

with the words "My dear sister come and kiss me." As the seven sisters all stood round his bed, he expressed great satisfaction, saying, it was delightful, how they loved one another. Elizabeth then knelt and offered thanks for such "unspeakable blessings." He then said "What a sweet prayer!" and afterwards, "I never passed so happy a morning; how delightful being together and loving one another as we do!" One of the sisters sang hymns which he enjoyed, and as the day advanced he remarked, "What a beautiful day this has been?"

On the day of the funeral Elizabeth writes:—

"My heart feels very full; my body I believe has trembled ever since I rose, to meet the party now assembled and likely to assemble here. My own corrupt dispositions I found showed themselves yesterday, which I believe tended to lay me very low; may I not say the feeling of my heart is that I am lying prostrate in the dust? I have been greatly tendered in spirit with love to those here whom I believe to love the *Lord*; united to them in a manner inexpressible, in my inmost heart—all barriers being broken down. Yet I feel it needful to be very watchful, very careful; to be faithful to the testimony that I apprehend myself called upon to bear, not only for my own sake, but also for the sake of the younger ones about me. *Lord* be pleased to help me, to guide me, to counsel me, that from my own will and prejudice I wound not a beloved brother or sister in Christ; but so keep me in Thy fear, in Thy love, and under a sense of Thy presence, that I may act in these most awful and important duties according to Thy most holy and blessed will. . . . Let Thy good presence be with us that the feeble be strengthened, the discouraged animated by hope, the lukewarm stimulated, and the backslider turned from the

error of his ways,—even so if consistent with Thy holy will. If Thou seest meet to make use of Thy unworthy children to speak in Thy name, be unto them tongue and utterance, wisdom and power, that through Thy grace, and the help of Thy Spirit sinners may be converted unto Thee. Amen, Amen."

"*Plushet, 22nd.*—My beloved brother's funeral was a very solemn and humbling day to me. Whilst we sat at Earham, round the body, my uncle Joseph, my sisters Catherine, Rachel, Priscilla, and I each had something to say; also Edward Edwards. I had to finish the sitting with these words 'There are different gifts but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But let us earnestly covet the best gifts.' It certainly was a striking occasion. Were we not all in a measure leavened into one spirit? It was a very solemn time at the ground, and I trust an instructive one, very affecting to our natural feelings thus to leave the body of one so tenderly beloved to moulder with the dust. Upon my return I heard of the sudden death of my long-loved cousin, Joseph Gurney Bevan. My spirit was much overwhelmed within me, but there was a stay underneath; blessed be the name of the Lord! I bade them all farewell at Earham in near unity. Oh may my children love as we love—this has been the prayer of my heart!"

But with all her gifts, her motherly kindness, her humility, her adroitness in dealing with different characters, Elizabeth Fry found it nowhere so difficult to act in the capacity of a minister with success, as in her own immediate family. This was due to various causes. Perhaps in the first place it was altogether natural, from the necessary familiarity on the one hand, and the necessity of enforcing authority on

the other. The profound law which secures diversity in unity is also apt to make some children branch off from the parent stock in spiritual as well as natural likings. In addition to these things considerable variety of opinion existing in the large family of uncles and aunts, several of whom belonged to the Church of England and were persons of estimable character, had its effect on the young minds. Still again, it appears from various passages both in the Journal and the later editor's notes that Elizabeth Fry's husband did not wholly sympathize with her at all times in her religious zeal although a member of the same society. We are even led to suspect, from the care taken to avoid explicit statements, and the profound grief of the devoted wife and mother, that there was a more serious want than the lack of denominational zeal. Something of this gathering cloud which overshadowed many of the later years of her life, may be seen in the following extracts, one from the Journal, and one from the abridged Life of Elizabeth Fry, edited by Susanna Corder.

"*Plasnet, Eleventh Month, 2nd, (1814).*—My beloved husband and girls returned from France on Second-day; my heart was rather overwhelmed in receiving them again. I also had to feel the spirit in which some persons took my having allowed them to go, making what appeared to be unkind remarks. Oh how I do see rocks on every hand! thus almost all persons who appear to pride themselves upon their consistency are apt to judge others; whilst some who no doubt yield to temptations greatly suffer and weaken themselves by it. How weak, how frail are we on every hand! My heart was much overwhelmed seeing the infirmities of others and feeling my own; I sat and wept in

meeting yesterday. I long, for myself, to have a more prompt obedience to the manifestation of light in my soul. When I have time to *pro* and *con* the matter, to try the fleece wet and dry, I do pretty well, seldom for instance leaving a Meeting condemned for disobedience so much as for want of maintaining a faithful exercise. But at home where things quickly arise in my mind, before meals, or in our pause after reading, it appears as if I could not give up to them without trying the thing again and again. I question whether I should not do better if I more simply, in these things, walked by faith—whether I should not prosper better, or make more progress Zionward;—but to go to the root of the matter, may my will become more subjected to the Divine will. How do I long for the time when I may know the Almighty to be my all in all, my Lord and my God, that He may be continually served by me, both day and night, in small things and in great."

