

CHAPTER V.

TRAVELS DURING THE YEARS 1794 TO 1801.—VISITS AT STOKE
NEWINGTON, &c.

Mary Capper appears, from the time of her Mother's decease, to have devoted herself to the service of her Divine Master; being a diligent attender of religious meetings, and travelling much to promote the spread of Truth and righteousness in various parts of this country. She was acknowledged as a minister in the early part of the year 1794. Her ministry was sound and of a spiritual character; having herself largely partaken of the conflict between flesh and spirit, she was often concerned to encourage the sincere hearted, patiently to submit to proving seasons, looking for effectual help to the light and power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"1794. 3rd mo. 8th. I set out, with a minute expressive of the concurrence of my own Monthly Meeting, to meet Mary Beesley at Bromsgrove, in order to unite with a committee of men friends appointed by the Quarterly Meeting, to visit our Monthly and Preparative meetings.

10th. After attending various meetings, returned to Birmingham, where the Meeting for Ministers and Elders was held in the evening. Ruth Fallows and Sarah Stephenson were present.

22nd. The friends of the committee met, and had a solemn opportunity of conference with us, children in the work; to our edification and encouragement. It was judged best to proceed in the engagement, previous to the Yearly Meeting.

24th. Monthly Meeting at Shipstone; the gathering was large, and measurably favoured with solemnity; to the comfort

and encouragement of rightly exercised minds. We called upon some families, after which we sat awhile together, under humbling feelings; then separated to return to our several allotments, having finished the engagement; through which we had been favoured with tender unity of spirit, and we now part desiring each others welfare and growth in the Truth.

Yearly Meeting, 1794.

5th month, 19th. Martha Routh spread before the Meeting of Ministers and Elders, a concern to pay a religious visit to Friends and others in America; also John Wigham, a similar concern; these came under weighty consideration. In the afternoon there was a meeting for discipline, at the new meeting-house, for Women Friends; the gathering, very large. Patience Chester is clerk, and Sarah Hustler assistant.

20th. An affecting epistle from Women Friends in Philadelphia was read; it set forth their deep suffering and humiliation, when that city was awfully visited by the yellow fever.

21st. Attended the meeting for worship in White Hart Court, to my refreshment and comfort. Mary Ridgway was particularly favoured, on the words, 'Be still, and know that I am God!' I was inwardly made sensible of the great need there is to keep on the watch, in these large meetings. O! saith my soul, that we little ones may be preserved in the quiet, humble, silent, resigned state! Aware of the great importance of speaking in these assemblies, we should wait for that which burns as a fire that will hardly be restrained.

22nd. Certificates were read, in the Select Meeting, expressive of concurrence with the concern of the friends for visiting America. Some weighty counsel was given, recommending that they who speak in these meetings should be careful only to speak from necessity. The meeting broke up under a covering of solemnity; and my heart's desire is that we may study to dwell in the stillness, wherein self is abased, and the Power of Truth exalted.

I believe that some of us are tempted to think, that unless we appear to take some active part in Truth's service, we may be looked upon by others, and perhaps by ourselves, as useless, lifeless members; but far otherwise is my judgment at this time. The humble patient traveller, who bears the burden of the word, until the right time comes for deliverance, (when the message will be accompanied by a measure of power and authority,) assuredly works essentially for the general good.

23rd. At Horslydown, gospel ministry was dispensed through Mary Ridgway, a devoted servant. In the afternoon, several testimonies concerning deceased ministers were read, to the tendering and humbling of some minds; raising desires to run with patience, the race set before them. One was from Wales, respecting Dorothy Owen; and one from Ireland, relative to Job Scott.

24th. Our esteemed friend Samuel Emlen, accompanied by another Friend, made us a very acceptable visit. The Men's Meeting sent us, for perusal, a very interesting communication from Friends in America; some of whom, in considering the late awful visitation of some parts of that Continent, were so deeply concerned for the general good, that they had believed it required from them, to represent to the Rulers and persons in power, the necessity for their exerting their authority, to endeavour to suppress all public amusements, gaming, stage entertainments, and dram shops, as being sources of much immorality and profaneness, widely estranging the mind from God and godliness.

27th. A caution was given to be especially careful that our conversation savour not of the spirit of this world; that at a time like the present, when nation seems rising against nation, and the rumour of war sounds in our ears, we may get every one to our tent, and there wait to be rightly prepared to meet the overturnings which may come; not presuming to offer our own conjectures upon events, but rather studying to be quiet, and to mind our own business; the important business of knowing a preparation to meet our God.

