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REMINISCENCES AND LETTERS

X
MARY PARKER
—

EDITED BY

SILAS H. DURAND

AND

BESSIE DURAND



PHILADELPHIA

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PREFACE

The afflicted sister, whose writings occupy the pages of this book, is well known by name to many of those who will read it. I will here tell them how we came to publish it. In a letter to Sister Bessie, written about a year ago, she asked her to take charge of her letters and other writings, and publish them after her departure, which she then felt would be soon. In a subsequent letter she said: "Dear Bessie—Since I opened my mind to you about my letters I feel so relieved. I do not want you to grant my request against your own wishes; but I do hope you will consider it, and that the dear Lord may direct you, and control your decision. I feel as though it is according to His will that I have been directed to you."

In reply, Sister Bessie told her that if we published the book at all we desired to do so while she is yet here, so that whatever might be received for it above the cost of publication could be applied for her comfort. We wished that the dear friends who desired to render her assistance, as many have already so lovingly done, might do so in the pleasant way of purchasing the book, which we knew would be heartily acknowledged as full "value received." In response to this our dear, self-depreciating sister wrote: "Sister Bessie, I feel to humbly beg your pardon for one thing I said about favorable letters I have received concerning my published letters. I only meant to explain why I thought they might pass through the press after I had gone. My dear sister, I could not consent for you to undertake the task you proposed for my sake. No! no! Besides, I feel it would be an imposition upon the dear household of faith, many of whom, out of charity, might feel called upon to purchase the book; and I feel that they have already favored me far, oh, very far, beyond what I deserve. If

you could not promise to look after my writings provided I should be taken away first, and a way should be opened for another publication, do, I implore you, try to forget that I ever made an allusion to the subject. One thing that makes me fear that some one might undertake another publication for his own benefit is this : several persons ordered several dozens of my book in order to reap the profit themselves."

The first thought was to republish many of the letters contained in the "Collection of Gems" published by our kind sister, Alma F. McNaughten. But as we have enough other material to fill a volume, of the size we design to make, mostly written since the publication of that, we have taken but a few of those, selecting those we deem of most general interest, and which cover ground not otherwise covered. In reply to the question as to what letters she would suggest to be taken from that book, Sister Mary said : "I am powerless to answer, for I have no copy of the book, and, though it may seem incredible, I never read it. I merely glanced through it enough to see my defects in thought stamped upon all. Very many have expressed themselves comforted by the letter written from the words, 'But the sorrow of the world worketh death ;' also, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.' I feel perfectly willing to trust your judgment, and that of Brother Durand and Sister Clarice."

My visit to our dear sister in May, 1890, is mentioned elsewhere. As I meditated one day upon her condition, her bodily sufferings and her spiritual peace, the favor of the Lord to her in thus displaying the riches of His grace, and the peculiar power of her writings to comfort the afflicted and poor people of God, I wished she might write something now concerning her past life. It seemed to me almost impossible that she should be able to do so, when I remembered that she can neither stand nor lie down, can occupy but one position, and that not a restful one, and that often pain renders her unconscious, or partly so, for hours and even days together. I wrote her as follows, dated April 3, 1891 :

"DEAR SISTER :

"As I sit here thinking of you and of the book we contemplate publishing, a thought occurs to me which I will suggest

to you. I wish you to write a little in the form of reminiscences. Begin some day when you are feeling well enough, and trace up your life, outwardly and inwardly, from your earliest remembrance. Do not write long at a time. If any scripture is on your mind with power at any time as you write, mention it; write your feelings about it, then go back again and bring up the story. Tell from your present remembrance the feelings when disease was binding you, and the way in which the Lord has at times brought into your soul, sweet and humble submission under His mighty hand, and tender resignation to His will. You can be engaged upon this as strength will permit for the next two months. Do not spend any time or anxiety in planning the article, or in thinking what it will be. Just write a little every day, when able, if only ten lines. Do not pass over anything that comes back in your memory, because you may have spoken of it in some letter. Let your private correspondence be very much lessened, for you are not able for so much. Indeed, it is a great wonder that you have done what you have. When you have written a dozen pages or so, send it to me, and we will make what suggestions we can, and will do anything to lessen any other work or correspondence you may have. As you trace along the history of the past it is not necessary that all connecting circumstances should be given. When you remember any particularly dark period, place yourself there for a little while, and give expression to the sorrow and dark forebodings; and the same when your heart was resting in sweet content, or filled with songs of praise and thanksgiving."

I was truly gratified and not a little surprised at the result of this suggestion, as I am sure the dear friends who read it will be. Seldom have I ever read anything more deeply interesting and touching than these reminiscences. We offer this book with the assurance that it will be of abiding interest and value to the spiritual reader.

Silas H. Durand.

SOUTHAMPTON, PA.,

June 30, 1891.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| PREFACE | 3 |
| REMINISCENCES | 9 |
| EXPERIENCE | 75 |
| LETTERS | |
| To Silas H. Durand, 85, 89, 150, 170 | |
| To Rosina B. Durand | 92 |
| EXTRACTS | |
| To Helen Corbin | 95 |
| Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright | 97 |
| Mattie S. Kaga | 100 |
| Cornelius Myers | 102 |
| Kate Swartout | 103 |
| Neffie Biggs | 107 |
| <i>Signs of the Times</i> , 108, 110 | |
| <i>Primitive Monitor</i> | 116 |
| Alma F. McNaughten | 120 |
| Emma L. Smith | 143 |
| Amanda L. Dulin | 153 |
| Sarah Tooth | 157 |
| Ruth Holcombe | 158 |
| Vine Loofbourrow | 172 |
| Sarah Boyd | 175 |
| Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Coulter | 177 |
| Margaret Craven | 184 |
| E. B. Walton | 185 |
| Amy R. Barnesley | 188, 192 |

Contents

7

PAGE

EXTRACTS—Continued

| | |
|--|----------|
| Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Walton | 190, 206 |
| Mr. and Mrs. John McConnell | 196 |
| R. M. Benedict | 200 |
| M. M. Hassell | 209 |
| M. M. Rounsavell | 212 |
| Diana Morris | 230 |
| Elder Harvey Wright | 233 |
| Elder Samuel Bradbeer | 236 |
| James Trask | 238 |
| Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Durand | 245 |
| Edith Durand | 264 |
| Bessie Durand | 265 |
| CONCLUSION | 296 |
| EXTRACTS PUBLISHED IN THE <i>Signs</i> | 215 |
| VISIT TO MARY PARKER | 224 |
| EDITORIAL REMARKS, 85, 94, 120, 221 | |
| APPENDIX—To the Holcombe Reunion | 301 |

REMINISCENCES

In the year 1848, in the mild month of September, when the air is balmy, and the golden sunlight falls in soft mellow shadows over the great, wide earth, in a pleasant country home, amid the green picturesque hills of Southern Ohio, I was born. I am the youngest of nine children and almost like "one born out of due season," my eldest brother and sister having reached maturity before my birth. The marriage of my sister, who is now a widow, living in Iowa, is the very first of my childish recollections. I was then between three and four years old, and after the marriage rites had been said by the Presbyterian minister, who officiated, my sister took me on her lap and my father bade me sing the hymn beginning: "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord." When I finished I was heartily applauded, especially by the minister, which was very pleasing to my childish vanity. My father, Elder John Parker, was born in Loudoun County, Virginia; my mother in Lambertville, New Jersey. Both united with the Old School Baptist Church at the same time, and both were buried with the Saviour in the watery grave at the same time by Elder Thomas Harper. When my dear father was raised up out of the water, his soul was so filled with the same glory that I think "shone round about Paul," that he began at once to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and for some time he stood upon the banks of the flowing stream, uttering such ascriptions of praise, telling of the goodness and

love of God with such ability as to astonish all who listened to him, and Elder Harper very emphatically declared he knew he had baptized a preacher. That his prophecy came true, my father's whole after-life, which was spent in so ably defending the truth, certainly went to prove. He never at all craved or sought notoriety, therefore his rare gifts and abilities were little known outside his personal, special charges. He was strongly attached and devoted to the four churches of which he had charge, and these churches would, as Paul says, "almost have plucked out their very eyes" for him, so deeply did they love him. I am told that he would often hold a large congregation two hours as if spell-bound, when every eye would be wet with tears, and the tears would drop like rain down his own cheeks. Oh, what a noble calling, to be called of the Lord "to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ," to publish peace, to bring the gospel of good tidings to the poor, to say unto them that mourn in Zion, "Thy God reigneth!"

What a strange, a wonderful thing is this human life of ours! The apostle says, "What is life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But, as the sturdy oak, even though it casts its beautiful leaves, yet has its substance in it, and will again come forth in its beauty in spring-time, so the soul, if the divine substance be in it, will come forth in the spring-time of eternal life in never-fading beauty and fragrance, and shine in resplendent glory, when clothed in the likeness of its Redeemer, in the world of never-ending bliss. Sometimes my poor, maimed life looks so narrow, so purposeless, so useless in every way, that, like Job, I think, "better is the day of my death than the day of my birth." I wonder that I am left here a useless cumberer of the ground. Then I am carried back to my childhood, my infancy, when I was a sickly, delicate babe in my mother's

arms, who thought each day the feeble spark of life would go out. All along my strangely afflicted life, the love, the power, the tender care of the dear covenant-keeping God has been round about me, sweetly, securely encircling me like a golden ring that has neither beginning nor ending, and even my poor life seems wonderful, oh, very wonderful! and in it there seems to flow much beauty and sweetness from that boundless, inexhaustible river, the "streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God."

A very dear brother in Christ knocks gently at my door and desires me to unlock the closed chambers of the buried past; to lay open before the reader the shut book of the happy days of yore. But how greatly I hesitate at the thought of opening the cherished volume in whose sacred pages are so many turned-down leaves, so many pages marked by tears, and the wrung-out anguish of a sorely-tried heart. As I sit here alone in my sick room, amid the silence, the hush and quiet that pervades the house when the dear ones go to their place of worship, when there falls upon the ear the sound of no human voice, when no human foot-fall is heard and no sound save the moaning of the house dog, disturbs the silence, then do my thoughts go back to the past, when my tiny bark of life sailed on a smooth summer sea, with no ripple, or wave or bounding billow to mar or stir its sweet, calm beauty. Wholly buried in thoughts of the golden happy past there comes across memory's green fields the poem:

"I am dreaming of the loved ones,
Of the happy days of yore,
Of the joys that I have tasted,
Joys which I shall know no more.

"I have seen the fairest flowers
Blasted by the snows of fate,
Brightest hopes all torn and scattered,
Hearts once glad made desolate."

Oh, the sweet memories that awaken within me, the touching, tender influences that cluster around me as I go back in memory to the old home and the old life! Home! What sweet music is wafted back from the buried past, arousing all the most tender emotions of the soul at the mention of this one cherished word, "Home." It is like running the fingers gently and swiftly over the keys of some instrument of music whose chords send forth soft, delicious strains of melody, which permeate the whole being, touch each secret heart-spring, and vibrate through each hidden recess and chamber of the soul. How oft in memory we go back to our happy childhood, where no dark cloud hung over the smooth surface of our sea of life. But when we have reached maturity, oh, how dark are the clouds! how tempestuous the billows that come over our sunshiny sea! Here we see tears, sorrows, bereavements; a time when footsteps fall softly and all around speak in low whispers, when there is the muffled sound of the closing of coffin-lids, the shutting out of sight of the dearest of all faces; the folding away forever of tired, kind hands. Soon there follows the broken household, the going out from the dear home of our childhood, and all our early, youthful joys are numbered with the past.

The dear home of my childhood was a home of quiet peace. The union of our parents was one of true affection, where heart is joined to heart. The blessed, sanctifying love of God shed the golden glory of its light upon the sacred shrine of their home, and prevented dissensions from coming within its quiet precincts. I think my mother was the most patient woman I ever knew. My father, when speaking of her, often said he was reminded of the words in Proverbs xxxi : 11 : "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." Paul says of the women, "Let them be keepers at home."

My father being almost all of the time absent preaching the blessed gospel, our dear mother was truly "a keeper at home," guiding her house, caring for her children and making home the dearest spot on earth for father when he came back weary with travel and hungry for the kindly ministrations and the soothing influences that the dear wife and mother shed about the sacred shrine of home.

Home and mother ! What depth of meaning lies in just these two short words. What tender, soothing influences cluster around, and sweet memories and emotions arise at the mention of these words. Like twin sisters they are so closely allied, they so tenderly blend and run together, that we can scarce recall to mind the one without the memory of the other coming up. Certainly there can be no perfect or pleasant home without a mother's presence, our light and love. And I firmly believe that this is the place where the all-wise Creator meant woman to shine ; the one great purpose for which she was created. No woman can bring within the sacred walls of home too much good sense, learning or culture. Indeed more intellect and wisdom are needed in guiding a household, in training the children to put their shoulders properly to the great revolving wheel of life, than in any other sphere, for in this lies the real basis of the future welfare of our country. Think not, dear reader, if you are a wife and mother, intellectual, educated, cultured, that you have buried your brilliant talents, but bring them to bear in making your home one that reaches to the highest standard of excellence in training the minds left to your keeping ; and not only will your children arise and call you blessed, but the world at large will be the richer because of your having lived. Oh ! I know, my dear sisters, that you, upon whose shoulders fall the care, the burdens of home, the grave and sacred responsibilities of wife and mother, often have great struggles and

sorrows. Your footsteps often become weary, your hearts heavy, and you almost lose sight of the fact that yours is a most exalted position, and that a halo of beauty rests upon the life of her who is the centre of home—the wife and mother. In all the trials of life you who are a dear wife and mother should lift up your “eyes unto the hills from whence cometh your help.” The pitying eye of your Heavenly Father is ever on you. He knows the mother hath sorrows, and He is a gracious burden bearer, who says “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him;” “Those who seek Him early shall find Him,” and “None are sent empty away.” No one more needs the strength of His dear everlasting arm, none need more to rest under His sheltering wing than the mother of children, the mistress of home. Oh! the blessedness of His love as it sheds its softening, refining influences over godly homes, making them an earthly Eden, where the father and mother and their children sit down and quietly rest as under the shadow of the branches of a wide-spreading tree.

