnestly she made her plea to those in authority, begging for commutation of the sentence. Among those to whom she appealed was an acquaintance of earlier years, William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester. The two had not met since the days of the scarlet riding-habit and the military band, at Norwich. Then, a merry boy and girl, they had danced, sung, frolicked together, under the green trees of Earlham. Now, their meeting was different indeed. Moved by the appeal of one he had always admired and respected, the Duke came in person to Newgate,

and was met in the gloomy gateway by the Quaker lady in her dove-colored dress. It must have been a strange moment for both, but no "storm of pleasure" now rose in Betsy's heart at sight of the Prince. Gently, gravely, she welcomed him, and led him through scenes that were new indeed to him. "The dark vaulted passage—the clanking fetters—the damp smell—the grating sound as the heavy key was turned, the massive bolt drawn back, and the iron-sheathed door forced reluctantly open."

The Duke of Gloucester was deeply moved. A kindly man, his heart rose in indignation at the crime which was about to be perpetrated in the holy name of justice. He promised to do all in his power to save Harriet Skelton, and kept his promise. His name and that of his brother were signed to an earnest appeal for mercy to Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary. Public sympathy was roused, and there was a general demand from high and low that the woman's life be spared. But all in vain. Those in authority saw the letter of the law only, and insisted upon its fulfillment. Innocent of all save weakness, patient and uncomplaining, Harriet Skelton met her fate, a sacrifice to ignorance and prejudice.

CHAPTER VIII

"IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN"

AND now, a new and strange phase of life opened for Elizabeth Fry. *She became the fashion!* Through the newspapers, the public had become aware of the good work going on in Newgate, and was deeply interested. Everybody was talking about Mrs. Fry and the wonders she had accomplished. Bishops, priests and deacons, dukes and counts and marquises, all wanted to see and hear the wonderful Quakeress. The Duke of Gloucester's interest had doubtless been roused in the first place by the memory of old times, and of the lovely sisters of Earlham; but now the Queen herself (Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of George III) sent for Mrs. Fry to visit her at the Mansion House. This was a command not to be disobeyed. At the appointed time Elizabeth, in company with Lady Harcourt, a kind friend, were waiting in the Egyptian Hall.

"After a time, the Queen perceived Mrs. Fry,

and, at the close of the examination, advanced to address her. It was a subject for Hayter: the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, but her countenance lighted up with an expression of the kindest benevolence; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure, though a little flushed, preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner, several of the bishops standing near her; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders; the noble hall lined with spectators; and, in the centre hundreds of poor children, brought there to be examined, from their different schools. . . . A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, followed by a simultaneous clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitude without, and died away in the distance. They hailed the scene before them; they saw in it, not so much the Queen and the Philanthropist, as royalty offering its meed of approval at the shrine of mercy and good works." [1]

Another and more lively description is given by Katherine Fry, Elizabeth's daughter, in a letter to her Aunt Hannah Buxton.

"Plashet, May 3, 1818.—My Aunt Catherine has

[1] "Memoir of Elizabeth Fry," I, 341.

commissioned me to write thee a description of our day at the Mansion House—it was the 19th of last month. . . . With infinite difficulty we got into the anteroom. In a few minutes some men in very grand liveries came in a great hurry to clear the way and lay down a piece of scarlet cloth; the cry was, 'The Queen is coming.' We looked through the entrance-door, and saw mamma (!) with the Bishop of Gloucester (!), and Lady Harcourt with Alderman Wood. Silence had been previously ordered as a mark of respect, but a buzz of 'Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Fry' ran through the room. It was to our utter astonishment that we saw them come in and walk along those spread carpets, Lady Harcourt in full court-dress, on the arm of the Alderman in his scarlet gown, and secondly the Bishop of Gloucester (Ryder) in lawn sleeves, leading our darling mother in her plain Friend's cap, and a dark silk gown—I see her now! her light flaxen hair, a little flush on her face from the bustle and noise she had passed through, and her sweet, lovely, placid smile. In a few minutes the Queen passed, followed by the Princesses, the Royal Dukes, the Lady Mayoress, and other official personages. . . .

"The Lord Mayor placed us behind the hustings on which the Queen was. We asked him for mam-

ma. He burst out laughing: 'There she is, on the bench of Bishops.' There were eight of them there. We heard people pointing her out one to another: 'That is she with her hair over her forehead.'—'That must be Mrs. Fry with the Bishops.'—'Look now! you may see Mrs. Fry; she rises to receive the Queen's salute.'

"Towards the close, after 'God Save the King' had been sung, everybody began to clap violently, and we asked the cause. 'Why, the Queen is speaking to Mrs. Fry.' When Queen Charlotte rose to go, she paused and passed to the side where the Bishops sat—of course all had risen—and Lady Harcourt presented our mother.

"The Queen, who is so short, courtesying, and our mother, who is so tall, not courtesying, was very awkward. Her Majesty asked our mother if she were not afraid of going into prisons, how far she lived from London, how many children she had, etc.

"The shouts in the hall were tremendous, and were caught up by the crowds outside; it was told why they shouted, and it was repeated again and again, till it reached our father, sitting in his office at St. Mildred's Court, that 'the Queen was speaking to Mrs. Fry.' "

After this, not only did everyone want to see Elizabeth Fry, but they wanted to see her at work, in the prison, among the convict women. They flocked in crowds to Newgate, gay ladies in feathers and laces, gay gallants in ruffles and knee-breeches. It was all vastly shocking, they said, but vastly interesting too. There were sometimes as many visitors as there were convicts. I wonder what the women thought of them. They were used to Mrs. Fry. They loved and reverenced her, and their eyes would often fill with tears as they listened to her silver voice, and met the kind glance of her eyes; they knew she came to help them. The Quaker dress, too, with its plain old-world fashion and sober color, must have been restful and pleasant to their eyes; but I think they may have wondered why the beflounced and befeathered ladies should come to stare at them. The prison authorities wondered, too, and it was often very inconvenient; but just at that time it was the best thing that could have happened, for every visitor went away and told her friends, and they again told theirs, and so the story spread all through London, all through England, till at last the nation and its rulers came to realize that something must be done in the way of prison reform.

And who were some of these gay visitors? Some of them we know: the royal dukes of Gloucester and Sussex, sons of the King; Amelia Opie, the gay, charming little lady who loved bright colors, and flowers and feathers and every kind of prettiness, but changed them by and by for Quaker gray; and another little lady who has been a good friend to several generations of children, and who is, I hope and trust, still read and loved today—Maria Edgeworth, author of "The Parent's Assistant," and many other delightful books. Miss Edgeworth thus describes her visit to Newgate:

"March, 1822.—Yesterday we went by appointment to Newgate. The private door opened at sight of our tickets, and the great doors, and the little doors, and the thick doors, and doors of all sorts, were unbolted and unlocked, and on we went through dreary but clean passages, till we came to a room where rows of empty benches fronted a table on which lay a large Bible. Several ladies and gentlemen entered and took their seats at either side of the table, in silence.

"Enter Mrs. Fry in a drab-colored silk cloak and plain borderless Quaker cap; a most benevolent countenance—Guido Madonna face—calm, benign. 'I must make an inquiry—Is Maria Edgeworth

here? and where?' I went forward; she bade us come and sit beside her. Her first smile as she looked upon me I can never forget.

"The prisoners came in, and in an orderly manner ranged themselves on the benches. All quite clean, faces, hair, caps, and hands. On a very low bench in front little children were seated and were *settled* by their mothers. . . .

"She opened the Bible, and read in the most sweetly solemn, sedate voice I ever heard, slowly and distinctly, without anything in the manner that could distract attention from the matter. Sometimes she paused to explain, which she did with great judgment, addressing the convicts, '*we* have felt; *we* are convinced.' They were very attentive, unaffectedly interested, I thought, in all she said, and touched by her manner. There was nothing put on in their countenances, not any appearance of hypocrisy. I studied their countenances carefully, but I could not see any which, without knowing to whom they belonged, I should have decided was bad; yet Mrs. Fry assured me that all these women had been of the worst sort. She confirmed what we have read and heard, that it was by their love of their children that she first obtained influence over these abandoned women. When she first took notice

Mrs. Fry in Newgate

of one or two of their fine children, the mothers said that if she could but save their children from the misery they had gone through in vice, they would do anything she bid them. And when they saw the change made in their children by her schooling, they begged to attend themselves. I could not have conceived that the love of their children could have remained so strong in hearts in which every other feeling of virtue had so long been dead. The Vicar of Wakefield's sermon in prison is, it seems, founded on a deep and true knowledge of human nature—'the spark of good is often smothered, never wholly extinguished.'"

Another visitor records a very different impression; one which, I confess, might have been my own, had I been there. Fanny Kemble, then a young and beautiful girl, writes:

"I had the great honor of accompanying Mrs. Fry in one of her visits to Newgate, but from various causes received rather a painful impression instead of the very different one I had anticipated. Her divine labor of love had become *famous,* and fine ladies of fashion pressed eagerly to accompany her, or be present at the Newgate exhortations. The unfortunate women she addressed were ranged opposite their less excusable sister sinners of the

better class, and I hardly dared to look at them, so entirely did I feel out of my place by the side of Mrs. Fry, and so sick for their degraded attitude and position. If I had been alone with them and their noble teacher I would assuredly have gone and sat down among them. On the day I was there a poor creature sat in the midst of the congregation attired differently from all the others, who was pointed out to me as being under sentence of transportation for whatever crime she committed. Altogether I felt broken-hearted for *them* and ashamed for *us*."

