

my views; and being well acquainted with the Jailer and his wife, he easily obtained access for me to the prison, where, accompanied by these two friends, I arrived about the time fixed for the visit. The poor men prisoners were all placed in the chapel; a great calm mercifully spread over us, and supplication was offered, that heavenly mercy might, in truth, be felt to be over all. The stillness was admirable; and we were favoured to feel a measure of our heavenly Father's love to be extended to us, wherein help and comfort were offered to the longing soul.

On Fifth-day morning, we were introduced to the women; it was an affecting time, and many tears were shed. I do believe Divine mercy was near to us; and I know that Christian goodwill flowed towards this unhappy, misguided part of our fellow-creatures. How marvellous is the love of God! how it would gather all! With earnest solicitude that we may be kept lowly and patient in the day of trial, I very affectionately subscribe, your closely attached relative,

MARY CAPPER."

The following account of the visit to the female prisoners was afterwards sent, anonymously, to Mary Capper; it was written by a person who was present on that occasion, in a letter to a friend of hers.

VISIT PAID BY A FEMALE FRIEND TO WARWICK COUNTY JAIL.

"December, 1819.

This person had a private interview about two months since, with the servant who murdered her mistress. She is one of the Society of Friends. Last week she paid a visit to the female prisoners, and you must set her before you, in a dark brown gown, a handkerchief pinned close up to the chin, and a plain muslin cap, covered with a black silk hood.

There were thirty persons assembled, who rose up to receive her, and remained standing, till she began to pray, kneeling. She sat down with her eyes fixed on the ground, as if in deep thought, and then rose, saying nearly the following words, 'This silence, no doubt, will be incomprehensible to your minds, but it is nevertheless useful. I wish you to check your busy, active imaginations, to be silent and to think; to consider your past ways and your present situation, with all that belongs to you, temporally and spiritually; to remember the great God, who although a God of power and justice, is also a God of mercy; who will hearken to your prayers, if offered with unfeigned repentance, through faith in his Son, Christ Jesus. Think of your sins, with that humiliation which becomes us all; but particularly, those, in your unhappy situation, who are placed here under locks and bolts and bars, for having offended against the laws both of God and man. In the world, you have practised deceit, and sought a refuge in lies; and are you happy? You have coveted and taken what was not your own; and are you happy? No! Yet you thought you should be, or you would not have done these things; you see then that you were mistaken. I pity your mistake; and as a fellow-pilgrim in the journey of life, earnestly tell you, that there is no happiness on earth, but in that obedience which is the evidence of our gratitude to God the Father, and faith in Him, and in the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ his Son.

Many of you have been tempted to do wrong through poverty, distress and bad company; and when you return into the world at large, as I trust many of you will, may you remember what, before, brought upon you sorrow and degradation; and never fail to pray for the Grace of God, to enable you to forsake your evil ways; that, by honesty and staying at home, not going from house to house, hearing and telling lies, you may obtain kind friends, and be happy by leading a new life. I warn you against hardening and encouraging one another in vice, while you remain

here, by laughing at sin and making light of your crimes; but may the care bestowed on you, by the excellent mistress of this establishment,* who is equally earnest with myself for your souls' welfare, be hereafter rewarded by the knowledge, that sinners have been turned from the evil of their ways, and that you can say, with humble thankfulness of heart, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name!' She then shook hands with all the prisoners, and addressed them individually. To the murderer, she said, 'May God Almighty bring conviction to thy soul!' and I could not help addressing my mite of exhortation to her, by begging of her to improve her mind.

The individual spoke for an hour and a half, so you will readily believe, that this is only a very small part of what she uttered, but I have endeavoured to recollect the heads of the exhortation."

MARY CAPPER TO HANNAH EVANS.