As I pause here for a little time, I quite startle to see how far I have drifted from the pages of the past, which I promised to lay open before the reader. Pardon the digression, and we will try to take up the broken thread where we left off.

At the time when my life began to drift along with the current and events of this world, the older members of the family had gone out from the home-roof to take their places in the great battle of life, and to establish homes of their own. My two younger brothers and myself were left in the dear home, under its moral and religious influences. I loved my two brothers almost to idolatry, and they in turn petted and were exceedingly kind to me; the older one especially looked

after me through all my childhood and early girlhood with untiring zeal and affection.

When I went skipping over the hills to the district school, this kind brother helped me over the foot-logs, up the steep hills, and was my protector and friend in all my childish troubles. Even at this early stage of my life the disease that now holds me so in thrall would at times shyly show itself, like some dangerous reptile lying in wait in the path of its helpless victim, awaiting a favorable time to seize upon and devour its prey. My flesh would at times bloat, and great sores would appear about my neck and on my person. If I ran rapidly at play, or ascended any upward incline, my heart would beat so wildly respiration would for a time almost cease, and my very tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. My teachers would often remark that I was so very pale during the afternoon, and the woman who did my mother's washing and heavy work often said she believed I was dropsical. Oh! if I only could have gone to my parents then and impressed them with the seriousness of my condition, how much suffering I might have escaped; but, alas! I was too young to myself comprehend my condition, and when I thought of it at all, in my childish ignorance, I really supposed all the human family had such symptoms. A few years after this time one of my married brothers had a little girl three years old to take general dropsy, and, after lying one whole year in her cradle, helpless as a great heavy log, suffering untold agony, she quietly passed away during the hot month of August. My father's youngest sister was delicate in health all her life, and soon after she had blossomed into a beautiful woman, married, and in one year died of dropsy. After I became twelve or thirteen years of age the symptoms of disease for a time disappeared, and my future lay before me full of beauty, and glowing with youthful hopes and dreams. Our parents were very hospitable, my father widely and favorably known, and

the dear old home was much of the time filled with dear pleasant friends from a distance, or young people from Logan, the nearest town, a thriving county-seat situated on the Hocking River, in the centre of the Hocking Valley, and girt about on either side by beautiful, picturesque hills. My older brother was a lover of, and a favorite in society, and it was his social influence that drew the young people to our pleasant country home. I did not so much enjoy the society of the young and gay as I did that of the sober, middle-aged Christians who came to see my parents and to talk of the goodness of God, and tell of the wonderful Nazarene. Oh! how I did love even then to hear about Jesus, the Jesus that in future years was to become my life, my strength, my hope, my *all*. I think I always believed in the existence of God, and knew that he had all power; but oh! not then, not at that early day, had the hidden spring of the soul been touched, the flood-gates opened and the King in his beauty and glory and holiness come in. I can scarce remember when, in my childish way, I did not try to pray, but if it was prayer, it was usually that the Lord might spare my father and mother to me, and that I might be an obedient, loving child, not to my Heavenly Parent, but to my natural parents. But, as I in memory go back to those happy days in early youth, I think I can plainly trace the working of the Father's dear hand, can see that there was a drawing of his love, the encircling of his almighty care, and oh! how my heart swells within me with gratitude and love when I see how, as I trust, he snatched me as a brand from the burning. To whom do I owe to-day the deep, great thankfulness that, as I open the pages of my past, none of midnight darkness are there, no pages all blotted and marred by the blackness of crime? Surely myself, "prone to sin as the sparks are to fly upward," cannot claim any credit; and to none is the praise due save to Him who never slumbers nor sleeps, and

whose all-seeing "eye is ever over the righteous, and His ear is open unto their cry."

True, in looking over the past, I see where often and often my wayward feet have gone far astray. There are many things that fill me with self-loathing, great remorse and deep regret; but oh! I am so glad, so thankful to the Lord that the darkness of out-broken sin, the blackness of actual crime, does not appear on the pages of my past.

But if it had followed that crime had been stamped upon my life-pages, and I wore about with me the mark of Cain; if, like King David, I would confess and be sorry for the sin, would not I find an advocate with the Father through the love and intercession of His dear Son? David, the "sweet singer in Israel," fervently prayed not only to be cleansed from the sin of having been a vile seducer, but also humbly begged to be cleansed from murder; for he well knew that the innocent blood of poor Uriah lay upon his soul. Oh! the depth of the love that will reach down to the very deepest depths of crime and sin, and rescue its victim, removing the filthy garments, clothing them in "linen clean and white," whose spotless purity has been bought at so precious a price as the shedding of the innocent blood of God's only Son; for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin.

The churches for which my father labored were all, save the one near our home, situated in different counties, and could not at that time be reached by rail. When not in school I was sometimes allowed to accompany father to an appointment. Sometimes he would relate some interesting adventure or scene through which he had passed; again we would both be silent, enjoying the lovely scenes of nature as we drove over hills, across streams and passed through towns, and saw pretty farm-houses. On these occasions I formed

some pleasant, lasting friendships and acquaintances, and visited in some lovely, delightful homes.

At one of father's charges we were always invited to the home of a wealthy sister, who was a widow. She was exceedingly eccentric, and so irritable and cross in her manner that she could neither keep a servant nor a companion with her any length of time, and being childless she was nearly always living alone in her large, beautiful home. She wore a wig, and was always richly attired, but she neither evinced any taste or an eye to the harmony of colors in her personal appearance, nor in her rich and elegant household furnishings. Though my father was decidedly her favorite preacher, she would scold him terribly; all the while, however, giving him the easiest chair, the choicest fruit and wine, and her most delicate, delicious viands, of which she seemed to have an abundant store. She took quite a fancy to me from our first meeting, and really begged my parents to allow her to adopt me. She gave me some costly presents, but they, like all her actions and belongings, were marked with her eccentricity. In her final will she made me one of her heirs, but I was so unfortunate as never to receive the portion left for me. That I am not among the number of the fortunates in temporal things the many dark waves of adversity that have swept their bitter surges over me, has certainly proven. But, thanks be unto the Giver of all good, no bitter wave that has swept across the surface of my stormy sea has been so dark, no storm-cloud has brought such blackness over the clearness of my sky, but that through it the rays of the sun could break, and that underneath it might be seen the bright gleams of the "silver lining." Oh! the love of God, that has interlined and encircled my entire life like a "silver" or a "gold lining" indeed. How wonderful it all seems, and how strange that our blessed Lord, like we read of the love of Boaz for Ruth, should have loved and

cared for us, and shielded our tender footsteps, even when we thought we were strangers to him. Are we not filled with wonder, as was Ruth, why we should find such favor from our dear Lord when we believed we were afar off from Him, strangers in a strange land? Oh! at the thought of such sweet, soul-saving, soul-cheering love, does not the heart swell with emotion, and does not the soul "mount up with wings as eagles?" "We are made to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint." And do we not feel to exclaim with the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, Oh, my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name."

About the time of the transition of my happy childhood into my early girlhood the late terrible war broke out. Who can look back to that time, when the very foundation of this happy, prosperous nation shook as with the thundering of a mighty volcano, when the "Goddess of Liberty" drew her mantle of midnight darkness about her, her eyes a fountain of tears, and when she, "like Rachel, was made to weep for her children, and would not be comforted," without having all the heart stirred to its very depths? Truly that was a time of our dear nation's darkest hour in history, when it seemed that father was against son, brother against brother; or when the union of our nation, like the relationship between twin sisters or brothers, was broken in twain, and the golden bowl containing love, crushed to atoms. Out from the mansions and the homes of culture and wealth, as well as from the rude log cabins, went the dear, noble men of our nation to lay their lives a willing sacrifice upon the altar of what each soul believed to be the right of liberty. In those terrible days, North or South, East or West, scarce one home could be found whose hearth-stone was not saddened, or threshold darkened by the shadow of death, or out from under whose roof some loved one had not gone, never more to return. As

one brings up the memory of those awful times, how we ought to thank the blessed Lord that He has, through His infinite mercy, goodness and love, once more given our nation peace.

From among our family group, two brothers joined a company being formed at Mt. Sterling, Ohio. One was young and afflicted with heart disease, and before he was in the army one year he was discharged. The other one, who left a young, beautiful wife and sweet little boy, was out five years. He was a Lieutenant, and lost his dear, precious, noble life at the terrible battle of Mission Ridge. His handsome young wife and the dear little boy became very dear to us all, and although she made her father's house her home, she and the child spent all or a part of each summer with us in our dear home amid the beautiful green hills. The years 1865 and 1866 were eventful ones in my journey of life, for it was on one calm summer evening of the first year, after a season of great mental darkness, struggle and doubt, that I trust the "mists were all rolled away" from my soul, the barriers of sin were removed and the pardoning mercy and love of Jesus flowed like a peaceful river into my soul. Father and mother and the younger brother, with the little errand boy, had retired. My older brother and my sister-in-law were sitting on the long veranda playing on the concertina and clarinet, and accompanying the instruments with their voices. I sat apart, feeling that the burden of my soul was too heavy to bear. The moon had risen in great beauty, and its calm rays flooded the place where I sat. Hastily arising I went to the orchard and knelt down under the shadow of a dark, spreading tree to try to pour out the burden of my soul to God, when a peace and calmness filled my whole being, a flood of golden glory seemed to envelope me that no words of mine can describe. The joy was *unspeakable* and full of glory, and only those can know

of its sweetness who have felt its power, for the Apostle says it is "*unspeakable*." Soon after this another lady, one who was spiritually minded, the daughter of the late Dr. Taylor, of S——, came to visit us, and with her I had much pleasant spiritual intercourse. Our home was filled with company nearly all that summer, a number of both gentlemen and ladies came from a distance, and a great many young people came out from Logan from time to time. This made our household duties quite heavy, and, with no efficient help to be found, my mother and I were often overworked. During the latter part of the summer the disease to which I am now a helpless prey, again showed itself. One morning, one of my limbs pained me as I went about my duties, and the trouble increased as the morning advanced. I drew off my shoe and hose, and just above the ankle found a bright red spot which seemed like burning fire. By nightfall these bright spots were to the knee, and I soon had a hard chill with high temperature and difficult respiration. Next day father took me to our family physician. He at once seemed puzzled, said he was not prepared to treat the case, and advised my father to have me examined by the doctors in Logan. But they seemed as much lost as the country physician, and said it was a very interesting as well as a peculiar case. Oh! if they only had known and could have then given me a remedy to eradicate rather than just cover up the disease, so that like fire it should again break forth with renewed fury, undermining the most precious boon allotted to mortals, that of health, what a blessing it would have been. But just here comes the thought that had it been the will of my dear Heavenly Father to give me this boon, He was *able* to have given it. Was it to bring me to know the dear Saviour better—to bring me into this close, precious fellowship with Him, through the fellowship of suffering, that He withheld the healing remedy from me? So often during that time and all along my pathway, did I most

fervently pray to be brought nearer and nearer to Him, "even though it be a cross that raiseth me." Most truly did I feel to say,

"Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Also, so often was the breathing of my very soul expressed in lines like this :

"Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

We have all heard the story of the man who was going backward on the brink of a mighty, yawning abyss, and who, all unknown to himself, would have soon gone reeling into its awful depths, down the dizzy height, had not a friend, who beheld him from the other side, struck him a blow which threw his body reeling the other way. So I believe the kind hand of Providence sometimes, all unknown and unseen by us, strikes us a blow which, though it wounds and hurts, yet is given through infinite love, to save us and sanctify us unto Himself. Better by far is it to have one hour of sweet communion with the Father, through the intercession of Jesus, His dear Son, than a whole life-time of earthly pleasure, if it be to the exclusion of heavenly joys. Richer by far do I deem myself, and infinitely more favored, to have dear Jesus for my friend, to be allowed to seek Him in prayer, to believe on Him and to come so near that we can almost touch the hem of His garment, with His dear presence sanctifying every pain, every loss, every heartache, and the fleeing away of each darling earthly hope; better by far to me is all this than would be health, wealth, the most ecstatic earthly bliss, which must vanish away as the dew of the morning, without the felt presence and love of my ever-blessed Saviour and Redeemer, who is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

At the time when my terrible disease manifested itself in the inflammation and swelling of my limbs, I was confined to my room five weeks. Those weeks were filled with great unrest and disquiet, and I imagined myself quite a martyr for having been shut in so long. I was never quite my healthy, buoyant self again. Some months after this my mother had unexpected company and dispatched me to the barn in great haste to get fresh eggs. Over one of the stables was a hay-mow, filled to the joists with sweet-scented hay. Into this I climbed, filled my apron with the freshly-laid eggs and started to descend to the barn-floor, when my feet slipped and I went reeling down into an ante-room of the stable, whose stalls were occupied with saddle and farm horses. I thought I had broken my back, and lay helpless quite a while, but finally went to the house and, strange to say, said nothing about the severity of my fall, nor told them of the pain I was enduring. That night, however, I suffered so that I could not remain in my room, and went down to the sitting-room, where I spent the night in great pain. From that time until this, I have not known what it is to exist without bodily pain. I went from home to school soon after this and suffered greatly, had no appetite, and when I did take food or drink would almost instantly have to throw it up. Most physicians think the sore or growth began in the stomach at this time and was the result of my fall. In the year 1866, on the fifth day of December, I was led into the watery grave by a visiting minister, and buried with my dear Saviour in baptism, and taken into the fellowship of Scott's Creek Church. It was a most beautiful day. The night before we had a heavy rain-fall with vivid thunderings and lightning, but on this late December morning the sun rose clear against the azure sky. As we drove to the baptismal waters I thought, as I gazed upon the great vault of heaven, it reminded me of a vast deep blue sea, with here and there a white, fleecy cloud looking so like a white sail upon the smooth surface of the

ocean. Oh! the sweet memory of that peaceful Sabbath day of the soul when I was baptized, and the sweet fragrance of the spices and frankincense and myrrh flowed like holy incense into the peaceful chambers of my soul, and I was carried on the wings of His love, above all temptation, sorrow and pain.

