

CHAPTER VIII.

REMOVAL FROM LEOMINSTER AND RE-SETTLEMENT AT BIRMINGHAM.—DEATH OF HER BROTHERS WILLIAM AND JASPER.—RELIGIOUS SERVICES, &c. TO THE END OF THE YEAR, 1820.

TO KATHARINE CAPPER.

“Leominster, 1st mo. 23rd, 1815.

When I can look into my own heart, and have a sense of its natural propensities from my youth up, O! how marvellous appears the mercy extended to me; so that, my endeared Niece, the secret acknowledgment of my soul is, God is love! and willeth not that any should perish. O! that the whole rational creation, the world over, would receive, own, and strive to obey, his Divine gift of Grace in the heart; then might we, as one large family, together praise the Lord for his goodness, and his mercy which endureth for ever. I have long been a debtor to my much loved niece R. Bevan, for a nice, affectionate letter. I have not been unmindful of the privation and grief that has been recently brought upon you, by the awful change which has taken place in the circle of your choicest friends, your justly valued, much loved Christian adviser having filled his measure; his pilgrimage ended, he has left an example to those who loved him, to follow him as he followed Christ.

MARY CAPPER.”

She this year again attended the Yearly Meeting, concerning which she made the following memoranda:—

“London, 5th mo. 22nd. The select Yearly Meeting met. Many are the vacant seats of those who have been eminently useful in their day; but with humble hope, and confidence in redeeming, sanctifying Power, we look towards a rising generation; many of whom appear to have given up their names, and to be advancing in dedication and usefulness.

William Grover and George Stacey were at the table. Some tender cautions were given, with respect to those benevolent associations, in which members of our Society are now so conspicuous. There was a fear in some minds, even while they rejoiced in the spreading of knowledge, the distribution of the Scriptures and the instruction of the poor, lest a danger might secretly lurk in the pleasure received from eloquent speeches, and flowing language, at the public meetings of these associations; especially lest our dear young friends should thereby lose their relish for simplicity, and be gradually drawn from the love of silent waiting in our meetings for worship; that waiting wherein they may know Jesus to be in the midst, teaching as never man taught; and by whom we have access to the Father. There was much worthy of observation in these remarks.

24th. The Women's Yearly Meeting began.

25th. A testimony concerning our valuable friend John Kendall, deceased, was read. He was favoured with heavenly wisdom, in his early years, and dedicated a large portion of a long life, and much of his substance, to the promotion of righteousness. In his love to his fellow-men, and desire to draw them off from mis-spending their time, he occasionally entered public-houses, and twice the theatre; in order to persuade those present, who were his neighbours, to consider the importance of life, and of the soul's salvation. In the afternoon, a testimony respecting dear Mary Lewis was read.

26th. At Devonshire-house meeting, some powerful testimonies were borne to the Divine mission of the Saviour upon earth, in his outward appearance, and to the operation of his Spirit, revealed in the hearts of the children of men. Many seemed to be seriously affected.

28th. *First day.* Martha Routh was enabled to preach the glad tidings of the gospel; and Jesus was set forth as a Saviour and Redeemer.

31st. Sarah Hustler gave in a written account of the money entrusted to her last year, when she accompanied Elizabeth Coggeshall into Germany and the South of France. She also expressed that she had been thankful to be the medium through which the liberality of Friends, in this land, had contributed to comfort many; and that, while employed in relieving their distresses, she had often thought of her sisters, in her native land, with desires that they might rightly appreciate their privileges, and be willing to make sacrifices to supply their suffering fellow-creatures.

E. Coggeshall tenderly touched upon the superfluity observable in clothing, &c. and we were called upon to shew our gratitude to the Author of all our blessings.

6th mo. 1st. Instructive counsel was given, relative to the care which should be exercised over servants of every denomination; that nothing may exist in our families that can in any way harm them; and that as much as in us lies, we may encourage them in that which is good. The clerk, in a very feeling manner, read the concluding minute; and after a precious silent pause, we separated."