Fashion was not the only thing that brought people to Newgate. The early nineteenth century was a time of general awakening. People were becoming aware of many abuses unsuited to civilized communities. Among the friends who gathered round Elizabeth Fry in Newgate were many reformers whose names are familiar in association with one good cause or another. Here was her brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton (husband of lovely Hannah Gurney. When he was a schoolboy, he saw her and said, "She shall be my wife!" and so in due time she was.) with his friend William Wilberforce, two men whose names will ever be honored as leaders in the fight against slavery in Eng-

lish colonies. Here were Samuel Romilly and Jeremy Bentham and a host of others, while often at their Betsy's side, upholding and encouraging her in every way, were the two good and noble brothers, Joseph John and Samuel Gurney. They could not do enough, it seemed, to show their love and reverence for this sister of theirs. Joseph John has told us what she appeared to him, in a passage equally tender and beautiful:

"The law of love, which might be said to be ever on her lips, was deeply engraven on the heart of Elizabeth Fry, and her charity, in the best and most comprehensive sense of the term, flowed freely forth towards her fellow-men of every class, of every condition. Thus with a peculiar grace she won her way, and almost always obtained her object. One of the qualities which tended powerfully to this result was her patience—her indomitable perseverance. She was never one of those who embraced a philanthropic project warmly, and as readily forgot it. But month after month, and year after year she labored in any plan of mercy which she had thought it her duty to undertake, and she never forsook it in heart or feeling, even when her health failed, or other circumstances, not under her control, closed the door for a time on her personal ex-

ertions. With this spirit of perseverance she combined a peculiar versatility and readiness for seizing every passing occasion, and converting it into an opportunity of usefulness. She was not only always willing, but always prepared, always ready (by a kind of mental sleight of hand) to do good, be it ever so little, to a child, a servant, a waiter at an inn, a friend, a neighbor, a stranger!"

A story told by a friend illustrates this forcibly:

"Walking with her one morning down Lombard Street, we met a woman decently dressed, but who appeared to be very sorrowful. She asked no relief, nor did she seek to attract attention. Yet Mrs. Fry, as if prompted or impelled by some superior power, let go my arm, and turning to the woman, said, 'Thou appearest to be in trouble; tell me, I beseech thee, the cause of thy sorrow, for perhaps I can assist thee and afford thee relief.' The woman hesitated, but Mrs. Fry, perceiving her burdened spirit, led her to the house of her brother in the same street, and there, by her kind solicitude, was told of her trouble. She needed no pecuniary assistance, but only the counsels of a wise and kind friend, whom she had thus most unexpectedly found. The unlooked-for sympathy she received saved her from misery and self-destruction, for she

afterwards showed how, when met by Mrs. Fry, she was on her way to drown herself in the Thames."

All this time Mrs. Fry and the rest of the Newgate Committee were giving practical as well as spiritual help to the prisoners. Up to this time the women had been in the habit of spending any money they could get on liquor, beer, cards, and so on. Now all this was stopped. A neat little shop was opened between the outer and inner gates of Newgate, and here they could buy tea, sugar, needles and thread, a bright ribbon, or a pretty kerchief. This proved a very good thing, and the women, now neat and tidy, delighted in spending the pennies given them by their friends in the shop, buying sweeties for the children or little adornments for themselves.

In August, 1818, Elizabeth Fry took a new step in her life work. England was thoroughly awakened from the lethargy in which she had been plunged ever since the death (twenty-eight years before) of John Howard, first and greatest of prison reformers. But how about Scotland and Ireland? Was it not time to wake them, too? Elizabeth Fry had been thinking of this for some time, and of combining the visiting of prisons with the Friends' Meetings in different places; but it

appeared almost impossible, her home claims being so very strong.

"I neither saw outward way for it," she says, "nor did I feel the heart made willing; but as I have so often found when there is a real 'putting-forth,' way is made within and without; so it has been now; all my sweet flock are, I trust, carefully provided for; Katherine and the three little ones at Earlham, Joseph and Chenda at Runcton (the home of her brother, Daniel), John and William at school, and Rachel with me. My beloved husband means to meet me on my journey; not only outward way has been made, but the willing heart also granted, and I had remarkably sweet peace and relief in being willing to give up to it."

So she started, in company with her brother Joseph John, who had now become an acknowledged minister among Friends, and his wife, and journeyed northward to Scotland. It was slow and tedious traveling by coach over wild and rugged roads (there were no railways then, remember) and spite of the "sweet peace and relief" Elizabeth's journal describes many anxieties and forebodings:

"Aberdeen, 29th.—I have felt low upon arriving here; five hundred miles from my beloved husband

and children! but a good account of them is cause for thankfulness. Still it is a deeply weighty thing, and I have to try my ground again and again. In almost every new place, the language of my spirit is, Why am I here? At this place, we find several other Friends, also traveling in the ministry, which make me feel it the more; but, as my coming is not of my own choice, or my own ordering, I desire to leave it, and to commit myself, my spirit and body, and all that is dear to me, absent and present, to Christ my Redeemer. We visited the old Barclay seat, at Ury, where our mother's forefathers once lived. How great the change from what it once was!"

"Hawick, 13th.—I may thankfully acknowledge being so far upon our way, but our journey through life is a little like a common journey: we may, after a day's traveling, lie down and rest; but we have, on the morrow, to set off again upon our travels. So I find my journey in life. I am not infrequently permitted to come for a short time to a sweet, quiet resting-place, but I find that I soon have to set forth again. I was glad and relieved in leaving Aberdeen, and then a fresh work began in Edinburgh. On Seventh day we visited the prisons, accompanied by some gentlemen, the Lord Provost

and others. Here we were much interested; we had to dine out with several gentlemen; we went, in the morning, to Meeting, and were favored to do well; many were there not Friends, and what were my feelings, in the evening, to find a considerable number of people, quite a Public Meeting, it gave me a great deal of alarm; but we had a good Meeting, and I trust the cause was exalted; people flocked much after us. Our being there was mentioned in the papers, which accounted for this; but it was to my own feelings a low time. . . .

"We arrived at Glasgow in the evening, and the next day visited the prisons, and formed a Ladies' Committee. We visited some families the next day, and, accompanied by several gentlemen, magistrates and others, we again went to the Bridewell Prison, where I had to start the Committee in their proceedings; it was awful to me, having to bow the knee for a blessing before so many who were strangers to our ways; but blessed be the Lord, the power of truth appeared to be over all, so that I remembered these words, 'Rejoice not that the spirits are made subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' We had two Meetings, one in the morning, for Friends, but many others came; and one, to my

deep humiliation, in the evening, for the public; awful work as it was, we were favored to get through well, and to leave Glasgow with clear minds. We have since traveled through great part of Cumberland, attended many Meetings there, some very important ones, and some highly favored by the Presence and Power of the Most High; thence to Kendal.

"At Liverpool was the next Meeting we attended; it was a large public one, and so it has been in many places. I deeply felt it; I hardly dared to raise my eyes because of the feathers and ribbons before me. However, best help was afforded, to my very great relief and consolation; truth appeared to be in great dominion."

A lady who saw her in the prisons at Glasgow thus describes her:

"She is about forty, tall, sedate, with a physiognomy gentle but very observing, at first not giving or calling for much sympathy. Her manner is free and unembarrassed. She met, by appointment, several of the magistrates and a number of ladies at Bridewell.[1] She told them with simplicity what had been done at Newgate, proposing something similar for Glasgow. She entered into pleasant

[1] A prison.

conversation with everyone. All were delighted when she offered to speak a little to the poor women, but the keeper of Bridewell said he feared it was a dangerous experiment, for that they never but by compulsion listened to reading, and were generally disposed to laugh and turn all into ridicule. Mrs. Fry said she was not without fear of this happening, but she thought it might give pleasure to some. The women, about one hundred, were assembled in a large room, and when we went in, were misdoubting and lowering. Mrs. Fry took off her little bonnet, and sat down on a low seat fronting the women. She looked round with a kind conciliating manner, but with an eye that met everyone there. She said, 'I had better tell you what we are come about.' She described how she had to do with a great many poor women—sadly wicked, more wicked than anyone present—and how they had recovered from evil. Her language was often Biblical, always referring to our Savior's promises, and cheering the desolate beings with holy hope. 'Would you like to turn from that which is wrong; would you *like* it,' she said, 'if ladies were to visit and speak comfort to you, and try to help you to be better? You could tell them your griefs, for they who have done wrong

have many sorrows.' As she read them the rules, asking them if they approved, she asked them to hold up their hands if they acceded. From the first many hands were upraised, and as she spoke tears began to fall. One very beautiful girl near me had her eyes swimming in tears, and her lips moved as if following Mrs. Fry's words. An old woman who held a Bible we saw pressing upon it, as she became more and more impressed. The hands were now almost all ready to rise at every pause, and these callous and obdurate offenders were with one consent bowed before her. In this moment she took the Bible, and read the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Piece of Silver, and of the Prodigal Son. It is not in my power to express to you the effect of her saintly voice. In speaking such blessed words, she often paused and looked at the 'poor women' (as she named them) with such sweetness as won all their confidence, and she applied different parts of the story with a delicacy and beauty such as I never heard before. 'His father saw him when he was yet afar off.' The reading was succeeded by a solemn pause, and then, resting her large Bible upon the ground, we suddenly saw Mrs. Fry kneeling before the women. Her prayer was beyond words—sooth-

ing and elevating, and I felt her musical voice in the peculiar recitative of the Quakers to be like a mother's song to a suffering child."

