

known by a Superior Power, who I trust will, in time, have mercy on me. I have this day prayed that in this day of darkness I may not prove an obstruction in the way of others; truly a South Land is my portion,—I only long for the wells of living water.”

The birth of her second child is thus recorded:

“*Fourth Month, 12th.*—My heart abounded with joy and gratitude when my dear little girl was born, perfect and lovely. Words are not equal to express my feelings, for I was most mercifully dealt with, my soul was so quiet, and so much supported.

“*Plasnet, Fifth Month, 21st.*—I have been long prevented from writing in my journal by a severe attack of indisposition. It is difficult exactly to express what I have gone through, but it has been, now and then, a time of close trial; my feelings being such, at times, as to be doubtful whether life or death would be my portion. One night I was, I believe, very seriously ill: I never remember feeling so forcibly how hard a trial it was in prospect, to part with life. Much as my mind, as well as body, was tried in this emergency, still I felt forcibly an inward support, and it reminded me of that text of Scripture, ‘Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.’ And then I told those around me that I was so ill I could almost forget my child; but that I felt the existence of a Power that could *never* forget. I have gone through much since, in various ways, from real bodily weakness, and also the trials of a nervous imagination. No one knows, but those who have felt them how hard those are to bear, for they lead the mind to look for trouble, and it requires much exertion not to be led away by them. Nothing I believe allays them so much as the quieting influence of religion, and that leads us to endeavor after quietness under them, not looking beyond the present. But they are a regular bodily disorder

that I believe no mental exertion can cure or overcome; but we must endeavor not to give way to them.”

From this time onward the light gradually grew brighter, and she again became engaged in various good works, as opportunity was afforded. She was slowly coming back toward the Land of Promise, which to her was the active work of benevolence, and the Ministry of the Gospel as the highest part of that work.

“*Plasnet, Second Month, 5th. (1805)*—Since I last wrote I have been much occupied with many things, rather more than usual about the poor. I have been desirous that attending to them as I do may not prove a snare to me: for I think acting charitably leads us often to receive more credit than we deserve, or at least to fancy so. It is one of those things that give my nature pleasure; therefore I believe I am no further praiseworthy than that I give way to a natural inclination. Attending the afflicted is one of those things that so remarkably bring their reward with them that we may rest in a sort of self-satisfaction which is dangerous; but I often feel the blessing of being so situated as to be able to assist the afflicted, and sometimes a little to relieve their distresses.

“*11th.*—We ought to make it an object in conversation and in conduct to endeavor to oblige those we are with, and rather to make the pleasure of others our object than our own. I am clear it is great virtue to be able constantly to yield in little things: it begets the same spirit in others and renders life happy.

“*Fifth Month, 7th.*—Yesterday my sister Eliza Fry was here; we were saying something about the children’s dress; and she remarked that for the sake of others, (she meant the fear of not setting a good example) she would not do so and so. I said it struck me that those who do their duty

with integrity are serving others as well as themselves, and do more real good to the cause of religion than in looking much outwardly either to what others do or think. I think that conscience will sometimes lead us to feel for others and not act so as materially to hurt a weak brother; but I believe we should seldom find that we hurt those whose opinion would be worth caring for, if we kept close to the witness in our own hearts. If I were going to do a thing I should endeavor to find whether it appeared to me in any way wrong, and whether I should feel easy to do it, looking secretly for help where it is to be found, and there I believe I should leave it; and if it led me to act rather differently from some I should probably be doing more good to society than in any conformity merely on account of others; for if I should be preserved in the way of obedience in other things it would in time show from whence such actions sprung: and I think this very spirit of conforming in trifles to the opinion of others leads into forms that may one day prove a stumbling block to the progress of our Society; whereas if we attend to the principle that brought us together it will lead us out of forms and not into them."

The above observation has been abundantly verified not only in the Society of Friends but in all others. The true principle, as referred to, is that laid down by Christ when He said "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light." It was expressed by George Fox in words that became a kind of watch-word, "Mind the Light." Had these injunctions been generally heeded sectarianism would have been a thing unknown.

"*Seventh Month, 3rd.*—It appears to me that we who desire to be the servants of Christ must expect to do a part of our Master's work, which no doubt is to bear with the

weaknesses and infirmities of human nature, and if we be favored to feel them and not sink under them, we may be enabled in time to help others bear their burdens; and it appears to me that all Christian travelers must expect to pass through, in their measure, the temptations and trials their Master did on earth.