28th. Answers to some of the epistles were read. A sentiment ran through my mind, that a day may come when we shall feel some restrictions in our correspondence; at least in the length of our communications; refraining even from good words.

We had a very acceptable visit from Thomas Shillitoe and others, who exhorted us to keep to the power in which our meetings were first established; that no mouth should utter words without life; but that in humble waiting upon God, we might know a being baptized into the one Spirit, wherein all are brought into true harmony.

Ann Tuke and other women friends mentioned a concern to visit the men's meeting; they had the sympathy and concurrence of feeling minds. Susanna Row accompanied them, and on their return, she expressed her satisfaction in having been with them. The meeting concluded in awful, reverent silence, and we separated under humbling impressions.

JOURNEY IN WALES.

1794. 8th mo. 3rd. Mary Beesley having long felt a deep concern of mind, to pay a visit to friends in Wales, and in the county of Hereford, my mind was, after serious consideration, engaged to accompany her; for this purpose we obtained certificates. On first-day, after attending a favoured meeting at Worcester, we dined at Wick, with the Parents of my friend, and parted from them in much tenderness of spirit, and in a humbling sense of our own inability for what we had in prospect. Through the care and kindness of Friends we were suitably provided. Thomas Goode, of Birmingham, was sent to accompany us through the journey, and Robert Newman went with us to Ross. Our first stage was to Ledbury, where we lodged. One lonely Woman Friend, a widow, lives in the town, and received a visit from us very kindly.

2nd day. From Ledbury to Ross; at Thomas Pritchard's.

Went on to Troy; we had to travel through a beautiful country, but the best life was low with us.

3rd day. Before we left William Dew's, had a little glimpse of the Heavenly Father's love, on which a few words were spoken, and we separated in tenderness.

4th day. Monthly Meeting at Pontimol; to which place we walked about a mile. Though but few in number, there was something of Divine Power to be felt, wherein we seemed to be owned as members of the living Catholic Church, which is of one spirit, and is united to the Head, Christ Jesus. My beloved friend Mary Beesley was strengthened to open, in a weighty manner, a concern to sit in the families.

5th day. We came to James Lewis's, a remote situation in a valley, at Lanelly, in Brecknockshire. Rough and fatiguing roads; we walked part of the way, though heavy rain made it difficult.

6th day. Set out in the morning to visit Richard Harford and his wife, five miles off; the road is here esteemed good, and indeed so the main road is; but to us the rocks and precipices were alarming, though to be admired as awfully grand. It is a railroad for the use of a coal company: meeting with their wagons and loaded horses was to me frightful; however we were favoured to get safely along. Friends receive us with much cordiality, making plentiful provision for refreshing the body; but ah! a few crumbs from our Master's table are still more desirable to us, for we are poor and stripped of inward consolation; yet favoured quietly to hope for a brighter season. After dinner we sat with the family. If we are preserved from hurting others, or wounding ourselves, it is no small favour. O! Father, preserve us, and leave us not! for we cannot direct ourselves. In the evening, sat with James Lewis's family.

2nd day. Were favoured to leave Pontipool in peace, and came to Penhow Castle, a good old farm house, where we were very hospitably received. The mistress is a plain, agreeable person,

not born in our society, but convinced by the secret power of Truth in her own breast; we did not see her husband, who was engaged in harvest work. In this family lives a poor old man; blind, and with locks as white as wool; we spoke to him, and his remarks seemed to do us good, evincing that his mind was brought into childlike simplicity, as he, in a few words, described his own weakness, and entire dependence on Divine Goodness. The mistress of the house said he had lived with them for many years, and that she had seen him, at times, in the fields, apparently in a retired state of mind, with tears trickling down his cheeks. She accompanied us to Shire Newton, where was a small meeting. We sat with the one Friend's family, and some neighbours, who seemed disposed to receive the Truth in the love of it, as ministered by very feeble instruments, who sought not their own exaltation. Returned to Penhow, by a beautiful road, with a fine view of the Bristol channel.

3rd day. The master of the house made way for his men and boys, with the maid servants, quite a large number, to come and sit down with us; and I think we may in humility confess that our Heavenly Father favoured us, in ministering, according to the ability given, and we trust to their edification. Staid all night at Newport.