Remarks of Mrs. Corder, on the above.

"Elizabeth Fry exercised a watchful care, never, unless *duty* required it, to oppose the wishes of her husband; and it could not reasonably be expected that she would prevent his taking his two elder girls on this excursion. But her solicitude on account of her family became increasingly great. She found as her children advanced in age, and the corrupt propensities of the natural mind developed themselves, that she often failed in her attempts to control the unyielding will and to subdue the vain inclination—and from external circumstances she did not receive the co-operation requisite rightly to govern their volatile temperament: but earnest were her efforts to guide them into the way of peace, and fervent her prayers that they might be gathered to the fold of the good Shepherd."

It is proper here to add some editorial remarks of her daughters made in this connection.

"Mrs. Fry was always very jealous over herself, lest her avocations as the head of the family should be neglected from her time and attention being so greatly occupied by those duties which she believed herself called to perform in the church; but she was even more alive to the danger of carrying on the business of life in dependence upon her own strength."

"It would not be true to say that Mrs. Fry naturally cared much for outward appearance, or that she took pleasure in domestic concern. She loved a simple liberality and unostentatious comfort. Her element was hospitality, and, whilst Christian moderation was observed, her taste was gratified by an open, generous mode of living; but she would not have chosen for her own pleasure the oversight of either house or table; and when in later life circumstances rendered care and economy a duty, it was a great relief to her to be able to depute the charge of household affairs to one of her daughters. She was always most correct in account-keeping; the distinct heads of house, garden, farm, charity, with many others, marked the painstaking care with which she performed her self-imposed task.

"As mistress of a family, if she erred it was upon the side of indulgence; scarcely liking to exert that power over the wills and feelings of others which is so conducive to their good, and so infinitely in favor of those governed, as well as those in the more arduous position of governing others; but she was aware of this herself, and a 'firm hand with a household,' was among the maxims she impressed upon her daughters as they advanced in life.

"During the infancy of her children she was singularly devoted to them by night as well as day. She attended to their minutest ailments, and was distressed by their sufferings; in health and happiness they refreshed her by their smiles. She had the gentlest touch with little children, literally and figuratively. She would win their hearts if they had never seen her before, almost at the first glance,

and by the first sound of her musical voice. As her children grew older her love was undiminished, but her facility was less than before the sinfulness of the human heart had developed itself in positive evil; this especially applies to the elder ones. She had not a talent for education if that word be used for imparting knowledge; probably because her own had been interrupted and unfinished; nor did she appreciate, till the experience of life taught her, the necessity of exerting minute, continued and personal influence over the minds of children. She had to learn that if the golden harvest of success is to be reaped, the husbandman must exert both industry and skill. The genial sun to ripen, and the refreshing shower to moisten the ground, are indeed needful; but the soil must have been turned up, and the seed sown by the laborer of man."

Pretty good results, however, seem to have been finally obtained; and it must always remain a question for individual judgment how much of the work belongs to man, and how much must be left to nature and grace.

"*Mildred's Court, First Month, 16th, 1815.*—We came here for a little change of air on account of our poor babe, who has been and continues seriously ill. Instead of her sweet smile her countenance mostly marks distress; the cause appears greatly hidden; my mind and heart are oppressed and my body fatigued, partly from losing so much sleep. I have felt my infirmity during this affliction, and also having betrayed it to others, which I have, I apprehended, to judge by my touchy feelings; but I trust I repent. Oh what am I? very poor, very unworthy, very weak; but through all I trust that the Lord will be my stay; and even when brought thus low I have known a little of being at seasons clothed with that righteousness which cometh from God. I found it was well so feelingly to have

been brought to a knowledge of what I am *in myself*, as I could more fully testify from whence the good comes, when brought in measure under its calming, enlivening, and loving influence. Preserve me, O Lord, from hurting the little ones, more particularly those before whom I have to walk; and permit me yet to encourage their progress Zionward.