“And I could not believe
That I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.”

But, alas! how little we understand ourselves; how vain to think we can take one step without the help of Him who so truly says, “without Me ye can do nothing.” How soon I found my frail bark moving on the Sea of Galilee amid a fierce black storm, whose raging waves and billows seemed to engulf me until, like Peter, I cried, “Lord save,” and the dear beloved voice again came floating over the stormy sea: “It is I; be not afraid.” Oh, the strength that comes to us when Jesus speaks! the rest, the calmness we feel when we know that “He walketh upon the sea,” and that with His own dear hand He will stay the mad waves. O blessed, blessed Jesus, dear Saviour of my soul, “let me hide myself in Thee!” “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I,” there to abide and bathe forever in the eternal love of God.

O, Time! how great are thy ravages, how strong is thine arm, how sure and unceasing are the strokes of thy sickle as it is thrust into the rich harvests of home, and every individual life! If only thy destroying hand could have been staid, if thy foot-prints had never entered the sacred precincts of my dear happy home, then would all its joys, its tender pleasant associations have clustered about me still. But no hearts are so loving and true, no lives so noble and useful, no home so sacred and dear but that thou wilt thrust into them all the keen blade of thy destroying hand and bring the

glory of all transitory things down to dust and ashes. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," should be graven upon thy breast, should be the motto of thy destructive mission.

In a very short time after I confessed my Saviour before the world, in our dear old home changes began to come thick and fast. My youngest brother was absent at school, and my older brother, who had so long carried on the farm, and who was the life of our home, became restless and dissatisfied, and purchased a dry goods store in Ewing, a small village not far from our country home, and went out from us, leaving a great vacancy, casting a dark shadow over my life. He did not marry until the following spring, and on coming home every Saturday night many were the expressions of unchanged affection for his sister, and fervently did he assure me that his wife's love would make no change in his affections for the dear ones in the old home; but that it did, and that the cares of his own family, and the steps of time together have almost obliterated his affection, the fact that only once since I have been shut within the confines of four walls have I seen his face, certainly shows. But such are the heart-rendings, the sad scenes, the vicissitudes of this transitory life. How good to have a "good hope through grace," a hope whose bright beacon-light points away beyond the fleeting things of this world to an eternal home where love never dies or grows cold, where we will listen no more for the coming of dear feet, look no more for the missing face, listen not again for the familiar voice, but where, in the full, sweet enjoyment of that infinite love "whose fullness filleth all in all," we shall bask forever in the smiles of him in "whose presence there is fullness of joy; at whose right hand there are pleasures forever more."

How often, while writing this brief glimpse out of the pages of the past, as memory brings up one beloved scene, event, or face after another, do I pause, and wonder and weep.

And again I am made to exclaim, what a strange, what a wondrous thing is human life ! How changeful its scenes, how fitful and varied are its vicissitudes ; what an intermingling and blending it is of clouds and sunlight, of joy and sorrow, of unrest and of quiet. Now there comes a day full of sunshine, of beautiful shadows, of bright dreams, of glad hopes, and we say life is so full of beauty, of love, of gladness. " Our lines are fallen in pleasant places." The sound of sweet music floats about as the perfume of fragrant flowers. There is the sound of familiar footsteps, the sight of beloved faces, the sound of voices most dear, the fervent clasp of loving hands, while over all is the soothing influence of peace.

But rudely does the hand of circumstance let fall the dark curtain of adversity, of care and trouble, and the beautiful picture of quiet, peace and happiness gives place to one of darkness and sorrow, and the picture which a moment ago was so bright, so peaceful, so dear, lives only in the past, or is a bright vision over which we tenderly, lovingly linger only in our day and nightly dreams. Our dear Lord says in His holy word : " It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." I often wonder if in every, or any individual life, this scriptural truth has been brought to bear as strikingly as it has been in mine. As powerless, as helpless have I been on the great ocean of life to row my bark in the one smooth, fair line pictured out by the vivid ambitious imaginations of my youth, as would be a ship in mid-ocean without helm or wind or wave. But the all-wise, omnipotent Father further says : " I will bring the blind by a way they know not ; I will lead them in paths they had not known." Surely by His dear, unseen hand has He led my blind feet in the paths that He, through infinite and divine wisdom, ordained was for my good and for the honor and glory of His dear name. And we are well assured that His way is right, and that " He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind." How well it is for us that the future

is veiled in mystery, and that we know nothing of what it has in store for us. Just at the period in my life of which I now write, could I have looked away into the deep, dark labyrinth of the future, and have seen how much of pain and human suffering and woe lay in my pathway, I would have sunk down in despair, and my soul would have grown dizzy and faint with the sight. But as it is, "Sufficient unto the day has been the evil thereof;" and truly amid the most trying scenes have I been made to realize, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." In this do we not only see the mercy and goodness of God made manifest to poor finite creatures, but also see the great wisdom and power of Omnipotence in His foreknowledge of all things, and see how infinite and great it rises far above the most profound knowledge of finite man. The most brilliant scholar, the most learned men of science, must own that they do not know what an hour, or day, or a moment may bring forth. The wisest, most successful man of medicine, can neither stay the hand of death when it calls for its victim, nor breathe one spark of breath into the lifeless body. Neither can the strongest person, intellectually or physically, give life to the tiniest insect that inhabits the earth. Where, then, is the boasted wisdom and strength of the mightiest of finite creatures? As the flower of the field it passeth away. If, then, they be powerless to save the body from death and decay, how much less can man do anything toward saving his soul, towards giving eternal life? Ah! we are poor creatures, and "man at his best estate is altogether vanity."

From my window near where my sick couch stands, looking westward upon a green, sunny slope overlooking the village, and from whose tower, I am told, a vast stretch of undulating country may be seen, which carries the eye away to the distant blue hills in Southern Ohio, stands a beautiful mansion. It is the summer home of the Hon. M. Wilson, who was an American Minister to foreign countries a number of terms.

He is now slowly, surely dying of cancer of the cheek and tongue. How I pity him, and how very, very poor I think he is amid the splendor of his home and all his wealth and title, and personal belongings. Poor indeed, "without hope and without God in the world." During his entire life haughty and lofty in bearing, ignoring all his early acquaintances and associations, professing no religion, attending no religious services, denying the existence of God. Now that he is brought as low as the lowest vassal, will he call upon God to have mercy upon his poor soul? Not unless his heart first be touched by the finger of God's love, and the hard, stony heart become one of flesh. The Psalmist says, "the wicked are not troubled as other men, therefore they have no bands in death." With no love for, or belief in the blessed Saviour of sinners, the unregenerate go down to everlasting punishment with no fear or care of what the consequences may be. Truly is it said, they *have* no *bands* in their death; and they are not troubled as those who feel their insufficiency and inability to save themselves.

But I have been drifting again away beyond my subject. At the time of which I was about to write, when changes began to come within the hitherto happy circle of our home, it was my father's fervent desire to send me away to school so that the desire that I had for learning, and of which my father and brothers so heartily approved, might be gratified. But my dear mother, who depended so largely upon me for companionship during my father's almost entire absence from home, could not think of it. She would give way to an outburst of weeping every time the subject was alluded to. So, deeply as I regretted giving up such a bright vision of future joy, I expressed my determination to remain at home. That this was the path marked out for me by Him who "works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," succeeding events

soon proved. At this time a maiden lady, who wished to avail herself of the church privileges which being an inmate of our home would give her, asked leave of my parents to come and assist with the duties of the house and make our house her home. Soon after she came I was called to the sick bed of a sister-in-law, who was dying of consumption. Poor, dear woman, what a state of mind she was in, with four helpless little ones, one of them a babe only three months old, knowing she must soon leave them motherless in a cold world. Oh, how deep was her grief! What was sadder still the dear woman had never felt the power and love and pardoning mercy of Jesus, yet I felt encouraged as she spoke of feeling herself to be such a sinner, for I told her it was to such the Saviour's promise was given, and I knew that never did He begin a work of grace in the heart but that He performed it to the day of Jesus Christ. Just before her last few days on earth were spent, she sent for father to come and pray with her, and during prayer she said she thought she felt the love of Jesus flow into her poor soul, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, removed the fear of death, and caused her to enter the dark valley and shadow of death comforted by the rod and staff of the dear, tender Shepherd. While I was at this dear sister's bed-side trying to minister to her, and to the little ones, a message came that my mother was very ill, and that I was wanted at home at once. Oh, how sick grew my heart at the thought that dear mother was ill, maybe dying! How I regretted having left her even for the duty that seemed to call me where I had been beside the sick sister. When I arrived home, I went at once to the room where mother lay, her patient face white as death, her voice too weak to speak any word of welcome. She had fallen the day before on the walk and had broken her thigh. What days and nights of suffering she endured, stretched upon a frame for ten weeks without being moved, no pen can tell, and how

trying to me were the experiences of those dark days none can know save those who have been placed in like circumstances. Within three weeks after this time the poor sick sister-in-law passed to the eternal shore, and two of the little ones, bad with whooping cough, were placed under my care. During the whole of that year, from 4 o'clock in the morning until often 11 and 12 at night did I have to labor to care for the sick, and perform the numerous duties that lay upon me. During the first year my suffering mother was as helpless as an infant, and from that time on, till, after four years of terrible suffering, she was taken home, as we hope and trust, to be for ever with the Lord, she was an habitual invalid, and never able to walk. Just before these events occurred a heavy snow fell which lay on the earth, making the carriage roads as smooth as glass, and it being customary in country places for families to go in parties, spending the entire day, we had a continuous housefull of company, which was pleasant, yet made my duties very heavy. Unable to procure any help, as the farmers were well-to-do and did not wish their girls to hire out, all the labor and care fell upon my young, inexperienced shoulders, except the little aid rendered me by the little maiden lady who lived with us; and if my suffering mother needed attention, day or night, no one could minister to her needs but my own now experienced hands. The good-natured doctor, who for three months came every day from Logan, would often pityingly say: "Mary, this is too much for you, it is just killing you;" and sometimes his anger would show itself with great vehemence because he thought I had many unnecessary weights. I had; but as I now look back to that time, how little judgment and really good sense did I exercise. If the roast was not properly done, if the loaves of bread did not come forth from the great brick oven creamy of crust and white as snowflakes, I was miserable. The tables and kitchen utensils, the

muslin curtains, the rooms, all must be kept "just so," or I felt disgraced, all the while ignoring the low, warning voice that came to me in throbbing brow, in aching of arms, in the weary limbs, in the nervous, sleepless nights, telling me, if only I would have heeded, that I was trampling on and desecrating the most precious of all earthly gifts to mortal man—that of health. At this time I also had great inward struggles and mental trials. I had but recently, as I firmly hoped, started out on the wonderful spiritual journey which leads to the portals of eternal day. I was a mere infant; and because I could not at once come into the full stature of a full-grown person in Christ, I thought I was running the race not at all. As our dear Master and Leader, after he was baptized of John in the river of Jordan, and had received such satisfying evidence of the Father's presence and approval, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending upon His head, while "there came a voice from heaven saying, this is My well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," was taken to the wilderness where he was tempted of Satan forty days, I often wonder if all His followers do not have to be in a measure tempted and tried in the same manner. At any rate at this time I was taken into a wilderness through whose dense darkness it did not seem one ray from the Sun of Righteousness could ever penetrate, and look on this side or on that, hideous wild beasts were ready to devour me. It seemed to me that the dear Saviour was more severe in His denunciations of the hypocrite and the Pharisee than any other class of sinners, and oh! how greatly did I fear that in having united with the church I had become, if not a Pharisee, a hypocrite; and I firmly resolved for the time being that I would go to the church and frankly tell them I was no Christian, and unfit to be with them. But ere an opportunity was offered for my doing so, the heavy clouds were somewhat lifted, a ray of sunshine penetrated and relieved the sombre gloom, and instead

of begging of the dear ones to be removed from among their number, the language of my soul was truly, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee, for where thou goest will I go, thy people shall be my people, thy God my God." How sweet, how blessed is the privilege to be admitted into the fellowship and the sweet enjoyments of the Church where there is "kept the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," to come unto Mount Zion the city of our King, which hath sure foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Oh, this is certainly the sweetest, dearest privilege given to the children of light as they sojourn here in this wilderness of sorrow and woe. If it be so sweet, so grand, so delightful to come within the lower courts, what then must it be to enter the Jerusalem above, where all is perfect purity, love, joy and peace, and where angels' voices unite in singing songs of never-ending praise, and where the one dear theme of all purified souls will be praise and honor and glory to God and the Lamb, world without end ?

In the month of June, following the winter in which such marked changes took place in the dear old home, my brother, of whose coming marriage I have spoken, and who was now engaged in mercantile business, brought to our home to spend a week his city bride. She was an English lady, tall, and stately with a decidedly queenly bearing. I had been determined not to trouble myself to even like her, for I felt so grieved because she had taken my brother from our home ; but she was so amiable and kind, and so patient with my resentment, that she threw coals of fire on my head. I despised myself much more than I had meant to dislike her, so without trying at all, which is the best way after all, I fell to liking her very much.

