

struck me, when I first heard it, as new and unusual. It was, indeed, greatly less usual thirty years ago than it is now. She did not come all at once to settled religious conviction and peace. Not indeed till some time after her marriage did she attain to the light in which those who knew her later in life could perceive that she stood.

After being much admired in her first appearances in society, Lady Blanche became engaged to James Maitland Balfour, the eldest son of the proprietor of Whittingehame, in East Lothian, and they were married in 1843, while she was still only eighteen. Her husband, a man of high spirit and eventually of proved capacity for business, never had more interest in literature than was due to her impulse and companionship. A great affection soon existed between her and several of her new kindred. With her own brother, the present Marquess of Salisbury, she was a favourite sister, who must have considerably aided and influenced him.

The public career of Lady Blanche's husband was destined to be short. He sat in the House of Commons for a time as member for the Haddington Burghs. During an illness of a protracted kind, he and his wife twice visited the island of Madeira, in hope of benefit from its climate; but from the second visit he never returned.

With the quickness of strong affection, Lady Blanche early saw the serious character of her husband's illness and was filled with apprehension. "He's dying; I know it; I know it," she said to a friend one day in a paroxysm of grief, "What is all the world to me if my husband is dying?" But half an hour after, Mr. Balfour himself being now present, all her bright cheerfulness of manner was resumed. As his illness went on

she devoted herself to him with entire abandonment. He became wholly dependent, on her and could bear no one else attending to him. A lady who sailed in the same ship with them to Madeira on their second visit told that Mr. Balfour was laid daily on the deck on cushions, and she noticed that his eyes followed his wife continually, as if he did not care to look at anything else. She did everything for him herself, and after his death she never had good health.

This is in few words the outward history of that time in her life. That it had an inner history too, of no slight significance to her, may be guessed from the words which she put on her husband's tombstone by his grave in Madeira: "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

Her husband's death (1856) became the dividing event in Lady Blanche's life. After her return from Madeira her special work began, which was, as she said, to be both father and mother to her eight children—five sons and three daughters.

The outstanding feature in Lady Blanche's upbringing of her children was the entireness with which she devoted herself to it. She completely gave up whatever enjoyments of social intercourse might have interfered with this, her great object of life, and she was unsparing of trouble in regard to every detail of her children's training to a degree not only beyond usual custom, but beyond ordinary imagination. This was the more remarkable because of what has been already mentioned—her permanently impaired health. The serious illnesses of her children were occasions when her devotion to them was most striking and memorable, and I have often