

tenance lighted with an expression of pleasure and of the kindest benevolence—Elizabeth Fry's tall figure clad in her simple Quaker dress, her countenance a little flushed, but preserving her wonted calmness of look and serious dignity of manner. The spectators of this remarkable interview, with a murmur of applause, hailed the scene before them, as the mead of approval offered by royalty at the shrine of mercy and good works."

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

## NEWGATE—CONTINUED.

In the spring of 1818, Elizabeth Fry and her family returned to their country residence at Plashet, where she again found time to note her experiences and reflections, occasionally, in her journal—not the least useful of her many employments. What a privilege it is to be introduced into the very "sanctum sanctorum" of the world's true nobility, and permitted to see the inmost workings and complexion of their minds in these confidential revelations of themselves to themselves, with us of the unknown and unborn future, and the friends who may remain after their death, for a possible audience.

"*Plashet, Fourth Month, 29th.*—May we more evidently *live*, in the best sense, even unto God. Since I last wrote I have led rather a remarkable life; so surprisingly followed after by the great, and others, in my Newgate concerns; in short the prison and myself are become quite a show, which is a very serious thing in many points. I believe that it certainly does much good to the cause, in spreading amongst all ranks of society a considerable interest in the subject; also a knowledge of Friends and their principles; but my own standing appears critical in many ways. In the first place the extreme importance of my walking strictly, and circumspectly amongst all men in all things, and not bring-

ing discredit upon the cause of truth and righteousness. In the next place, after our readings there, the ministry is a most awful calling, thus publicly amongst men to be in season and out of season. I desire to live, (more particularly in these things,) in the fear of God rather than of man, and that neither good report nor evil report, the approbation nor the disapprobation of men, should move me the least, but my eye should be kept quite single to the great and good Shepherd and bishop of souls—this is my continual prayer for myself."

Though at a somewhat greater distance, her interest in Newgate and its concerns still continued unabated, and soon became extended from the prison itself to those, still more unfortunate, who were condemned to transportation to Australia. When the next ship load was being prepared, Mrs. Fry interested herself to have the removals to the ship made as privately as possible, and then set to work to arrange the convicts into classes, each having a monitor, with a Bible and school books at hand, to take the charge and keep the classes separate from each other. Then after much deliberation how to find them employment, the committee were told that patchwork and fancy work found a ready sale at New South Wales. A call was at once issued for little pieces of colored cotton cloth, and in a few days enough were sent from the different Manchester houses in London to supply the want. When the preparations were as complete as opportunity and means permitted, the Committee took a solemn leave of the one hundred and twenty-eight unhappy exiles whom they had so generously befriended. The scene is thus described:

"There was great uncertainty whether the poor convicts would see their benefactress again. She stood at the cabin

door, attended by her friends and the captain; the women on the quarter deck facing them. The sailors, anxious to see what was going on, climbed into the rigging, upon 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, leaned over the ships on each 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 plant 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."

The following entry in July of this year shows that all was not sunshine, even when conscience approved and the world applauded.

"*Plasnet, Seventh Month, 1st.*—Since I last wrote much has happened to me; some things have occurred of an important nature. My prison engagements have gone on well, and many have flocked after me, may I not say of almost all descriptions, from the greatest to the least; and we have had some remarkably favored times together in the prison. The Yearly Meeting was a very interesting one to me, and also encouraging. I felt the unity of Friends a comfort and support. I had to go into the Men's Meeting, which was a deep trial of faith; but it appeared called for at my hand, and peace attended giving up to it. The unity which the women expressed at my going, and the good reception I found amongst the men, were comforting to me; but it was a close, very close, exercise. Although I have had much support from many of my fellow mortals, and so much unity

expressed with me, both in and out of our Society, yet I believe many Friends have great fears for me and mine; and some not Friends do not scruple to spread evil reports, as if vanity, or political motives, led me to neglect a large family. I desire patiently to bear it all, but the very critical view that is taken of my beloved children grieves me much."