They found the Scottish prisons mostly in a bad way; they visited many dreadful places, where human beings, both criminals and lunatics, were kept as no domestic animal would be kept today. All these things were described by Joseph John in a pamphlet entitled, "Notes on a visit made to some of the Prisons in Scotland and the North of England, in company with Elizabeth Fry."

Elizabeth's tender heart was deeply moved by all she saw, most especially by the piteous condition of the insane. Her mind was full of terrible pictures of suffering and misery; her nerves racked with sympathy and tenderness.

"That which most deeply affected Mrs. Fry, and excited sorrowful recollections, which she retained almost to the close of her life, was the condition of the poor lunatics confined in those prisons. Not the wretched prisoner fastened to the iron bar at Haddington; not those chained to the bedstead at Forfar; nor to the walls of their cells, as at Berwick; nor to a ring on the floor, as at Newcastle, left such a melancholy impression on her mind, as the state of the poor lunatic in the cell at Hadding-

ton. But happily this evil also was in progress of remedy, through the erection of Lunatic Asylums." All this, added to the fatigue of the journey, was too much for her strength, which was strained almost to breaking. Moreover, she returned to many anxieties. Her husband had had an accident; two of the children were ill. The journal shows the overburdened state of her mind:

"Plashet, Tenth Month, 15th.—I have had the comfort of finding my beloved husband mending. My first arrival for a few hours was sorrowful; my dearest —— being seriously ill, but I am thankful to say she soon recovered. My Louisa is now poorly, but I hope not materially so. My prison concerns truly flourishing: surely in that a blessing in a remarkable manner appears to attend me; more apparently, than in some of my home duties. Business pressed very hard upon me: the large family at Mildred's Court, so many to please there, and attend to—the various accounts—the dear children and their education—my husband poorly—the church—the poor—my poor infirm aunt whom I have undertaken to care for—my public business, and my numerous friends and correspondents. I have desired to keep my mind quiet and lifted up to my Redeemer, as my Helper and my Guide; in-

wardly, I have felt helped, even He whom my soul loves has been near; but I have also had some perplexity and discouragement, thinking that some of those very dear, as well as others, are almost jealous over me, and ready to mistrust my various callings, and are open both to see my children's weaknesses, and almost to doubt the propriety of my many objects. Such are my thoughts! Indeed I too much feel the pain of not being able to please everyone; but this cannot be, I believe, and if I only may please my Master, I trust that His servants will not greatly disapprove me. I certainly at times feel pressed almost out of measure; but then I do not think that I have brought myself into all this service, therefore I humbly hope that I and my family may be kept in it. I sometimes wish I had more order in my pursuits, but this appears almost impossible. Oh! for a little help daily and hourly to press forward towards the mark, until the prize be obtained; through good report, and evil report; through perplexities and cares, joys and sorrows. Thou hast helped in a marvelous way, O Lord! be pleased to continue to help and to be very near thy poor unworthy child and servant, and make a way for her where at seasons she may see no way. Amen."

Under the pressure of thoughts like these, it was not strange that she should feel misgivings about her public work. Evidently, some of her friends or relations had been urging her to give it up, pressing upon her considerations of health, of duty to her family, etc. She is also beset with fears lest the readings at Newgate be a snare to herself and to others.

"Plashet, 28th.—Entering my public life again is very serious to me, more particularly my readings at Newgate. They are to my feelings too much like making a show of a good thing, yet we have so often been favored in them to the tendering of many hearts, that I believe I must not be hasty in putting an end to them, or hindering people coming to them; and it is the desire and prayer of my heart, that way may rightly open about them, and that when engaged in them, I may do what I do heartily unto the Lord, and not unto man; and look not either to the good or evil opinions of men. The prudent fears that the good have for me, try me more than most things, and I find that it calls for Christian forbearance, not to be a little put out by them. I am confident that we often see a Martha-like spirit about spiritual things. I know, by myself, what it is to be over-busy. O Lord!

enable us to keep our ranks in righteousness, and pardon the iniquity of even our holy things, of our omissions and commissions; and be pleased to enable Thy poor, unworthy child and servant to cleave very close to Thee in spirit; and if it should please Thee that she should again be brought forth even as a spectacle among the people, oh! be pleased to keep her from ever hurting or bringing discredit upon Thy ever blessed cause; but enable her to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before Thee; and so to abide in the light and life of Christ her Savior and Redeemer, that many may be led to glorify Thee, her Father who art in heaven, Amen, and Amen."

Again and again we find her in the journal "tossed with tempest," her spirit "brought deeply prostrate within her." "My flesh and my heart, at seasons, feel ready to fail—sorrows have compassed me about. Among other distresses, finding how powerful the enemy is, and how even those whom I do fully believe to be servants of the Most High, give way to what appears to be a gossiping slanderous spirit."

She was troubled about her children, too, who were not as religious at heart as she wished. "Another sorrow, just now, is fearing that I have not

one child much under the influence of grace. . . . Perhaps I am hardly tender enough over the temptations of youth. (O Lord! make me more so: a better wife and mother; more calculated to bring them all to Christ their Redeemer.)"

Had Betsy forgotten "Goat's" which she so often found *"dis"*? Had she forgotten her scarlet riding-habit and her purple boots? I somehow fear she had, and that she was expecting her boys and girls, young growing things, to share, at sixteen, the feelings which were now hers at forty.

It was a great trial to her also, that to some of her children the bonds of Quakerism were growing irksome. Like some of their aunts before them, they preferred the Church of England, finally joined it openly, and were married by its ordinance. In these cases the tender mother did not feel that she could attend the wedding. She sat at home and prayed, her heart full of longing; loving her child all the more, yearning over him all the more deeply, never for an instant questioning his right to follow the path that he saw most clearly, but grieving over the separation that must ensue.

I wish I had more to tell you about the young Frys. The two who wrote their mother's Memoir, Katherine and Rachel, were certainly grave and

pious enough, to judge from their writing. They never hint at anything in the way of play or merriment: you would think that none of them knew how to laugh, though they tell us that their mother was often playful and had a keen sense of humor. But evidently some of the children loved pleasure, and tried to get it, not always in ways their gentle mother approved. Nor were they the only ones. Joseph Fry was extremely fond of music, and he seems, with advancing years, to have grown less strict in his ideas as his wife grew more so. No music was allowed in the house; the days were long past when Betsy felt and hoped that it might not be wrong, because she loved it so much; so—husband Joseph now and then went to a concert, and once, it is believed, he actually went to the opera, a very sad and grievous thing in his Betsy's eyes.

Taking one thing with another, it is not strange that soon after her return from Scotland Mrs. Fry fell ill and continued for some months in a very weak and suffering condition. "All that could be shaken appeared to be shaken!" says the poor lady. The journal has much to say about this illness, and alludes to other matters that must have been more trying still.

Though all good people rejoiced in her work for the prisoners of Newgate, it was inevitable that opposition should also be aroused. There were criticisms, not always kindly; there was, I fear, a good deal of envy and jealousy. Some people, doubtless, thought that the prisons were very well as they were, and that it was absurd for a parcel of women to go poking their noses into places where they had no business. Others thought Mrs. Fry would better stay at home and attend to her children. It is easy to imagine how talk would run. She had been lifted to the skies on wings of faith and love, and a zeal as holy as ever filled a human breast; now, for the moment, she felt as if dashed to earth, the bright wings broken and bruised, the tender heart thrown back on itself. So she writes:

"The difference of last winter and this has been striking; though I then had my deep conflicts, I was, as it were, marvelously raised up—the holy anointing oil appeared freshly poured forth. How did the righteous compass me about, from the Sovereign, the Prince, and the Princesses, down to the poorest, lowest, and most destitute; how did poor sinners, of almost every description, seek after me, and cleave to me. What was not said of me?

What was not thought of me? May I not say, in public, and in private, in innumerable publications, etc., etc. This winter, the bed of languishing; deep, very deep prostration of soul and body; the enemy coming in, at seasons, like a flood; sorrows compassing me about. Instead of being a helper to others, ready to lean upon all; glad, even to be diverted by a child's book. In addition to this, I find the tongue of slander has been ready to attack me. The work that was made so much of before, some try to lessen now. What shall I say to all this—that, in my best judgment, in my soundest faith (if I have this faith) it is the Lord's doing, by His permission, and marvelous in my eyes. He raiseth up and casteth down."

Yet many things came to cheer her. Husband and children were most devoted to her, and every mail brought letters from sympathizing and loving friends. Among these letters, we may be sure none touched her more deeply than the following, from the women of Newgate.

"Honored Madam,

"Influenced by gratitude to our general benefactress and friend, we humbly venture to address you. It is with sorrow we say, that we had not the pleas-

ure of seeing you at the accustomed time, which we have been always taught to look for; we mean Friday last. We are fearful that your health was the cause of our being deprived of that heartfelt joy which your presence always diffuses through the prison; but we hope, through the mercies of God, we shall be able personally to return you the grateful acknowledgments of our hearts, before we leave our country for ever, for all the past and present favors so benevolently bestowed upon what has been termed the 'most unfortunate of Society,' until cheered by your benevolence, kindness and charity; and hoping that your health, which is so dear to such a number of unfortunates, will be fully reëstablished before we go, so that after our departure from our native land, those who are so unfortunate as to fall into the same situation as them who now address you, may enjoy the same blessings both spiritually and temporally that we have done before them; and may our minds be impressed with a due sense of the many comforts we have enjoyed, whilst under your kind protection.