Two miles from our home, down the lovely green valley of Honey Creek, lived my young cousin, Lou C——. She was

an only daughter, beautiful, exceedingly intelligent, but much petted and indulged, and very proud. During this one eventful year she had lost a devoted mother, become a happy bride, and, before the end of a twelve-month, was a mother—and a corpse. From early youth this sweet girl and I had been companions, but since my mother had become helpless I had not once made her a visit; and in her new-found happiness she sought gayer associations, more congenial associates than she could now find in her strangely altered cousin. One mid-summer day while preparing the noon-day meal for the hired men at work in the golden harvest, a neighbor called to me from the road and told me Cousin Lou was dangerously ill. As soon as the dinner work was finished, I donned my riding habit and hastily saddling my youngest brother's riding pony, galloped down to my cousin's home. When I entered her room she raised up and threw out her arms, saying: "Oh, Mary, for one week I have prayed that you might come!" Her innocent babe lay beside her, but not once during my stay did she mention or notice it, but began at once to tell me that she was going to die, and that she was without hope and without God. Never in my life did I witness such sorrow of soul, such self condemnation, such contrition for sin, such a hungering and thirsting after the living waters and living bread. Her young husband, who sat beside her, said "Oh, Lou, do quiet yourself, you are crazy." She then firmly told him and the nurse to leave the room as she wished to be alone with me. Just then a glimmer of sunlight cast a bright ray across the room, and she told the nurse to close it out, saying "it just seems to me it is the light of Christ trying to get to me, but my dreadful sins shut it out and the sunlight mocks me." Alone with her she begged me to pray for her and to talk to her about Jesus. "Oh," she cried, "my wasted, vain and useless life, if only I could live it over and use the many precious moments spent in folly in reading God's word and

learning of Him ; but it is too late, too late !” In vain I strove to sooth her, in vain did I tell her of the thief on the cross, of the maniac among the tombs, and that Jesus came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance ; it seemed to do no good. How very true that none but “ Jesus can do helpless sinners good.” Much as she wanted me to remain, and difficult as it was to leave her in this state, my duty called me home. Oh ! the darkness that filled my soul as I rode homeward, a darkness that seemed to obscure the light of the natural sun and make the midsummer evening seem like one of wintry darkness. The next morning brought the news that the dear young life had ebbed away at 12 that night, and had I not learned before that she died happy, when I looked upon the still form as it lay in the coffin, clad in her silken bridal robe, her beautiful up-turned face so gloriously happy with the radiant smile that left its impress upon the marble features, I should certainly have felt that she had been with Jesus, and sweetly learned the beautiful lesson of His mercy and love, and felt it applied to her stricken soul ere she passed beyond the mystic tide. Her nurse told me that about three hours before she died she broke forth into singing, and though in health she had no gift to sing, she sang one hymn after another ; then began to praise her Saviour and continued blessing and praising Him until the mortal put on immortality, and she was clothed upon with her house which is from heaven. Oh, the wonders of such love ! the matchless beauty and power of such all-saving, sin-cleansing grace ! the glorious fountain here opened to the house of David for sin and uncleanness ! None who are sick, none who feel the need of this great Physician, this healing balm in Gilead, no matter how black their garments, how vile their sins, how sick their soul, need fear of being turned away, but to all such the dear voice of Jesus says : “ Your sins are all forgiven, come unto Me and I will give you rest.” Without money and without

price we can at this great fountain source find the riches of eternal life, the blessed gift of God which comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. How sweet to feel the refining, healing influence of this love flooding and encircling our entire life, infusing it with warmth and light, so like the glad, golden sunlight that fills the whole earth, and which broadens and stretches away, enveloping us in its glory even to the shore of eternity in the blessed home above.

“ My dear Heavenly Father,

“ I thank Thee for friends Thou did'st give me,
Whose kindness oft softened my care ;
I thought they never would leave me,
All lonely and desolate here.

“ My frail gourds they quickly did wither,
I was left to the chilling wind's blast,
When Thy pitiful voice said ‘ come hither,
‘ My wings over thee I will cast.’ ”

The love of my parents and my affection for them was to me as the comforting shadow of a beautiful vine under which I rested, but which was removed before I reached the noon-day of womanhood. I knew that in some future time they would be taken away, and that, if I survived them, I would be left alone in the cold world, but I would try to lay aside the thought, or when it would abide with me I would comfort myself with the scriptural promise, “ When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” I had given up all youthful dreams, had willingly sacrificed upon the altar of duty towards my parents and home all other earthly reliances. My dear Heavenly Friend knew all that it had cost me, all I had suffered and lost, and He alone knew how very “ like breaking one's teeth with gravel stones,” it was to me at times. But His love and grace sustained and upheld me through it all, and I believed He would give me strength in every future trial. After three years of family afflic-

tion in which was crowded much care and toil for me, one sunshiny day in March my dear father started to make a tour of his appointments, intending to visit the three charges and be absent over three Sundays. The roads were very bad and he was forced to cross the country twenty-five miles on horseback before reaching a railroad. He was very corpulent, weighing at this time about three hundred pounds. He reached New Holland on Friday evening, intending to stay at my eldest brother's all night, then go to Waterloo next morning, where he was to preach at 11 A. M. Sometime during the night he woke my brother and wife and they found him delirious, and very ill. Medical men say he had a lesion of the brain which induced paralysis. A protracted illness followed, of typhoid-pneumonia, from which he arose a mere shadow of his former self, and he never again recovered his strength of body or vigor of mind. Since my mother became helpless, up to this time, I had not once left her a day or night, but now that she could be left in the care of my brother and little nephew and a hired woman, I felt it my duty to go to my father; for who can nurse or care for one sick and in danger so well as one who is actuated by true affection? The touch of no hand is so cooling, so soft, so gentle; the sound of no voice so quieting as that of one who we know really cares for us, and who is dear to us. I was told that he would not recognize me, but he did, and the physician said he seemed to grow quieter when he became aware of my presence. From this time, and until his death, eight years afterward, my strong, dear father, on whom we had all so often leaned, became as a child, and clung to me with all of a child's persistent affection.

Another year full of care and perplexity with my now gradually failing health. Then in March of that year, one evening after a snow-storm, when great banks of white, fleecy, gold-tinged clouds lay in the West, beneath which the sun

was sinking out of sight, *Death*, entered our home and took our dear mother. Oh, the sadness of that dark hour! Did you ever think, dear reader, what a depth of sorrow and loss and suffering hovers around the one little word "gone"? Yes, mother was gone! Gone out from the dear threshold of the home of which she had always been the central figure; from which she would always be missed; *gone*, never to return! Oh, the awful hush and solemnity that falls upon the home at such an hour!

How vividly the picture of that sorrowful time comes before me now, causing the heart to swell and tears to flow from my eyes. But these sad scenes are a part of this life. Sooner or later they come to all homes, and to every individual. But who ever feels prepared to meet the sadness and the heart-ache of such a scene and hour? If the kind hand of Providence did not soothe, or if Time did not soften such keen grief, many of us would never be able to rise above its blighting influence. But it is said that "earth has no sorrows that Heaven cannot heal." The Christian at least can find a balm in Gilead, a dear physician in Christ Jesus, the strength of whose everlasting love and arm is able to uphold under every trial and to soothe every heart-ache. How great the favor to be allowed to lie down in green pastures, to be led beside still waters, to rest and hide under the shadow of the sheltering wing of the Almighty, when all earthly hopes and reliances are taken from us! "Truly when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

At the time of my mother's death, my father was very feeble in health, my little nephew also lay very sick with lung fever. The physician said my pulse was exceedingly rapid, yet I kept about, waiting on the sick, and trying to look after the duties of the house. But the next morning after mother's death, when I attempted to rise, I took a hard chill, and for seven weeks I seemed to hover between life and death. Two

physicians attended me, and one of them was with me most of the time. As I could not receive proper attention in our now lonely home, my dear aunt and uncle, who lived near Logan, kindly took me to their home, where I was near the doctor, and where I received every attention and kindness that loving hands could bestow. Although I was permitted to once more get about the house and to go back to my afflicted parent, who so needed my affectionate care, from that day until now I have been the victim of a most painful chronic malady. My home now no longer seemed the place of quiet happiness and peaceful content which it had once been. My youngest brother, who had charge of the farm, did not like farming, and poor father could not bear to go into the room where was mother's vacant chair, and the couch upon which her afflicted body had so long lain. Everything reminded him of her, yet she was gone; gone never to return. Never again could he see the dear face, he said, until the resurrection morn, when, at the sounding of the last trumpet, the dead in Christ should arise in glory. Then he felt sweetly assured they would meet again to part no more. Does it not seem that our dearest Lord has left nothing undone that would tend to make us supremely happy, when we cross to the unseen shore to join the multitude who walk with Jesus in robes of spotless white, and who sing the song that none but the redeemed can ever learn or sing? Oh, the joy, the unalloyed bliss that awaits the poor suffering, trembling child of God! Why should not the hands that hang down be uplifted, the feeble knees be strengthened and the eyes be turned "unto the hills, whence cometh our help"?

In November, nine months after my mother was laid to rest, with the grass and flowers now green and blooming over her grave, the farm had been disposed of, and we were ready to move to this village, eighty miles northwest. If the reader has ever gone out from the home of his childhood where every

nook and corner had become familiar, and endeared by some tender association, where every tree and shrub that grew upon the sacred spot seemed like some speaking, loving soul; if the dear home seemed a part of self, a part of your very life, and to leave it seemed like the severing of heart from heart, then you will know how I felt when I stood for the last time upon the threshold, and my eyes lingered lovingly, tenderly over the scenes so familiar, beautiful and dear. But just here is another turned-down leaf, one among the many I have had to pass over, leaving them to rest amid the ruins of the buried past. But the memory of this home, like the forms and faces of the departed, will often "visit us in dreams,"

"And glide across our memories
Like shadows over streams."

Soon after we became settled here the father of the two little nephews who had been four years under my care, married again, and took them away to his home in the extreme north-western part of Ohio. Another year passed, then my youngest brother went out from us. Although I did not allow myself to become so rebellious about the marriage of my last brother as I did when the brother now living in Logan married, yet it gave me a wonderful heartache; and when, after I witnessed the marriage ceremony performed in the Presbyterian meeting-house in this village, and saw him with his bride take the train on their wedding tour, and then wended my way back to our home with none but father and myself left, I felt broken in spirit indeed, and many were the tears I shed, as I set about arranging and putting away his things.

But time, though by one hand it cuts down our dear earthly hopes and reliances and takes away many an idol, with the other hand it softens every blow, and in a measure soothes and heals each aching wound. So as the days and years glided onward, I became accustomed to the sad changes in our

household, as did also my dear father. We two were very happy. He wished to visit all the churches of his former charge, and on his tours I nearly always accompanied him. We also visited the far West, and at one time made a lengthy visit in Kentucky. Poor, dear father often remarked he would have no worldly trouble now if only I could get well. But though I had the benefit of travel, of change of scene and of all the various schools of medicine, yet disease, like the unseen worm at the roots of plants, still pressed on me with its blight and heart-sickening results. True I kept about, and when at home performed my household duties, which I greatly enjoyed, never at any time being so happy as when my rooms were in neatness and order and I was preparing delicate, tempting food to place upon a nicely arranged table for father and other dear ones to enjoy. But every few weeks I would have a severe hemorrhage of the stomach, always throwing up two or three pints of coagulated blood. These attacks were always preceded by bloating and swelling of the body, and sometimes of the face and lower limbs. I was under first one physician's care then another, and hundreds of dollars were expended, all to no purpose.

Eight years of almost uninterrupted sunshine and domestic happiness and peace, and then all the happiness of an earthly nature that I believe Providence ordained should be mine, went out of my sorely stricken life, like the going out of a lamp on a night of thick darkness, leaving nothing but midnight gloom. All that winter father had been unusually feeble, and neither of us had been outside the village. At night he would be very delirious, and I had to be near him, watching him as I would a little child, and all this but drew the cord which bound child to parent more closely about my heart. On Thursday before the last Saturday in April, 1877, he expressed a wish to attend a yearly meeting held by our people near Good Hope, twelve miles from here, and asked me to

arrange to accompany him. On Saturday morning, we ran down to Washington Court House on the cars, then took a carriage and drove across the country to the place of meeting. It was a glorious spring day, the golden sunlight flooding the earth, the fields covered with delicate verdure, while the singing of birds and the sweet scent of blossoms filled the air. But gloom, like a funeral pall, lay upon my soul, and cast a shadow over the perfect picture of rural beauty that opened like a grand panorama on every side, and a voice as of one weeping seemed to fill the air. So heavily did this, which I now believe to have been a presentiment of coming affliction, weigh upon me at times, that I would cover my eyes and ears and strive to rid myself of such awful gloom. I mentioned my mental condition to father, and he said he, too, felt a great depression of spirits. Yet he conversed near all of the way, relating many interesting incidents connected with his early ministry. When we arrived at the place of worship we were met by the smiling faces of cousin Robert Yeoman and wife, and as other dear ones gave us the hand of welcome I felt very happy, and felt that it was indeed pleasant for brethren "to dwell together in unity." The friends insisted on my father speaking awhile, and he did so, taking for his subject, "Blessed is the people who know the joyful sound," but had spoken but a few moments when there was a rush of blood to the head, and in broken sentences he asked to be excused, and immediately passed out of the house. Soon he motioned to me to follow him. Finding him very ill we hastily got him in a carriage and I drove rapidly to my cousin's beautiful home, where he received every kindness, and the best medical aid that could be found. Three physicians were brought, and consulted together, but all their efforts, and all my tender nursing availed nothing. His course here on earth was finished. He had fought the good fight, had kept the faith, and now the dear Master called him to inherit

the kingdom prepared for him. Oh! the sanctity that pervaded his death-chamber. All lips seemed closed, everyone's breath hushed, as we stood about that dying couch, and watched the dear life go out so sweetly, so calmly, just like going to sleep on the dear Saviour's bosom. Just as the sun rose in radiant glory and beauty in the eastern horizon his spirit took its flight to that home above, which has no need of the light of the sun, "for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

Again in my soul arose the agonizing cry, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." What is there in this transitory life that we may safely love and trust, since Time will take it all from our grasp? "As the flower of the field it vanisheth away;" and, after all, everything in this life is but dust. Oh, the dumb agony that filled my soul in this sad hour! Like one who had received a hard blow, I felt, though I made no outcry, uttered no word of complaint. When my mother was taken away, in my sorrow I could lean on my father; I did not feel alone. But now, every earthly prop was gone, the last binding tie broken. I had no one to share my sorrow with, no one to condole with, no one to offer me the sympathy I craved. It seems the pen of the most gifted writer would fail in the attempt to describe the terrible agony that seemed to bruise and break every tendril of my heart, as I stood by that open grave and saw the dear form of my only earthly protector lowered into its dark, narrow resting-place, never again to look upon it, never more to hear the dear voice, listen for the beloved footstep or hear a tender, loving word; to turn away, realizing that I was ALONE. Oh, it was heart-rending indeed! Looking about me, how wide, and broad and fair was this world, but it held no sunshine for me. Large as it was there seemed no vacancy, no longer any place for me; no one needed me; nobody wanted me. We have heard it said that we all have many fair weather friends,

who, like the swallows and sparrows, only come to us when the soft south winds blow, and when the summer-time of prosperity is with us. But there are birds that come to us with their beautiful plumage and their glad songs in the winter time, and those we prize most and hold most dear. So it is in this life; when we prosper, when we move in the higher walks of life, and we sail upon undisturbed seas, then it is that the world will flatter, will praise us and honor us; but when enveloped in the dark clouds of adversity, then it is indeed that we find the friendship of the world but a poor thing; and then, too, do we learn to prize those who are willing in our adversity to lend us a helping hand, and to perform the part of a real Samaritan to us. Such a friend did I find in my dear youngest brother, who, with his dear young wife, opened their house to me. Such a friend, also, would my dear uncle, Albert Parker, have been, had he lived. But he was called away five months after father was taken. Next to my own dear father and mother did I love him and his amiable, affectionate wife; and when we parted the day after father's burial, it was with the understanding that I was to come to them in their home, back among the loved and familiar scenes of my childhood, so soon as I could arrange my affairs.