"8th.—My heart is too full to express much; yesterday I had a very interesting day at Newgate with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and many other persons of consequence: Much in the cross to myself I had to express a few words in supplication before them; but the effect was solemn and satisfactory. After this I felt peaceful and comforted. Sometimes I think, after such times, I am disposed to feel as if *that* day's work was *done*, and give way to cheerful conversation, without sufficiently waiting for the fresh manifestations of the Spirit, and abiding under the humiliations of the Cross."

The impression made upon the witnesses on some of these occasions is shown by an extract from a letter of Sir. James Mackintosh, then a member of Parliament, to his wife. He says—

"I dined on Saturday, June 3d, at Devonshire House. The company consisted of the Duke of Norfolk, Lords Lansdown, Lauderdale, Albemarle, Cowper, Hardwicke, Carnarvon, Sefton, Ossulston, Milton, Duncannon, &c. The subject was Mrs. Fry's exhortation to forty-five female convicts, at which Lord —— had been present on Friday. He could hardly refrain from tears in speaking of it. He called it the deepest tragedy he had ever witnessed. What she read and expounded to the convicts, with almost miraculous effect was the fourth chapter to the Ephesians. Coke (of Norfolk) begged me to go with him next Friday.

I doubt whether, as that is the day of my motion, (For the revision of the Penal Laws,) I shall be able to go, and whether it be prudent to expose myself to the danger of being too much warmed by the scene, just before a speech in which I shall need all my discretion."

The year when this letter was written is not given, but a comparison of the month and day, June 3, when the circumstance was related, with that of an account written by the Hon. Mrs. Waldegrave for her mother, June 2nd, 1820, together with the identity of the subject—4th Ephesians—and the fact that Lord Albemarle is named in both instances makes it probable that we have a pretty full report of this remarkable meeting in the account which is here subjoined. It was sent the compiler of the "Life of Elizabeth Fry," with the accompanying note. If not the same event the coincidence is remarkable.

"Account of a visit to Newgate, June 2nd, 1820, written by the late Hon. Mrs. Waldegrave, for her mother, lady Elizabeth Whitbread, on whose death in 1846, it was sent to me.

"Elizabeth Waldegrave, Jun.

"4 Harley Street, London, March 2nd, 1852."

"June, 2nd, 1820.—We reached Newgate at half-past ten, and waited with the rest of the company in a small room up stairs; in the way to it we passed through several wards in which the most perfect stillness prevailed; these were the former scenes of all the riot and confusion of which we had heard so much.

"After waiting a short time Mrs. Fry entered, saluting everybody in the most dignified manner. The female convicts, forty in number, came in upon a bell being rung, and

took their seats at one end of the room with perfect order—the monitors sitting on the first bench and the others in classes behind; each had her work, at which she employed herself till Mrs. Fry began reading. They had ivory tickets round their necks with numbers on them.

“Mrs. Fry arranged a large old Bible on her desk and sat down—her voice was so gentle that we wondered we could hear what she said, but remarkably mild and sweet. She began by requesting their *attention*.—‘I am desirous that your attention should be, as much as possible, undivided—notwithstanding our being subject to-day to the interruptions of company, it is equally important that your attention should be fixed on what I say—praying that the Holy Spirit may enlighten your understanding. I am going to read the 4th chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians. They all laid aside their work, most of them fixing their eyes on the ground, and we could not observe that more than two or three looked about afterwards till she had done reading. She read the chapter slowly and impressively—the 6th, 28th and 32nd verses appeared to affect them deeply—every word that she uttered seemed to be written in her own heart. She then turned to the book of Psalms. After a moment’s pause she turned back to the chapter she had been reading, and said, ‘I was going to read a Psalm, but I thought I should be best satisfied to say a word on the chapter I have been reading. The greater part of it is so simple and clear that a very little endeavor on your part will enable you to understand it; but there is one expression which perhaps may be obscure. ‘One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.’ If you look only at the external you might say, so many different opinions prevail, people are so divided as to what they think ought to be believed, how can they be said to have one faith? I have always viewed it very differently; ‘One Lord,’—yea, and have not all Christians the same Lord, which is Christ? and while we acknowledge Him our Master, look to Him for our justifi-

