

## CHAPTER XI.

ACCOUNT OF HER LAST JOURNEY WITH CERTIFICATE, AS A MINISTER.—CONCLUDING EXTRACTS FROM HER DIARY.

TO H. EVANS.

“Bromyard, 2nd mo. 11th, 1825.

MY MUCH LOVED FRIEND,

Thou knowest that I may be reckoned among those who see but a very little way before them, scarcely knowing what an hour may bring forth. Desirous, I hope I am, to possess my soul in patience, and to be found watching when our Lord cometh. However weak, poor, and unworthy to be esteemed a servant, my heart's desire is to be made willing, without unavailing hesitation, to do the Master's will, to the best of my understanding and ability; if I err, when thus simply surrendered and dedicated, the stripes will be few and gentle.

On receiving the alarming intelligence of Thomas Hughes's illness, it almost immediately sprang in my mind that I should go to Bromyard. In a prudent point of view, it seemed unlikely, and I said little about it; but the event, the death of a young man, who had for years considered me as an adopted mother, and for whom I had felt the solicitude and affection of a relative, seemed so decisive, that I did believe it required of me to look beyond bodily infirmities, fears and discouragements. Richard Cadbury, like a kind friend, and sympathizing brother, offered to accompany me, which was a

truly acceptable relief, and the journey was performed with less fatigue than could have been expected. The interment took place the following morning. The attendance was large. My long-suspended voice was restored, when on my knees, in the act of prayer. I remain but weakly.

Farewell, affectionately,

MARY CAPPER.”

TO R. AND E. C.

“2nd mo. 17th, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I came safely to Leominster, in improved health, though still in a weak state, but I do not feel condemnation for making the effort. I have, before this day, found that when the mind is weightily impressed, and we can calmly look beyond surmise and doubt, for help and direction, there is a strength equal to the day. My heart's desire is to live close to this Power, in deep humility, at all times and under every dispensation. My low seasons are doubtless profitable, and I desire an increase of every Christian virtue, to the praise of my Redeemer and Lord.

I am well satisfied with having spent a few days at Bromyard, under the roof of my much valued young friend. I felt the settled assurance that all was well with him, and that there was mercy in the dispensation, unseen by mortal eye. It was gratifying to learn the general estimation of his character for industry, integrity and benevolence; also as a consistent member of our religious Society; prompt and useful in the station where his lot was cast; unassuming and exemplary. 'Tis consoling to those who loved him to contemplate his meridian sun thus set in brightness. My love is to you all, affectionately,

MARY CAPPER.”

To M. S.

"Birmingham, 3rd mo. 23rd, 1825.

MY KIND FRIEND,

I think we parted under reciprocal feelings; my spirits were rather below their usual key, so that the beauty of the bright sunshine did not cheer me, and I thought I left thee in perplexity. It was not in my power to help thee, though fellow-feeling may not be altogether useless. I believe there is individual profit in it; as far as respects myself, my mind is humbled, and my spirit tendered, in feeling with the tried and the afflicted ones. The ways of Providence are a great deep; we cannot do better than submit, in reverence, as dependent beings, who see through a glass darkly.

I was very pleasantly received; my apartments clean and delightfully comfortable, though surrounded by smoke, dirt and noise without; but there is a favoured retreat wherein outward disturbances cannot enter. This is the secret place, where my spirit strives to enter and abide.

MARY CAPPER."

To H. EVANS.

Birmingham, 5th mo. 2nd, 1825.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

My appetite and strength continue very weak; but what shall I say of the mercy, the goodness and heavenly kindness shed round about me! The envious power of the evil one

seems rebuked, and not a thought has troubled me. It is the Lord's doing; and O! may patience and resignation still be granted.

I am sorry thou art suffering from various causes; but thy mighty Helper, in whom is thy trust, will never leave nor forsake thee. All thy troubles will, ere long, be taken from thee, or thou from them. My dear love to thy sister, and to your faithful Mary. Hannah Simms is a great blessing to me; I consider her as the servant granted to my fervent prayers.

Thy affectionate friend,

MARY CAPPER."

To H. EVANS.

"5th mo. 12th, 1825.

MY TENDER FRIEND,

I have been once out, but the exertion is rather too much at present, as I walk very feebly; my spirits are lively as ever, and I do not pass my days idly. It seems desirable to set many of my little concerns in order, as I wish as little trouble as may be to those who survive me. I consider my present restoration among the Lord's gracious dealings toward me; and I am content; yea! I ought to be very grateful, very humble, and resigned either to life or death.

Thy affectionate

MARY CAPPER."

To M. S.