25th.—A time of anxiety about things temporal has lately been my portion, but much deliverance has so far been granted; my sweet baby is much better: though other matters are still pressing, yet it appears, as to things temporal, that prayer has been heard and answered. From one cause or another how much my heart, mind and time have, for more than a year past, been engaged with the cares of this life; alas! may the pure seed not be choked."

Two short religious visits were made during the year 1815, and before its close she who had ministered consolation to others was called to bear a new and severe trial of her own strength in the loss of a child. The event is thus described in her Journal.

"*Plashet, Eleventh Month.*—It has pleased Almighty and Infinite Wisdom to take from us our most dear and tenderly beloved child, little Betsey—between four and five years old. She was a very precious child, of much wisdom for her years, and I can hardly help believing much grace: liable to the frailty of childhood. At times she would differ with the little one and rather loved her own way; but she was very easy to lead, though not one to be driven. She had most tender affections, a good understanding, for her years a remarkably staid and solid mind. Her love was very strong and her little attentions great to those she loved, and remarkable in her kindness to servants, poor people, and to all animals, she had much feeling for them. But what was more, the bent of her mind was remarkably

toward serious things. It was a subject she loved to dwell upon. She would often talk about 'Almighty,' and almost everything that had connection with Him. On Third-day, after some suffering of body from great sickness she appeared wonderfully relieved, and I may say raised in spirit. She began by telling me how many hymns and stories she knew, with her countenance greatly animated, a flush on her cheeks, and her eyes very bright, a smile of inexpressible content, almost joy. I think she first said with a powerful voice,

'How glorious is our Heavenly King,
Who reigns above the skies;'

and then expressed how beautiful it was, and how the little children that die stand before Him; but she did not remember all the words of the hymn, nor could I help her. She then mentioned other hymns, and many sweet things; she spoke with delight of how she could nurse the little ones and take care of them, etc., her heart appeared inexpressibly to overflow with love. . . . In her death there appeared abundant cause for thanksgiving; prayer appeared indeed to be answered, as very little if any suffering seemed to attend her, and no struggle at last; but her breath grew more and more seldom and gentle, till she ceased to breathe. During the day, being from time to time strengthened in prayer, in heart, and in word, I found myself only led to ask for her that she might be forever with her God, whether she remained much longer in time or not, but that, if it pleased Infinite Wisdom, her sufferings might be mitigated, and as far as it was needful for her to suffer, that she might be sustained. This was marvelously answered, beyond anything we could expect. I desire never to forget this favor but, if it please Infinite Wisdom, to be preserved from repining or unduly giving way to lamentation for losing so sweet, so kind a child. . . . My loss has touched me in a

manner almost inexpressible; to awake and find my much and so tenderly beloved little girl so totally fled from my view, so many pleasant pictures marred. As far as I am concerned, I view it as a separation from a sweet source of comfort and enjoyment, but surely not a real evil. Abundant comforts are left me, if it please my kind and Heavenly Father to give me power to enjoy them, and continually in heart to return Him thanks on account of His unutterable loving-kindness to my tenderly beloved little one, who had so sweet and easy a life and so tranquil a death; and that in her young and tender years her heart had been animated with love and desires after Himself, and also that for our sakes she should so often have expressed it in her childish, innocent way.

In reference to this event, Richenda Gurney, writing to her sister Rachel, at Rome, said;—

“I never witnessed stronger faith, more submission, more evidences of the power of grace in any one, than in our beloved sister at this time; I felt it a mercy to be a humble sharer in the rich portion granted her in that hour of need; never was I more impressed with the blessedness which is experienced by those who have served the Lord Jesus, who have preferred Him above all things, who have been willing to take up their daily cross and follow Him. He is not a hard Master; He never leaves nor forsakes His own, and will show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him. After a few minutes we retired with our dear sister to the next room. She was desirous that children and servants, (especially the nurses,) and all her friends who had been present should come to her. When thus surrounded as she lay upon the sofa, she poured out her heart in thanksgiving and prayer, in a manner deeply affecting and edifying. For myself I felt it

highly valuable, and would not but have been there for a great deal. Whilst memory lasts, I think and hope I never shall forget the scene or the impression it made.”

The trials of the mother and minister are touchingly portrayed in the following entry in her Journal within less than a month after the death of her child.