"Coventry, 12th mo. 23rd, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We parted peacefully; may I not say sweetly? though feeling our mutual privation. I fancy thee at home missing thy nursling; and I feel as weaned from a tender, nursing mother. Well! do not let us dwell too much upon these pleasant things by the way; possibly it is best for us to walk alone! My strength is small, but I believe it will revive as occasion requires; do not let us doubt, but humbly believe from day to day. My mind, through marvellous condescension, is favoured with stability and calmness; with a child-like tenderness towards all the creation of our universal Father. This is from a Power, higher and better than anything of my own. I hope I am thankfully sensible of the mercy, and not impatient nor dismayed at the strippings and

* Esther Tatnal.

secret plunges of my spirit, again and again shewing me what is in the human heart, and teaching me that the sanctifying power of Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit, believed in and obeyed, is the only safe armour of the Christian.

I subscribe, affectionately,

MARY CAPPER."

TO THE SAME.

"Foshil Lodge, 12th mo. 28th, 1819.

My KIND FRIEND,

Thy sympathy is cordial; I have had my plunges and stripings, since I last wrote to thee; yet let me, with reverence and humility, say, that my mind has been kept from sinking below the confidence of a Christian believer, whose only sure reliance is on the Rock that followed Israel, and that Rock is Christ. I have been into some families; and I am thankful that thy judgment strengthens my own, that it is safe, and best for me, to be alone; I trust it is in no presumption or self confidence, but in that measure of love and good-will which daily clothes my spirit. I have had no offer of a companion, so that I have been spared the trial of having to decline.

Thy tender feeling for me will, I believe, be afresh excited when I tell thee, that my precious brother Jasper suddenly breathed his last on the 24th. He was truly a precious Brother! We were, I trust, joined in spirit, so that death cannot separate us. On the 9th of last month, he very solemnly said, 'When my time is come, if I should say little or much, anything or nothing, I request it may be said, that I died, relying on the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus;' and on the 11th, 'None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good, and I am one!' He was at that time very ill, but afterwards revived for a time. About a week

before his death, the pain, &c. having returned, he said, 'I never saw myself so lost and undone without a Saviour, as I have done in this illness. I have suffered anguish of mind; and but for faith in the Saviour, what should I have done! He has paid our great debt!' On the day upon which he died, he expressed to his wife, his belief, that when he should be taken from her, God would be her consolation. The last conflict came on, just after lying down in bed, and he peacefully expired in the midst of his family. We have often had sweet converse together; that is over, as it respects this state of existence, and it becomes us to leave all that is to come, in the ordering of a faithful Creator.

I came here yesterday, with a view to have some rest, which I need. The links which bind me to earth and to endearing connexions, are gently loosening one by one; and my spirit, in some favoured moments, aspires to a more perfect union. Farewell, my much-loved friend,

I subscribe, affectionately,
MARY CAPPER."

TO THE FAMILY AT STOKE NEWINGTON.

"12th mo. 29th, 1819.

MY DEAR MOURNING RELATIVES,

I am much affected by the intelligence of dear Katharine's letter. Although the event has for some time been anticipated, nevertheless, now the spirit has fled, what a void does the affectionate heart feel! In my measure, as a sister, increasingly united to a brother, evidently increasing in all that is lovely, and fitting for heaven and blessedness, I participate with you in mourning our loss. Every day, for some time to come, will, I seem aware, add to your sense of it. Necessary arrangements, arouse every tender emotion of the heart; scenes past, and

sweet communion almost forgotten, revive with fresh interest. Link after link seems to be rapidly breaking; but there remains a soul-cheering belief, that although yet but faintly seen and imperfectly understood, there is a union which cannot be broken! When you are shedding tears over the grave of our very dearly beloved one, calm resignation, and the assurance that his redeemed spirit is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, in whom he trusted as his Saviour, may be your stay and your strong consolation. Long have we known him as disclaiming every rag of self-righteousness. How often was his spirit broken and humbled! It is precious to remember these seasons."

To E. C.

"Warwick, 1st mo. 7th, 1820.

I have had no very late intelligence from any of my dear sorrowing relatives. Much I think of them, but our mourning is sweetened by hope; how widely different to a gloomy spirit of sorrow!