"Honored and worthy Madam, hoping we shall be pardoned for our presumption in addressing you at this time; but our fears of not seeing you before the time of our departure induces us to

entreat your acceptance of our prayers for your restoration to your family; and may the prayers and supplications of the unfortunate prisoners, ascend to heaven for the prolonging of that life, which is so dear to the most wretched of the English nation.

"Honored Madam, we beg leave to subscribe ourselves with humble respect,

"Your most grateful and devoted,

"THE PRISONERS OF NEWGATE.

"Monday, March 8th, 1819."

CHAPTER IX

THE GURNEYS ONCE MORE

FROM the death of John Gurney, in 1814, up to 1821, the brothers and sisters of Earlham had formed an unbroken circle; unbroken, that is, in heart and affection. The first break was now to come; but before speaking of it, let us first glance round upon these people, whom we knew so well in their gay, golden youth at Earlham.

Seven of the eleven were now married: Hannah, as we have seen, to Thomas Fowell Buxton; Richenda to the Reverend Francis Cunningham; Louisa to Samuel Hoare, the boy who kissed her when she was ten years old, to her great indignation; Joseph John to the first of his three wives, Jane Birkbeck, a Plain Friend, while Sam had wooed and won Elizabeth Sheppard, "an uncommonly pretty girl," with "a tender, serious spirit, which was extremely winning." Daniel, the youngest, was to wait till 1822 for his wife, Lady Harriet Jemima Hay.

Catherine, Rachel and Priscilla remained unmarried.

Mrs. Catherine, as she was now called, spent practically all her life at Earlham. For twenty-five years, until the marriage of Joseph John in 1817, she was mistress of the house, and virtual head of the family, the one round whom all the others clustered. Between ourselves, as author and reader, I think that Jane Birkbeck might have let her remain mistress of Earlham, instead of instantly asserting herself and taking her own way about everything in the house and out of it, even though that way was a kindly and sensible one. But worse than this was to befall Mrs. Catherine. In 1847, when Joseph John's second wife, Mary Fowler, died, what did that lovely but inconsiderate gentleman do but give over the management of Earlham to Rachel Fowler, his wife's elder sister! *Really,* Joseph John, it is the one thing I have against you—except that you might just as well have married lovely Amelia Opie, who, as everybody knew, admired you greatly, and—as some people whispered—became a Quaker largely for your sake!

Many women, under these circumstances, would have left Earlham, sadly, resentfully, or cheerfully,

according to their temperament and disposition; but Mrs. Catherine made no complaint. She received the successive sisters-in-law with perfect calm and sweetness, stepping back into comparative retirement in her own rooms, but always ready to come forward when she was needed to help, cheer or comfort. I do not know whether she ever thought of marrying, but I know that she once received a proposal of marriage without realizing it. Mr. Edward Edwards, a warm friend of all the family, made up his mind that he would like Mrs. Catherine for his wife, and wrote her a letter telling her so. No sooner was the letter sent than he realized that he had been hasty; that though Mrs. Catherine was perfection as a friend, it was not so certain that a nearer relationship would suit either. The poor gentleman brooded over this till he felt bound in honor and duty to inform the lady of his change of feeling. He started for Earlham on foot, and as he walked up the drive, whom should he meet but Mrs. Catherine walking down it! At sight of his crestfallen and miserable looks, the dear lady cried out, as if suddenly remembering something. Could Mr. Edwards forgive her? She had been so *very* busy when his letter came the other day, she had slipped it into her pocket un-

opened, and had never thought of it again till this moment.

"Oh!" cried Mr. Edwards, "then *pray* don't read it! Pray, destroy it unread!"

He married somebody else soon afterwards, and after many years, when he and Mrs. Catherine were both old people, he told her the story, and they had a hearty laugh over it.

Rachel divided her time between Earlham and Runcton, where her brother Daniel lived: a sweet, rather sad woman, one somehow feels, an early disappointment casting a shadow over a naturally sensitive disposition.

In her radiant girlhood she had been deeply attached to Henry Enfield of Norwich. He was passionately in love with her; the families had for years lived in close intimacy; but the Enfields were Unitarians, and Mr. Gurney, as his children began to grow up, felt their influence to be a dangerous one. He was very unhappy, and at a loss how to treat the case. Catherine writes, years afterwards:

"He had not the decision or power to resist the stream of our affections, which became more and more exclusively fixed on our own friends and favorites; and this was in no slight degree strengthened by the intense affection which sprung up be-

tween Rachel and Henry Enfield, and which was carried on for several years in concealment from our indulgent father, who had a painful and confused sense of our going wrong, and yet could not prevent it.

"At length my father discovered the truth, and insisted upon a separation, not only between Rachel and Henry Enfield (whose distress caused him to promise that they should be allowed to meet again if they continued in the same mind after a separation of two years), but from the whole Enfield family. This was to us all a blow of no common pain and trial, and hard did we feel it to be kept in such constraint, separated from our dearest friends. At the same time our opinions, which began in sentiment, had advanced to infidelity, for we were still thrown amongst those who held these views, and the volumes of Godwin, Paine, etc., had fallen into our hands, so that we were truly in the wilderness of error. It made me very unhappy. The others—except Rachel—having more natural glee and spirits, were not depressed in the same way. The people we now were frequently with went far beyond our dear friends the Enfields, who were never infidels."

The two years were extended to three. Rachel's

twenty-first birthday came, and with it, according to promise, Henry Enfield. But three years had brought a great change in Rachel's religious opinions; her intensely devout nature had turned more and more toward the teachings and beliefs of her own people: it was a different, though not a less tenderly loving Rachel who anxiously awaited her lover's coming that day.

They were long shut up together: he left the house without seeing the family. Rachel scarcely spoke of what had passed between them, but she drooped and mourned. As day followed day, bringing no tidings, her father's tender heart was moved. He could not bear to see his child's distress: he was now ready to bring about the union which he had so long opposed. But it was too late: Henry Enfield was already married to another.

"From that day Rachel's spirits were broken, and her beauty faded."

I fancy Rachel like Milton's "divinest Melancholy," the

> "—pensive nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, steadfast and demure!"

She does not seem to have inclined either toward the Church of England, which Hannah and Rich-

enda and Daniel had now joined, or toward the Society of Friends. Perhaps the sorrow which wrecked her youth and bloom had destroyed the outward shell of opinion, leaving only the clear flame of a pure and devout soul. She writes:

"I have lately felt no good or sufficient reason for appearing, as a Quaker, so different from other people, and have doubted whether it is worth while to adopt any further singularity than true moderation and perfect modesty would lead to."

Richenda Cunningham lived at Pakefield Rectory, but was later to move to Lowestoft, where she and her husband devoted themselves to good works, making themselves beloved in all the countryside. Of their home there we are told that "no other place was like it in its freedom, its wonderful activity, its thoughtful kindness, in the truly parental care over everybody." A portrait of Richenda shows a bright, animated face, full of charm and distinction. She wears a huge cap, as all married women did then, with strings tied under her firm little chin; her eyes sparkle with good will and energy. There are many stories of life at Lowestoft Rectory. One of them tells how one day, when Mr. Cunningham was reading family prayers, "a servant burst in with, 'Please, sir, your

study's on fire.' 'All right, James,' said Mr. Cunningham very quietly, 'but this is not the time to speak of such things,' and reverently and deliberately, he went on reading the chapter and the prayers which followed, to the end, leaving the fire to take care of itself. The study was completely burnt, but the fire did not spread to the rest of the house."

Hannah and Fowell Buxton lived first at Cromer Hall, then at Northrepps. It was in 1821 that Mr. Buxton (afterward Sir Thomas Fowell) made his famous speech in Parliament on capital punishment; he was also, as I have said before, devoting much of his time and his great ability in work for the abolition of slavery, in which his beautiful and gentle wife did her utmost to aid him.

From the Hall we may step aside to Northrepps Cottage and call on "the Cottage Ladies," Sarah Buxton and Anna Gurney, cousins of the family at the Hall. Here we shall find the same active, kindly spirit. Anna Gurney had been paralyzed at ten months old, and had passed her whole life in a wheeled chair. This chair had been study, carriage, confessional and throne to a truly royal little woman. In girlhood, her tutor could hardly keep pace with her. "She mastered Latin, Greek,

and Hebrew, and then turned to the Teutonic languages," which so delighted her that in 1819 we find her translating the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, hardly a light or playful task. She lived much in her library, and when talking, she loved to wheel herself about from one bookcase to another, taking down this volume or that to point or adorn her remarks.

But study was only one side of Anna Gurney's life. A trifle like paralysis was not allowed to interfere with her activities. She went to Rome, to Athens, to Argos. (It was no easy matter to go to Argos in the nineteenth century: *experto crede!*) At home, living so near Fowell Buxton, she was naturally steeped in philanthropy of the kindliest, friendliest sort: carried on a large missionary correspondence, was the heart and life of the whole countryside. Children ran to her whenever they caught sight of the wheeled chair. She loved them, taught them, told them stories, taught their mothers, too, and their grandmothers, for aught I know. But the dramatic element of Anna Gurney's nature found its outlet on the seashore. She lived on the wild Norfolk coast, with the sound of the sea always in her ears. Wrecks were frequent in those days, lighthouses were few. When a storm came

on, the little lady was instantly on the alert; wheeling herself from window to window, watching the clouds, harkening to the roar of the surf. At the first report of a vessel in danger, down she must go to the beach, carried now in the arms of her devoted servants, since the chair could not make its way over the rocks. We can fancy how the fishermen gathered round her with anxious tenderness; how they pointed out the sheltered rock-cranny where she might be settled with least discomfort. We can see her sitting there, the gale shouting around her, the waves hissing and thundering at her feet; she, dauntless little creature, directing the appliance of the life-saving apparatus which she had herself provided. When the end came, when the good ship was a handful of broken playthings, and the shipwrecked sailors, more dead than alive, were dragged ashore, we can see her ready with everything, blankets, brandy, whatever was needed; then ordering them up to the cottage, to be cared for, fed, clothed, talked with in whatever language happened to be theirs, finally sent to their homes with money in their pockets and blessings on their lips.