cation, follow his precepts, obey his commandments, love him, serve him, he is our Lord, he is the ‘one Lord’ of all who *thus* acknowledge him their *Head*.—Again, ‘one Faith’—there is a diversity of opinions, but only one true and saving Faith, the Faith which lives in the heart, and becomes evident by its fruits; which lays hold of the promises; which actuates to all godliness, and produces the blessed effects of a holy life. This one true, saving faith is common to all Christians, how exceedingly soever they may seem to differ. So also ‘one Baptism:’ Christians may differ as to the manner of administering the Baptism of water; nay though some even dispense with that altogether, yet there is one spiritual baptism of the heart,—the Spirit of God sanctifying and renewing the heart, and creating it after God in righteousness and true holiness. In this manner we have all ‘one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. What a sweet bond of unity is this, where we are not only brethren in this world, but may hope to meet in Heaven, there to give glory to Him with one accord for ever and for evermore.’

“Mrs. Fry then read the 86th Psalm, at the end of which a brother Quaker said a few words of exhortation to all present to join in prayer on behalf of the poor sufferers contained in these walls, and not to be unmindful that all were sinners, all under one condemnation.

“She then knelt down and prayed so beautiful a prayer,—with such fervency, so rich a flow of ideas, such perfect command of Scripture language to clothe them in, that it is impossible to convey an idea of its beauty. The *chaunt*, in which the Quakers recite their prayers, gave it a very singular, but very impressive effect; for her voice is good, and when exerted, very strong and clear. This, after a few words from one of the company, concluded the service—the women retired in perfect order, each class separately, with its monitor from the front row; all making courtesies as

they left the room. Mrs. Fry, in the course of some conversation with Lord Albemarle, said that she believed the coolness she had experienced from Lord Sidmouth, to have originated in too anxious a desire on her part to save the life of a condemned woman; which had induced her to speak to the Duke of Gloucester on the subject after Lord Sidmouth had refused to interfere; by which she believed she had given offence; that she thought they had been wrong and urged too far; that at first they had free communication with the Secretary of State's office, but that it had been closed for some time.

"She said that her success had surprised herself as much as it did others—That a very remarkable Providence had attended all her efforts—she had never seen the Bible received as it had been there. 'Ten years ago,' she said, 'when it occurred to me to make trial, I went with a young Friend into one of the wards in which the greatest riot and confusion prevailed. I went in with my Bible in my hand, and told them I was come to read the Scriptures. They all flocked round me, and I am convinced many had never heard them before. It seemed to be glad tidings to them. All were attentive. I had been warned to take off such things as could possibly be stolen but no attempt of the kind was made. If I dropped anything it was picked up and brought to me. I felt rather alarmed at first at the idea of being shut up with these poor creatures, but I was preserved through it.

"She said that some remarkable things had happened for her encouragement: one which occurred lately she related. 'A woman who was one of the lowest of the low—a thief, a drunkard, and in every way as bad as possible, was committed to Newgate. On the first day that she attended (the reading) I happened to read the parable of the prodigal son. She was much affected by it, and the next day I received a letter, in which she expressed her thankfulness to God that, through our instrumentality, a new way had

been opened before her—that she was like the prodigal son, and it seemed as if God had seen her afar off—that she prayed to be enabled to hold fast the hope she felt—all in this strain. We made her our school mistress, and during the whole term of her imprisonment I never knew her to break one rule, or be guilty of the smallest impropriety of speech or behavior. When they quit Newgate we support them from our fund till they are otherwise provided for. In consequence of illness *she* remained for some time dependent on us. We received a message from her, requesting that we would if possible, obtain her admittance into some workhouse where, if we could furnish her with a little tea and sugar, she should be much happier than now, for she was miserable at the idea of diminishing *that fund* which might be the means of rescuing other poor creatures from the state she had herself been in. We got her into a workhouse where she lately died, one of the most peaceful, happy deaths; the only pain she experienced was from none of us being present that she might have expressed to us her gratitude for the benefit she had derived through our means. Another young woman too, of the same character, is lately dead; she lived well, and died well.