I note down, as a watchword for myself, that I am this day made sensible that there is need to watch; and most especially in times of favour, for here is danger of sliding into a state of ease. I have this day felt the reproofs of instruction in my own mind, for not being sufficiently guarded in my conduct toward strangers. There is a propensity in some natures to be open and unreserved; but I wish to be thankful for the gentle, internal monition, and to remember that it is needful to be prudent, especially when thus engaged in the service of the great cause of Truth; even innocent cheerfulness, if not strictly guarded, may lead into inconvenience.

5th day. Came to the house of Evan Rees, Neath.

1st day, 17th. Attended the meetings at Swansea. A day of humiliation and suffering. Returned to Neath.

2nd day. Remained at our kind friend Evan Rees's; not being fully satisfied in our minds, which might be the right and safe way for us to move; we were thankful in believing that our friends felt for us.

3rd day. Prepared to re-visit Swansea; Evan Rees accompanies us; Friends are very kind. We visited the few in their families. There are young people growing up, whose situation seems to demand tender care.

5th day. Came to the house of Jane Lewis, Haverfordwest.

6th day. Received the unexpected intelligence of my brother Harry being called from this uncertain state of existence; his illness was short, and he has left a young wife, for whom I feel much. My dear Brother was young, hardly past what is termed the bloom of life.

1st day, 24th. A low time in the meetings. In the family, felt more life and liberty; tender counsel, caution and encouragement flowed toward the children. Mary Beesley very poorly.

2nd day. It appears probable that we shall not feel clear of this place without sitting in the families of Friends. Jane Lewis accompanied us into one family.

4th day. Came with Daniel Starbuck, to Pill, where Samuel Starbuck and wife, his son and daughter and their little ones reside. They were formerly from Nantucket; and in the time of the American troubles, were sufferers, with many others.

5th day. At meeting; poverty of spirit my allotted portion. After dinner, walked about a mile to Milford, where Samuel Starbuck, jun. lives; his wife was sick, and we sat together in her chamber. We crossed the water, in a small boat, to visit a serious woman who frequents our meetings; her husband is a sailor; the vessel lying near shore she sent for him, and I thought we were favoured together, with a little sweet refreshment, though in a very humble hut, where outward accommodations were but

mean; but I thought there was something to be felt, far preferable to all that the world could bestow. Returned to Pill.

7th day. Daniel Starbuck and his wife accompanied us to a family who profess with us; but the female branches having married out of our Society, the spiritual life seems to have received a check. Surely these marriages have proved a great hinderance to our brightness as a people! In these parts, in particular, it seems to have been the means of scattering. We dined with these friends, and had an opportunity to express the desire which was raised, that the power of godliness might be preferred to the form. Returned to Haverford.

1st day, 31st. At both meetings. A day not without some light and peace, though intermixed with bitters.

9th mo. 1st. Second day. We are yet bound here. Called upon a Moravian teacher who had been to visit us; truly a uniting power spread over us, and I believe we parted in that Christian spirit which sincerely desires each others growth in the real principle of Truth. Surely there still are different dispensations, as to the outward, but one and the same spirit! In a few words, delivered in great simplicity, H. S. exhorted us, 'as we had received Christ, so to walk in Him.' In the afternoon, visited a serious family of Moravians, who seemed to receive us with open house and heart. We had a solid time together. In the evening we had an opportunity of solemn retirement with Jane Lewis and five of her children; something of the Heavenly Father's love was felt.

3rd day. Very considerable was our exercise in not feeling at liberty to go forward; after a season of some trial, and I trust unfeigned supplication, we believed it right to have an evening meeting; which, being mentioned in diffidence and fear, to Jane Lewis and other friends, we were encouraged to appoint one. We particularly desired the attendance of servants and apprentice lads.

The gathering was large, and remarkably still. I believe there

is a tender, honest minded people in this place; and assuredly the Heavenly Father's love is over them, and will gather them unto Himself!

4th day. We attended the Women's Monthly Meeting; no meeting for business held by the men; indeed the discipline is so low, that the very form is almost lost; we wish that a revival, through the power of Truth, may take place among them; seeing that many young people are growing up, who are much uninformed. We rather hope the American Friends S. and A. Starbuck, &c. will be united, and add a little strength, to these feeble ones.

