

be more than compensated by a larger measure of the unsearchable riches of Christ. You will not forget that the time is short; but there will be no end to that eternity of happiness and glory which I doubt not will in your instance follow it. Meanwhile you are richly provided with relatives and friends whom you love so well as to relish receiving kindnesses from them, as well as the far easier office of doing them. That you may be blessed with a long continuance of usefulness and comfort in this world, to be followed by a still better portion in a better, is the cordial wish and shall be the prayer also of (begging from you a frequent performance of the last named office of friendship for myself and mine),

My dear Mrs. Fry,
Your sincere and affectionate Friend,
W. WILBERFORCE."

FROM THE REV. JOHN W. CUNNINGHAM.

"Harrow, November, 26th, 1828.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND:—

I need not tell you with what sorrow I have received the most unexpected intelligence which reached me yesterday. It is but a short time since I was called to sympathize with a near relative in similar circumstances, and now again I am called to mourn as for a brother and a friend. My experience in the former case has enabled me to take a more hopeful and cheerful view of your heavy trial. Perhaps, dear friend, this event may be made a blessing to every member of your family; and we must not complain of a little rough handling when the jewels are to be polished for the treasury of God. All that drives us home to Him and to the power of His Spirit for grace and strength and joy is beyond all price to the soul. Is it not a comfort to you, dear friend at this moment, that you have spent so much of your time and property for God and His creatures?

is not money given to the poor lent to the Lord, and to be returned again, in some form or other 'with usury?' I beg my very kind remembrances to Mr. Fry and your dear children. I have already been led to pray for them more than once that this affliction may be sanctified to them, and that they may more and more seek the durable riches of the kingdom of Christ.

"My wife unites with me in very kind regards, and I am very affectionately yours.

J. W. CUNNINGHAM."

FROM T. FOWELL BUNTON.

"Northrepps, December, 1st, 1828.

"MY DEAREST SISTER:—

I have hitherto, I confess, shrunk from writing to you. Not surely, however, from any want of feeling for you, and with you; but from so deep a sense of your calamity as to make all attempts at comfort appear almost idle. A very quiet day yesterday, and a long time spent over the 69th Psalm from the 13th to the 17th verse, with peculiar reference to you, have given me more encouragement. I am more able to feel that we may confidently commit you and yours to that most merciful Lord from whom the dispensation has come; and I have been comforted by the reflection, strange comfort as it may seem, that you and all of us have not long to live; that in truth it signifies little how we fare here for a few years, provided we are safe in that long and endless journey upon which we shall soon enter. I think, however, I have in some degree followed you in the little mortifications, as well as the great ones, of this trial. I am not sure that the great and lasting disaster is so galling to my mind at the moment, as some of the little provoking and humbling attendants on it. But since the time I spent in heart with you yesterday I have been able in some measure to get rid of these intruders, and to look upon you under the aspect of one beloved of God.

honored of men, and more than ever loved, cherished and delighted in by a large brotherhood. I never felt so keenly as now the privilege of belonging to you, or so conscious of the honor and benefit of such a sister; and I feel no distrust about your future lot. I cannot doubt that years of contentment and happiness await you. I expect that your light will shine forth more brightly than ever. You have ever been a teacher to the whole family, and now I am confidently persuaded you will instruct us with what humility, with what submission, and with what faith, we ought to bear our deepest trials. What comes from above cannot be bad for us; and under the sense of this I adopt David's words, 'Why art thou cast down, oh my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him.'

Ever, my dearest Betsey,
Your most affectionate brother
T. F. BUXTON."

FROM MRS. OPIE.

"*Twelfth Month, 17th. (First-day Morning) 1828.*

"Though I have not hitherto felt free in mind to write to thee, my very dear friend, under thy present most severe trial, thou hast been continually, I may say, in my thoughts, brought feelingly and solemnly before me, both day and night. But I am now desired by thy sister Catherine to tell thee that she will be with thee to-morrow evening. I must also tell thee, to please myself, that two nights ago I had a pleasing, cheering dream of thee!