“Birmingham, 5th mo. 17th, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Among other kind friends, thou hast manifested a tender solicitude in the time of my weakness. I believe the great reduction of my strength occasioned some serious apprehension, but it has pleased that great Almighty Power, in whom is my confidence and hope, again to revive, and daily to recruit my poor frame, for the great end of farther sanctification. The days of my pilgrimage I consider as not a few; and though I have seen and felt much evil, nevertheless my quickened spirit can often praise the Lord my Redeemer, and speak well of his name. His Light and Love is revealed in the heart, and being obeyed, there is understanding given, to walk in the way that leads to pure peace, putting to silence all unavailing speculations, doubts, and perplexities, which disturb the wavering mind. Sweet is such a foretaste of rest, prepared for the people of God! of every age, nation and denomination, who are brought to receive the heavenly gift of the kingdom, as docile children; in no wise presuming to question, Why is it thus? The Almighty Power can work this subjection in the heart; for marvellous is the power of redeeming Love! Seek after it, my dear friend.

MARY CAPPER.”

To K. B.

“Birmingham, 11th mo. 7th, 1825.

I have but little to say of my movements; my secular concerns are few. I have food and raiment convenient for me. O! I have comforts befitting old age; a cheerful fire, a good bed, &c.

all that my drooping nature wants! My bodily health continues beyond what might be expected; my mind—O! here is the marvellous mercy! my mind is kept lowly, calm and content; though daily in the exercise of faith and patience. I have been much from home; some little engagement, one way or other, has claimed my attention, and a willing mind has been granted. However small, if any, the service, peace and love have been the unmerited, free reward; and again I retire, as for an uncertain period, to wait, and to be ready, come whatever may come.

MARY CAPPER.”

To H. EVANS.

“Birmingham, 11th mo. 18th, 1825.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

Ere thou receivest this, thou wilt probably have heard of the death of S. Burlingham's amiable wife; the interment to take place on First-day afternoon. If thy bodily ability permit, I think our tender regard and sympathy would not admit of hesitation to meet in the scene of sorrow.

I am not very well, yet I dare not get from under the solemn pressure on my spirit. Ease and quiet seem desirable, but no outward consideration can come in competition with the little sacrifices we can make, in endeavouring to fulfil our apprehended duties, whether active or passive. I very often think, my dear friend, of thy comparatively solitary, patient, enduring exercise, and unfeigned solicitude for the increase of righteousness. Thy secret wrestlings and earnest prayers, in the silence of all flesh, I do not, cannot doubt, are as acceptable

as the obvious, active services, where something of self may be intermingled, sometimes I have thought more availing.

In heart-humbling feelings on my own account, and endearing love to thee, I subscribe

MARY CAPPER."

To H. EVANS.

"Birmingham, 3rd mo. 7th, 1826.

My affectionately and truly-interested fellow-traveller in a path hidden from human view, and with which the worldly selfish spirit has no fellowship! Thy feelingly communicated letter of sympathy, it is almost needless for me to say, is as a refreshing stream, proceeding from the inexhaustible Fountain, that sends forth its pure water, far and wide, into the low vallies and thirsty ground. Much as I have been reduced, in body and in mind, I am satisfied with the lowly calm that is afforded, and in which I feel no discouragement, but am ready to say, It is enough. Yet I feel a solemn seriousness, in the view of opening my concern to my friends to-morrow at our Monthly Meeting. I have had a little conference with my dear friend Rachel Lloyd, whom I esteem as a worthy elder and mother in the church. Though, my beloved friend, I perhaps know but little of the peculiar circumstances that are now permitted to try thy faith, yet can I, dare I, doubt the sufficiency of that Almighty Power that has been with thee all thy life long? Did not Mercy watch over our childish days, and the yet more dangerous years of youth, when vivacity and inexperience led towards evil, which might have embittered our growing years? This Mercy follows us still; it is our hope and stay to this day; our all in all!

8th. A certificate is ordered to be brought to our next Monthly

Meeting for me, as friends have expressed unity with my prospect; so far, my spirit seems relieved.

In precious fellowship with thee, my dear friend, farewell!

MARY CAPPER."

To K. B.

"Birmingham, 3rd mo. 11th, 1826.

Increase of years wears down the powers of nature, but sometimes I marvel at the activity of my little, weakly frame; shaken as it has frequently been, through the long space of seventy years! and, even now, I seem like a child beginning to learn the perfect will concerning me. Sometimes light arises out of darkness, and simple dedication, with the little strength that I have, seems the way to obtain peace. Thus, after a time of much reduction of mind and body, with a little revival of strength, a prospect, which I have had at times for some years, has revived; to visit the meetings and families of friends in Derbyshire, Notts, and some parts of Leicestershire. The undertaking seems great; I have indeed felt it so; almost enough to overwhelm my weak powers; but I am not my own, and the time draws on when all sacrifices will be over, and redeeming Love be all in all! The unity of my friends is helpful to me.