"*Mildred's Court, 19th.*—Yesterday and the day before I have been driven from one thing to another, and from one person to another, as is usual in this place. I have feared my attention being quite diverted from good. But I have also thought that *doing our duty is most effectually serving the Lord.* May I therefore endeavor to do mine and not be impatient at my numerous interruptions, but strive to center my mind in a humble desire to do the will of my Creator, which will, through all, create a degree of quietness.

"*26th.*—I have observed how much better things are done, and how much more satisfaction they produce, when done in that quiet, seeking state of mind. How greatly I desire that all I do may be done to the glory of God rather than to my own self-satisfaction."

In the month of May 1808, for the first time since the decease of their mother, death entered the large and highly favored family of John Gurney and removed the wife of Elizabeth Fry's eldest brother John. This event became the occasion of some important changes. In his affliction he sought the advice of the Rev. Edward Edwards, whose influence among the brothers and sisters, all of whom were awakened to the importance of a religious life, was such as to lead several of them to a judgment favoring the Church of England. Others chose the hereditary faith of the Friends, Elizabeth having been the first to assume a decided stand. They became nearly equally divided on these

extreme right and left wings of Protestantism; and yet they preserved a remarkable unity of spirit and purpose; thus setting a most beautiful example of Christian charity. Two of the brothers, Samuel and Joseph John, and two of the sisters, Elizabeth and Priscilla, were Friends—three of them being ministers. The brothers John and Daniel, with Catharine, the eldest of the family, who remained unmarried, Louisa, who married Samuel Hoare, Esq., Richenda, wife of Rev. Francis Cunningham, and Hannah who became the wife of Sir T. Fowell Buxton, joined the Episcopal Church; while Rachel the second sister also unmarried, remained without decided preference. In referring to this divergence Mrs. Fry's daughters, who were similarly divided,—the eldest, Katharine, remaining a Friend, and the second Rachel, who united with her in editing their mother's Memoir, becoming an Episcopalian—remark: "It was not without pain that she who had so decidedly chosen the path of Friends, saw others so dear to her as decidedly choosing another way, and uniting themselves with the Church of England; but as each one became established in his own course, some one way and some the other, a wonderful union and communion sprang up among them; so that their bond in natural things was not stronger than that which united them as devoted worshipers of the same Lord."

"*Eighth Month, 20th.* (1808).—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, and instead of being, as I had hoped, a useful instrument in the Church Militant, here I am, a care-worn wife and mother, outwardly, nearly devoted

to the things of this life. Though at times this difference in my destination has been trying to me, yet I believe those trials (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; and at the same time have taught me where power is, and in what we are to glory; not in ourselves, nor in anything we can be, or do, but we are alone to desire that He may be glorified, either through us, or others,—in our being something, or nothing, as He may see best for us. I have seen, particularly in our spiritual allotments, that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. It is our place only to be as passive clay in His holy hands, simply desiring that He would make us what He would have us to be. But the way in which this great work is to be effected we must leave to Him who has been the Author and we may trust will be the Finisher of the work: and we must not be surprised to find it going on differently to what our frail hearts would desire.

"I may also acknowledge that, through all my trials, there does appear to have been a particular blessing attending me, both as to the fatness of the land and the dew of Heaven; for, though I have been at times deeply tried, inwardly, and outwardly, yet I have always found the delivering Arm has been near at hand, and the trials have appeared blessed to me. The little efforts, or small acts of duty, I have ever performed have often seemed remarkably blessed to me; and where others have been concerned, it has also, I think, been apparent to them that the effort on my part has been blessed to both parties. Also what shall I say when I look at my husband and my five lovely babes? How have I been favored to recover from illness, and to get through them without material injury in any way. I also observe how any little care towards my servants appears to have been blessed, and what faithful and kind friends to me I have found them. Indeed I cannot enumerate my blessings; but I may truly say, that of all the blessings I have

received, and still receive, there is none to compare with believing that I am not yet forsaken, but, notwithstanding all my deviations, in mercy cared for. And, if all the rest be taken from me, far above all I desire that, if I should be led through paths which I know not of, which may try my weak faith and nature, I may not lose faith in Thee; but may increasingly love Thee, delight to follow after Thee, and be singly Thine, giving all things up to Thee who hast hitherto been my only merciful Protector and Preserver."