I know this is a digression; I know I cannot, must not, stop to tell all about all Elizabeth Fry's cousins; but I really *had* to tell about Anna Gurney.

Louisa Hoare, meantime, little Louisa who was sometimes naughty, who thought "Goat's *dis!*" and who, at eleven, "could not bear strict authority over her," was writing "Hints on Nursery Discipline," and "Friendly Hints on the Management of Children," two volumes well known in their day. As to her husband, Sam Hoare, who vexed her so by kissing her when she was ten years old, we are told that he was "ever an excellent working philanthropist" and became so well known in this capacity, that when King William IV of Prussia was making out an almanac of Protestant saints, he awarded a day to Saint Samuel Hoare.

Priscilla, the youngest of the Earlham sisterhood, had become not only a Plain Friend, but an acknowledged minister of the Society. She is described as a most exquisite person, small but beautifully made, with a finish and refinement of charm that made her the delight of all who knew her. She threw herself into the work of preaching with all the fervor of a deeply religious and emotional nature; but it was too much for her delicate frame. In 1819 she made a journey through Ireland, preaching and praying wherever she went, and soon after this her strength began to decline. Gently and

gradually she faded away like a rose of summer; and the brothers and sisters gathered round her in anxious devotion. They were all with her when the end came, March 31st, 1821: a relative present thus describes the scene:

"I can never lose sight of that group, the cluster of sisters, the perfect silence, the sacred and assured peace—not a sob reached the ear, but exquisite tenderness pervaded the whole. Your mother (Mrs. Fry) prayed, returned thanks to the Savior, and committed her dying sister, and then the family, fervently and unreservedly into God's keeping."

In the following year, 1822, Joseph John's wife died; Mrs. Catherine resumed her gentle sway at Earlham and, with Rachel to help her, took charge of Joseph John's two motherless children. More and more Earlham became the family home, as the younger generation began to enjoy its delights, to take their turn at playing hide-and-seek among the eighty cupboards, to dance in the hall and run races in the garden. Katherine Fry writes:

"Perhaps Earlham was never more charming, or, if we may use the expression, in its zenith, than during these five years, in which our Aunts Catherine and Rachel were our Uncle Joseph's companions,

and mistresses of his house. Although they differed from him in some points, and were not in religious communion with Friends, their deep piety and Christian simplicity of habits were the same as his own, whilst they were also a check upon the little trammels which, under the influence of Quakerism, he fell into, in later life. . . .

"At this time, besides the motherless children of our Uncle Joseph, many other of her nephews and nieces were frequently in our Aunt Rachel's care—especially Elizabeth Fry's children, who ever cherish her memory with filial affection. If one of the children, or a group of them, wanted stimulus, or more discipline, or more relaxation, it was consigned to Aunt Rachel's care and judicious adaptation of the arrangements to the requirements. Head and heart were alike benefited by her cultivation and influence."

Another of the "children," Samuel Gurney's daughter, thus describes the journeys to Earlham, which were the great delight of all her family:

"Our journeys from Upton to Earlham were days of greatest enjoyment—in the large handsome Ham House coach, painted a light olive green, with a box in front, and an ample rumble behind for man and maid.

"Our own horses took us to Woodford directly after breakfast, and then four posters were 'clapped on' in a very few minutes, at the sound of 'Horses on' from the ostler of the inn. Then the two post-boys, in high white beaver hats, blue jackets, red waistcoats, white neckcloths, short white corduroy breeches, and bright top-boots, started off at a smart trot, which was continued the whole stage up and down hill, often stopping for a moment for a post-boy to dismount and put on a drag. Our greatest delight was driving on the box. I remember my astonishment as a child at seeing my father pay away so many gold pieces as the post-boys came up to the window for their fare at the end of each stage. We always slept at Thetford, in a charming, old-fashioned inn, with large stables, and a garden opposite across the road; the same old footman warmly welcoming us there year after year. Then how delightful was the arrival at Earlham Hall, with the warmest of welcomes awaiting us.

"These were refreshing times. The great comfort and luxury of the coach, well lined with fawn-colored watered silk, the steps made to fold up inside and covered with softest carpet. How quickly the hours passed—our father always bright and

cheerful, our mother quietly happy, a variety of books and amusements for all of us."

Ham House was Samuel's home, where he brightened a whole neighborhood with his warm, genial presence. He had now become a man of enormous wealth. During the panic of 1825 his firm lent money to so many other houses that it became known as "the Banker's Bank"; I suppose it will never be known how many people this good man saved from ruin.

Children and grandchildren loved to describe the life at Ham House: "the beautiful radiant grandpapa leading a troop of boys, or conversing in kindest interest with the elder grandson, just emerging out of the boy, but too shy to be quite the man."

"How delightful," says another, "were the evenings at Ham House in our young days. Our father, however tired after a long day of business in Lombard Street, was always ready to preside at our occupations, as we gathered round the great table.

"He often had a good play with the younger ones before we 'settled,' swinging them in the curtain, or romping on the floor in greatest merriment with the parrot or kitten, while Arabella—the mother cat—lay on the rug at our mother's feet.

"Then, he generally had a map spread before

him, which he would study if not wanted for the moment, or a book of good prints. Or, in his unique style, for his reading was exquisite, he would read aloud some delightful book, whether light or important. He was very fond of science, and I well remember our great amusement at what we thought the fantastical ideas about steam. He laughed, and we laughed, at the idea of his going to Lombard Street up Whitechapel Road at ten miles an hour, behind some form of boiler.

"Then, before breakfast, how he used to take us about, the animals clustering round—the very tame kangaroos and peacocks, the dogs, as well as the horses and cows. He *could* be displeased with old Christopher if a cow had not the best shelter and care. These must have been very early walks, as I think he always went off in the whisky at nine."

All earnest, all noble, all loving: it is good to know about the Gurneys of Earlham.

CHAPTER X

THE MULTIPLICATION OF WORKS

ON November first, 1822, Elizabeth Fry's eleventh and youngest child was born, and the same day saw the birth of her first grandchild. The dear lady was full of gratitude for this double blessing, but for some time she was very weak and ill. As soon as she recovered strength—indeed before she had fully recovered it—she took up once more her visiting at Newgate. The prisoners received her with delight; turnkeys, jailers, warden, all were glad to see their gentle visitor back again. "I felt peaceful there," she says, "and afresh sensible that the work was not ours; that we had first been brought there. . . . I was low in myself, but felt renewedly the great importance of the prison cause."

The women of Newgate were now become very industrious people. Instead of spending their time in fighting and pulling things to pieces, they spent it in sewing, knitting, etc., making things which

were to be sold for their benefit. At one sale of the Newgate Association three hundred and nineteen pounds were realized. This was a change indeed from the days when every penny the prisoners had must be either begged or stolen! Elizabeth Fry disliked these sales: she felt deeply, poor, dear soul, "the danger of the pollution of the world, in meeting so many of the world's people," but she trusted no harm was done. She was also much distressed in mind about this time because husband Joseph would have her portrait painted by Leslie, a fashionable painter of the day. "It is not altogether what I like or approve," she says; "it is making too much of this poor tabernacle, and rather exalting that part in us which should be laid low, and kept low;" still, she felt obliged to yield, "from peculiar circumstances." Perhaps good Joseph had given up a concert to please her; perhaps the children had risen up and said they *would* have a good likeness of mother. Who knows? At any rate the portrait was painted, and is only less good than the Richmond portrait which prefaces these pages. She dined with the Lord Mayor, at the Mansion House, about this time, and suffered many pangs about this too, but decided that "we may by our lives and con-

versation glorify God, even at a dinner visit."

But there were no doubts or pangs when it was a question of going out, in storm and rain, to visit the convict ships in the river or harbor. Do you remember little Betsy Gurney's terror of the water? She never ceased to fear it, but never for a moment did she let the dread interfere with her duty. On one occasion the sea was so rough that she and her companions had to be taken ashore in a basket slung on a rope from ship to pier. Another time the ladies were in great danger, and were rescued by a friendly Harbor Master, who thus describes the occasion:

"It was on a fine sultry day, in the summer of 1821, that I was racing up the River Thames, in the command of the Ramsgate Steam Packet, *Eagle,* hoping to overtake our Margate competitors, the *Victory* and *Favourite* steamers, and bringing them nearer to view as we rounded the points of the Reach of the river. It was in the midst of this excitement, that we encountered one of those sudden thunder squalls, so common in this country, and which passing rapidly off, with a heavy rain, leave behind them a strong and increasing northerly gale. I was looking out ahead, pleasing myself with the reflection that we were the fastest vessel

against a head wind, and should certainly overtake our Margate friends; when upon entering Long Reach, about two miles below Purfleet, I saw a boat laboring with very little effect against the gale, and with a whole ebb-tide just making to add to their difficulties; in this boat were two ladies, in the close habit of the Society of Friends, evidently drenched with the heavy shower which had overtaken them. I was then a dashing, high-spirited sailor; but I had always a secret admiration of the quiet demeanor of that Society, and occasionally had some of them passengers with me, always intelligent and inquiring, and always pleased with any information a seaman could extend to them. Well, here was a dilemma! To stop would spoil my chase, in which most of my passengers were as eager as myself, but to go on, and to pass two ladies in such a situation! I passed the word softly to the engineer; desired the mate to sheer alongside the boat carefully; threw the delighted rowers a rope, and before the passengers were fully aware that we had stopped the engines, the ladies were on board, the boat made fast astern, and the *Eagle* again flying up the Thames. I have those two persons strongly, nay, indelibly stamped upon my mind's eye. The one I had last

assisted on board, still held my hand, as she thanked me, with dignified but beautiful expression: 'It is kind of thee, Captain, and we thank thee. We made no sign to thee; having held up our handkerchiefs to the other packets, we did not think we should succeed with thee.' I assured them that I could not have passed them under such circumstances, and called the stewardess to take them below into the ladies' cabin and see to their comfort. They had been well cloaked, and had not suffered so much as I had anticipated.