5th day. Parted from our kind friends Jane Lewis and others, in an almost silent feeling of solemnity; our spirits seeming still, as it were, to hover round them, earnestly desiring their growth in the spiritual life. We left them in a feeling of sadness, and pursued our journey in pensive quietness. Our kind and ancient friend Samuel Starbuck, with his valuable wife, accompanied us on horseback. Came as far as Westmore, where we were comfortably lodged in a Friend's family, after arriving late, as the road was rough and difficult.

7th day. Reached Caermarthen. The company of Samuel Starbuck and his wife, was a comfort and encouragement to us.

1st day, 9th mo. 6th. We went to meeting in weakness and fear; several sober people came in, and it proved a season of favour. In the afternoon there was a large gathering, and the power of Truth so far prevailed, that all seemed brought into a degree of solemn stillness. Some exhortations, and some plain truths, were expressed.

2nd day. Travelled through a beautiful country to Llandilo; we met Job Thomas, who conducted my friend and me to his own habitation, a very humble, thatched dwelling. We were kindly received by his wife, a native of the mountains, who speaks no English, but whose countenance bids us welcome to the best they

can afford, and we feel easy. It is however somewhat painful that, as there is not room for our kind friends Samuel Starbuck and wife, they are obliged to ride a mile farther.

3rd day. Our kind, attentive friends came to breakfast with us, and we went nine miles, on horseback, mostly over the mountains, to visit a man Friend; his habitation is mean, but his hearty reception of us, with his solid, innocent deportment, was ample amends for the fatigue.

Our valued friends Samuel Starbuck and wife left us this evening. Their company has been very acceptable, and we feel pain in parting from them, they having been more like parents to us than any we have met in our journey.

4th day. We took tea with Job Thomas's brother and sister. Some neighbours had been invited to meet at Job's house, and a considerable number came. Job Thomas had something to express, but we sat silent; the people were quiet and solid; yet I thought they were too much looking without, for that which is to be found within.

5th day. Went on horseback six miles to Newhouse, where we attended a Monthly Meeting; there seemed to be honest enquiring minds, but too much outward. The members of our Society are very few, and some of them appear not enough separated from the language and corruptions of general custom. The meeting for business very small; the order of the discipline measurably preserved by Job Thomas; but things are low. In the evening came six miles, fording the river Towey, to Llandoverly.

6th day. Job Thomas accompanied us thirteen long miles, over rough mountain road, very difficult for a carriage; we walked a mile or two and stopped at a very poor looking thatched house; we had a comfortable dinner, well cooked, for which they charged only eightpence each. We afterwards forded the river Irvon, and came ten Welsh miles to Builth.

7th day. Job Thomas left us, and the inn-keeper came guide

with us to Rees Bowen's quiet habitation. The road was rugged, and we were glad to reach the house of our kind friend, being weary in body and mind.

1st day, 13th. Walked to the Pales Meeting.

4th day. Set forward, but it rained smartly, and we were very wet before we reached the Friend's house; appearances were rather discouraging, the master and mistress being from home, and a poor servant girl, with three or four children, seemed almost frightened at us; the house very mean, but like many others we have seen; and of this we hope never to utter a word of complaint; indeed we felt it to be cause for thankfulness to be received; and after a time, things became more comfortable. When the woman friend returned, she made up a good fire, and gave us some tea, with a hearty welcome, which quite satisfied us. Being fatigued, we soon retired to rest, and were accommodated far beyond our expectation, with a good bed, dry linen, &c.

5th day. We had a religious opportunity with the family, under a measure of our Heavenly Father's love. We then set out for Pencraig; a terrifying storm of wind and rain came on, such as we had never experienced; but at length, being sometimes on horseback and at others walking, we safely reached our journey's end, to our no small comfort. Poor, wet, dirty figures we were! so we went to bed while our clothes were dried. We here met with James Lewis, from Llanelly, who had kindly been from place to place, in order to join us; it is some encouragement to our feeble minds, when we find valuable friends so disposed to help us on our way.

6th day. A season of religious retirement in the family. Walked to visit a poor man, with whom we had an affecting time, under a sense of a tried, tempted state. Left him in a very tender frame of mind.

7th day. Weather bound; which is no little disappointment; however we are preserved tolerably quiet in our minds.

1st day, 20th. Sat their morning meeting; the afternoon

being favourable, we returned to Rees Bowen's, and were thankful to be once more quietly and comfortably accommodated.

2nd day. My dear friend much indisposed and very low, which is discouraging to me; I strive after resignation, and hope for a brighter day.