The death of her father-in-law, soon after the date of the above extract, caused the removal of Joseph Fry's family from London to the country home at Plashet, in Essex, which for the next twenty years formed their principal residence; a portion of the season being passed at Mildred's Court, London. About a year after their removal to Plashet, Elizabeth's father died; and it was on this occasion that her spirit was so powerfully wrought upon that she gave brief expression to her feelings, in obedience to an impulse of the Spirit, which was regarded as an entrance upon the work of the Ministry.

This event is best described in her own words.

"*Earlham, 30th. (1809)*—I hardly know how to express myself: I have indeed passed through wonders. On the 26th, as we were sitting quietly together, (after my dear sister Richenda had left us, and my soul had bowed on my beloved father's account, of whom we had daily very poor reports,) an express arrived bringing Chenda back, saying our most dear father was so ill that they did not expect his life would be spared. Words fall short to describe what I felt, he was so tenderly near and dear to me. We soon believed it best to set off for this place, on some accounts under great discouragement, principally from my own bodily weak-

ness, and also the fever in the house; but it did not appear as if we could omit it, feeling as we did; therefore, after a tender parting with my beloved flock, my dearest Joseph, Chenda and I with the baby set off. We arrived at Mildred's Court the first night, where our dear sister left us, in hopes of seeing our dear parent alive. In very great weakness I set off next morning, and had at times great discouragements; but many hours were comforting and sweet. Hearing on the road, at different stages that my dearest father was living, we proceeded till we arrived at Earlham about twelve o'clock that night. We got out of the carriage and once more saw him who has been so inexpressibly dear to me through life, since I knew what love was; he was asleep but death was strongly marked on his sweet and to me beautiful face. Whilst in his room all was sweetness, nothing bitter, though how I feel his loss is hard to express; but indeed I have abundant cause to rejoice on his account; after very deep probation his mind was so strikingly visited and consoled at last in passing through the valley of the shadow of death. He frequently expressed that he feared no evil, but believed that through the mercy of God in Christ he should be received in glory. His deep humility, and the tender loving state he was in, were most valuable to those around him. He encouraged us, his children, to hold on our way; and sweetly expressed his belief that our love of good (in the degree we had it) had been a stimulus and help to him.

The next morning he died quite easily. I was not with him, but on entering the room, soon after it was over, my soul was bowed within me, in love, not only for the deceased, but also for the living, and in humble thankfulness; so that I could hardly help uttering (which I did) my thanksgiving and praise, and also what I felt for the living as well as the dead. I cannot understand it, but the power given was wonderful to myself and the cross none; my heart was so full that I could hardly hinder utterance.

"*Eleventh Month, 3rd.*—We attended our beloved father's funeral. Before I went I was so deeply impressed at times with love for all, and thanksgiving that I doubted whether it might not possibly be my place to express it there; but I did, the evening before, humbly crave not to be permitted to do so unless rightly called to it. Fear of man appeared greatly taken away. I sat the meeting under a solemn quietness, though there was preaching that neither disturbed nor enlivened me much. The same words still powerfully impressed me that had done ever since I first entered the room where the corpse lay. Upon going to the grave this still continued. Under this solemn, quiet calm, the fear of man appeared so much removed that I believe my sole desire was that the will of God might be done in me. Though it was unpleasant to me what man might say, yet I most feared it was a temptation, owing to my state of sorrow; but that I fully believe was not the case, as something of the kind had been on my mind so long; but it had appeared more ripe the last few weeks, and even months; I had so often had to 'rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the God of my salvation,' that it had made me desire that others might partake, and know how good He had been to my soul, and be encouraged to walk in those paths which I had found to be paths of pleasantness and peace. However, after a solemn waiting, my dear uncle Joseph spoke, greatly to my encouragement and comfort, and the removal of some of my fears. I remained till dearest John began to move to go away: when it appeared as if it could not be omitted, and I fell on my knees and began, not knowing how I should go on, with these words, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints! Be pleased to receive our thanksgiving.' And there I seemed stopped, though I thought that I should have had to express that I gave thanks on my beloved father's account. But not feeling the power continue I

arose directly. A quiet, calm and invigorated state, mental and bodily, were my portion afterwards, and altogether a sweet day, but a very painful night, discouraged on every side—I could believe by him who tries to deceive. The discouragement appeared to arise principally from what others would think; and nature flinched and sank; but I was enabled this morning to commit myself in prayer."