"The gale had cleared away the rain, and in a very short time they came upon deck again; one of them was Mrs. Fry, and she never lost an opportunity of doing good. I saw her speaking to some of my crew, who were looking very serious as she offered them tracts, and some of them casting a side glance at me for my approval or otherwise. I had some little dislike to sects then, which I thank God left me in riper years,—but who could resist this beautiful, persuasive, and heavenly-minded woman? To see her, was to love her; to hear her, was to feel as if a guardian angel had bid you follow that teaching which could alone subdue the temptations and evils of this life, and secure a Redeemer's love in eternity! In her you

saw all that was attractive in woman, lit up by the bright beams of philanthropy; devoting the prime of life, and health, and personal graces, to her Divine Master's service; and I feel assured that much of the success which attended her missions of mercy, was based upon that awe which such a presence inspired. It was something to possess a countenance which portrayed in every look the overflowings of such a heart, and thus as a humble instrument in the hands of Divine Providence, she was indeed highly favored among women."

The convict women did not forget their friend and benefactress. Letters came to her from far-off Australia, telling her in stiff, stilted language, of their life out there; thanking and blessing her, and assuring her of their undying remembrance. They sent little presents too. Not long after her death came a parcel marked, "A calabash from the garden of Hester——" with a message of love and gratitude. Hester had been in Newgate, one of those prisoners chosen to teach the children. When she left the prison, Mrs. Fry had given her a pound of lump sugar and half a pound of tea. Hester had been married twenty years now, and wished her honored Madam Fry to know that she had plenty of pigs and fowls; that she bought

her tea by the chest; and that the patchwork quilt that covered her bed was made of the pieces given her by the ladies when she embarked.

In 1824, Elizabeth Fry's health broke down again from overwork, and she was ordered to Brighton for rest and change of air. During this illness, we are told, "she was liable to distressing attacks of faintness, during the night and early morning; when it was frequently necessary to take her to an open window for the refreshment of the air. Whether through the quiet gray dawn of the summer's morning, or by the fitful gleams of a tempestuous sky, one living object always presented itself to her view on these occasions; the solitary blockade-man pacing the shingly beach. It first attracted her attention, and soon excited her sympathy, for the service was one of hardship and of danger."

This blockade-man (now called "coast-guard") was on the watch for smugglers or invaders; scores of these men patrolled the English Channel coast. It was indeed a hard and lonely life. The men must be on the lookout all day long, in any weather, often in dreary and inaccessible places. The shore-dwellers hated them as much as they liked the jovial smugglers who sold them tea and tobacco,

French brandy and Flemish lace, at less than the market-price. They must always be ready for a fight, must often be on the watch all night in lonely bay or rocky bight; in fact, as Katherine Fry says, "they might almost be said to be in a state of blockade themselves."

From the window of her sickroom, Elizabeth Fry watched the solitary figure pacing up and down, up and down, no one ever coming near him or giving him a word of greeting. Her tender heart was moved, and when, on her daily drive, she passed the coast-guard station, she stopped the carriage and spoke to the man. He told her civilly that he was not allowed to hold any communication with strangers. Afraid lest she might get him into trouble, yet determined, as ever, to give help where help was needed, she handed the man her card, asking him to give it to his commanding officer, and to say that she had spoken to the guard, wishing to inquire into the condition of his life and that of his family. A few days after, the officer, a naval lieutenant, came to call on Mrs. Fry. Glad enough to find someone interested in his work, he told her of the many hardships incurred by the men, and she in turn confided to him her desire to do something for them. The first thing, she

thought, was to give them books: the Bible first, and then other interesting books which might help them and their families to pass many weary hours. She had already persuaded the Government to provide libraries for the naval hospitals: why not also for the coast-guard stations? With Elizabeth Fry to think was to do. The books were sent for, and gratefully received. In a short time, every coast-guard was her friend, and when her drive took her past their lonely beat, she was greeted with smiles and grateful looks.

This acorn grew to a goodly oak: in time, and chiefly through Mrs. Fry's efforts, libraries were established at all the coast-guard stations in the United Kingdom, over five hundred in number: "thereby," as the report says, "to furnish a body of deserving and useful men and their wives and families, (amounting to upwards of 21,000 persons) with the means of moral and religious instruction, as well as profitable amusement, most of whom, from their situation in life, have not the means of procuring such benefits from their own resources, and who in many instances are so far removed from places of public worship and schools as to prevent the possibility of themselves or their families deriving advantage from either."

"The work was now accomplished," says Katherine Fry; "and dismissed from her mind as a point gained, and a blessing granted."

In 1827 Mrs. Fry and Joseph John Gurney and his wife felt it their duty to make a journey through Ireland, partly to visit the Friends of that country and preach in their meetings, partly to look into the conditions of prisons and insane asylums.

Traveling in Ireland at that time was even more difficult than in Scotland. The missionaries (for such they were in all but name) suffered every kind of inconvenience and many kinds of hardship, but nothing could daunt their spirits. Whenever she had time, Elizabeth Fry would sit down in shieling or roadside inn, and write the letters which were to delight the family at home. They had not wished her to go; some of her elder children thought mother ought to stay at home, and not go preaching about the country: but they changed their minds when they saw the results of the preaching and journeying: saw that wherever she and her brother went, flowers of help and kindness sprang up in their footsteps. Here are some extracts from her letters:

"The boggy country has a peculiar and desolate look; the generally miserable cabins, and appear-

ance of the poor (though most of the women have cloaks, and the men great-coats), give a very different appearance to England. There is also a general want of order in the manner of cultivating the ground: the hedges half down, and badly kept, excepting near gentlemen's places, where things bear a different aspect. We observed a number of goats; I suppose they use their milk. Pigs abound; I think they have rather a more elegant appearance than ours, their hair often rather curled: perhaps naturalists may attribute this to their intimate association with their betters! The turf-fires, mostly used in the neighborhood of the bogs, are pleasant. We yesterday met a true Irish funeral; it was a curious sight, and really surprising to see how neat and clean the people turned out of their dirty cabins: some were really good-looking. The howl (if it was the howl) was like a dirge—melancholy, but rather pleasing. We have not lately had so much begging as nearer Dublin, or the appearance of so much distress. We had a curious meeting this morning, of Friends, respectable persons, laborers, and the very poor people, many, I believe, Roman Catholics."

". . . Afterwards, by some accident, I went into a private house, thinking it was the inn, and gave

orders as if at an inn: I ordered tea immediately, and begged to be shown to a bed-room, for my sister to lie down, as she was but poorly; at last I discovered my droll, and at first, disagreeable mistake; but such was Irish hospitality, that the lady of the house made us stay, gave us some tea, comforted us up, and sent us off, not knowing whom she had received, nor do we now know her name. . . ."

". . . We got up about four o'clock. On our way to Enniskillen, stopped at a curious public-house for breakfast; where we saw a good deal of the people, who flocked after us for tracts. I wish I could picture to you the scene, in a mud-floored parlor, with a turf fire. I took my seat some time in the curious kitchen, to talk to the family. After a time, they sent out to buy us a little bread, and some eggs. We fared well, and had a cheerful meal in our humble abode. The roads bad, and horses bad; we got on very slowly, going twenty miles in about six hours. The roads, too, are often dangerous; many of them being raised very high, without wall or hedge of any kind. In several places, a precipice on each side. Much of it through bog; indeed, I think, we have not passed a stage since we left Dublin, without part of it being

through black bog. We reached Enniskillen in time to visit the Infirmary and Prison, and to form a Ladies' Committee. . . ."

"We parted in real love from the people of the place [Sligo], and then set off here, paying visits to two cabins by the way. We have had no further adventure. Imagine us in the cabin, round a turf fire, on a mud floor, a hole in the top for a chimney, a little dirty straw on the floor for them to sleep, as the woman said, 'up and down in the room.' Some heath and turf for firing, no windows, and two little dirty benches to sit on; the husband, wife, and children, round the potatoes boiling; they offered us 'a prater and an egg'; though so poor, so hospitable!"

No wonder that before the journey was over, her powers completely failed her and she was prostrated for a week and more by severe illness. By slow stages she reached home, but it was some time before she recovered health and strength. I only hope her devoted children refrained from saying, "Dear mother, we told you so!"

The autumn of this year brought a great sorrow. Rachel Gurney, the best beloved sister, the companion with whom little Betsy had shared her playroom and her tea things, had been out of health

for some time, and was now sinking into what was then known as "a decline." Slowly and gently she faded: tenderly and anxiously once more the sisters gathered at Earlham to nurse and tend her, as six years before they had tended Priscilla. This was before the days of trained nurses. Soon, as we shall see, Elizabeth Fry and her friends were to make the first move in this direction, but still, and for many years to come, the women of a family were nurses *ex officio* in time of sickness, whether they knew anything about it or not. Happy the patient who had such a nurse as Mrs. Fry! Her skill in a sick room was most remarkable; the mixture of authority and tenderness, the strong, calm, cheerful presence, the atmosphere of faith and hope which attended her everywhere. Her niece, Priscilla Buxton, whom she nursed through a dangerous illness, wrote long after of her "condescending to the humblest services"; of her soft hand, her exquisite reading, and delicious company: and adds, "Oh! that we could hear her, feel her, see her once more!"