With heart solacing satisfaction I recur to the last time I spent with my beloved Brothers, now both of them taken from pain, sickness and sorrow; their immortal spirits, I assuredly believe, sanctified, redeemed, and admitted into the kingdom of heaven; where the ransomed of our Lord join in the glorious anthem of thanksgiving and praise.*

I am not, however, insensible of my own privation. The affectionate communications of my dear brother Jasper, have now ceased, yet a precious sense remains of a union never to be broken, and here every discontent is swallowed up, in the perfect fruition of light, life and love. It is very sweet to reflect, that my present engagements were known and approved by my beloved Brother, at a time when his spirit was so nigh to the haven of rest and of purity.

MARY CAPPER."

* Her brother William died in third month. 1819.

TO REBECCA LAMLEY.

“Birmingham, 2nd mo. 14th, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

With tender love I remember thee, and think of thy lowly diffident mind. There is surely a possibility of dwelling so much upon our own weakness and unworthiness, as to overlook, or sink below, the heavenly gift of Divine Grace, which is given to every one to profit withal. ‘The Lord preserveth the simple;’ and I do believe, dear friend, that through merciful kindness, thou art one of the simple in heart, desiring to follow a crucified Saviour. Take courage then, and think upon a Redeemer’s love more than upon thy unworthiness. It is not because of our righteousness, but of mercy, that we come to know the mind of Christ, and deliverance from those things that grieve the Holy Spirit. Take courage, I again say, my tender friend, and give no place to distrust. I subscribe, with endeared love,

Thy fellow-traveller, and friend,

MARY CAPPER.”

TO HANNAH EVANS.

“Birmingham, 2nd mo. 15th, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I hope it may not be too much to say that the union that I have been favoured to feel with thy spirit, brought me into a measure of suffering which has not passed lightly over. These secret dippings may possibly be among the “all things” that work together for some good, we cannot now see; and here I do desire to leave what I do not understand.

Thy lines were cordial, and I am thankful that thou couldst

feel sweet satisfaction in reviewing my little acts of dedication. I may humbly say, that in delivering up my certificate on Fourth-day, I believe there was a precious evidence felt by more minds than my own, that I had been mercifully kept from hurting the cause unto which my heart is bound. My prevailing petition was and is, ‘Abba! Father; keep me from evil; the evil of my own heart, and the evil that abounds in the world; thine is the power, and the glory for ever!’—How very beautiful and instructive are some of the morning Portions; it seems helpful, consoling, and uniting that we can read them, as if we were personally together.

Thou possessest the rare and happy art of compressing so much in a little, that I am almost afraid, my lengthened scribbling should surprise, I will not say alarm thee. Do not, my dear Christian friend! if thou canst avoid it, suffer thyself as it were to catch at discouragements when they present inwardly. Thou knowest what I think on this subject.

MARY CAPPER.”

TO THE SAME.

“Birmingham, 3rd mo. 7th. 1820.

I began to think the time long since I received thy “multum in parvo,” but I am satisfied that we are united in spirit, even though mountains should rise up between us. How sweet and cordial it will be to my feelings, to welcome thee under my roof, is not for me to express. I quite approve thy note, and thank thee for the perusal of it; it has been delivered. I am at no loss to enter into thy feelings as therein expressed. Ah! ‘What is the chaff to the wheat?’ and what is outward conformity if unaccompanied by true spirituality of mind! Here it is that Christians taste and know the true unity, and can feel one for, and one with another, in their pilgrimage, and in this painful mixture of

things, where faith, patience and forbearance are often brought into exercise.

This evening is our meeting of ministers and elders. The Dudley and Stourbridge Friends add to our little number. We are preserved in unanimity and affection, which is better than increase of numbers.