I have received a very satisfactory account of the calm and favoured close of dear Sylvanus Bevan, the son of my late precious niece. O! the mercy which, in youthful days, as in old age, is the crown at the end. Who can desire human life, when redemption is complete? My accommodations, I know, are not altogether what some of my liberal friends desire; and some

things there are, not very agreeable; but my dear niece, here I am, with food and raiment, a faithful servant, &c. &c. quietness within my walls! and what can I expect better, should I attempt, in my own will, to make a change? Such things as are not to my mind, I desire my mind may be brought to bear, and that I may be thankful.

MARY CAPPER."

To H. EVANS.

"Birmingham, 3rd mo. 26th, 1826.

MY ENDEARED FRIEND,

It is a precious privilege to have spiritual unity, and secret fellowship, in hidden trials and provings of faith. Christian pilgrims have their sufferings; how else should they be disciples of a crucified Lord? and if we look around, on those who turn their back upon spiritual sorrows, is there any trouble like unto worldly sorrow? wave upon wave, a troubled sea! and no powerful Word, to speak, Peace, be still! Every tender feeling within us may compassionate the various sufferers of this day; the monied men, the manufacturer, and the labourer, are all involved in the present far-spreading dismay.

MARY CAPPER."

"1826. 4th mo. 15th. Arrived at S. Fox's, Nottingham.

18th. The Quarterly Meeting large; a considerable number of serious Friends; though, as in other places, the deeply experienced fathers and mothers are but few. A rising generation must learn for themselves to sit at the feet of Jesus, and be taught in the way of the cross.

20th. My very kind friend, E. Cadbury, left me; I feel the privation, being now alone, among almost strangers, though friends are very kind. Sarah Fox, the mistress of this family, is very delicate, and mostly confined up stairs just now; but there are young persons in the household, who are very active and affectionate.

26th. Privileged with a shelter within doors, from the rain. Those who are to be visited are so kind as to come to me. I feel weak and poorly; but wonderful in my view, is the daily covering of Christian good-will, which condescending mercy spreads abroad, in the midst of my poverty of spirit. I hope I am in my right allotment in this place, and that I may be, in my measure, instrumental to stir up the pure mind in the followers of Jesus. Took tea with J. Armitage and his wife; surely it is for my own instruction that I am brought among these friends.

29th. Sat with two sisters in declining years; I thought the quickening life or power seemed at the lowest ebb that I had known, in retirement of this kind, since I came here. A young man afterwards sat down with me, and I believe something arose like life answering to life. This is marvellous! when light is thus permitted to shine out of darkness. In the evening, sat with a family, in solemn, quiet waiting for the renewed revelation of the light and life of Christ in the soul. O, how different this from lifeless form, or any outward dependence! how pure the desire to acquaint ourselves with that great and glorious Power that worked out our salvation, in us and for us! Yea! how chastened are our sorrows, how subdued our anxieties, our every trouble and care, when we can be truly resigned to the will of Him who ruleth over all, and doeth all things well! This little season has left a sweet savour.

30th. *First day.* Before I rose, a grateful sense of past favours contrited my spirit, and raised the secret prayer that the unseen but sustaining Arm may continue to direct my steps; that no presumption, no unwatchfulness, no neglect of prayer, may be

permitted to misguide or delude me. When we met, in our little circle, to breakfast, there seemed a remaining dew, after a time of refreshing; and we had again a sweet token that the Lord's mercies are new, every morning. Our more public gathering for worship was, I hope, a spiritual benefit to some; but the want of united diligence, and inward watchfulness, for the arising of light, of life, and of prayer, is surely a hindrance from that approach unto God, which the quickened soul thirsts after."

To E. L.

"5th mo. 1826.

'O! thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come!' All have need of prayer. 'If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, I will hear from heaven and forgive!'

Jesus, the Saviour, though without sin, prayed oft-times, as we read in the Scriptures; He enjoined his disciples, and all that believe in, and follow Him, to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation. The Spirit of the Lord teacheth us to pray as we ought, though words may not be spoken.

MARY CAPPER."

"5th mo. 7th. First day. At both meetings. With reverence I record it! my spirit was clothed with lowly dependence on that Power whence all our sure mercies come; and again I thought a ray of light mildly shone out of darkness, and I saw that it was good to be patient under humiliation, wherein a willingness is wrought in us to suffer with those, who, in their several stations in the spiritual family, are labouring for the fresh arising of life and power in our meetings. As we are a people who profess to have no dependence on

outward ministrations, we, above all other Christians, have need to cherish the spirit of prayer, and an inward, reverent waiting for the renewal of our faith, and for ability to worship aright, and to walk worthy of our profession from day to day; otherwise our meetings are dull, heavy and vain pretensions.

