

house were stationed in the Circuit, which then included what were called "two missions,"—one of which comprised part of Sussex and Surrey, while the other embraced the back and east parts of the Isle of Wight. In this latter section of the Circuit it was that Mr. Crabb principally laboured, changing occasionally with the Southampton Preachers. Mr. Crabb was deeply devoted to his Master's cause, and was very useful, and at the same time very popular; so that when it was known that the Missionary from the Isle of Wight was coming to Southampton, the little Methodist circle of that place was all pleasurable expectation.

Elizabeth had three fellow-servants; namely, Robert Taylor, Elizabeth Cox, and Elizabeth Groves. Robert Taylor and Elizabeth Cox were attendant at the Methodist place of worship. The latter had once professed to know something of religion by personal experience, but was now not a member of the society. She was subsequently restored to the enjoyment of the blessing she had lost, and again united herself to the people of God, through the affectionate exhortations of Elizabeth Wallbridge, and lived forty years a member of the Methodist society, abounding her Christian profession by an exemplary life, and at last dying in the triumph of faith and hope. Robert Taylor, at the time of which I write, was a truly pious member of the society, and zealous for the salvation of his fellow-servants. Elizabeth Groves and Elizabeth Wallbridge both went to the Established Church, and had never yet heard a Methodist Preacher. By the latter Methodism was viewed with much contempt, and even angry dislike, especially after her brother had connected himself with a sect every where spoken against, and had even ventured to address an admonitory letter to his sister, affectionately exhorting her to seek the salvation of her soul.

Mr. Crabb being about to preach at the room one week-day evening, Robert Taylor, happening in the course of the day to enter a room where Elizabeth Wallbridge and Elizabeth Groves were at work together, he said to them, "Minds, will you go this evening and hear preaching at the Methodist chapel?"—they called the little room: "Mr. Crabb, the Missionary from the Isle of Wight, is to preach. He is very much liked as a preacher; and I think if you were to go and hear for yourselves, you would be pleased with him." Elizabeth Wallbridge, with her characteristic levity and vivacity, gave Robert such a reply as left him no ground on which to rest any anticipations of a favourable result. But there was an overruling power at work. Curiosity also was at work; and as Elizabeth and her companion talked over the strange proposal that had been made to them, (so they considered it,) they became influenced by a strong desire to agree to it, and to hear Mr. Crabb; and eventually they were found that evening among his hearers. This step was not in itself decisive, but still it was a most important one; it was the step which, in their case, led to salvation. Prejudice was overcome; a degree of respect was gained both for the preacher and the service; and they both resolved to attend again.* Mr. Crabb soon returned to Southampton for the services of an entire Sabbath, and Elizabeth heard him in the morning. Still a captive to the vanity of the carnal mind, she was led to put on her gayest attire, that her foolish heart might be gratified by her utmost display among the poor humble Methodists. The text was taken from the fourth chapter of the Prophet Zechariah: "Who art thou, O great mountain!" &c. It was a memorable tune, and the mountains soon flowed down at the presence of the Lord. While the preacher, with the authority of an ambassador for Christ, bore hard on the sins of vanity, self, and pride, the light of truth enabled Elizabeth Wallbridge to see that she was the very reverse of being clothed with humility. Wounded by the sword of the Spirit, she returned home in silence, indignant at herself. There was now no foolish talking and jesting about things sacred; her mouth was stopped; she felt herself guilty before God, and trembled in his presence. Ignorant of the great change that was taking place in her mind, her fellow-servants were astonished that the giddy,

trifling, and talkative "Betty Wallbridge" had become serious, and "slow to speak;" but their astonishment was greater when they saw her sit down in a chair, and actually tear off those parts of her dress which she deemed most expressive of the foolish ambition of her vain and wicked heart. Retiring from her ordinary task, she retired to her own room to complete the demolition of her idols, and to converse with God and her own heart; and in the evening, divested of her to-dish and outward adorning, but full of eagerness for the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, she once more appeared among the hearers of this heart-searching preacher. This contempt and dread of every thing in dress uncommanded by Christian propriety, she retained to the end of her life without change. From this memorable Sabbath, indeed, Elizabeth was "a new creature." The full stream of nature's tide was turned, and from henceforth her desires, her words, her actions, all tended towards God and heavenly objects. All parties concur in testifying that from the day of her conversion she was entirely and steadily devoted to God. She seemed to be actuated literally and permanently by the impression of that great truth, that "the things which are seen are temporal, while the things which are not seen are eternal." She absorbed was she in the pursuit of invisible realities, that her spiritual exercises seemed sometimes as though they would teach on the regular duties of ordinary life. If this was indeed her failing,—if she was in this respect "righteous overmuch,"—it is the only thing which I have ever heard said to the charge of "the Dairyman's Daughter."

I have taken some pains to ascertain the struggles of her mind prior to her obtaining that "glorious liberty" which she seemed ever to experience after her union with the Methodists; but I can learn nothing of the matter. Mrs. Y., who lived in the house with her at the time of the gracious change in her character, informed me that she could have suffered but little from her convictions of sin, before she found peace with God, as she had no recollection of anything but gratitude and praise proceeding from her lips from that decisive day on which the truth of God reached her heart. It is therefore probable, that being deeply convinced of her guilt and danger, but having, at the same time, clear views of Christ as the Almighty and present Saviour of all who believe in him, she at once rested her soul on his infinite merits, and found peace and joy in believing. Henceforth she breathed prayer and praise. Jesus now engrossed her supreme affections, and she felt "the heaven of loving him alone." While her hands were engaged about her work, and others were about her, her fall heart would often constrain her to praise God aloud. She appears to have been of the happy few, (way should they be few!) who could "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks."

One of the first of her spiritual letters was addressed to her brother Robert. It was written at Southampton in an early part of her Christian life; and was given by her brother, some years ago, to a gentleman at Cowes, who has expressed the value he sets upon it, by putting it into a handsome frame between two plates of glass, and suspending it amongst the ornaments of his own parlour. The handwriting and orthography are just such as might have been expected from an uneducated servant girl; but it contains the genuine effusions of a heart overflowing with love to God and man. Even did it partake less of excellence than it does, yet as it is an original letter from one so celebrated as "the Dairyman's Daughter," and was written three or four years prior to the date of those which have already been published, there is sufficient reason for giving it a place in this account; but I think the reader will see that throughout the whole, an elevated and admirable spirit continually breathes. I give it entire, with the exception of a piece of doggerel poetry, which she had picked up somewhere, and the mere alteration of slight and common grammatical errors. Seeing that she had but just begun to read the Bible attentively, and with a warm heart, her inaccurate quotations from Scripture are quite natural, and only what was to be expected. I subjoin it as nearly as possible verbatim, as I think it will in that state be more interesting; and will, at the same time, fully relieve Mr. Richmond from the charge of having himself written the other letters which are written in her name.

"Southampton, March 33, 1797."

"MY DEAR BROTHER."

"I received your kind letter the 21st inst., and you may think what a transport of joy I felt to receive such an affectionate letter from a brother I had so little regarded since he had left the world and me. You may well say what great joy it gave you to hear I was converted to God. But are you the only one? No, my dear brother. Thank what shouting and rejoicing there was with the angels of God in heaven, that are around the throne, and continually cry, 'Worthy the Lamb of God that was slain, to receive all glory, and honour, and praise.' Aha! blessed be God, who hath showed strength with his hand, and with his holy arm hath gotten himself the victory! Yes, and he hath scattered all the proud imaginations of my heart, the great conceits of my soul's satisfaction. O, how true are those words of my Redeemer, that 'whosoever is in me is a new creature;' for, behold, old things are passed away, and all things are become new! O, how often would the Lamb of God gather me unto himself as a hen doth gather her chickens, and I would not! And how often hath he stretched out his arm, and I have not resisted it! But how shall I ever praise my God enough, to thank how long a time so long a watch like me, who drank iniquities like water, and felt how I after the virtues of my own doctortul heart, which was wicked above all things!

"It was when I was sitting under that delightful man, Mr. Crabb, that the Lord opened my eyes; it was the second time that I heard him. And on Sunday last, in the morning, I was standing at the window, and he came past, and when I saw him my heart leaped within me for joy; for I believed him to be commissioned from the most high God to preach the Gospel of salvation and peace to all that will hear it. My dear brother, I know it is not good to be partial to any of God's creatures; but I taken him to St. Paul, for he seems to labour more than they all; yet not he, but the grace of God which is in him, and that is extended to all that hear him speak. It seems as if I could say with David, when he is there, 'O that I could dwell in the house of my God for ever.' I shall ever have the highest esteem for him as a minister of God and Christ.

"And now, my dear brother, as I have no money with me, I beg you will apply to my dear mother for six guineas of my money, and give them to Mr. Crabb, and tell him it is a free gift of a poor, needy creature, who has been to the Lamb of God, naked and destitute of every thing; and then when He saw my wretched condition, with what tender compassion did he look down upon me, and sprinkle me with his blood, and give me the whole armour of God, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the breastplate of righteousness! And now his sweet voice still whispers in my heart, 'I counsel thee, my child, to buy of me gold tried in the fire.' What, then, would the dominion of the whole world be to me, and what indeed to the love of God that he hath been pleased to shed abroad in my heart! My dear brother, praise God for it. Buy Mr. Crabb a very large Bible, that when he looks upon it he may bless his God, and thank what good he hath done for my poor soul, through the gracious influence of the Spirit of God, and the rest he may dispose of to the glory of God, and the good of poor souls. And what is between you and me think no more of; and pray, my dear brother, send your children to school, and I will pay for them as long as I am able. And do see that our dear brother is not in want of any thing that I can do for him; I hope that God will be merciful to all my dear friends who are yet in darkness: may they be filled with the Spirit of God, and may they feel the pardoning love of God shed abroad in their hearts! Do, my dear brother, if possible, assemble them together, and prevail on that good man Mr. Crabb to be with them, if possible, (I know he is a dear lover of souls,) that he may assist them in turning to God. I fear what you can say to them will be of no great use; for, remember the words of our Saviour, that a 'Prophet hath no honour in his own country.' My dear brother, how can you rest, seeing any so nearly related to you, so far from God! O when will God cease to be merciful! It is said, when the

tide ceases to ebb and flow, then may God cease to be merciful. See them—

"Lay on a neck of land,
Twist two unshod feet they stand!
O God, their inmost soul-courser!"

Be sure you do as I have desired in the name of the Lord, and for the glory of his holy name, and my love to all that are in him, and that are wanting to turn to him. Pray excuse this, and write as soon as you conveniently can.

"Adieu, dear brother."

"ELIZABETH WALLBRIDGE."

I should have been glad to have added here an extract from a letter which she wrote to her brother not long after this, and in which she gives an interesting account of the manner of her receiving the blessing of entire sanctification; but Mr. Wallbridge informed me that it was either lost or destroyed for the preservation of her letters was deemed a matter of any special moment.

Within the year after her joining the Methodist society, she was obliged, by ill health, to leave her situation at Southampton, and return to her parents, at Arrotton. Getting a little better, she went to reside in a pious family belonging to the Wesleyan society at West Cowes. After this she frequented several other pious families in the neighbourhood, but not quite recovering her health, and having something to fear from former years' sickness, she did not, after leaving Southampton, hire herself any more as a servant for stipulated wages. Choosing now to wear the humblest apparel, and desiring nothing but the plainest food, and at the same time, walking as she did on the verge of eternity, she felt that she wanted but little here below, and saw that she could not want that little long.

As an instance of her mortified spirit and self-denial, a friend of hers (who has just now gone to join her above) informed me that she dined with him, he believed, the last time she was at Newport; and when they sat down to partake of the humble meal provided for them, she abstained from the use of anything but potatoes, declaring that, so deeply was she penetrated with a sense of her own unworthiness in the sight of God, that she felt that only the meanest fare was fit for the use of such a sinner as she was; exemplifying the feeling of the Patriarch, when he exclaimed, "I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies."

In the above letter, we have a striking development of her benevolent and generous spirit as to others, however self-denying she might be in regard to her own personal comforts. There was in the Newport society a pious and a very afflicted man of the name of William Adey, well known and much esteemed; but at this time he and his wife were poor and much distressed. The charitable Dairyman's Daughter, now residing at Cowes, heard of his case, and forwarded for him a small parcel to a mutual friend residing at Newport, who took it at once to his parishing brother, and, carelessly throwing it on the table, said, with apparent unconcern, "I wish you may find a guinea in it." On opening its careful foldings, to their agreeable and grateful surprise, it did contain "a guinea for William Adey, presented to him by Elizabeth Wallbridge." William told me this himself, with much emotion, on his dying bed, on my incidentally asking him if he knew any thing of her. He added, "O she was a good creature; and at another time, when she knew that I was in want, she kindly sent me half-a-guinea."

She lived in the spirit of obedience to that useful direction of Methodism, "Exhort, instruct, reprove, all you have any intercourse with." None were spared; not even old professors, when she saw any hope of being useful. And a word of exhortation or reproof was sometimes followed by an act of kindness in reference to temporal circumstances, in order to engage attention to matters of higher moment. A little before her death, happening to be at a house in Newport, a neighbour stepped in; a poor woman, and destitute of religion. Elizabeth seized the opportunity of conversing with her very closely about her soul, and the affairs of another world; and, that she might fasten the words of holy counsel on the heart of the poor woman, she immediately afterwards sent her one of her own gowns, of some value.

Such was "the Dairyman's Daughter," when she so providentially fell into the hands of the Rev. Leigh Richmond. Till that period it does not appear that she had

* Elizabeth Groves (now Mrs. Y.—) is a native of the Isle of Wight, and still lives there. She has, through grace, still held on in that good way on which she entered of the same time with Elizabeth Wallbridge; and it is from her that some valuable portions of the present narrative have been received.

* By the comparison of various dates, written and unwritten, I find it should be 1795, and not 1797. † It was then called West Cowes, and not Newport.