"I saw thee looking thy best, drest with peculiar care and neatness, and smiling so brightly that I could not help stroking thy cheek and saying, 'Dear friend! it is quite delightful to me to see thee looking thus again, so like the Betsey Fry of former days;' and then I awoke. But this sweet image of thee lives with me still, and I trust that when this dark cloud has passed away from you (as it has

passed away from so many, many others) I shall not only see thee in a dream, but in reality, as those who love thee desire to see thee always.

"Since your trials were known I have rarely, if ever, opened a page of Scripture without finding some promise applicable to thee and thine. I do not believe that I was looking for them, but they presented themselves unsought, and gave me comfort and confidence. Do not suppose, dear friend, that I am not fully aware of the peculiar bitterness and suffering which attends this trial, in thy situation, to thy own individual feelings; but then, how precious and how cheering to thee must be the evidence it has called forth of the love and respect of those who are near and dear to thee, and of the public at large! Adversity is indeed the time to try the hearts of our friends, and it must be now, or will be in future, a cordial to thee to remember that thou hast proved how truly and generally thou art beloved and revered."

We may add the testimony of Mrs. Corder to the spirit manifested by Elizabeth Fry during this period.

"Whilst this precious servant of God was thus passing through the furnace of adversity, the Compiler of this volume was privileged to belong to the meeting (that of Grace-church-street) which, when her state of health permitted, Elizabeth Fry constantly attended. The opportunities of public worship, as well as many of a more private character, at which this afflicted handmaid of the Lord was united in worship with her endeared friends, were often favored with a solemnity of which perhaps no adequate idea could be conveyed in words; and the offerings of prayer as well as, at seasons, of devout thanksgiving which she was enabled to dedicate to her Almighty Sustainer, were accompanied by a heavenly power and unction that cannot even now be remembered without a reverent and affecting sense of that

mercy and Fatherly loving-kindness which thus strengthened her to glorify God in this furnace of affliction. The sweetness of her disposition and the remarkable wisdom with which she was endowed shone, in this time of trial, with increased brightness."

Her daughters observe:

"She had a quality difficult to describe, but marked to those who knew her well, the power of rapidly, and by a process of thought which she could herself hardly have explained, arriving at the truth, striking the balance, and finding the just weight of a question; no natural gift could be of more value under such circumstances.

"Mr. and Mrs. Fry resolved upon at once leaving Plasket and seeking a temporary home in Mildred's Court, then the residence of their eldest son. One great mitigation attended this calamity, that the mercantile business, formerly their grandfather's, and conducted by their father, remained to the young men of the family who were thus enabled with the important assistance of their mother's brothers, to re-establish their parents in comfort. With leaving Plasket came much that was sad uprooting habits, long-formed tastes and local associations, parting with servants, and leaving many old pensioners and dependents.

"Mrs. Fry had, for many years, displayed singular wisdom and economy in her household arrangements, as well as in her charities and benevolent objects, varying according to the circumstances in which she had been placed. To 'be just before generous,' was a maxim often expressed to those around her. On this occasion these powers were called into full action.

"As winter advanced her health greatly failed. Circumstances occurred to weaken her husband's and children's attachment to the Society of Friends. Truly the sorrows

of her heart were enlarged. She exclaims in her journal, (which was very irregularly kept) that her 'soul was bowed down within her, and her eyes were red with weeping.' Yet she was enabled to adopt the language 'I will hope continually and yet praise Thee more and more;' and also to acknowledge that she was much sustained inwardly, and that at times her heart was kept in almost perfect peace. In addition to domestic trials, her tender feelings were at times grievously and unnecessarily wounded; from without, there was much of bitterness infused into her daily cup, which can only be appreciated by those who have had to bear the brunt of a similar calamity."*

"*Plasket, Twelfth Month, 16th.*—I have had some quiet, peaceful hours, but I continue in the low valley, and naturally feel too much leaving this sweet home, but not being well makes my spirits more weak than usual. I desire not only to be resigned, but cheerfully, willing to give up whatever is required of me, and in all things patiently to submit to the will of God, and to estimate my many remaining blessings. I am sorry to find how much I cleave to some earthly things—health, ease, places, possessions. Lord, Thou alone canst enable me to estimate them justly, and to keep them in their right places. In Thine own way, dearest Lord, accomplish Thine own work in me, to Thine own praise! grant that out of weakness I may yet be made strong, and through Thy power wax valiant in fight, and may yet, if consistent with Thy holy will, see of the travail of my soul and be satisfied, as it respects myself and my most tenderly beloved family. Amen!