When, after the funeral, the friends had all returned to their homes, the painful task of going back to our dear home, which was *home* to me no longer, and opening its closed blinds and doors, awaited me. *Alone* I went back, opened the little gate and unlocked the door out of which, only a few weeks before, father and I together had gone, he smiling upon me, and complimenting me upon what he in his parental devotion deemed my good personal appearance. The familiar sitting-room looked tidy and as if it were ready for its usual occupants. Side by side were father's large easy chair and my own light rocker. But it was when I went to his sleeping

apartment that the pent-up anguish in my heart burst all bounds and *alone*, in what had once been home, dear, dear home, I gave way to my uncontrollable grief. There stood his couch with the covering just as he had left it, the pillow still bearing the indentation made in its downy softness by the dear head, while scattered here and there were his discarded garments and his bathing things. No one can know the deep anguish of such moments, save those who have also drank from the same bitter cup of sorrow, draining its heart-piercing contents to the very dregs. But here again is one of the "turned-down leaves" upon which we may merely glance. But let us shut these pages ever so closely, in memory's book every tear dimmed sentence is written with indelible ink and cannot be blotted out.

By September, everything I had to do here was settled and arranged. There was nothing to keep me here. Although the few really intimate friends I had were exceedingly affectionate and kind to me, yet I felt that no one needed, no one would specially miss me ; and, oh ! it made my heart sad. Dear as I had been to my father, tenderly as he had clung to me, carefully, affectionately and tenderly as I had been nurtured and loved from early youth, how void seemed my life, how sad was my aching, almost breaking heart. Oh ! when I now see sensitive, tender-hearted little children, cradled in the lap of tenderness and love, when no rude wind is allowed to blow upon them, when no words are spoken but those of kindness and approval, when their every wish is anticipated and cared for, and their very life is lined inside and out, as was the infant basket that held the child Moses, with the environments of pure affection, I almost shudder for the future of that child, lest the rude hand of sorrow overtake it, and all its bright hopes be destroyed and the tendrils of its heart be broken by the cold and pitiless winds of adversity and bereavement.

Dear father's death occurred May 24, 1877; and one bright balmy morning in the beginning of the month of September, I was ready to take the train for Logan. I said that no one cared to have me go, but in my brother's home was a dear little three-year-old household pet, who was the one only bright spot left amid the ruins of my youthful joys. She would throw her little arms about me when I was alone in my room shedding the tears I could not suppress, and say, "Evie loves you, Aunt Mollie, please do not cry," and her little arms lingered lovingly about me, as I was about to leave, and her sobs and tears made my sore heart feel that at least her dear little heart held a place for one even so deserted as I. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." "I will not leave you comfortless," saith the Saviour. How very sure are all His blessed promises, how forcibly have they been brought to pass in the storms that have swept their huge avalanches over my poor soul. Under the darkest of midnight clouds has the sun of righteousness ever shone, illuminating my pathway in the darkest hours and enabling me to lift up my voice out of the depths and cry unto the Saviour and to say, "Thou who hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth." Yes, out of the deepest depths of human suffering and woe, whither we have followed the footsteps of our Divine Redeemer, His tender, loving hand leads us into the sunlight of His redeeming love, unto the portals of eternal Day; into the happy land of peace. Peter says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered awhile, strengthen, establish, settle you." Oh, it is a wonderful way, the journey on which the poor little child of God starts out, that leads through great tribulation up to the Mount Zion on high, the fair city of our King, where He sits in resplendent glory on the great white throne, while all about are the white-robed throng who have

gone up through this same thorny way, this "way which they knew not, this path which they had not known," but who now stand before the throne, crying "Holy! Holy is the Lamb!" As I now sit here, though helpless upon a bed of pain, but with the sunshine of His love all about me, the shadow of this wonderful trust in Him, casting its golden light around my life, I now can look back to the dark hour of which I speak and see that the hand of love, pitiful, and very tender, was then leading me, and "that after that I had *suffered* awhile, His grace would strengthen, stablish, settle me." Not in a moment "can patience have her perfect work," but "*tribulation* must *work* it." Hence "these light afflictions," saith the apostle, "*work* for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But to return to my subject; I took the early east-bound train for Logan, travelling for the first time in my life any distance alone, and without my father. When I reached the depot in Logan I was met by my dear uncle and the cheery face of Dr. Little, our old family physician, both of whom greeted me with pleasant words of welcome. I was not long in being driven to my uncle's home, where I was kindly welcomed by my aunt and the dear little ones. My dear uncle treated me with much tenderness; and once, as I stood apart from the family on the veranda, thinking of my dear father, he laid his hand gently on my head and said: "dear child, you look so lonely." Three weeks passed by, then we were all called around the bed of that dear uncle to find his spirit already flown. He had been ailing a few days, but kept about the house, and about an hour before he died said he was so much better he thought if we would all retire to our rooms he could rest. A little while and auntie's voice called out in great alarm, and when the three children and his step-daughter and I reached his room he was lying on the bed *still* in the

embrace of death. Thus in a few short months did I stand and see the coffin-lid close for ever upon the features of two earthly friends I held so dear.

My dear aunt was completely broken down at the great shock, and I strove as much as possible to spare her all care and mental and physical effort. I therefore looked after all telegrams, many of the burial appointments, and, as there was quite a housefull of relatives and friends staying in the house, I took it upon myself to superintend the household affairs. This and my heavy sorrow proved too much for me, and the next day after the burial of my uncle I took one of my severe attacks. The family thought I was very near death, as did also the physician, as he afterwards told me. When I began to recover, my aunt told me the children were in constant terror lest another death take place in the family, and when I told her it was my intention to return to New Holland, I at once felt it accorded with her wishes. In a few days, though so weak I scarce could walk, I prepared for my journey, my physician all the while telling me it was a very dangerous undertaking, and assuring me if I did go his wife should accompany me to Lancaster, which she did, kindly assisting me in changing cars, and seeing me comfortably seated in the railway coach and under the kind conductor's charge ere she left me. Oh! how sad and desolate was my heart as the train sped onward, bearing me back to the only place I could call home, yet to whose shelter I had no real claim. Surely if any class of persons need kind words, it is the homeless orphans. To one thus bereft how soothing would be a welcoming smile, a word of welcome, or the assurance that somewhere in this wide world there is a home whose door is open to you, and loving, generous hearts willing and anxious to share the sweet influences and comforts of home with you. But the prospect of taking a confirmed invalid into one's home is not very cheering; and to perform such a self-sacrificing

deed of charity and kindness willingly, one would have to be actuated by a strong sense of duty, strengthened and upheld by both human and divine love.

When I came back to New Holland it was with the hope that I might engage in business of some kind; not that I specially needed to labor, for my income was then sufficient to supply all needs; but I knew I would be better content, and would not then feel burdensome to any one. A lady occupied rooms in a business building belonging to our estate and carried on millinery. I was deeply attached to her, and she offered me a partnership with her providing my health improved. But I grew worse, and by winter was so weak and emaciated I could scarcely walk about. The physicians here advised and urged me to go to a hospital. I wrote to our family physician at Logan, who procured admittance for me in St. Francis' Hospital at Columbus, Ohio. My brother who resides in Logan was here looking after the business of my father's estate, and he kindly accompanied me to Columbus, placing me in charge of Dr. Laving, President of Sterling Medical College, and the Sister Superior of St. Frances' Hospital. All the leading physicians belonging to the faculty examined me, and all agreed that the leading trouble was an ulcer in the stomach, and said it could be felt, by drawing the hand across the organ, very perceptibly. They gave me the same remedies the doctor at home had given me, with the same trying results. I think every dose of medicine I took, as well as food and drinks, were in a short time thrown up, and they finally said it was no use. It was a most interesting case they said, but it seemed evident to them I was better off without any treatment. Oh! how greatly disappointed did I feel. During my brief stay there I felt that I had crowded into my strange and changeful life almost the experience of years. It was during

the holidays, very cold, and the building was full of sick people to overflowing. It was impossible to secure a room to myself, so I was placed in a ward containing five cots, and in which were four sick ladies beside myself. In one cot lay a lady who seemed very ill, but whose pale face looked very interesting and intelligent. She held out her thin hand to me and smiling said, "I am so glad you are to occupy this ward." Near the door stood a cot, from which low, piteous moans were issuing, while every now and then in sad undertones, with a strong, foreign accent, came a cry, "Oh, Lord, let me die!" This patient I learned was a very young lady, whose husband had died while they were crossing the ocean. She reached New York homeless, friendless and penniless, soon fell ill and was taken to the "Home of the Friendless" in Cleveland. There she was found by one of the medical faculty here and brought to St. Francis'. She would eat nothing, talk to no one (though greatly petted by the doctors) and day and night, over and over, she would cry, "Lord, let me die." How we all pitied her, and we strove to soothe her, but our every word and act was repulsed. If one of us would attempt to smooth the raven hair or touch the soft cheek, she would turn away like a peevish child.

If one would see suffering and distress in every form, until it would almost appear that the world was but a mass of suffering humanity, one must go to a place like this. All night long and all through the day from the various wards would issue the moans and cries of the sick and suffering. The Sisters of Charity, notwithstanding the basis of their life-work is to enlarge the Catholic Church, are doing a grand work for suffering humanity. They pick up friendless children, clothe, feed and educate them. They will take men and women of the vilest habits out of the ditches, cleanse their vile bodies, clothe, feed and cure them. The most beautiful and fairest woman I ever saw was the sweet, noble, youthful

soul who had charge of the ward I was in, assisted by an older lady called Sister Polly. I learned that she was a titled lady belonging to a noble, aristocratic Catholic family in the old country, who, until she "took the veil," had never made her toilet without the assistance of a maid. She said her father kept seventy-five servants, and all her vast income she now expends on the charitable institutions of the Catholic Church. The beautiful nun of whom I spoke, was called "Sister Hildegard." Of her former history I learned nothing, but the beauty and purity of her face, the sweetness of her lovely life, which hung about her as the perfume of some rare flower, I can never forget. All day long and until nine o'clock at night these beautiful, refined ladies went up and down the long corridors, in and out of the wards, waiting on the sick, and with their own pretty hands mopping the floors and performing the most menial services for the sick. My heart went out to the beautiful Hildegard, whose angelic face seemed like sunshine in the wards; and though she treated me with much tenderness, always calling me "dear Mary," yet if through my impulsive love I would throw my arms about her and try to caress her, she would gently shake her head, and say "I love you, dear Mary, but I dare not kiss you." We had three regular meals a day, with a delicate lunch at 10 A. M. and 3 P. M., thus taking nourishment five times each day. Before each meal and at lunch-time "Sister Hildegard" would pray aloud in the corridor, repeating always what is called the Lord's prayer, in which all Catholic patients would join, rapidly counting their beads; then they would address a fervent petition to the Holy Virgin, asking of her the pardon of their sins.

One Sunday the Catholic patients said to me I ought to go to chapel that afternoon, as the infant Jesus would be seen in the manger for the last time. I asked Sister Polly if I might go, when she looked at me surprisedly and said, "Will

you really go?" When I assured her it was my wish to do so, she told me she would come for me when the bell rang. When first I entered the hospital, I noticed the outer doors were all barred after us; my trunk was taken from me and also my purse. The sisters wore the long black garments of cloth with a veil of the same, reaching to the waist and confined about the temples, under which was a band of snow-white linen. The patients all wore loose, ill-fitting garments with great loose slippers and coarse hose, while each one wore upon the head the inevitable little white cap. All my pride stood in arms against being rigged out myself in such horrid style, and strongly did I beg to be saved the horror at least of donning the funny-looking cap. Now I felt alternately amused and horrified at the thought of having my friends visit me here, if I must be dressed up in a style like that. When the chapel-bell rang I heard the patter of Sister Polly's tiny feet; and when I asked her if I could not get my shawl and bonnet, she hastily threw a red-striped patient's shawl about me and bade me follow her. Through the long corridor she led the way, then down a grand hall-way into the chapel. The altar was hung with rich tapestry, and a great many wax-tapers were burning, bringing into bold relief the highly wrought lace designs. At one end of the altar was a mock-manger, with a wreath of jets burning in a half-circle under which lay a large doll, which they called the child Jesus. My feelings cannot be told! Soon the grand organ began to chant; when in came the priest dressed in a long, white, elaborately embroidered robe, while four prettily dressed little boys, followed closely, jingling tiny silver bells. I asked Sister Hildegard if she would not have my Bible brought to me from my trunk. She said she would speak to the Sister Superior. Days passed by and I did not see my beloved Bible; then I asked the Sister if I could not have my own Bible would she please loan me a Catholic Bible. She seemed embarrassed,

and made some incoherent reply. No mirrors were allowed to come into the wards. For this I felt truly thankful; for if at any time the Sisters would command me to put on the funny, ridiculous gear worn by the established patients, I never would have had the courage to look at the reflection of the comic figure I was sure to cut.