The mind of Mary Capper appears to have been frequently much exercised on behalf of that class of persons, who are employed as haymakers, &c. in the neighbourhood of London; and at this period she expressed her interest for them in the following address, which she had printed and circulated amongst them.

AN AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS TO THOSE WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN HARVEST WORK, 1815.

How rich, how beautiful are the fields! how promising are the crops, to supply the wants of Man and of Cattle! Shall we behold them without one grateful acknowledgment to that bountiful Giver from whom all our mercies flow? The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and you, my fellow pilgrims, who labour and toil in gathering the produce of the fields, and in heaping up stores, you are partakers of the fruits of the earth, you eat of the bread that strengthens the heart of man; and that it may continue to be given to you in abundance, is the desire of thousands, who are themselves supplied with it. Words can but faintly set forth, how affectionately, how earnestly, your Christian friends wish, that the blessing of the Lord may be with you, in the fields, when your hands are diligently employed in hard labour. They earnestly desire that when the toil of the day is over, peace, the inward peace of your minds, may make your rest sweet, and refresh your weary bodies, fitting you for the task of the succeeding day. Let affectionate solicitude, for your soul's sake, prevail upon you to avoid all excess in drinking; it is an ungrateful waste of the Creator's bounty. Drunkenness unfits both the mind and the body for all that is innocent and good, it is a shameful inlet to bad and idle words, to profane and filthy communications, and to foolish jestings, which things are dangerous in their consequences, and often lead into serious harms, that might not be even thought of in the beginning of familiarities.

Permit a stranger to put you in mind, that without serious thoughtfulness and prayer, neither the Poor nor the Rich, the Labourer nor the Master, is safe. We cannot in our own strength resist temptation. Oh! it grieves your friends, who are interested for you, who observe you when you are not aware, it grieves them, when the old men amongst you commit folly, and the young men unhappily follow the sad example.

Why will ye not accept a Saviour's redeeming love, who suffered, was crucified and died, to save us from our sins? Receive this exhortation in seriousness, and let it make some impression for good on your hearts, as it is offered to you by a fellow traveller who has your present and eternal happiness in view.

And you, dear young Children of the Poor, who attend your Parents and others in the labours of the fields; remember that your Heavenly Father careth for you; that he pitieth you, even whilst you are ignorant of Him. Think upon his goodness and mercy; He would keep you from sin, from all wicked words, from lies and deceit; take heed, dear children, that you learn not these things from those who are older than you, and ought to teach you better things. Love one another, be gentle, kind and good; then nothing can harm you."

Mary Capper again attended the Yearly Meeting in 1816; her diary thus continues.

"5th mo. 20th. The Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders met; and after a time of reverent waiting, very low as at the footstool of mercy, vocal prayer was offered. Jonathan Hutchinson joined Wm. Grover, &c. at the table. Mary Naftel, in a weighty manner, informed us of a concern to visit Friends in America. After much silent deliberation, a belief was expressed that the meeting might safely sanction the movement, and the language of encouragement was held forth.

21st. Elizabeth Thomas Robson opened to the meeting, in much simplicity, her apprehension that it was required of her to visit those under our name in France and Germany. Much tender feeling was expressed, and the decision was left to a future sitting.

22nd. Soon after the Women's Yearly Meeting gathered, a very precious stillness prevailed, and seemed to spread over us

through this sitting; a gentle hint was given to be watchful when out of meeting, so that the beneficial impressions received might be retained.

23rd. Four testimonies were read, respecting deceased ministers, who had been favoured to finish their earthly pilgrimage in peace, and with a lively hope of acceptance, through Christ the Saviour, who redeemeth the believers in Him.

24th. It was remarked, that while many are running to and fro in the earth, in order that knowledge may be increased, the retired humble Christian believer, who finds no power to go forth, and can only rejoice with trembling, may, by secret and sincere prayer, be instrumental in the promotion of truth and righteousness.