3rd day. Mary Beesley is better; we went, on horseback, to visit two families, each consisting of a man and wife, and five children. In the evening, Timothy Bevington, Thomas Colley, Joseph Gurney Bevan, and Richard Phillips, arrived very unexpectedly at Rees Bowen's, appointed by the Yearly Meeting to visit the meetings in Wales; a service which I hope will prove edifying, for they are in want of help.

4th day. Went to Builth, after having a meeting.

6th day. The Week-day Meeting; a comfortable season in silent waiting.

1st day, 27th. Sat the meeting in poverty, though not without some sense of good. Father of mercies! if we are right, strengthen us still in the right to stay! if we are wrong, thy light impart, to lead and teach the better way! Surely Thou hast raised in our hearts a sincere desire to be thy obedient children! the desire after good is thine, and the work of righteousness is altogether thine; and thy power alone can carry on and perfect thy own work!

Very unexpectedly, a little light broke in upon us, as we were sitting together, retired in spirit, after some Scripture reading, and a few words, spoken in tenderness by Rees Bowen. It was a refreshment, to our drooping minds, and we retired to rest, somewhat revived.

2nd day. Rees Bowen accompanied us to the school, near Llanidloes, where we were kindly received by Robert Whitaker and his wife.

3rd day. Sat with one family. After dinner our certificates were read, before the children withdrew, and we had an opportunity of explaining to them the nature of our engagement. Had

a very pleasant walk to visit the family of Richard Brown; and another family, in a very poor cottage. Our minds were comforted in these lowly cots. We had also a time of solid retirement in spirit with Robert Whitaker and wife."

Extract of a letter from Abigail Starbuck to M. C. and M. B. received at R. B—'s.

"Milford, 17th of 9th month, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

We were much pleased to hear from you, as you have been much the companions of our conversation, since we left you in this your arduous undertaking, sincerely wishing you comfort and encouragement in your passing along; which we have no reason to doubt, as I believe your minds are engaged to discharge the trust that is committed to you. Dear Friends, I may assure you it was with reluctance we left you; for the little time that we were with you had made you feel very near to us, and we felt a near sympathy with you at parting.

We were obliged for your information of the committee's intention of visiting us, and hope they may be a means of strengthening the weak among us, for we have need of help; though I am sensible they cannot do the work for us, (although far more experienced) but that we must each look to our own standing. It is my wish that we may; and that we were worthy to be remembered by you, and to unite in desire after strength to press forward. I believe you will be often remembered by us, in our sequestered situation and lonely sittings. We are obliged to you for your care about our getting home, and can say the satisfaction we received in your company, more than compensated for the little fatigue of the journey. We found our children well. With our united love to you, in which they heartily join,

Your affectionate friend,

ABIGAIL STARBUCK."

"4th day. A very exercising time in a family; yet we had to

believe that Divine Love is extended, to gather the returning prodigal. Sat also with a young woman who frequents our religious meetings; her parents being present. It was a time of renewal of strength. Had a satisfactory opportunity with the children after dinner; all seemed attentive, and some tendered; as were our own spirits. Our minds have been a little refreshed in this place.

10th of 1st month. Fifth day. Left Llanidloes, and came eight miles to Eskergoch, where we sat their small meeting. The accommodations very lowly; we had a little refreshment with us, after partaking of which, and distributing our morsel, came twelve miles, to Machynlleth. Richard Brown accompanied us; his pleasant countenance and his solid conduct, seemed to do us good.

6th day. The morning wet, but we set forward with our acceptable guide; afternoon fine; got to Llwydee, and were kindly received at the house of Henry Owen, which is surrounded by huge rocks; with a grand view of Cardigan Bay.

1st day, 4th of 10th month. The meetings were held at Henry Owen's; some sober people attended.

2nd day. We set out, accompanied by Henry Owen and wife, and our pleasant guide, Richard Brown. I rode single; the road rugged and stony, surrounded by prodigious mountains, with precipices, and the sea rolling below; the appearance awful, but my mind was preserved from apprehension of danger, which was no small favour. After emerging from between lofty rocks, just at twilight, Dolgelley appeared rather a pleasant spot, though it is a poor mean town.

3rd day. Went to a meeting appointed at Tyddyn-y-garreg; but few Friends. After some conflict, we gave up to what we apprehended might tend to peace; and accompanied by Richard Brown, proceeded to sit in the families separately, and were favoured to get through to satisfaction.

5th day. Breakfasted at Welchpool, where we parted, in