After the physicians had prescribed for me, and the Sisters told them I did not retain anything I swallowed, they left off prescribing altogether; and when, after a time, I spoke to President Laving, he told me I was free to do as I liked, or return to my friends if I preferred, as I would do better without treatment. The Sisters, especially Sister Hildegard and the ladies in my ward, begged me to remain; but I did not think the blessing of God would rest upon me where I could not read His word. About the middle of January I prepared to leave the prison-like walls of St. Francis. Sister Hildegard said she would order a cab for me, but I waited until the middle of the afternoon before the cab drew up to the gate. The patients all crowded around me, many of them shedding tears and pressing me with little tokens of remembrance. Sister Hildegard took my arm and hand in hand we went down the walk to the curb-stone where the cab stood waiting. Tears filled her clear, lovely eyes and she pressed me to her in a long embrace, though, as before, she refused to allow any further demonstrations.

It was a long, cold drive to the depot; and when I found myself alone amid a vast, living throng of strangers, alone in that splendid capital city, the sun was fast sinking in the western horizon, and I knew not what to do or whither to turn. Learning that I could not reach New Holland before noon the next day, and finding a train would soon be due that would take me to Logan without change by eight that night, I resolved on the latter course. Not very

many persons entered the coach I took, and nearly all of those left it when we reached the City of Lancaster. Drawing my wraps and thick veil about me I gave myself up to reflection. How strange seemed the scenes through which I had passed. I always felt that God had a purpose in all His dealings with His children ; was I indeed His child ? And since He says in His word, " It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," why, and for what purpose had He led me to St. Francis, among a people of a different religion, and mostly of different nationality ? His blessing to heal my disease had not followed me, for I was coming away as ill as I went, and with a heart sick with disappointment. Just as I was leaving the hospital, a sweet-faced aged Catholic lady called to me, and as she came up gave me an affectionate farewell, and said : " You are so genteel, and we all love you and have been praying for your conversion ever since you came." Her words impressed me with a feeling that I had been surrounded with great danger, and that the gracious hand of my heavenly Father had delivered me through His dear infinite love, as He did Daniel when in the lion's den, or as He did the three Hebrew children. Those people were exceedingly kind to me ; indeed more so than to the other patients ; and possessed as I am naturally with a very strong sense of gratitude, I almost shudder to think into what deep wrong I might unconsciously have been led, had not the unseen hand of my dear Saviour delivered and saved me. Surely can I say :

" He near my soul has always stood,
His loving kindness, oh ! how good."

Oh, the matchless goodness of his wondrous, encircling love ! " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem," so has His dear love and protecting care seemed to follow me whithersoever I have gone ; and though alone in the world, no father, no mother, the Lord has taken me up, and He is

our God forever ; He will be our guide even unto death. Oh ! that I may praise him now and forever more !

It was long after night-fall when I left the railway coach at the depot in Logan, and among the jostling, hurrying crowd I saw no familiar face, heard no welcoming voice. Taking a cab I was not long in being driven through the lighted streets to my brother's residence. My brother was absent, but his wife and their three little children gave me a warm reception, which greatly soothed my aching heart. The next morning as I went to the window and looked out over the great snow-capped hills as they sloped back from the river banks, their towering heights glistening amid the golden glory of the rising sun, the dear familiar scenes brought up many memories of the past, awoke many tender emotions within me ; and over my tempest-tossed soul, I trust, there fell something of that restful peace, which we are told " passeth all understanding." The steady flow and the roar and music of the ceaseless river, as it wound its graceful curves in and out among the hills, reminded me of that " River, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of our God." And the thought came to me, that away across the ebb and flow of the tide of that wondrous river of Eternal life, is the sweet Home of the Soul ; and upon that shining strand, clothed in white are, I believe and trust, the redeemed and glorified spirits of my dear parents with all the blood-washed throng walking forever with Jesus, the great Saviour and Redeemer of our souls. As I stood at the window looking out upon the familiar scenes, my thoughts went out across the bridge of this natural river, over the snow-covered hills, where only a little way was the dear home of my childhood. But homeless though I was, to its sheltering wing I could no longer turn ; for its dear hearth-stone was deserted and silent, its once happy household broken ; no dear father's arms were there, held out to receive me ; no dear mother's welcoming

smile and voice to bid me come ; no brother's hurrying feet to meet me ; all those joys belong to the "long ago ;" strangers now own the once sacred spot, strange faces, strange voices, strange footsteps alone resound within those walls.

While making my toilet that morning, I looked in a mirror for the first time since I left New Holland for St. Francis' Hospital. I believe I had half expected to see perched upon my head the inevitable prim little invalid's cap, and I smiled as I beheld the same pale face with absolutely no traces of wrinkled age, for I felt as if years had elapsed since I entered those prison-like walls ; and I really felt a degree of satisfaction when I found the brown hair was still unmixed with grey. How dear, pious little Sister Polly would shake her head and stamp her pretty little feet were she to see me thus giving away to the weakness of such sinful vanity. But Sister Hildegard, dear beautiful maiden ; I guess she would forgive, for I doubt very much if she could resist the temptation of looking into a mirror herself, were it placed before her.

I had been in Logan but a few days, when my brother, who had been absent some time, returned. He said he thought I would be better satisfied to remain in Logan, at least for some length of time, than to return to New Holland. A few days afterward he told me that Mr. Howson, Clerk of the Common Pleas Court, was in need of some one to copy manuscripts for him, and that he offered me the place did I choose to accept it. As he offered to send all the work to my room, thus saving me from the disagreeable publicity of going to an office, I gladly accepted. My brother and his wife offered me a pleasant room on the second floor of their house, and I was to assist about the household duties between writing hours. I got along nicely with my work, but soon had a severe hemorrhage which prostrated me for two weeks ;

but rallying from this I again resumed my duties, and before I was again and finally stricken down, the snow had disappeared from off the hills, and from my window I could see their delicate green covering over which the sun cast its warmth and glow; the spring birds were sweetly singing, and the dear little children coming in from their refreshing rambles, would bring me great, fragrant clusters of sweet early blossoms. The goodness and tender mercy of God, seemed to be wafted on the mild spring breezes, to show itself in each fragrant bloom and bursting bud, in the glad song of the birds, and all his beautiful handiwork seemed to show forth his praise; and at times there would come over my bereaved, suffering soul a great wave of thankfulness and peace, and I would feel some respite from my great sorrow, on account of the loss of parents and home. Yet disease still gnawed away at my youthful vitality, and like some dangerous, venomous reptile, lay concealed in my pathway, only awaiting a favorable time to wind its sickening coils about me, thus securing me as a constant victim. One morning, after a night of great suffering with only a few moments of troubled sleep, when I attempted to stand on my feet, I was seized with the most excruciating pain. Again and again, after lying awhile, I attempted to rise but could not, and before mid-day my bad vomiting came on, and I begged my sister-in-law to call our old family physician. I had had a number of such attacks before, but my dear father had until during the last three, always been with me, and stayed by me. Oh, how I now missed him; how much I felt the need of his presence. For nearly four months during that exceedingly hot season was I confined to that room, and nearly all of the time to my couch. How often, when lying down in that pretty but very warm room, would I think for a time that I heard the familiar and beloved footstep of dear father on the walk below, and I would feel my being all aglow with gladness, ere would come to me

the sad realization that he was gone and I would no more hear the sound of his coming feet, no more listen to his familiar voice.

The wife of the Clerk of the Court became a devoted friend to me as I lay there, as did also Sister Martha Vanatta, who lived near, and a number of the ladies. I was fortunate to secure the services of a dear mother in Israel as nurse, and could I still have her motherly love and care, it would be the dearest earthly boon I could possess. A lovely lady of wealth and high social standing, who was an aunt to my brother's wife, was also exceedingly kind to me, and often would the soothing, cooling touch of her soft, white hand quiet me when all else would fail. As the pleasant faces of those dear friends are brought before me as I write, with what tender yearnings do my affections again go out to them, and to feel once more the the pressure of their hand, to hear the sound of their voices, would be an inexpressible joy to me. My people there are Presbyterians; and their minister, whom they introduced as Mr. Hart, came frequently to see me, and his kind, fatherly manner, his conversation, his prayers, were really a comfort to me; and never, while time and memory last, will I forget this kind gentleman's attentions to me. When at times I would murmur some word of thanks, he would say, "No, no, I loved your father; besides, I too am a father; and maybe my daughters will one day be sick and orphaned, then the Lord will raise some one up to comfort them." The Methodist minister at New Holland, who lived next door to my brother there, together with his wife, had also been very kind after my father's death; and while I lay sick at Logan, the wife paid me a visit which was very cheering, and thus while I was pressed sorely with affliction and sorrow, yet did the blessed Lord, on the other hand, strew my pathway on every side with choice blessings, and underneath it all were his dear, everlasting arms, and over all was the shadow of his shelter-

ing wing, and the beautiful sunshine of his undying, unchangeable love. Oh, that I may praise him now and forevermore, for his goodness and tender care.

One bright morning toward the last of May, when the air was balmy and pure, when came into my sick room the fragrance of sweet-scented honeysuckle and bright blooming roses, and there flitted past my window every now and then a tiny, gold-crested humming-bird, my brother came to the door and said that in the parlor below was an old friend who wished very much to see me. I did not recognize him as he entered my room, but my brother introduced him as Colonel O. L. Jackson, of New Castle, Pennsylvania. How very surprised and pleased I was. In early youth, in the golden days, at the dear old home, this young man had been a frequent and welcome visitor. When the war broke out he got up a company in Logan, and as captain of the company entered the war. He was wounded in the head, and lay hovering between life and death for a long time, but finally rallying (though he will never cease to suffer from the wound), he resumed his station and office, which was then that of Colonel of his regiment. From the time he entered the army until this bright morning in May we had not met, as he had, at the close of the war, become a successful lawyer in his native town of New Castle, Pa. He was now on a short visit to Logan, amid the familiar scenes and places, to renew old acquaintances, and to recreate after long and steady application to his profession. Every day during his stay he came around from his hotel and spent a little while in my sick room, and very pleasant were the moments, and quickly did time pass as we talked over the old days and associations. Then the leave-taking came, and I watched this handsome, intellectual friend go out from my presence and my life, most probably forever. Thus do the paths of human friends in this social life, cross and recross each other. Sincere and pleasant friendships are

formed to continue for awhile, then some day, somewhere, the golden chain is broken, and we see their faces no more. Yet to me there is something very enjoyable, beautiful and ennobling about true, unselfish friendship. When thinking of it, there is always brought to my mind the friendship that existed between David, the "sweet singer of Israel," and Jonathan, the son of David's bitter enemy, King Saul. How sincerely and deeply did David mourn the death of Jonathan; and it was then that he declared the love of his brother Jonathan was "wonderful, passing the love of women."

Five miles west of Logan is the plain Baptist meeting-house, near which flow the clear waters of the creek where the sacred ordinance of baptism is administered. In this plain structure, with its uncarpeted aisles and uncushioned seats, for thirty-seven years my dear departed father fearlessly and boldly, "declared the whole counsel of God," and proclaimed the glorious news of the gospel, which is "good tidings of great joy," and, indeed, "good news to the poor." But here Time has also placed his destructive hand, as he has everywhere in the past, as he will in all future ages. The form that now fills that pulpit and stands as a watchman upon Zion's walls, is not that of my beloved father; my mother's seat is filled by another; all, all is changed, save the blessed gospel. That, oh, thanks be unto our God! cannot, will never change; and we are sweetly assured that life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature shall separate us from the love of our living, glorious Redeemer; and that nothing, not even the powers of Satan, shall pluck one of the least of his little ones out of his hand. Oh! the security, the restfulness to be found by those who, like the gentle, humble Moabitish maiden, Ruth, have come to trust, and to rest under the wings of the Almighty.

During the month of July, when the scorching rays of the mid-summer sun beat pitilessly upon us, making my pretty

little room, with its sides facing the east and west, seem almost like a heated furnace, my youngest brother and wife and little daughter, with whom I now find a permanent home, paid me an unexpected visit. How it cheered and gladdened me, and how fervently did my heart go out in love to them. They were only going to remain over one day and night, and I thought if I could only go back to New Holland with them I would get well. I urged them to carry me down stairs to see if I could not then feel able to undertake the journey. I was now so thin in flesh, that one person could carry me without fatigue. With an arm round each of my brothers, they attempted to carry me down stairs, but before we reached the stairway, I became so faint and ill that they were obliged to take me back to my tiresome couch. Sad indeed was my heart as I saw those loved ones from my window enter the coach to be driven to the depot. When the hot days began to give place to pleasanter weather, and there came at last the breezy days of September, I began to slowly improve, and as my strength came back my anxiety to return to New Holland increased. Slowly, day after day, I got my belongings together, little by little, and packed in my trunk. While I lay in bed the dropsical swelling all left my body, but now that I began to move about, it returned again. One gloomy looking morning, about the middle of September, I was ready for my contemplated journey.