"*Mildred's Court, First Month, 19th, 1829.*—My first journal in this year! What an eventful one was the last! prosperity and adversity were peculiarly our portion. It has been in no common degree a picture of life comprised in a small compass. However, through all, in prosperity

* Memoir Vol. 2, page 95.

and in adversity, however bright, or cloudy my present position or prospects may be, my desire for myself and all whom I love is this, so strongly expressed by the Psalmist, 'I will hope continually and will yet praise Thee more and more!' So be it, saith my soul, and if it be the Lord's will, may light rise in our present obscurity, and our darkness become as the noonday, both as to temporal and spiritual prospects!"

That she suffered an undue sense of humiliation, from the failure of her husband and the mortifying incidents attending it, of the nature of which we are not informed, is shown by a letter from her faithful friend and co-laborer Mr. Wilberforce, dated one day after the above entry.

"Highwood Hill, Middlesex, 30th January, 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND:

Though my eyes are just now so indifferent that I must be extremely sparing in the use of my pen, yet I cannot forbear or delay assuring you, that I do not see how it is possible for any reasonable being to doubt the propriety, (that is a very inadequate way of speaking—let me rather say absolute duty,) of your renewing your prison visitations. A gracious Providence has blessed you with success in your endeavors to impress a set of miserables whose character and circumstances might almost have extinguished hope; and you will return to them, if with diminished pecuniary powers, yet we may trust, through the mercy and goodness of our Heavenly Father, with powers of a far higher order unimpaired, and with the augmented respect and regard of every sound judgment, not merely of every Christian mind, for having borne, with becoming dispositions, a far harder trial, (for such it is,) certainly than any stroke which proceeds immediately from the hand of God. May you continue, my dear madam, to be the honored instrument of great and rare benefits to almost the most pitiable of your fellow-creatures.

"Mrs. Wilberforce desires to join with me in saying that we hope we shall again have the pleasure of seeing you, by and by, at this place. Meanwhile, with every kind regard, and friendly remembrances to Mr. Fry, and your family circle, I remain, with cordial esteem and regard,

My dear friend, very sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

For our instruction it is well to note that the dark shadow of misfortune was not suddenly or miraculously, lifted from the heart and home of this devoted Christian. When relief came, it came, as we should say naturally—that is by God's regular appointment—through her again entering, after months of painful waiting, upon the active duties of her various callings.

"During that mournful winter in London," write her daughters, "there were periods of peculiar suffering and anxiety. Mrs. Fry's own health being so shaken by her severe mental distresses, as nearly to confine her to her room, with a bad cough. Her beloved son William was on the bed of sickness from oppression of the brain, the result of an overstrained and exhausted mind. Shortly afterwards her daughter-in-law was, in the same house, in an alarming state of illness, and a friend who came to assist in nursing, was taken ill with the measles. The measles in a grown up family becomes a serious disease. They were driven from London in consequence, though too late to escape infection, and took shelter in the vacant house at Plashet, which for many weeks became a scene of anxious nursing. Thence they removed, early in June, to a small but commodious dwelling in Upton Lane, immediately adjoining the

Ham House grounds, the residence of her beloved brother Samuel Gurney, Esq."

"*Milred's Court, Third Month.*—It appears late to begin the journal of a year; but the constant press of engagements to which I am liable in this place prevent my having time for much writing. We are remaining here with our son and daughter and their children until there is some opening for having a settled home. However my desire is that we may in faith and humility entirely bow. I have of late not visited the prisons and been much occupied at home; but I trust that I may be permitted to enter this interesting work again, clothed as with fresh armor, both to defend me and qualify me for fresh service; that my hands may be taught to war, and my fingers to fight; and that, if consistent with the will of my God, I may, through the help of the Captain of my salvation, yet do valiantly.