It should perhaps here be mentioned that the Friends do not consider it unsuitable for even nearest relatives of the deceased to express their minds, under a proper impulse, at funerals. Rarely, perhaps, are ministers first called forth on such occasions; and yet the deep and lively emotions might aid in weakening the bond of timidity by which nearly all are embarrassed on a first exposure. Probably few have a greater natural dread of such a trial than Elizabeth Fry who possessed a peculiarly sensitive organization; and yet when the proper time came the promised grace was found sufficient for her. The river was parted and she went through on dry ground.

"*Plasket, Eleventh Month, 16th.*—We arrived here on Third-day evening. Though plunged into feeling before I arrived, I felt flat on meeting my tenderly beloved little flock. I was enabled, coming along to crave help, in the first place to be made willing either to do, or to suffer whatever was the Divine will concerning me. I also desired that I might not be so occupied with my present state of mind, as to its religious duties, as in any degree to omit close attention to all daily duties my beloved husband, children, servants, poor, &c.; but if I should be permitted to enter the humiliating path that has appeared to be opening before me, to look well at home and not discredit the cause I desire to advocate. Last First-day morning I had a deeply trying

Meeting, on account of the words, 'Be of good courage and He will strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord,' which had impressed me toward Norwich Meeting before I went into it; and after I had sat there a little time they came with double force, and continued resting on my mind, until my fright was extreme, and it appeared almost as if I must, if I did my duty, utter them. I hope I did not wholly revolt, but I did cry in my heart for that time to be excused, that like Samuel, I might apply to some Eli, to know what the voice was that I heard. My beloved Uncle Joseph I thought was the person. On this sort of excuse, or covenant, as I may call it, a calmness was granted the rest of the meeting; but not the reward of peace. As soon as the Meeting was over I went to my dear Uncle and begged him to come to Earham to see me. The conflict I had passed through was so great as to shake my body, as well as mind, and I had reason to fear and to believe I should have been happier and much more relieved in mind, if I had given up to this little service. I have felt since like one in debt to that Meeting. My dear Uncle came, and only confirmed me, by his kind advice, to walk by faith, and not by sight. He strongly advised a simple following of what arose, and expressed his experience of the benefit of giving up to it, and the confusion of not doing so. How have I desired, since, not to stand in the fear of man; but I believe it is the sou's enemy seeking whom he may devour; for terrible as it was, as then presented to me and as it often had been before, yet when some ability was granted to get through, that same enemy would have had me glory on that account. May I not give way either to one feeling or the other, but strive to look to the preserving power of God.

"*Twelfth Month, 4th.*—When I have given up, in the morning only to make an indifferent remark to the servants on our reading, sweet peace has been my portion: but when it has been presented to me and I have not followed, far different has been the case. In Meeting it is such an awful

matter, for the sake of others as well as myself. If it be Thy work in me, be pleased, O Lord, to grant faith and power sufficient for the needful time. I long to serve Thee and to do Thy commandments, and I believe if I be faithful in the little Thou wilt be pleased to make me ruler over more.

"*9th.*—Soon after sitting down in Meeting on Fourth-day, (the Friends hold a meeting in the middle of the week) I was enabled to feel encouraged by these words, 'Though the enemy come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.' This appeared my experience, for soon the storm was quieted and a degree even of ease was my portion. About eleven o'clock these same words that had done so in Norwich meeting came feelingly over me—'Be of good courage and I will strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord.' And that which had hitherto appeared impossible to human nature seemed not only possible, but I believe I was willing simply desiring that in the new and awful undertaking I might not lose my faith and that the Divine will might be done in me. Under this sense, and feeling as if I could not omit, I uttered them. Though clearness still continued, nature, in a great measure, seemed to sink under the effort afterwards, and low feelings and imaginations to have much dominion, which, in mercy, were soon relieved, and I have gone on sweetly and easily since, even rejoicing.

"*22nd.*—Again, on Fourth-day, I have dared to open my mouth in public: I am ready to say What has come to me?—even in supplication, that the work might be carried on in myself and others, and that we might be preserved from evil. My weight of deep feeling on the subject I believe exceeded any other time. I was, I may say, brought into a wrestling state, that the work of the ministry in me might, if right, be carried on, if not, stopped short. I feel, of myself, no power for such a work; I may, say wholly unable; yet when the feeling and power continue, so that I dare not omit it, then what can I do?