A few neighbors gathered in to say, "good-bye." My brother drove me to the depot in an easy carriage. My dear young niece, Cora, accompanied me, from whom I was very loath to part. How this dear, winsome child did twine herself about my heart, and she seemed to return my affection with all the warmth of her fresh young life. When we reached the depot we found it one living mass of moving humanity. So many persons entered the train for Columbus, where the state fair was being held, that it was with difficulty my brother

found me a seat beside a lady of our acquaintance. My physician was on the train going to Columbus, and when we reached Lancaster, he assisted me to the ladies' parlor, told the agent to see me on the Cincinnati train, and engaged for me a lunch before he again boarded his own train. I now found myself weak, ill and alone. But from the agent and the person who kept the refreshment stand, I received every kind attention; and when my train came up, they placed me under the conductor's care, who seated me and arranged my shawls and pillows. Very sad were my reflections as the train sped onward, moving me away from my childhood friends and scenes, I felt assured, for ever, back to the only place I could call home, yet which alas! was not home. Like poor Rosey, the feeble, friendless and forlorn creature whose plaintive cry so went to all hearts in St. Francis Hospital, I longed, I hoped, yes, and I tried to pray, too, that I might die; and the most soothing hope and thought that came to me on that dreary, weary journey was that I might soon die and be laid to rest. But oh! how mysterious and incomprehensible are the dealings of Divine Providence. Not yet was it His will to call me. Little by little in the furnace of affliction did He see fit to let the dross slowly burn off and to try me, as I trust, that I might come forth as gold, purified and fit for the Master's use. Oh! if I could but think and believe that notwithstanding all my sinfulness, my utter insignificance before Him, He is preparing me for His glorious Kingdom above, and that in that great day when He comes to make up His jewels, I shall be found among them; if I, like poor afflicted Job, could say at all times in the midst of *my* great trial, "When thou hast tried me I shall come forth as gold," and with assurance say and feel, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" then could I indeed "be still, and know that He is God," and bowing submissively to His will in all things, say "Thy will, dearest

Lord, not mine, be done." What a victory I would then have, and how patiently could I "wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change came."

I reached New Holland the same day on which I left Logan, weary and ill indeed, but glad to be back, and so glad to see the dear familiar faces of my youngest brother and wife, and my little pet niece, whose animated, childish chatter and smiles of welcome made glad my weary, homesick heart. After resting here a few days, accompanied by one of my cousins, I again took the train to go to Washington, thence to Good Hope, where the Indian Creek Association was held. This proved to be the last time I was (as it now appears) ever to meet with the people of my faith and order, in a public assembly and a church capacity. In the railway coach, in which we rode as far as Washington, there were very few travelers, but when we took the south-bound train for Good Hope, the coaches all seemed to be crowded. There was much animated conversation going on, and as I caught now and then portions of it, I knew I was in company with my own spiritual kindred, though I saw no faces that I knew. Just across the aisle, sat two sweet-faced ladies, towards whom I felt singularly drawn. Try as I would, I could not wholly withdraw my gaze from at least one face, which to me seemed quite charming. Reader, do you believe in personal magnetism? I do. When I left the train and entered the large, commodious carriage sent by my cousin, Robert Yeoman, to meet friends going to his house, I was greatly pleased to see the lady of whom I spoke become one of the party also. During the ride I had no opportunity to address or approach her, but when we reached Cousin Robert's she was introduced to me as Sister Jennie Shambaugh, of Xenia, Ohio. How my heart bounded with pleasurable emotions. She was one of my loved and valued correspondents. When I told her that I quite fell in love with her in the train, not dreaming who she

was, she told me she had experienced the same pleasurable emotions regarding myself. I was here joined by Mattie Derr, a dear sister whose acquaintance I had formed when at Logan.

Only six months had elapsed since I, with other sorrowing friends, had followed the funeral bier of my dear father out from this beautiful home, twelve miles across the beautiful stretch of country to its final resting place in the lovely burial grounds at New Holland. My uncle, Albert Parker, was one of the number then, but now he too was sleeping the sleep "from which none ever wake to weep." Only a year previous to this, another brother, the late Elder Joseph Parker, died in this same place. Thus in quick succession did my father and his brothers pass away, for before the coming of another year still another brother, the last of the family save one, was carried to the grave. Notwithstanding the sad associations connected with the place, and the sorrow I felt when I entered the room which had been the place of my father's death-bed scene, I became exceedingly happy. Here I met for the first and last time our late dear Elder Danks, of Cincinnati; Elder Harvey Wright, of Indiana, and Elder R. M. Thomas, of Missouri. Especially did I enjoy the preaching and conversation of Elder Danks. The one sermon which I heard him preach was from the text, "And this God is our God forever; He will be our guide *even* unto death." It was particularly edifying and comforting to me, and many have been the delicious morsels that I have partaken of as I have gone back, from time to time, and gathered up baskets full of fragments. At this association I met some of the sweetest, dearest sisters, whose minds seemed lifted above the petty vanities of this life, and who were as truly refined and cultured as any that it has ever been my privilege to meet. It seemed a heaven below, and I felt that it certainly was a foretaste of joys of

that sinless clime, "Where congregations ne'er break up." This delightful, heavenly assembly, however, must break up, sad farewells must be said, partings must take place. But in yonder blessed abode, no parting ever comes, no tears are shed, the song of praise is not hushed and love flows on and on from heart to heart and from the great Fountain Source in an unbroken stream of unending joy and unalloyed bliss. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Sweetly, oh, very sweetly, do we realize the truth of this beautiful Psalm, when we meet with those who "know the joyful sound," who speak the language of one's soul, who "have no confidence in the flesh," but who give all the glory to our King. One of the evidences that we have passed from death unto life, saith the Apostle, is that "we love the brethren." Surely each heaven-born, awakened soul, no matter how feeble his hope, can, when mingling with those who give evidence of having been with Jesus and learned of him, lay hold of this evidence, and thereby experience a revival of the hope which to us seems so small, but which is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

On Sunday evening when the glorious sun was sinking in the west, and all nature seemed to feel that rare hush and serene peacefulness we sometimes experience after a Sabbath day of worship, and of unclouded brightness, with heartfelt sorrow I took leave of my dear kindred in Christ; and accompanied by my cousin, Charles Parker, and Sister Mattie Derr, went over to the village of Good Hope, a mile distant, to spend the night. When in the quiet of my sleeping-room that night, all my bereavements and my loneliness came afresh to mind, and the sorrow pent up in my heart burst forth, and the exalted tension of my over-strained nerves also gave way, leaving me ill, weak and almost strengthless. I thought of each dear happy-looking face from which I had parted, and wondered

if among all those smiling, seemingly happy beings, there was one whose heart was so sad, so bereaved, so homesick as mine. All seemed to be ready with eager happy feet to turn homeward. I had no home to which to go; and again the cry arose from the great gulf of my sorrow that I might die, for I felt at least the earth would not murmur or receive me grudgingly. Yet to no one, at least into no human ear did I pour my grief; and I had not yet learned to go boldly to the throne of grace with the trustfulness of a little child, as I believe I have since learned to do; neither had I yet felt in all its sweet fulness, that the dear Lord does, indeed, take us up into his everlasting arms, and comfort us, "as one whom his mother comforteth." I was so prostrated the next day that I had to be carried to the train. I had no dropsical symptoms then, but looked ill and emaciated, and my presence in the coach created quite a commotion among the passengers, so that the conductor had to enquire into the nature of my ailment, in order to restore quiet, as it seemed some one started the story that I was a yellow fever victim from the South. When we reached Washington, we found we were half an hour late, and our train was gone. We entered a carriage and were driven to a hotel, and here my condition excited quite as much alarm as it did on the cars. The occupants all left the parlor, and the landlord called my cousin out to inquire the cause of my sickness, for here, too, the idea had gone over the building that a yellow fever patient had come from New Orleans. This was during the terrible epidemic reign of that fatal fever in the South. The landlord very politely apologized afterwards, but I began to conclude if I was becoming such an object of fear to my fellow beings, I should certainly keep in the background from henceforth. When we reached New Holland it was quite late in the night; the air was balmy, the sky clear, the full moon shed its

radiance upon us, whilst myriads of stars studded the blue vault of heaven. My dear, good brother was at the depot waiting; and when he told me he had been disturbed because of my non-appearance at an earlier hour, and said that he no longer felt satisfied when I was absent, my heart was filled with a great, deep thankfulness. Oh, what a soothing balm to me were his kind words and deeds. Kind words! what a depth of meaning they express! What delicious fragrance often flows into the dark recesses of the soul at the utterance of just *one* kind word!

“Only listen—they are speaking, spirit voices sweet and low,
 Sweet as perfumed breath of summer, gentle as the streamlet’s
 flow;
 When an unkind look is given, when an angry word is said,
 Hark! they whisper, patience, pardon, bend the knee and bow the
 head.”

How wide is the difference between unkind words and kind ones. Whilst “a soft answer turneth away wrath,” and a kind look and word falls like a soothing balm into a stricken heart, soothing its sorrows, healing its wounds, one angry look and word carries into the hearts, often, the poison of reptiles, and rankles there to show itself in every evil passion. It is only when the love of Christ is *in* the heart, when “Charity which forgiveth all things,” controls us, that such evil seed sown does not bring forth the same evil fruit. But even Christians, though they do forgive, cannot forget; and often the keen anguish that is felt when one has received some unkind word or thrust, will be brought back by memory’s undying efforts, and again and again be felt long after it has been spoken. Kind words cost us nothing, and very often prove to be “bread cast upon the waters,” to return to us after many days. I would that we could all more carefully cultivate and use them. “Life at best is but a vapor that soon vanisheth away,” and how much better we would all

feel if we could go down to the grave with the consciousness that the heart of no fellow being has been wounded or made to ache by any unkind word spoken by us. Let us, then, strive to utter :

“ Little words of kindness,
Little deeds of love ;
'Twill make our home an Eden
Like to that above.”

I now became permanently settled in the home of my youngest brother. I had used every available means to restore my health, only to fail.

I had striven in various ways to settle myself in business, so that I might live and set up a home for myself independent of my relatives ; for of all dreaded calamities the thought of being dependent for a home, a burden and in the way, was the most terrible. But I had failed in that as well as all else, and like Job, I could bitterly, truly say, “ That which I feared has come upon me.” My disease now laid hold upon me with redoubled force, and with the most destructive results, undermining both strength of body and mind. I became afraid of myself, afraid that in some frenzied moment of temporary madness I might end all, by taking my own life. Oh ! those dark days of sorrow, when darkness and mid-night gloom settled down upon me, so that I dreaded the natural light of day. The sunlight mocked me ; the songs of birds sank into my heart like death-knells ; nature no longer held a charm for me ; and no ray from the Sun of Righteousness seemed to penetrate the mid-night darkness. Intense as was my bodily pain, far more unbearable was the mental anguish that bore down upon me with its crushing weight. Nor was this mental state without its causes. I was the victim of a deep and bitter wrong ; and like the Psalmist David, “ It was mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who did eat bread at my table, who turned the heel against

me." It was not enough that I, who had been so tenderly nurtured in a home whose rule was the law of human kindness, should now be homeless; it was not enough that I had lost father and mother and health; I had yet to endure the bitterness of knowing that one, whom I had so dearly loved and trusted, had become false, was my enemy, whose bitter rage left no stone unturned whereby they might do me an injury. "But thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord." I have lived to see my enemy's evil devices for the destruction of another thwarted, and returned upon themselves; and can sweetly say that, "many are the afflictions of the righteous, but out of them all the Lord delivereth them." Truly when my father and my mother did forsake me, then the blessed Lord took me up. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." "The Lord *is* thy Keeper." "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil." "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even forever more." What blessed promises, and how sure, coming from the God who changeth not, and who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Truly they who trust in Him "shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever." Then what have those who are in Christ, who have put in Him all their trust, to fear? Not even Satan, with all his numerous host, hath power to injure one hair of our heads. "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the *night* watches. Because thou hast been my help therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."—Psalm lxxiii: 6, 7. Oh! how sweet, after the fierce, black storms that have swept over my soul, when I sank down, down amid the waves of the mighty deep, that out of the depths my cry went unto the

Lord, that He heard my voice, and that now I can lift up mine eyes "unto the hills from whence cometh my help," and that under the shadow of His dear sheltering wings I am now made to rejoice, while peace flows like a river into my soul, filling every avenue with the pure crystal waters from the river of God's love. Oh! this wondrous, unfailing river, which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. No wave, not even a ripple of sorrow or woe, shall ever disturb its pure crystal surface, and none but the redeemed and purified shall walk upon its shining banks. But "they that have gone up through much tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," shall drink forever from this pure, living stream.

Not very long after I became settled here the father of my brother's wife, who was a widower, living two miles in the country alone with his unmarried son, became very ill, and sister Lottie was called there to nurse him. My brother's business was then such that he was absent all of the time, and what to do I did not know. I engaged an elderly woman to stay with me who had nothing whatever to do but prepare her own meals, as days would elapse without my being able to take any nourishment but milk, yet her charges were so exorbitant and my funds now becoming so low, I could not long retain her. The pastor of the M. E. Church, coming in with the doctor one morning, heard me relating my sad story, and kindly offered to send one of his daughters to stay with me at nights. And thus I dragged along my wretched existence until New Years, when death ended the suffering of my sister's father, and I had the comfort once more of her society. The dropsy had now become one of my permanent symptoms; and though I continued to go about most of the time and assist some about the work, my person and limbs were swollen out of all natural proportions. One year passed in much this way. Then about the middle

of the second winter I took a hard chill followed by high fever, delerium and entire unconsciousness. For sometime, though they said my eyes were wide open and staring, I could see nothing at all, and would call sister Lottie when she was right by me. Soon my left limb became one continuous blister. The blister broke, and large quantities of water oozed out, leaving the flesh raw for month after month. The odor was so bad no one could stay near me. Finally the limbs healed so I could walk a little on crutches, but for about six months before I quit walking I would fall backward every time I tried to get up, and often when standing quite still I would suddenly lose my balance and fall heavily backwards to the floor. Sometimes I would be seized with hard cramps in the whole length of the limbs, until knots would form along the leaders. All the while I suffered more than tongue can tell. Well do I remember the last time I walked. I felt a chill coming on in the morning, and as it was warm weather, and there was no fire in any of the rooms but the kitchen, I determined to go there. Attempting to get up from my couch I fell backward. Calling the hired girl, I asked her to assist me to arise; she did so, kindly helping me to a seat near the fire. It was not long until I became unconscious, and I sat there in the kitchen all day long, conscious of nothing save the awful burning and pains in my limbs. As night came on my sister and the girl came to help me back to my room. At every step it seemed as though sharp-pointed needles were piercing my feet and limbs, and gradually, day by day, the flesh bursted open, leaving great furrows. The flesh on the toes of the left foot fell off, leaving the foot a hideous mass. After a time the flesh again grew on the toes; but they were badly deformed, and soon again bursted, and have ever since been a mass of ulcers. A greater part of all this while I labored under great darkness and depression of mind, longing for death above all things. The pain in my

limbs and body was so great it were vain to attempt to describe it ; I just sat on the bed or in the chair and cried most of the time. Gradually I grew worse, and day by day did my strength slip away, together with all hope of ever being any better in health. But as all my earthly hopes and reliances left me, one by one, and I watched the flight of earthly joys, experienced the spoiling of my earthly idols, there gradually stole over my broken spirits the calm, sweet influences of heavenly resignation. The promised blessing of the Holy Comforter came into the chambers of my soul, and grace, amazing, soul-sustaining, *saving* grace, gave me something of the "oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ;" stripped of all earthly props, deprived of those earthly blessings which are so pleasant, and are so anxiously sought after, my dearest Lord and Saviour, threw round about me, even me, who am less than the least of all, His dear, everlasting arms. "He strengthened me upon my bed of languishing ; He made all my bed in my sickness," and has truly, during all this wonderful pathway of almost unparalleled suffering and trial, caused "patience to have her perfect work." Patience has been a gift to me, just the same as has His wondrous grace. "Tribulation," says Paul, "worketh patience." Men and women come to see me from almost everywhere. They look with pity and wonder upon my indescribable suffering. They say they know not how I endure it. They give *me* credit for having great patience ; all the while I know no great credit is due me. It is not through any power of mine that I sit here from day to day with a serene countenance, a greater part of the time "clothed and in my right mind," quietly and uncomplainingly enduring what no *human* being *could* endure *alone*. But it is all due to "Christ who dwelleth in me, the hope of glory," and because "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