"*Upton, 10th.*—We are now nearly settled in this our new abode; and I may say, although the house and garden are small, it is pleasant and convenient, and I am fully satisfied, and I am thankful for such a home. I have at times been favored to feel great peace, and I may say joy, in the Lord—a sort of seal to the important step taken; though at others the extreme disorder into which things have been brought by all these changes, and the difficulty of making new arrangements has harassed and tried me. But I trust it will please a kind Providence to bless my endeavor to have and keep my house in order. Place is a matter of small importance if that peace which the world cannot give be our portion—even at times—as a brook by the way—to the refreshment of our weary and heavy laden souls. Although a large garden is not now my allotment, I feel pleasure in having even a small one, and my acute relish for the beautiful in nature and art is, on a clear day, almost constantly gratified by a delightful view of Greenwich Hospital and Park, and other parts of Kent, the shipping on the river as well as the cattle in the meadows. So that in

small things and great, spiritual and temporal, I have yet reason to raise up my Ebenezer, and praise, bless and magnify the name of my Lord.

"*Sixth Month, 23rd.*—I little expected to attend the Yearly Meeting, having of late appeared to be so much taken out of such things and such services; but, contrary to my expectation, way opened for me to attend every sitting, and to take rather an active part in it, to my real consolation, refreshment and help. The unity of Friends was remarkable. I certainly felt very low at the commencement. After having, for so many years, received dear friends at my house, and that with heartfelt pleasure, it tried—not to say puzzled me, why such a change was permitted me. But I rest in the weighty import of the words, 'That which I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'"

Can anything exceed the admirable temper and disposition thus exhibited during a great trial. Mitigated indeed the trial was, in many respects by the ability and generosity of her friends; and a beautiful picture the whole presents of a Christian family and society closing round the falling member, with quick and tender care, and not only breaking the fall as much as love could do it, but as soon as might be, again establishing the broken home in peace and comfort, and continuing such aid so long as necessary. The graceful manner in which this was done may be seen from the following extracts of letters to Elizabeth Fry from her brother Joseph John Gurney, both before and after these events, during which all needful aid was given by her brothers and some other friends in the most delicate and hearty manner.

"*Earlham, First Month, 19th, 1819.*

"MY DEAREST BETSEY:

'He that giveth let him do it with simplicity.' In the

desire to fulfil this precept, I may state that I have on the settlement of my accounts, five hundred pounds 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 mayst 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 any one. Of course I take no refusal and can admit but very little gratitude."

"Norwich, First Month, 19th, 1836.

"I have a surplus fund which I think I ought to dispose of at the winding up of the year 1835, and I had been thinking of sending thee a portion of it, to which thou art perfectly welcome. I order Barclay and Co., to pay the draft for the amount. Pray do not allow thyself any compunction or hesitation on this point. I shall always depend on thy being perfectly free in mentioning thy needs to me. In fact it is a kindness, as I do not consider that my circumstances justify much, if any, accumulation.

"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 thou shouldst ride, or if thou art ever denying thyself any of the comforts of life which are needful for thee."

It is pleasant to add a tribute from this excellent and accomplished man, to his sister's worth, and her rare personal qualities, found in his journal, bearing date about the time we have now reached in her history.

*"Ninth Month, 17th. (1828).—*The time which has passed since I last wrote has been fraught with lively interests. My dear sister Fry's satisfactory and comforting

visit, from fourth to seventh day last, was perhaps the principal. I never saw her, that I remember, in a more favored condition, and she was the means of raising me considerably in the scale of spiritual feeling, wherein I am so very apt to find a low place. Greatly gifted she assuredly is, both by nature and grace, and is enabled to exercise a gentle and unseen, yet powerful influence over all about her. She was present at our large and highly favored Monthly Meeting, last fifth-day, and was memorably engaged amongst us as a daughter of consolation."