"We went afterwards through part of the prison, but in a very unsatisfactory manner, owing to the number of persons present. She said that one proof of essential good being done was that, whereas the returns used to be 30 per cent., they are now less than 4."

On June 3rd, 1818, the Marquis of Lansdowne moved an address to the Prince Regent on the state of the prisons of the United Kingdom. In his speech he made this observation in reference to Newgate.

"It was impossible, from the manner in which it was constantly crowded, to apply any general system of regulations. There it was necessary to place several felons in the

same cell, and persons guilty of very different descriptions of offences were mixed together. The consequences were such as might be expected, notwithstanding all the efforts of that very meritorious individual (Mrs. Fry), who had come like a genius of good into this scene of misery and vice, and had, by her wonderful influence and exertions, produced in a short time a most extraordinary reform among the most abandoned class of prisoners. After this great example of humanity and benevolence, he would leave it to their lordships how much good persons similarly disposed, might effect in other prisons, were the mechanism, if he might use the expression, of these places of confinement better adapted to the purposes of reformation. The institution of the great Penitentiary-house was likely to be attended with great advantages, though he did not approve of all the regulations. That establishment was a great step taken in the important work of reformation. He was aware there were persons who considered all expense of this kind as useless; who thought that all that could be done was to provide for the safe custody of prisoners, and that attempts to reform them were hopeless. Let those who entertain this notion go and see what had been effected by Mrs. Fry and other benevolent persons in Newgate. The scenes which passed there would induce them to alter their opinion. There were moments when the hardest hearts could be softened and disposed to reform."

After such an expression made in the House of Lords and published in the journals of the day, it is not surprising that Newgate became an object of interest to people of all classes.

In addition to English visitors of all ranks, numerous foreigners were attracted to Newgate;—among others John Randolph, at that time American Envoy to Great Britain,

who gave a characteristic description of the scene to a friend who thus relates the particulars:

"Suddenly Randolph rose from his chair and in his most imposing manner thus addressed me: 'Mr. Harvey, two days ago I saw the greatest curiosity in London—aye, and in England too, sir—compared to which Westminster Abbey, the Tower, Somerset House, the British Museum, nay Parliament itself, sink into utter insignificance! I have seen, sir, Elizabeth Fry in Newgate, and have witnessed there miraculous effects of true Christianity upon the most depraved of human beings! And yet the wretched outcasts have been tamed and subdued by the Christian eloquence of Mrs. Fry! I have seen them weep repentant tears while she addressed them. I have heard their groans of despair, sir! Nothing but religion can effect this miracle; for what can be a greater miracle than the conversion of a degraded, sinful woman taken from the very dregs of society? Oh, sir, it was a sight worthy the attention of angels! You must also see this wonder.'"

Persons of distinction from the Continent were introduced to Newgate and its noted reformer, and carried back reports to their different countries which were like seeds of a new interest in humanity. Some of the first fruits were seen in Russia, where the Princess Sophia Mestchersky and other ladies formed themselves into an association, with highly satisfactory results, to visit the women confined in the five prisons of the capital. A gentleman named Walter Venning also devoted himself to visiting the prisoners there. Hearing of this Mrs. Fry opened a correspondence on the subject to encourage the good work. In a letter written by the Russian Princess to Mr. Venning, on the second of August, 1820, is the following passage:—