8th. I hope I shall not improperly call for thy sympathy, but it seems as if the small measure of my active services must be filled up, without much delay; so that, after a time of serious consideration, and something I believe of that dipping and stripping, known only to those who have trodden in the same path, I have this day laid before my friends, a concern to attend the ensuing meeting for Friends of the principality of Wales, at Coalbrookdale, next month; also to visit the families of Friends in Shropshire, &c. Thus I have again thrown myself upon my friends, and I feel little, low and quiet. The approbation expressed was encouraging, and my heart craves to be kept by that sustaining Power, which alone can effectually keep from error, on the right and on the left. My love to T. S. and to his wife and family; I do not forget them. A rising generation claim the love and interest of those who are hastening to the close of their earthly pilgrimage, and who wish peace, with joy unspeakable, to those who may fill up the places of the faithful.

Farewell, affectionately,

MARY CAPPER."

In this visit, Mary Capper was accompanied by her friend Hannah Evans, from whose memoranda the following extracts are taken.

"1820. 4th mo. 15th. I went to Birmingham, to accompany my dear friend Mary Capper in a religious visit to the families of Friends in Shropshire Monthly Meeting.

17th. We went to Coalbrookdale, and were cordially received at our valued friend Sarah Darby's.

30th. Went to Horse-hay, where we were kindly entertained by our friend Wm. Stanley and his wife.

5th mo. 2nd. In the evening, a meeting, appointed for the workmen employed in the iron works, was held in one of the mills. It was estimated that more than a thousand attended; I think it may be said to have been a memorable meeting, for the feeling mind must have been sensible of the condescending goodness of heavenly Love. It was thought dear Mary Capper was on her feet near an hour and a half, during which time, as also in time of silence, it was as quiet, as though all had been of our own Society. It was truly a satisfactory meeting.

14th First day. At meeting, morning and evening; the last at Coalbrookdale. It was a precious time to us, wherein we felt the overshadowings of heavenly kindness and love, to the reviving and strengthening of our minds; from this meeting, we came away, comforted and refreshed. Also in the evening, when the family, &c. were collected to read, was a precious opportunity. Divine goodness and mercy were afresh extended. The spirit of prayer was felt, and vocal supplication offered.

Having gone through the families in this Monthly Meeting, I can in sincerity say, with reverent gratitude, that I have often had cause to be thankful, that I was permitted to accompany my endeared friend in her arduous engagement; and have had to admire the condescension of Divine goodness and love, in furnishing and helping his faithful, dedicated servant, from day to day, to divide the word aright, to the several states of the visited. And although I have had little to do in verbal communication, yet I trust I have not been altogether an idle, unfeeling companion; but have often felt a deep secret, travail of spirit, and fervent breathing, for the support of my beloved friend, and that the Divine blessing may attend her labours; and I think I may say our spirits were nearly united in the bond of gospel fellowship.

19th. Under a precious feeling of our heavenly Father's love,

we took an affectionate farewell of our kind friends at the Dale, and returned to Birmingham, in the enjoyment of sweet peace.

21st. We parted under a sense of that uniting love which remains to be a badge of discipleship, and I returned to my own habitation with thankfulness."

TO HANNAH EVANS.

"Polesworth, 9th mo. 5th, 1820.

I am low, in mind and body, yet I dare not let go my confidence, that heavenly Mercy will not leave me to follow a vain shadow, or to kindle a fire, and warm myself with the sparks. There is nothing that my soul longs after with so much earnestness as the real substance of the religion of Jesus, the soul-satisfying bread of life, daily ministered to nourish and keep alive the immortal spirit.

5th day. I returned home this morning, a little weary. Thou mayst rest satisfied, my dear and affectionate friend, that I take as much nourishment as I conveniently can, and my health and strength seem marvellously equal to the exertion required. Do not let this subject occasion thee solicitude. I should prefer, if thou wilt indulge me, that we rarely advert to anything merely personal.

I subscribe, in a very feeling sense of thy love,
Thy affectionate friend.

MARY CAPPER."

Memoranda of a religious visit in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

"9th mo. 13th. Our Monthly Meeting at Birmingham. The sympathy and unity expressed, and the solemnity that spread over the meeting, were precious and encouraging to me.