28th. Some very interesting accounts were sent in from our Men Friends, relative to the civilization and improvement of the Indians in North America. Friends in that land still extend much care towards them; schools are established, and Friends reside among them; many of the women and girls have learned to spin, &c. The report mentions that an ancient chief expressed the satisfaction which they felt, in observing the stability of the Friends who had settled among them; that even when the great guns shook the earth they did not seem disturbed; from this they concluded that the Good Spirit was with them.

30th. Counsel was expressed, tending to encourage and comfort the lowly-minded, and to animate all to watch unto prayer, that spiritual mindedness might increase among us, and that our worship might really be in spirit and in truth; even though without verbal ministry. We received an acceptable visit from Richard Phillips, accompanied by William Grover. In the evening we concluded our business, which has been transacted in much harmony, and under a sense of that gracious, condescending mercy, which the Christian believer prizes above every earthly enjoyment.

6th mo. 1st. The adjourned Meeting of Ministers and Elders opened with a fresh manifestation of that Power which draws into solemn stillness, and prepares the mind for secret or vocal prayer; the latter was offered on the bended knee. The concern of Elizabeth Robson was again seriously considered, and it appeared right to liberate her for the service.

26th. At the Quarterly Meeting for London and Middlesex, Elizabeth Fry, of Plashett Cottage, was liberated to accompany Elizabeth Robson.

9th mo. 24th. Attended the Monthly Meeting at Hereford, and under a persuasion that it was a right movement, requested a certificate of removal to the North Monthly Meeting of Warwickshire.

10th mo. 7th. Requested permission to have a religious meeting with some of the inhabitants of Leominster, before leaving that place; and informed Friends that I felt inclined to pay a visit to some families not professing with us, as way might open for it. The Monthly Meeting concurred therein, and appointed John Southall to accompany me, when desirable.

8th. Made one call, where we were favoured with a precious sense of the tender mercy of the Lord.

10th. Sarah Waring accompanied me to the house of a very respectable widow, where we took tea; an opportunity was afterwards very willingly given, to have the company of a faithful servant, who had been with her mistress during many years of affliction, and who, being sickly, had received great kindness in return. After relieving my mind, we parted in mutual good will. I afterwards called on several more of my neighbours, and was always kindly received. As I found ability given me, in tenderness and love, I expressed my solicitude for the welfare of the immortal soul, which will have an existence when we shall no more meet, in these poor, frail, mortal bodies. The neighbours were invited to attend one of our religious meetings, and the house was pretty well filled. Stillness prevailed, and

some of us were enabled to wait on the God of all grace. Something was expressed in love to souls. I had particular satisfaction, and felt great sweetness, in calling upon two Moravian families. I thought the spirituality of faith in Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of men, was to be found among them.

I left Leominster in a low frame of spirit, though I did not feel condemnation for anything that I had done, or wilfully left undone."

TO KATHARINE CAPPER.

"Birmingham, 2nd mo. 11th, 1817.

MY DEAR NIECE,

I was affected by the account of thy dear Father's sufferings, and being something of an invalid myself, I thought very affectionately of my much-loved Brother, as I lay awake on my bed. I remember the love of our youth; mutual endearment is even more precious now, in my old age, than in the morning of my day. Tell my dear Brother that an increased sense of fellowship binds me to him.

I call to mind thy dear Father's first communication respecting his sense of the sinfulness of sin; and to the best of my recollection, it was the beginning of serious thoughtfulness, upon the nature of sin, in my mind; though my foolish heart made light of it, just at that time. But little as a beloved Brother may think that he had to do with it, so it is, that I connect the incident, the love for him, and an awful reverence for the watchful Shepherd of souls; as then and now working together for good; even to the end designed, of mercifully redeeming, fitting and preparing for a mansion of purity and blessedness.

With a large portion of love to you all, thy Aunt,

MARY CAPPER."

"Birmingham, 4th mo. 18th.

DEAR M. S.