“*Plashet, Twelfth Month, 2nd.*—I am brought into some conflict this morning respecting my attending the Dorsetshire Quarterly Meeting. I had looked to it before the illness of our dear lamb, and not feeling clear of it, and yet not much light shining upon it, my poor soul is tried within me; for under my present circumstances I appear much to want the help of faith to leave my other sweet lambs. But ought I not rather to feel renewed stimulus, seeing how short time is, to do what comes to hand, and after all that I have experienced should I not rather trust than be afraid:—for was the hand of Providence ever more marked, even as it related to outward things? I believe I am fully resigned to go if it be the Lord's will: for I do believe, for all my many and great infirmities, my flinching nature, my want of faith and patience, yet it remains my first desire to do or to suffer according to the Divine will. If consistent with Thy holy will, dearest Lord, if I ought to go, be pleased to throw a little light upon the subject; and if not, somehow make it manifest; and if Thou shouldst think fit to call Thy poor child into Thy service, be pleased to be with her in it, and bless her labors of love where her lot may be cast, that others may be made sensible how good a God Thou art, how great is Thy tender mercy and loving kindness, and that these may be encouraged yet to serve Thee more with the whole heart; also be pleased, dearest Lord, if Thou shouldst order it that I go, to keep my beloved husband, children and household in my absence, that no harm may

come to them, spiritually or bodily. Thou hast in abundant mercy regarded the weak estate of Thy handmaid, and hitherto answered her cry, and even met her in her weakness; that if not asking in her own will she could supplicate Thee that their poor bodies, as well as their souls, may be preserved from (much) harm in her absence; but, dearest Lord, let me not go if my right place be at home; but if Thou callest me out, be pleased to grant a little faith, and a little strength, that I may go forth in Thy power, trusting in Thee, as it relates to them, as well as to myself. Be pleased also, if I be called from home at such a time, not to let it try or weaken the faith of others; but rather may it tend to confirm and strengthen it.

Plasbet, 11th.—Truly I went forth weeping; and my sweet Louisa being poorly, much increased my anxiety; and it is difficult to say the fears and doubts that crept in, on my way to Shaftsbury, though through mercy the enemy's power appeared limited, and my fears gained no dominion over me; but they were soon quieted, and I had mostly quiet, comfortable nights, though it was wading through deep waters and in great weakness; yet help was from season to season administered.

Plasbet, 14th.—It is the opinion of medical men that the scarlet fever, in a mild form, is the complaint in the house. It is most probable that it will again appear amongst us, but that I desire to leave. They also think our dear Rachel has a very serious hip complaint, but this I also feel disposed not to be very anxious about. With regard to my tenderly beloved little Betsey, she is in my most near and affectionate remembrance, by night and by day. When I feel her loss, and view her little (to me) beautiful body in Barking burying-ground, my heart is pained within me; but when, with the eye of faith, I can view her in an everlasting resting-place in Christ Jesus, where indeed no evil can come nigh her dwelling, then I can rest, even with sweet consolation; and I do truly desire that when

her loss is so present with me, as it is at times, that I cannot help my natural spirits being much overwhelmed, that I may be preserved from anything like repining, or undue sorrow, or in any degree depreciating the many blessings continued; particularly so many sweet dear children being left us: for through all I feel receiving them a blessing, having their life preserved a blessing, and in the sweet Lamb who is taken, I have felt a blessing in her being taken away; such an evidence of faith has been granted that it is in mercy, and at the time such a feeling of joy on her account. It is now softened down into a very tender sorrow; the remembrance of her is inexpressibly sweet, and I trust that the whole event has done me good, as I peculiarly feel it an encouragement to suffer whatever is appointed me; that being (if it may ever be my blessed allotment) made perfect through suffering, I may be prepared to join the purified spirits of those that have gone before me; and having felt so very deeply, I am almost ready to think has a little prepared my neck for the yoke of suffering."

Her tenth child was born on the 18th of May, 1816. In June her children went to Pakefield, for the benefit of sea air, and remained for a time in the family of her brother-in-law, Francis Cunningham, "an active and devoted clergyman." "She deeply felt their being thrown among those who were not Friends, but the advantages of the wise care and oversight of her sister Rachel Gurney, and the privilege of associating with the brother who invited them to be his guests, overcame her objections, and she agreed to an arrangement which appears to have given the complexion to their future lives, and more or less directly to have influenced every member of the family."*

*I have received a letter, bearing date August 22, 1882, from the son