11th. I thought the meeting was favoured with the overshadowing of that mercy which is ancient and new; but here, as in other places, there are comparatively few who make the necessary sacrifices to attend these religious meetings in the middle of the week; of course, there is a great individual loss of that spiritual consolation which would renew the best life.

13th. Fervently prayed to be kept in the path of duty, humble and simple hearted, in no way presuming upon what I may think I know, or ever have known.—Paid a visit to an aged man, in very precarious health, yet cleaving to life; his earthly possessions, it is to be feared, are somewhat like chains, which fetter the spirit. O! I hope these bonds may be loosed.

15th. As my weak frame needs rest, I was conveyed about three miles. to S. R.'s, in a small, quiet village. The country is beautiful, but it is a cold, backward spring.

17th. Surrounded, in this peaceful spot, with rural sounds, and simple variety, my health seems to recruit a little.

19th. Having had about sixty sittings, it presses upon my mind to have a meeting with servants who live in Friends' families.

20th. Mentioned the subject to some friends, and nothing discouraging arose; but it ever seems a serious thing to gather an assemblage together. I desire to keep lowly, and fearful, lest in any wise, I should do evil. Surely I do wrestle in prayer, as far as I can understand what this means; I do supplicate, on the bended knees of my body, and in prostration of all within me, that fatherly compassion and mercy may keep me from error, and presumption, in thought, word and deed! I have no might or wisdom of my own.

21st. *First day.* A large gathering. Love to souls, in the offers of redemption from the bondage of sin, and of sanctification, with access to the Throne of Mercy, by Christ, the new and living Way to the Father, was a little opened; and counsel given to servants to be faithful in their different stations, not as eye-servants; with some encouragement, to the sufferers in the troubles of the present times, to endeavour after patient submission; and that there may be a serious search, how far any had lightly esteemed the Lord's mercies, in a day of comparative prosperity. It may be, these very things which seem against us, may eventually work for good. I thought the meeting closed with solemnity.

23rd. Walked a considerable distance, to visit a poor family; I found the mother, an aged Friend, with two daughters, in a small room, all that they had, except a shop below it; they were washing. On entering this little dwelling, I thought there was a sweet consoling evidence that the Son of Peace was there; more precious than the odour of rich perfumes, or than the rare curiosities which adorn the apartments of the affluent. I was thankful, and well repaid for bodily toil.

24th. Early occupied in serious consideration. O! who can set forth the secret ponderings of a heart, quickened with desire to know God, and to obey his will, concerning the rational creation which He has formed, to fill the right place and allotted station therein! May the Spirit help my infirmities! that I may ask aright for wisdom and understanding in the things belonging to salvation. Surely I do wrestle for the heavenly Gift, that leadeth into all truth, as it is in Jesus! not trusting to my own poor comprehension, which sometimes troubles and perplexes me, with what comes to the outward ear; nevertheless I dare not but rely on the mercy which kept me in my youthful days, from time to time manifesting a glimpse of the incomparable beauty of holiness; I dare not doubt

the gracious design to complete the work of sanctification and redemption.

29th. *First day.* At the morning meeting, my mind was under an unusual sense of distress, comparable to a thick, dark cloud, obstructing the strong consolations that are in the faith, and the truth, as it is in Jesus the Redeemer, the atoning sacrifice, according to the Scriptures, which record my heart believes in; and I can, at times, joy and rejoice with full confidence in this salvation, for my own soul and for the souls of all who are reconciled to God the Father, through the mediatorial offering of Christ Jesus, his Son. This dark and distressing feeling in measure passed by, as in much brokenness of spirit, and in the ability given, I spread it before those present; expressing my desire that, if any tender mind might be thus tried by the assaults of Satan, such might, with me, be fervent in prayer, until we had an evidence that our Lord rebuked the evil spirit, and in mercy, strengthened and increased our faith. In the evening, at the house of a friend, the same subject presented itself; my mind was brought into deep sympathy with the inexperienced who might be so tried; and counsel was given to be still, and to wait in humility and reverent silence, upon God, that He might be pleased more fully to open the spiritual understanding; that He might reveal his will in us, and give us the knowledge of the Son, by whom we have access to the throne of Grace, with Christian boldness. I have a lowly confidence that God the Father does and will teach his humble obedient, praying children, by his Spirit in their hearts; that He will deliver out of spiritual distress, when we are simple enough to trust in Him, without bewildering ourselves with the notions and opinions that are abroad in the world; and if we cannot contend, or give strong reasons, for our faith in Christ, I believe, that if we are willing in our measure to