All these helpful powers were now devoted to soothing and comforting the closing days of a life unspeakably dear to her. "Catherine is my constant comfort," said sweet Rachel, "Betsy is my

greatest treat; but each one of you fills a place; the love is equal for all."

The last day came, when the quiet spirit was to return to God who gave it. While Rachel was still conscious, a letter came in a handwriting once familiar but long strange to the Earlham sisters: the writing of Henry Enfield. "He touchingly bade her farewell, and assured her that he had never, in all the twenty-eight years they had been parted, passed a single day without thinking of her."

The sisters hesitated: should they tell her? Yes: she should not miss the last joy that earth could give her. The letter was read to her, and she listened with shining eyes of joy and gratitude. Then she asked for the letter to hold in her hand; and so, holding it, passed quietly to her rest.

CHAPTER XI

ADVERSITY

THE year 1828 brought a new experience to Elizabeth Fry. Through the failure of a house of business in which her husband was a partner, a large part of their income was swept away, and their whole scale of living was necessarily changed. Up to this time, Elizabeth had never had to think about money. There was always plenty of it, first at Earlham, then in London, later still (and still more of it!) at Plashet. There had been enough for them to live handsomely, in sober Quaker fashion, to entertain constantly, keeping open house often for weeks at a time, to give the children everything they could possibly need, and to carry on all manner of benevolent enterprises with open-handed generosity. But these days were over. Instead of having "everything very handsome about her," Mrs. Fry must now count every shilling, and find very few to count. She could not even, at first, have a roof of her own.

Plashet must be given up, the great staff of servants dismissed, the dinner-parties and house-parties for the flocks of visiting Friends cut down, the pensioners and pupils dismissed.

For a time the Frys went to live with William, their eldest son, now established in the house in St. Mildred's Court; the large family, accustomed to the wide spaces and ample grounds of the beautiful country seat, must pack itself as best it could into the city house, already occupied by another household.

This great change was very keenly felt by Elizabeth Fry. It was not, we may be sure, the loss of material comforts and luxuries that so bowed and bent this strong, serene nature. She regretted them, doubtless, more for her husband's and children's sakes than her own, but the real sting lay in the fact that she could no longer minister open-handed to the needs of others; that the poor and the naked might cry to her, and cry in vain. This thought was hard indeed for her to bear. She did not at once realize what was soon made clear to her, that such work as hers would not be suffered to stop; that other purses beside her own were full, and open for her use.

At first, the blow seemed a crushing one. On the Sunday after it fell, "the question was

much debated, as to whether she, and her family generally, should attend their meeting for worship or not; but she felt it right to go, and of course was accompanied by her husband and children. She took her usual seat, bowed down and overwhelmed, with the bitter tears rolling down her cheeks—no common thing with her.

"After a very solemn pause she rose with these words, her voice trembling with emotion: 'Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him'; and testified, in a short and beautiful discourse, that her faith and love were as strong in the hour of adversity as they had been in the time of prosperity. Her friends were deeply affected, marking by their manner their sympathy and love."

This was a sad winter for the dear lady. Her health failed, and bodily pain and weakness were added to mental anxiety. Moreover, we are told that "circumstances occurred to weaken her husband's and children's attachment to the Society of Friends"; "truly the sorrows of her heart were enlarged." "My soul is bowed down within me," she says in her journal, "and my eyes are red with weeping."

Beside all this, her son and his wife were both taken alarmingly ill, and a lady who came to help

in the nursing was attacked with measles. "They were driven from London, in consequence, though too late to escape the infection, and took shelter in the vacant house at Plashet, which for many weeks became a scene of anxious nursing."

But now good Brother Samuel came to the rescue. There was a small but comfortable house at Upton Lane, not far from his own Ham House; here he helped the Frys to establish themselves, and here they continued to live through many years.

All this time, while Elizabeth Fry was "in a valley," as she would have said, the cause of prison reform was prospering, in England and elsewhere. All over Europe, people were waking up, and saying to one another, "England is improving her prisons; how about ours?" Then they would write to Mrs. Fry, and ask her advice, and go to work forming prison committees of their own.

In 1838 she made her first visit to France, where she was received with eager cordiality. She visited prisons, hospitals, asylums, and everywhere people gathered round her, anxious to greet her, and to hear every word she spoke. The King and Queen, Louis Philippe and Marie Amélie, must see the English lady, and gave her a special audience. ("But alas! what in reality is rank?" she asks in

her journal.) At Abbéville her carriage was surrounded by people begging for books; the servants of the hotel "beguiled her into the kitchen, where she told them in broken French, which however they contrived to understand, a little of her wishes for them as to faith and practice; then all would shake hands with her, even to the portly *chef de cuisine.*"

At the Foundling Hospital in Paris she found the poor babies in a piteous condition, tightly swaddled from head to foot, their bonds loosed only once in twelve hours. "The sound in the ward could be only compared to the faint and pitiful bleating of a flock of lambs. . . . In front of the fire was a sloping stage, on which was a mattress, and a row of these little creatures placed upon it to warm, and await their turn to be fed from the spoon by a nurse. After much persuasion, one that was crying piteously was released from its swaddling bands; it stretched its little limbs, and ceased its wailings. Mrs. Fry pleaded so hard for them with the superior, that their arms have since been released. . . ."

We may be sure that Elizabeth Fry felt amply rewarded by this one achievement for all the fatigues and exertion of her French journeyings.

Before leaving Paris, she wrote a report on its prisons, addressed to the King. In the course of this paper she says:

"When thee builds a prison, thee had better build with the thought ever in thy mind that thee and thy children may occupy the cells."

We may well believe that with such thoughts in her heart and such scenes before her eyes, she soon forgot her own financial anxieties. We hear nothing more about them, from her at least.

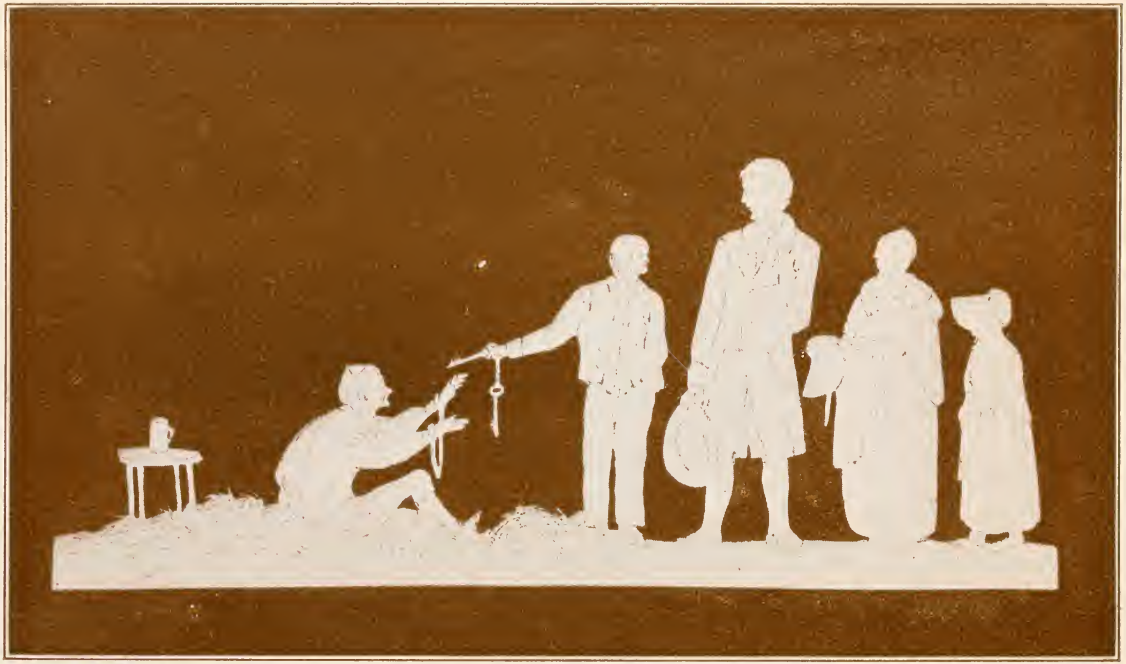
In spite of her exclamation about rank, I think Mrs. Fry rather enjoyed meeting great people—that is, if they were good as well as great. I am sure she enjoyed her visit to "the Duchess of Kent and her very pleasing daughter, the Princess Victoria," some time before this.

"We took some books on the subject of slavery, with the hope of influencing the young princess in that important cause. We were received with much kindness and cordiality, and I felt my way open to express, not only my desire that the best blessing might rest upon them, but that the young princess might follow the example of our blessed Lord, that as she 'grew in stature she might grow in favor with God and man.' I also ventured to remind her of King Josiah, who began to reign

at eight years old, and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, which seemed to be well received. Since that, I thought it right to send the Duke of Gloucester my brother Joseph's work on the Sabbath, and rather a serious letter, and had a very valuable answer from him, full of feeling. I have an invitation to visit the Duchess of Gloucester next Fourth-day; may good result to them, and no harm to myself, but I feel these openings rather a weighty responsibility, and desire to be faithful, not forward. I had long felt an inclination to see the young princess, and endeavor to throw a little weight in the right scale, seeing the very important place that she is likely to fill. I was much pleased with her, and think her a sweet, lovely and hopeful child."