Doubtless thou hast had accounts of my weak state of health ; I am indeed again reduced very low, but I see it as my place to be quiet and patient, which is the petition of my spirit more often than the day. Subjection of the will, and the reduction of all that is contrary to the righteous law of Christ, however secret it may be, is the work and end of pure religion in the soul ; whatever our name, situation or rank in life. Sickness and retirement do not exclude trials of faith ; nor do I believe that an active, busy scene, in things lawful, precludes the precious influence of that divine, heavenly Power, which, if believed and obeyed, leads out of error, and opens the way of truth.

My voice remains suspended, so that it is a fatigue to make myself understood. I have the great privilege of a quiet, pleasant, little room, where I am much alone."

"Birmingham, 4th mo. 26th, 1817.

DEAR W. F.

Though I am now in as poor and weak a state as thou hast heretofore seen me in ; yet being favoured to feel some liveliness of spirit, and interest in those things which I am persuaded make for peace, I earnestly desire the increase of spirituality among all professing Christians ; that we may manifest of a truth, that we believe in God, and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. To experience the change from nature unto grace, is more to be desired than kingdoms ; and is worth enduring conflicts and distress, to know realised in ourselves ; and if so might be, to prepare us, to strengthen, help and encourage other burdened souls.

I doubt not thy continued dedication is attended with many

trials and sacrifices, but also with many gracious helps, many sweet mercies ; and thou knowst these cannot be bought too dear ; in fact, what has the most favoured servant to give, which has not first been received ? The best enjoyment of every good gift is a grateful sense of the bounty of the Giver."

Mary Capper did not attend the Yearly Meeting, but her sister Anne Capper sent her the following particulars.

"5th mo. 11th. *First day.* We had a precious company to dine ; our dear brother and sister John Capper called, and silence ensued. Mary Proud and Mary Alexander spoke sweetly, and I think our dear Brother and Sister were comforted. My Brother is seventy.

19th. To-day my Jasper is sixty-six ; upon looking back, I find both the brothers increasingly desirous of yielding themselves to best guidance, and precious drawn from visible things. The opening of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders to-day was a time of refreshment to many. Elizabeth Robson gave an account of the labours of herself and companions ; also of their great trials in having to leave William Allen in his affliction, and in the death of his wife.

20th. William Byrd first broke silence, in testimony ; then his wife in prayer. Then Hannah Field, from America, with much simplicity, informed us of her prospect of visiting those under our name in France ; and Elizabeth Barker hers, to be the companion of Hannah Field. Much sympathy and unity were expressed.

23rd. At the Meeting for worship we were comforted together ; bread was broken, blessed, and handed to them that were brought low. The dear, simple-hearted American Friends dined with us ; eight of our children were with us, and many others. After dinner, in a religious opportunity, Hannah Field and

E. Barker had to exhort and encourage us. E. Barker also appeared in supplication.

25th. First day. Thy dear Brother, Ann Crowley, and I, were privileged with the company of the dear American Friends, to go with us to attend the interment of my aged friend, Benjamin Angell, of Brentford. I think he was eighty-three. The instructive society of our friends was very precious to us. At the funeral, Hannah Field encouraged all present to come from shadows to the living substance. E. Barker and Ann Crowley were engaged in reverent supplication, and several friends in testimony.

31st. The select Yearly Meeting concluded under a very solemn covering. My dear husband is very poorly, but we have had to commemorate the Lord's tender dealings with us; he is so favoured, in this time of sickness, that it is with reverent, humble gratitude I perceive the increase of his faith and love. Surely goodness and mercy have followed him all his days! of this I also have largely partaken."

Rebecca Bevan also sent an account of the daily transactions of the Women's Meeting, to which she subjoined the following; her last address to her Aunt.

"Tottenham, 1817.

I have endeavoured, my dear Aunt, to keep a daily account of the proceedings of our Yearly Meeting, but it is so inferior to what I could have wished, that I believe it must go, without any other recommendation than the affection which induced me to begin it, and I hope thou will accept it as a proof of my love. I was gratified by thy kind letter, sent by one who appears to have grown so much in all that is good, as almost to discourage some of her companions in the Christian race; but while I have been writing this, the words, 'In my Father's house are many

mansions,' have afforded me a ray of encouragement, and renewed my hope.

I think, if I could slip away from my engagements, I could enjoy a few quiet days with thee; but at present, that is out of the question; my dear boys are just coming home, for a six weeks' vacation, and our two youngest have the hooping cough. I believe the rest have all had it, and it is not very violent. My Father is but poorly.

Thy very affectionate Niece,

REBECCA BEVAN."

Rebecca Bevan died the 9th of the 11th month of this year, in the faith and hope of a humble Christian, having endured a very suffering illness with much patience.—*See Piety Promoted, Part XI, page 189.*

MARY CAPPER TO JOHN AND SARAH GRUBB.

"Birmingham, 6th mo. 7th, 1817.

MY DEAR EXERCISED FRIENDS,

I seem as though I could not well forbear to communicate a little of my feelings toward you, as they arise in freshness, though it may be but in a very small measure that I can enter into your tribulated state. A petition something like this has arisen on your behalf; 'O! Father, help with holy help, thy humble, dedicated servants; sustain them continually through heights and depths. Their conflicts are fully known to thee, though it may be, not unto any fellow mortal. O! when the poor, weak, human frame is overwhelmed, and seems ready to sink, and the heart to fail, may it please thee, thou source of true consolation! to be the strength of the heart; to pour in Gilead's balm, and prove thyself their Holy Physician.' Weak and

solitary as I am, yet I cannot count myself dead, so long as I am capable of feeling an interest in the labours of those who are actively engaged. May the Lord of the harvest be in the midst, and bless his servants, and crown his own works! I hope, if it be best, that a little respite will be given you, to recruit your health and spirits. Depression is not unusual in bodily weakness; but doubtless there is a suffering with the Church, spiritually, that goes yet deeper; nevertheless, my precious friends, look forward; the end will crown all; because you do know in whom ye have believed; and because your Redeemer liveth, ye shall live also.

MARY CAPPER."

To E. C.

"Alder House, 10th mo. 10th, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Thou canst better think than I can tell, the feelings of my heart, respecting the alarming state and inexpressible sufferings of my dear, much-loved niece Rebecca Bevan. Greatly will she be missed in her family, and in that station where her services and abilities were called into action. The intelligence received gives no reasonable hope of recovery, Dear creature! while I secretly participate in the present affliction, and mourn the privation that will be felt by near and dear connexions, the cheering, precious consolation of my soul is, that the all-wise Disposer of events sees fit to gather her devoted spirit from the trials and pains of the body, at an early period of life. The Divine will, done in us and through us, is all in all. My views extend to that blessed time, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our heavenly Father and of his Christ. It seems that tribulation, pain and suffering is the medium whereby grace triumphs

over nature; sustaining faith, the gift of mercy and goodness, will, I humbly hope, uphold us through all. I seem strongly inclined to return home; retirement will better suit the sympathetic sadness that clothes my spirit, though the friends here are tenderly kind. Still it is not my own little apartments, nor so much in the way of seeing you, as a part of our family connexion, and hearing almost every day or two some account of my dear afflicted relatives.

My love to all,

MARY CAPPER."

MARY CAPPER TO HER BROTHER JASPER CAPPER.

"Birmingham, 2nd mo. 7th, 1818.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Often in my solitude I think of thee; my heart seems increasingly bound to thee, as we descend the slope of time. In some of my best moments, thou seemst present with me; and in my low strippings, I think of thee. When Satan whispers ugly things, and would fright my soul from prayer, sometimes on my knees, 'with teary face,' like the poor Indian, bending low, I seek relief; and though many a time no form of words presents, there seems a spiritual intercession, and a calm succeeds; not always immediately. Faith and patience are kept alive by exercise. Then, again, I think of thee, and my soul takes courage. May we not be thankful that we can, in the secret of our hearts, believe, 'The precious blood was shed, to cleanse this heart of mine!' Yes, thine and mine! from all sin! that being justified, we may be glorified; clothed in the fine linen, white and clean, as no fuller on earth can make it! No skilful alchemist can so separate the precious from the vile! My beloved Brother, may