17th. *First day*. At Bromyard, we were a poor small company at meeting. There is deep instruction, to a rightly waiting, exercised mind, in these low sittings; all our dependence, for spiritual refreshment, being simply upon Him who is the Spiritual Head of his people. My heart does admire, and greatly desire, that I may reverently, and thankfully estimate the marvellous condescension, and mercy of our faithful Creator.

18th. I called on a poor family who once belonged to our religious Society; but from causes well known to themselves, distress and perplexity have been their lot; nevertheless such poor wanderers should be, at times, sought after, visited and invited to turn to the good Shepherd for help. I came to Leominster in the evening, and was very affectionately received by my kind friends H. and S. Waring.

19th. S. Waring had a minute willingly granted, to accompany me through the families of Friends in Herefordshire.

20th. The Quarterly Meeting large, and a time of spiritual refreshment.

22nd. S. W. and I came to Hereford, on our way to the interment of dear Rebecca Pritchard, she was about twenty-four years old; a lovely wife and mother.

24th. *First day*. Ross. The interment was a solemn time; it was attended by the mournful husband, his Father, and Roger Merrick his Father-in-law, &c.

26th. We visited Roger Merrick; the house of mourning and the children of affliction, often afford lessons of deep instruction, and I thought it was so, on this occasion."

TO HANNAH EVANS.

"9th mo. 28th, 1820.

Thy cordial sympathy and encouragement are acceptable. In this mixed scene, O! what a favour is the sweet drop of love;

inducing the poor mind to look to the pure, undefiled source; thence comes the true union of spirit, which subsists through all low times; enduring all that may be allotted; trusting and believing that we shall not be forsaken. The designed end of our trying times doubtless is, that we may be a praying people.

MARY CAPPER."

10th mo. 6th. J. Newman kindly conveyed us in his carriage to visit a family at a distance, some of whom attend our meetings; two of the daughters have joined our Society. We found their father a serious, kind and liberal-minded man, and our visit was truly pleasant to us.

10th. Came to Hereford.

13th. Some serious neighbours came to tea; some well-meant enquiries were made, and I believe were cautiously answered. Conversation on important subjects requires watchful circumspection.

18th. We took tea to-day with a Baptist teacher, with whom, and his humble, sweet spirited wife, I had in years past some acquaintance. It is precious to find, that unity in the one Spirit, continues unchanged; we had a little sweet converse, and thought the time came too quickly for our separation."

TO HANNAH EVANS.

"Hereford, 10th mo. 18th, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I desire to be really thankful, that day by day, my mind is measurably stayed upon the requirings of the day, with little of unavailing anxiety. Many times I do think myself a poor, weak child, learning to step alone; being set upon my feet, I must

creep or go as I can. This matters little, if I be kept from dangerous falls.

I cannot yet fix a day for quitting this place, as I am in a little suspense, as to the movements of my sister Anne Capper. Should she, in her return from the North, pursue her design of passing some time at Birmingham, I feel strongly inclined to meet her and her daughters there; my Sister's health is so very precarious, that it impresses my mind, that this opportunity missed, I may see my dear Sister no more.

19th. We have several visiters, not of our Society, especially some young women, who appear to have seeking, tender minds, and their behaviour is quite agreeable. Two of this description breakfasted with us this morning. The longer we stay here the more we find of a spirit of enquiry after the pure spirituality of religion and its effects; yet we feel a fear that there is much danger of some talking away what they feel, and which is intended for their own help. As to my own steps, I am satisfied it is not my proper business to direct them myself, but simply to follow, as my heavenly guide leads the way, and mercifully keeps me childlike enough to obey.

Farewell,

MARY CAPPER."

"19th. Two very serious young women took tea with us; they had been at our meeting, and they appeared to be pleased with the Scripture reading, &c. in the evening, also with the expression of a little affectionate counsel. Something is at work to disturb the false rest and the indifference, which has long held many Christian professors, in a state of lukewarmness and of dangerous security. May the work go forward, to the glory of our gracious Lord. O! that the unsanctified activity of the creature may not hinder its progress! To my poor frame, this was a wearisome day; but I do not see it best to withdraw from such society as may fall in our way, without our seeking it, or