This was in 1831, when Princess Victoria was twelve years old. Six years later this young girl was to become Queen of England, and to reign more than sixty-three years, honored and beloved.

Mrs. Fry made several visits to the Continent, always at the urgent request of people who longed for the inspiration of her presence, the helpfulness of her advice. Her journal tells of courts and prisons, hospitals and penitentiaries, in Holland and



"'I Was in Prison and Ye Came unto Me'"

Denmark, in Prussia and Hanover. On one of these visits (in 1841) her brother Joseph John accompanied her, together with his daughter Anna, and Elizabeth Gurney, daughter of Samuel. The latter writes from Copenhagen:

"I wish you could have heard our aunt's final address to the Queen, and seen how deeply it was felt, not only by her Majesty, but by the Princesses and ladies present. The poor Queen was most deeply affected. Then my uncle added a few sentences in French, expressing thanks and adding his wishes for the whole royal family. I am sure there was not a dry eye in the room as the Queen kissed us, hardly able to utter a word. *'Priez pour Danemark; que Dieu vous bénisse tous!'* was all she could say, and her poor ladies were as bad. They came with us to the door, and we drove off without saying much. They followed us with waving handkerchiefs from the palace windows, until we had left the square. Many dined with us before we left, but several ladies, young and old, dropped off from the table drowned in tears. . . . At three we left Copenhagen: strange has been our sojourn there, and most interesting."

Elizabeth Fry herself thus described to her grandchildren her visit to a prison in Hanover:

"I found there more than a thousand prisoners (mostly confined for small crimes), loaded with heavy chains. I was so touched by their misery that it tempted me to represent the cruelty and injustice of their treatment to the Government. A few weeks after, when I visited the prison again, I found, to my surprise and pleasure, that my remonstrance had been listened to, and the chains taken off all the prisoners except one most unruly man. I suppose they knew through whom they were freed from their chains, for I can never forget their heartfelt expressions of joy and gratitude at seeing me.

"When I visited the prison the second time, I could not help being rather amused, though at the same time grieved, when I remarked a number of little leaden images of the Virgin. Mentioning that they were not there when I was there before, I was told that, after my departure, the prisoners had been so impressed by the importance of religion that they had each *bought a Virgin!*"

One who saw her in the foreign prisons thus describes the scene:

"See her tall figure, in her simple but always tasteful dress, sitting in the prison chapel amidst convicts in a foreign land, with six or eight com-

panions besides the governor; at the bottom of the room a cluster of gendarmes and turnkeys, and in the middle of the chapel rough depraved-looking men in their prison dress. Being permitted to address them, she opened her discourse with an account of the conversion of Mary Magdalene, of her loving much because she had much forgiven, and spoke in a strain of encouragement and hope to the penitent sinners.

"The hard men had never heard such tones before, they may have brought back the spirit of the mother's cradle-song to their hearts, or the dream of childhood in its comparative innocence. They listened with intense interest and with earnest wonder, and many a tear fell from the eye of the hardened sinner."

CHAPTER XII

THE END OF THE DAY

SO the story goes on. Work, ministry, prayer—prayer, ministry, work: all carried on together, all flowing in one broad full stream of beneficence. So long as life endured, Elizabeth Fry continued to labor for the poor, the suffering, the oppressed, in every walk of life. Wherever she saw need, she must give help—this was the strongest instinct of her nature. So, long after her bodily strength began to decline, her active mind went on seeking out the dark places and lighting them with her radiant faith and her invincible good will and kindness. I can only briefly touch upon a few of these numerous activities. I have already spoken of the coast-guard libraries: in 1835 she established a system of libraries for the packet ships sailing from Plymouth, each vessel being provided with thirty books, changed from time to time. She had much to do with the founding of the first District Nursing Association in

England. Indeed, she planned it entirely, urged thereto by the need she saw around her, and by the work of Pastor Fliedner's nursing sisterhood at Kaiserswerth, which she had visited. She was too overwhelmed with other work to undertake this in person, but, as so often happened, her family came to the rescue. She made the plan; her sister-in-law, Mrs. Samuel Gurney, with her daughters and some other ladies, carried it out. The Association was called "A Society for Sisters of Charity," but it seems to have been very like the District Nursing Associations of our own day. She established a "Patronage Society for prisoners, by which many poor wanderers appear to be helped and protected," and the first School of Discipline for wayward and neglected little girls, and I know not how many more good things.

Beside her own special branches of philanthropy, she was hand in glove with all the endless good works of her family and their connections. With Fowell Buxton she labored for the abolition of slavery and for the amendment of the laws concerning capital punishment; with her brother, Joseph John, she went about among the Friends of her own and other countries, preaching and praying, a devout minister of the word of God;

with Samuel she helped and comforted the poor of London; with her sisters she kept alive the flame of family love, a love of which every expression seems to have been a prayer.

Look back to the opening chapters of this little book, and recall the boys and girls of Earlham in their merry, careless childhood, running, riding, singing, dancing, flitting like bright birds with their scarlet cloaks and shining hair about the gardens and walks of the home they loved so well. Then listen to Betsy's description of her brothers and sisters in the afternoon of her life and theirs.

"Amongst the many blessings still remaining to me, the brothers and sisters that I yet have are amongst the greatest. Catherine, with her simple, powerful, noble, yet humble and devoted mind. Richenda, with her diligence, excellence, cheerfulness, vivacity, willingness and power to serve many. Hannah, with her chastened, refined, tender, humble, and powerful character. Louisa, with her uncommon ability, talent, expansive generosity, and true sympathy and kindness. Samuel, always my friend and my companion, more or less my guide, my counselor, and my comforter; his stable mind, his living faith, his Christian practice, rejoice me

often. Joseph is the fruitful vine whose branches hang over the wall, my prophet, priest and sympathiser, and often the upholder of my soul. Daniel, in his uprightness, integrity, power, and sympathy, and son-like as well as brother-like attentions to me, is invaluable: he has sweetened many of my bitter cups."

But now we must come back to the year 1845. When this year opened Elizabeth Fry was very weary: the body was less and less able to answer the call of the undaunted spirit, but still she worked to the limit of her strength and beyond it. In February came a great grief in the death of Fowell Buxton, her beloved brother-in-law and fellow-worker; "a death of perfect quietness and peace," says Joseph John Gurney. "So fell the forest oak, but truly without a crash, yet never to be replaced in this world, for men in general, by comparison, are but saplings."

This loss was a grievous one to Elizabeth Fry. She was much with her widowed sister; the two mourned together, and talked together of many things. Lady Buxton was struck by Elizabeth's "heavenly, patient, forbearing spirit."

"I asked her view of the state after death. 'My mind is, that there is a tabernacle provided.' I

said it was a pain to me that we did not wish to depart. 'Not at all to me,' she said: 'it is given to us to wish to remain; it is evidently intended and right we should, and shows a much more wholesome and right state of mind than to wish to leave this world.'"

It was at Northrepps that the two saintly sisters thus talked together. Before this, Elizabeth Fry had spent several weeks at Earlham, this having been the earnest wish of her heart. It was in early spring, and the beloved place wore its brightest look for her. The primroses were awake and welcoming, the violets nodded a greeting, the leaves were uncurling on the great oaks under which she had played, a happy, golden-haired child. There were the walks up and down which she had paced with the Prince, brave in scarlet and gold; there the white seat on which Joseph Fry had laid the watch on the day of wooing and winning. How it all came back to her, as her wheeled chair (for she could not walk now) was drawn slowly up and down the trim gravel walks with their blossoming borders. Yes! there were the very laurel bushes in which the sisters had hid—naughty girls! We can almost see her smile and hear her sigh, as she turns to Sister Catherine, who, wrapped in her soft

white shawl—for the dear old lady is very frail now—paces slowly beside her.

Before leaving Earlham she must go to Norwich Meeting, she said. "Goat's" was still standing, sturdy and uncompromising as when Betsy Gurney tripped up the aisle in her purple boots with scarlet lacings. Now, up the same aisle, she was drawn in her chair, grave and beautiful in her fawn-colored silk shawl and snowy cap, while every eye turned upon her in reverent love and awe. Their Quaker saint; their holy woman! How their hearts must have been uplifted when she spoke to them, "with wonderful life and power," we are told, "her memory of Scripture and her power of applying it in no degree failing her."

It was the last time the old meeting-house was to receive her. Through the year, gently and gradually, her strength failed. As long as she could, she kept at work; finally, when God called her, she laid down her arms like a good soldier, and found rest, and the peace that passes understanding. She died, surrounded by her children and grandchildren, on the fourteenth of October, 1845.

Years before this another good and famous woman, Hannah More, presented Elizabeth Fry with a copy of one of her own books, with an

inscription on the first page: this inscription may fitly close this brief record of a heroic life:

TO

MRS. FRY,

PRESENTED BY

HANNAH MORE,

AS A TOKEN OF VENERATION
OF HER HEROIC ZEAL,
CHRISTIAN CHARITY,
AND PERSEVERING KINDNESS,
TO THE MOST FORLORN
OF HUMAN BEINGS.
THEY WERE NAKED AND SHE
CLOTHED THEM;
IN PRISON AND SHE VISITED THEM;
IGNORANT AND SHE TAUGHT THEM,
FOR HIS SAKE,
IN HIS NAME, AND BY HIS WORD,
WHO WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD.