













THE FERRAR FAMILY, OR A SKETCH OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF LITTLE GIDDING, A TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY MRS. LUNDY. To my Daughters this little work is affectionately inscribed. By A. E. LUNDY. Lockington Rectory, Epiphany, 1847.

After the study of the Holy Scriptures, there is no reading so beneficial to young people as the biography of those whose lives have been exemplary while on earth; and the 17th century abounds with many such characters, eminent for their piety, talents, and worldly trials. In one period of that era we have Ferrar, Herbert, Morley, Walton, Ken, Taylor, and many others who were contemporaries, and lived to the glory of God and the true Church. The names of these excellent men are well known to the scholar and historian, but their lives being mostly confined to voluminous and expensive works, preclude many young persons from becoming acquainted with them. The following short history of the pious founder of the society at Little Gidding has been written with a view to show that the forms and ceremonies of our Church may be kept up, free from Romish errors and superstitions. Mr. Ferrar's tenets in the 17th century were very similar to those of many of our Clergy in the 19th century: he had the same enemies to contend with which they have now, and he combated with them on all sides with holy and fervent zeal. To the young reader the account of the females of the society at Little Gidding may be instructive; their piety, their active duties, their elegant acquirements, industry and charity, are worthy of imitation in such a degree as change of time and circumstances allow, and to such this little work is addressed by a member of the true Church.

CHAPTER I.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." In the year 1636, four young ladies were seated at a table in a large wainscoted apartment in the old manor-house of Little Gidding, near Huntingdon, engaged in a work of no common kind, and on which their whole attention appeared to be riveted; yet ever and anon a lighter conversation than that which comments on their task drew forth, passed amongst these industrious and devoted young women, who were all nieces of the pious master of the house where they dwelt, though in regard to each other, they were only cousins, being the children of different parents. These young ladies were all dressed alike, in robes of plain black stuff, formed in the simplest manner of the times, and had very much the appearance of a conventional costume, but instead of the head-gear of a nun, they had their hair neatly arranged in the manner of maidens of the better class at that period. Isabella Morley, the eldest of the party, was about twenty-five years of age, and the sedateness of her manner, and the lead she took in the work before them, entitled her to be considered a kind of monitor to her companions, who were all much younger; her fine and pensive features had something of the Madonna character, and the calm expression of her countenance spoke of the pure and refined spirit that reigned within. Alice Weston was a decided contrast to her cousin; she had just reached her eighteenth year, and no one could look upon her without being struck by her rare beauty; and what rendered this fair girl still more fascinating, was the total unconsciousness of her own attractions. Her laughing eyes and fair hair contrasted well with the dark eyes and ebony tresses of Isabella; and the simple black dress tended to set off the dazzling freshness of her complexion. Of the other two cousins, Maud and Mary Ferrar, nothing particular appeared in regard to personal attractions; they were both younger than Alice, and listened attentively to the discourse of their elder companions, and on this occasion the conversation was solely between them.

"Well," said Alice, in a lively tone, "I shall not be sorry when this work is finished, though we are honoured by working for His Majesty King Charles; I only hope he will duly appreciate our labours, though, most probably, that which we have taken such pains to accomplish will be placed as a curiosity amongst many others to be looked at occasionally."

"I am not so sure, Alice," said Isabella Morley, "I judge not, lest ye be judged." I am of a different opinion, and I augur much good from His Majesty's visit to my worthy uncle. Why should he turn out of his road to visit our humble society, if he had not had a good motive for it? Why should he wish for such a work as this, if he did not intend to make a good use of it? How know we but the perusal of this very book may impress him with thoughts which he may not yet have felt? Yes, with the Divine blessing, this humble work of our hands may lead him to reflections which may comfort him in that hour when the world is passing away. Alas! these are troublous times, when those devoted to God and the true Church are obliged to retire, as it were, into distant places to worship. As to the court, there is little true religion there, except in the heart of the king, and I do believe he is staunch if he dared but avow it."

"You are such an orator, Isabella," said Alice, "I cannot argue with you, nevertheless I think the king's visit to our retired habitation was one of curiosity alone. Think you that the retirement from public life for so many years of such a man as our uncle, once so esteemed in high places, can escape notice? And methinks it were no great trouble for the king and his gallant train to ride a few miles out of their road to see such a colony of ascetics as we form. Depend upon it our sayings and doings will afford subject of conversation for the court for a week at least."

"Alice Weston," said Isabella, "I am truly grieved to hear you speak in such a tone of levity of a society which stands unrivalled in this kingdom, or in any other protestant country, for its simple and humble piety. What would our worthy uncle say to hear a member of his own family speak in terms so disrespectful? But it seems to me, Alice Weston, that you have got a new light; you did not use to talk in this way; I flattered myself you were one of us in heart and spirit! Surely the sight of our good king and his gallant train has not infected you with a wish to live in the world again, — to mix in its follies and vanities, I should say its vices."

"You accuse me wrongfully, dear cousin," said Alice, "I do not wish to mix in its follies, its vices I shrink from, yet I think it possible to live in the world without being either weak or dissipated."

"Perhaps so," replied Isabella, "but in my opinion, the pleasures of the world are a temptation which those who can should fly from. Does not the prayer of prayers express this, 'Lead us not into temptation?' Happy are those who, like every member of this household, may live in the daily preparation for a better world, amidst employments for the industrious and innocent recreations for leisure hours."

"Name me not as an example, dear Alice," said her cousin, "I am but a humble imitator of our reverend grandmother; she was indeed a saint upon earth, and I can have no doubt she is a saint in heaven! I had the good privilege, Alice, of being brought up under her care, of assisting her in works of piety and usefulness, and of witnessing her happy and peaceful death. — May my last end be like hers."

"It was, indeed, a privilege," said Alice, "and perhaps, had I been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel as you were, I might have been more like you; but I, unapplying, lost my mother in my infancy, and being amply child, my father indulged me in all my foolish whims, and before I was fit for society I was allowed to enter into scenes of dissipation but too dazzling to the youthful and uneducated child. My father was reported wealthy, and not till his death, two years ago, had I ever known a sorrow; then I became an orphan and penniless; then my good uncle took me into his house, and has ever treated me as a daughter. Here I have learnt to feel my own unworthiness; here I have endeavoured to walk in your footsteps, Isabella, and oh! how fruitless has been the attempt. I am no hypocrite, and I freely confess that religious zeal does not increase in my heart."

"I admire your candour, Alice," said her cousin, "and will assist you in seeking 'that peace which the world cannot give'; set your whole heart upon prayer when engaged in it; fly for refuge to that Being who can change the hearts of those who seek him aright; confess your secret sins and vain wanderings, and most assuredly you will find strength; 'Cast your whole care on Him, for He careth for you.' At this moment the bell rang for evening prayers, and the young ladies adjourned to the oratory, where their uncle was surrounded by his whole household, and where we will leave them to give the reader a slight sketch of the far-famed religious society of Little Gidding."

Before describing Little Gidding or its society, it will be necessary to give a brief history of the pious founder of a protestant religious society which had no parallel but that of the Roman Catholic society of Port Royal, in France; the same good motives inspired the various members of both, and the abolition of both was somewhat similar. Mr. Nicholas Ferrar was born in the year 1592: he was the third son of a wealthy merchant, and his mother was eminent for her virtues. In his childhood he was remarked for his great beauty, though ever of a delicate constitution; yet his vigorous temper of mind overcame his bodily infirmities, and his talents developed themselves at the early age of six, when he studied history and the bible so as to occupy most of his time; and three years made him acquainted with the historical part, and enabled him to commit the whole of the Psalms to memory, while other boys were at play. He was placed at a school near Newbury, in Berkshire, under the care of Mr. Brooks, an excellent man, from whom he probably received the first impression of that self-denying and religious course of life, which he, after many years, illustrated in his own family. At thirteen he was admitted at Clare Hall, Cambridge, as a fellow commoner, and when he had taken his degree, was chosen by unanimous consent a fellow of his College. His life was without reproach, and his literary acquirements beyond all competition; his industry was beyond all praise. But with the enlargement of his mind, the health of his body failed, and, after seven years' residence at Cambridge, his physician advised him to seek renewed health in foreign travel. Mr. and Mrs. Ferrar were very unwilling to part with a son so deservedly dear to them, but the hoped-for benefit induced them to submit to this trial, and they commended him to the care of that Being who can send the angel of health with healing in his wings. They were both eminent for their piety, and Bishop Linsell used to say of Mrs. Ferrar, 'he knew few women who could equal her in wisdom, charity, and piety; and we may well imagine the early lessons of childhood were indelibly impressed upon the mind of the young Nicholas, and proved the foundation upon which he built his future works.'

Mr. Ferrar set sail and landed at Flushing, and, after visiting the Hague, and other towns of note in Holland, he passed into Germany, and remained some time at Leipzig, where many eminent scholars courted his acquaintance; but his popularity drawing around him too many visitors, he retired to a neighbouring village, and studied the German language and its most choice authors. After visiting the Imperial Court and city, he bent his course from thence to Italy. Many German towns were at this time infected with the plague, so that when he came upon the frontiers of Italy, he was compelled at one place to perform quarantine. This occurred during Lent, and he employed this season of solitude and fasting to good purpose: he had no leisure to revise his notes, and reduce his observations to method. In the morning he went up into a neighbouring mountain, where great abundance of wild thyme and rosemary grew, and where with a book and with his Creator, whom he met at every turn in the closest walks of his mind, he spent the day in reading, prayer, and meditation, coming down in the evening to an early supper of fish, which was his only set meal. We next find Mr. Ferrar at Padua, where, after some stay, he had a severe fit of sickness; but it was the will of God to raise him from it, and he went on to Rome. But this city was not so safe a place for protestant travellers in the seventeenth century as it is in the nineteenth, and he was obliged to change his lodging every night, and shorten his stay to ten days; yet in that time he took note of everything worthy of remark. From Rome our traveller went to Naples, and took shipping for a port in Spain, from whence he went to Madrid, where he found many of his countrymen. But a letter from his father informed him that his family were involved in great difficulties, and this good son abandoned his purpose of visiting France, and hastened to set off for England, and, after a tedious journey over the Spanish Mountains, on foot, he arrived at St. Sebastian, and, after few days' sail, put into Dover, whence he hurried with an anxious heart to London. The fluctuation between hope and fear, on his approach to his father's house, may be imagined: the door stood invitingly open, he rushed into his father's apartment, and fell at his feet, who, seeing a man in a Spanish habit begging his blessing, demanded who he was; but soon was he raised to his father's bosom, who was all thankfulness for this unexpected presence. Thus, after five years of unwearied travel of body and mind, Ferrar returned home with an improved constitution, an increase of knowledge and useful information, and with a heart devoted to the service of God and the good of mankind.

In the year 1624 Mr. Ferrar was elected a member of the House of Commons, but soon became tired of the intricacies of a political career; and about this time Mr. Ferrar the elder died in a good old age, leaving his son Nicholas sole executor and guardian to a large family of children and grand-children. Just as the business connected with these affairs was settled, the great plague of 1625 broke out in all its horrors: the infection reached the house next to that of Mr. Ferrar, and one person died, but great hopes were entertained that the disease of which he died was not the plague, and the family attended the funeral. — Another person sickened in the same house, and Mr. Ferrar, in pious care for his aged mother, removed her and all his household to the residence of his sister, Mrs. Collett, at Bourne, in Cambridgeshire, while he remained in the city till the weekly victims amounted to four thousand, in order that he might clear off all debts on his father's estate, and place the remains to the best advantage for his brothers and sisters. Mr. Ferrar had recently purchased a mansion in an obscure village in Huntingdonshire, named Little Gidding, and in this retirement he determined to spend the rest of his days. The manor-house and some cottages were the only habitations in the parish, but the situation was healthy, and, though the house was in want of re-

pairs, the good old lady, her worthy son, and the other members of the family here took up their abode. The sacrifice and profusion of a former proprietor had tempted him to turn the village church into a barn, which was now filled with hay; on seeing which Mr. Ferrar ordered all the workmen who were engaged on the repairs of the house, to fling the hay out of the windows, and clean it as well as they could. The ruinous state of the dwelling scarce afforded a dry room for the old lady to rest in; yet she was content to wait till the church was restored to a state suitable to the sacred purpose of its erection. It required both time and cost to make the old manor-house a fitting residence for a large family; but in a few months all was accomplished, and Mrs. Ferrar drew round her health children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, amongst whom were many orphans, who were brought up to serve the Lord. And now they all engaged in the pleasing work of enlarging and adorning the church: Mr. Ferrar obtained leave of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Williams, an old college friend, and now his neighbour at Buckden, in consideration of the plague raging in the devoted city, to use the Litany every day in the church; and having introduced it, he had licence to retain it after the plague, and thus interceding for the sins of the whole world, the cause of all its misery. The public prayers of the Church were separated into three services, and the Clergyman of Little Gidding was ever ready to assist.

Thus the family spent the autumn of 1625 and the following winter in retirement and peace, the religious exercises, works of charity, and domestic occupations engaging all their time; and early in the spring Mr. Ferrar determined (what he had long meditated,) to enter into holy orders, and devote himself to a religious course of life, which he had for years thirsted after. On Trinity Sunday, in the year 1626, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, he was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Laud, and towards evening returned to his mother, and read her a document written on vellum and signed with his own hand, recording a solemn vow to Almighty God, that since God had afforded him so many striking deliverances from so many perilous attempts of the devil or man upon his soul and body, and since his family was now rescued from a ruin so deplorable that, but for God's infinite goodness to them, they had fallen, he would separate himself to serve God in this holy calling, namely, to be the Levite himself in his own house, and to make his relations his cure of souls, adding, that he had that day received episcopal authority to do so. His pious mother and other relations present were overjoyed at this discourse, and the old lady prayed that he might live long to be a blessing to the whole family, who would henceforth aid him in all his exertions for the "one thing needful." No sooner was it known he had taken orders, than several noblemen offered him valuable livings, in the persuasion that he would be an honour to the Church, both for his talents and holy zeal; but he returned them grateful acknowledgments, and told them that as he had parted with his temporal estate, sharing it with his kindred for the common good, so would he be partaker with them in true spiritual treasures.

Mrs. Ferrar was not satisfied that the House of God should wear a decent appearance, she would have it adorned also; she ordered the walls to be wainscoted and the floor boarded, not only for cleanliness, but because warmth was necessary in a place where so much time was spent. The communion-table was covered with blue silk, embroidered with gold; the pulpit and reading-desk hung with fine cloth of the same colour, laced and fringed, with valance about each of them; the altar floor was covered with sky-blue silk, the benches round the chancel with blue taffeta, and all was suitable and very noble: but these were only used on Sundays and Holy-days; there were carpets of coarser material for the week-days. — A goodly font was placed in a suitable part of the church, near the entrance, and a great eagle of brass to support a large bible: in short, all the appointments to this so long neglected place of worship, were directed to the satisfaction of Mr. Ferrar and his family, and the admiration of all their neighbours.

Mrs. Ferrar and her son now turned their thoughts to the establishment of a school: an ancient pigeon-hole was transformed into a commodious school-room, where not only the children of the family were instructed, but those of adjoining parishes were admitted on the request of their parents: here they might learn virtue as well as grammar, music and arithmetic, together with fair writing, for which they had three masters; music was taught to the praise and glory of God, as will be hereafter seen. Mr. Ferrar assigned to all his female relatives, according to their age and condition, "chambers, closets, gardens, and walks of pleasure; he fitted up convenient accommodations for the schoolmasters and scholars, and placed his own lodging in the centre of the house, so that he could maintain good order." He fitted up a room which he called the infirmary, where any sick member of his household might lodge; and as every thing at Little Gidding was done decently and in order, he appointed places of recreation for the young, where they might use bows and arrows, or many exercises. As Little Gidding partook somewhat of the conventual system, without its defects, we are assured by a Bishop who was a frequent visitor, that "the habit of the young women was a black stuff, all of one grave fashion, and always the same;" and he adds, "if ever women merited the title of the devout sex, these gentlewomen won it by their carriage, and deserved to wear it."

These good Protestant Sisters of Charity were expert with their needles, and they made them, as well as their scissors, serve the altar and the poor: they were fine surgeons, and kept by them balsams, and oils, and herbs for the cure of simple maladies; they distilled cordial waters, and had a room on purpose for their stores, which they distributed freely, and would with their own hands dress the wounds of the poor, and were ever ready to administer good counsel and prayers for the soul's health. Of these young ladies, there were nine or ten, four were selected to take the charge of the household affairs, but in such a manner as to prove more a recreation than a labour, every one being sole directress of the household for one month in four: she was not to apply her hands to anything servile, but her office required reflection, and judicious management of servants; she was required to enter all household expenses in an account book; and these domestic exercises fitted Mr. Ferrar's nieces for being what many of them afterwards became, wives and good managers of their own establishments. As "order is the soul of business," so all was conducted at the manor-house with such exactness as might be compared to clock-work; no bustle, no confusion ever entered there, for every day had his or her stated duties.

On the Lord's Day they rose at the usual hour of five, and having made their private sacrifice of prayer and praise, they repaired to a large apartment where a cheerful fire in winter was ready for them: there was Mr. Ferrar, to whom the younger people repeated the psalms and chapters they had learnt, till seven; breakfast and private reading till nine, when the bell summoned them to prayers in the church; then all came together again in the chamber, where a hymn was sung, accompanied by the organ, after which they proceeded by a covered way from the house to the church in orderly procession, the three school-masters leading the way in gowns, the youths in caps and gowns following; then came Mr. Ferrar and his aged mother, his brothers, their children, and the servants. The masters took their places, the boys knelt on the upper steps, and the women sat by themselves: as was the custom in the ancient Church, the reading-desk and pulpit stood opposite each other, of equal height, and Mr. Ferrar, in his surplice and hood, conducted the service. On returning home his elder nieces catechised the children who came from surrounding villages, who, by way of reward, had each a penny and their Sunday dinner; and as many as forty and fifty would assemble to repeat what they

had learnt in the past week. At half-past ten the minister of the next parish came with his own flock to Little Gidding to preach; Mr. Ferrar read the second service at the communion table, when a psalm being sung, the minister preached, and all retired in order to the house. In a large apartment the poor children ranged themselves at long narrow tables placed on trellises, where they stood while they took their dinner; some of the family remained to establish order and good conduct; and then the bell rang for the family dinner in the great dining room, when a hymn was sung; and while the meal proceeded, one of the party read a chapter in the bible, that their hearts and ears might not lack spiritual food. After dinner the family dispersed, some to the gardens or orchard; others to their chambers, till two o'clock, when the bell called them to evening service at Steeple Gidding Church, about a mile from the manor-house; on their return the children repeated the psalms and other exercises till six, when the supper bell rang, when an anthem was sung to the sound of the organ, and after grace, one was deputed to read a portion of sacred history to those who refreshed themselves with needful food. — At eight o'clock they were summoned to the oratory, where family prayers and an evening hymn concluded the holy duties of the day: after which they retired to their own apartments. Such was Sunday at Little Gidding, a day of holy quiet, and rest, free from the petty cares and turmoils of the past week; but we cannot do better than give the opinion of Mr. Ferrar himself respecting the proper observance of that sacred day: "It is a day of rest, not of pleasure; it frees us from bodily labour, but it more produces the exercises of the mind: God blessed and sanctified it, — they must both go together, — if we would have it happy we must make it holy, and that can be done by nothing better than by taking a survey of all God's works according to the two divisions of heaven and earth, whereunto he hath reduced all sorts of generations, — and if it seem too long and too hard a matter to go through all, we must but return to ourselves, where we shall find an epitome of all."

(To be continued.)

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WM. WATERS, Clarke's Mills, Camden (Ontario), where, throughout the business of Toronto, he has found out the residence of his Sister, Joanna Waters, who some 12 or 14 years ago was married to a man of the name of Thomas Butler. It is believed that Butler and his wife are now residing in Wisconsin, U.S. If the said Joanna Butler would address her brother, Wm. Waters, as above directed, she would receive from him pleasing intelligence.

NEW BOOKS. A LARGE ADDITION to the Books in the Depository of The Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, has just been received from The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, including the following NEW PUBLICATIONS:

- Permanent Catalogue. 8. d. LAST HOURS OF CHRISTIANS, OR an Account of the Deaths of some Members of the Church of England; by the Rev. H. GIBSON, M.A. 3. 4 THE PSALMS OF DAVID Printed from the Book of Common Prayer, in large type. (Great Primer) 1. Supplemental Catalogue. SKETCHES OF RURAL AFFAIRS, in one volume, with Cuts 4. 2 A WEEK AT THE LIZARD, dedicated by Her Majesty's permission to H. H. Albert, Prince of Wales, by Rev. C. A. Johns, B.A., F.L.S. 4. 2 THE THUNDER STORM, or an Account of the Nature, Properties, Dangers, and Uses of Lightning, in various parts of the World. 3 SUMMER IN THE ANTARCTIC REGIONS, a Narrative of Discoveries made by Captain James Ross, in 1819. 2. 6 THE TEMPEST, an Account of the Nature, Properties, Dangers and Uses of Wind in various parts of the World. 3. 4 FIRST STEPS TO GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Part I.—The Animal Kingdom 2. 6 Part II.—The Surface of the Earth 1. 8 Part III.—The Stars and Planets 1. 3 SHORT STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY: Part I. 2. 6 Part II. 2. 6 Part III. 2. 6 Part IV. 2. 6 THE Stock of BIBLES, TESTAMENTS, and PRAYER BOOKS is very large, including some in very beautiful bindings.

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35	2 16 7	2 6 4	2 2 6
40	3 6 2	3 14 8	2 17 6
45	5 17 1	5 0 9	3