It was not very long after the utter breaking down of my health until my financial horizon began to darken. Notwithstanding the large sums paid to physicians, and nurses and other heavy expenses, I had kept within the bounds of my income. But soon a gentleman to whom I had loaned money failed; I had no security, so I lost both interest and principal. In less than a year a relative by marriage petitioned in court for a partition of the real estate, the rents from which the other heirs had agreed should be mine during my life. Attorneys were employed, and the whole affair put beyond the help or protestation of the other heirs before I had any knowledge of it. This was a severe blow to me; for those who wished to thus deprive me of what was, by verbal agreement, my right, were neither sick nor destitute. But the same sustaining power held me up, and He who causeth the lilies to grow, who feedeth the ravens and careth for the sparrows, has sweetly verified His blessed promise to care for me; and forcibly indeed have I realized that He never leaves nor forsakes those who trust in Him, and who cast on Him their cares.

Oh, what a safe resting place, what a calm, sweet retreat, have I found beneath the shadow of His sheltering wing! Stripped of all hopes of earthly joys, deprived of almost every source of earthly help and trust, I have had no source to which to look save "unto the hills from whence cometh my help;" and truly "my help has come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Daily, hourly, does He shed the golden sunshine of His love and care about me. He causes blessings to flow into my darkened life like distilling dew, refreshing my drooping, weary soul and filling my heart with thanksgiving and praise. In the gift of a fragrant flower, in the offering of some choice article of food, and above all, in the love and fellowship manifested to me by my dear spiritual kindred throughout the land, I am enabled to see the marks of His dear hand, and to return thanksgiving and honor and

praise and adoration to his wondrous, matchless name. Then, too, the kindness of the dear little family under whose roof I am placed, through all these years of such intense pain, in having borne with me, and in sharing with me the comforts of their pretty little home, has aroused within me emotions of deepest gratitude and love, not only to them, but also to the Great Giver of all good. The kindness and attentions of the people of this village have also been very cheering to me. From the beginning of my journey of life until now the love and watch-care of my beloved Saviour has been thrown about me; and with assurance I feel to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;" and whether I be low in the valley of humiliation, sinking under the weight of affliction and sorrow, or upon the mountain top, viewing with rapture the glories and beauties of the fair land of Promise, my times are in His hand; and it is always the same dear Friend, constant and true, who leadeth me. Oh! to be led by the hand of such a wise and loving Father; to be encircled by His wondrous love; to be saved by the gift and power of His grace; what more could we wish for?

I am now about to close the open volume from which I have allowed the reader to read some of the pages of my past. Some of its turned-down pages, sealed with a woman's tears, in which are youthful hopes, and dreams and aspirations, have been left undisturbed and untouched; for even myself, when I came to those places, have felt to move softly, like one walking over the graves of the sacred dead. It will not be long now until this life, to all who now tread the earth, will be ended, and the places that know us now will soon know us no more forever.

"Swift as a weaver's shuttle speed our years;"
Nor would I stop their flight;
"No, hasten and bear me to that golden shore,
Where eyes shall cease weeping and hearts break no more."

How anxiously do I look forward to the coming of our Lord—to the blessed time when the very same dear, compassionate, loving Jesus, whom the disciples said, ascended into heaven, and who, the angels said, “would come again,” and who himself said, “where I am there ye shall be also,” will, with His own dear voice, call me home to the sinless land, to be with Him and all the redeemed family for evermore. Here we often yearn for the society of the saints, for the companionship of those we hold most dear, when our longing cannot be gratified, because an insurmountable space lies between and separates us; but on yonder bright shore there will be no intervening space, nor anything to interrupt or mar the sweet fellowship of kindred souls. Oh, may we all, by the power of His grace, by the indwelling and guidance of His Holy Spirit, be made meet to dwell with Him and all the Israel of God in glory. This truly is my prayer for Jesus’ sake.

“Holy Spirit, guide and guard me,
 Train me for the realms above;
 There to share the endless glory,
 Purchased by redeeming love.

Let not worldly joys ensnare us,
 Empty, fleeting, false and vain;
 Point me to that blissful region,
 Where eternal blessings reign.

Where no more shall care or sorrow,
 Prey upon my anxious breast,
 Where’s no night and no to-morrow,
 But one changeless scene of rest.

Holy Spirit, hover near me,
 Till this life of death is done;
 Then in Christian triumph bear me
 To the Almighty, Three in One.”

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, O., May 11, 1891.

EXPERIENCE

From "*The Signs of the Times*," of April, 1869.

Copy of a letter written to a minister, and friend, and copied for my father.

I promised you the last time you were here that I would write you the rest of my experience ; but the many cares that so soon fell upon me, owing to my mother's affliction, have allowed me but little time to write. If I could write as some do, it would not be such a task to write to God's dear children ; but I fear that I too much lack in spiritual wisdom and understanding, to attempt to write anything concerning those things which should at all times make up my thoughts and fill my mind with anxious trembling and fear. You already know something of the sorrow and trials through which my soul has passed ; but as you wish to know more of the way through which I have been led, I will try to write you as definitely as I can, and if it is unsatisfactory to you, as I am sure it will be to me, and if you can discover no traces of a work of grace begun in my heart, I hope you will be frank to acknowledge it.

I think I was brought to a sense of my sinfulness, and to feel the need of a Saviour's love at quite an early age ; but I thought I must do something to make me worthy of it—something that I had never yet done. I was sick a great deal, and one of my aunts told me she was afraid I would not live

to be a woman. I replied if I knew the Lord loved me I would be willing to die at any time. She said if I would pray often, and ask the Lord to forgive my sins, he would not turn me off. And from that time I took to reading the Bible when I thought there was no one watching me; and I would often try to pray; but sometimes when trying to pray there would come over me such a sense of my wickedness that I would start with fear, and run from the place almost shrieking aloud. I would think I never would attempt to pray again, for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; and I would quit reading the Bible, too, for every thing there condemned me, and made me more afraid. I dreaded for night to come; for I lay awake many times until the midnight hour, thinking of my dreadful condition, and fearing often that Satan was near me, ready to bind me in his burning chains; and when at last I would fall asleep I would sometimes be startled with the most frightful dreams; and at one time I dreamed of Satan's being at my bedside, trying to get me away with him. The family noticed there was something wrong, and said they were afraid I was going crazy; and I wondered if I really was rational. But this fear of hell, and of Satan wore away, or at any rate the worst of it left me, and I was brought to think more of Christ; but not as my Saviour. I read the Bible sometimes; and although I loved to read of the sufferings and crucifixion of Christ, and could see plainly how others might be cleansed by His blood, I could not think it could reach me. Christ died for the elect, and they were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world; and his saving power would reach no farther. I felt this to be a hard doctrine, but nevertheless true. I believed that the Lord's people were an elect people; but they were happy and Christlike, and although I outwardly appeared as good as they, I was inwardly vile as could be, and very like Satan; and how dared I to think that Christ died for me. It

would be wicked, presumptuous sin, and would only draw me nearer to the brink of hell. O no ! I must try to banish such thoughts ; I was not fit to think of Christ. He is pure, and righteous, and holy ; I am all corruption. But, oh, I could not help it, I must think of Jesus, must want to love him. Was he not meek, tender, and compassionate ? Did he not say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ?" Was I not heavy laden ? and might there not be a little hope ? Thus I would reason with myself, and there would a quietness steal over me for awhile ; and indeed I would become quite careless for a time—would seek gay company, become light and vain, and think I would never have those gloomy thoughts any more. It was no use ; I could be cheerful like my young associates if I would try, and oh ! I would. But soon a gloomy depression would seize me, and I would be sorry I had joined those merry outbursts of laughter, and taken part in their foolish acts and light conversation. It was often difficult to get my mind on my studies at school, and my heart seemed to be filled with such wicked rebellion toward God, I was afraid to look in His word lest the wickedness in my heart would gush forth in words, and thus bring more wrath and indignation upon me ; and where could I turn for help ? Did not God clothe and feed me, and preserve the lives of those I love as well as prolong my own life ? and why could I not love Him, and look to him for the salvation of my soul ? And in spite of all the rebellion in my heart I felt a longing desire toward Christ. I certainly did want to love him ; there was none else to turn to ; and if I could only feel that he would let me love him, that he would let me cling to him as my strong tower, my rock, my refuge, my all, how happy I would be, and how secure from the storms of Satan that had so threatened to engulf me. But I could see nothing in myself to merit his love ; I was so unlike any one else. I know when I

heard Christians talk, they did not appear to think they were good but seemed to feel very sinful. But oh, they were not like me! They were the elect, were born again, and had been made righteous through the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. They possessed two natures, the old one sinful, but it could do them no harm; they were now safe in Christ; while I had but one nature, and that altogether sinful. When about twelve years of age I attended a Methodist prayer-meeting, which was held at a neighbor's house, and after they were done praying an old man arose, and talked to the young folks awhile, and finally began walking around the room, talking to each one separately; and as he drew near where I sat, he asked a young girl if she loved the Lord, and she openly replied in the negative. He admonished her most severely, and told her she was going straight to hell, and spoke much like he thought she could help it, if she would only "become resolved." I began to fear he would come to me and ask the same question; and how could I answer him? Would it be right to say I love the Lord? O no; it would be acting the hypocrite I feared: and yet I could not, dared not, answer as that young girl did. I wondered if Christians really knew they loved the Lord; and I longed to tell father and mother how troubled I was; but O no! I would not have them know I was feeling so for anything. I did speak to a young Baptist lady, who was spending the winter here, about my feelings, and she talked very kindly and comfortingly to me, and also related to me some of her own experience. And now I began to wonder if this really was the Lord at work in my heart. Perhaps it might be. Perhaps I might yet behold that pure and holy God, and praise him like those favored ones who have had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. I felt calm now, and I thought almost happy; but still I had not

lost my burden of sin, and I soon began to wish that I had not spoken of my feelings to my friend ; for it seemed she did not see me as I saw myself, or comprehend my words aright ; besides, I was afraid she would tell my parents I was born again, and thus I would not only be a sinner, but also a hypocrite and deceiver of God's people. I was now old enough to be invited to parties, and I attended several with my brothers, but always felt so badly afterwards that I resolved not to go to places of merriment of any kind ; and when asked why I was so old-fashioned, and solicited by my brothers to accompany them, I would answer I did not think it right to go ; besides I could not enjoy them. And this also would make me feel as though I were acting the hypocrite ; for by withdrawing from the world and its pleasures, was I not trying to make believe I was pious ! Did not Satan prompt me to do these things, and thus make me an instrument of his, to try to deceive some of the elect ? And on the whole, was it not very gratifying to my nature to have people think I was good and pious ? These thoughts would drive me almost mad, and I would pray God not to let me be a hypocrite—to take me out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and forgive my many sins. About this time my father baptized two young ladies at Waterloo, both of whom I knew and loved, and with one of whom I had been corresponding. They wrote him their experience, and he asked me to read one of them aloud to some friends one evening. I knew what the letter contained, and although I wanted to read it, and did not like to disobey father's wishes, still I felt I must refuse ; for if I tried to read it aloud I feared I would lose all self-control, and then thought I would lay myself liable to be questioned by my father, and this I dreaded above everything else ; for what could I tell him ? True, I was troubled, and in some things it seemed much like those girls ; but they were soon delivered, while I was hedged in on every side by Satan and

corruption, which I could not see through. They were happy and could look away to Christ, and had recognized Him as their Redeemer; but my case was quite different from theirs. But on being pressed I began to read the letter, and had read but little when my heart began to swell so that I felt I must quit; and I told father as calmly as I could that I could not read more; and said, by way of excuse, the room was too warm, and I would smother if I did not get some air. On leaving the room I met mother coming in, and she inquired what ailed me. I replied, my voice choking with emotion, that I did not know. I cannot express the sorrow I felt when alone. It seemed of all the Lord's creatures there was not one like me—none so miserable and wretched. And although I tried to pray and ask the Lord to make me like those girls, to show me my sins and lead me to Christ, it gave me no relief; for I could not think that He would hear me, or that I had in any way been led as they. Surely, I thought, there was no hope for me. There had been times when I had hoped that I might one day receive a hope in Christ, but it was no use to deceive myself longer, and I reflected on some things I had said to my grandmother when alone with her, and a few allusions to my mother concerning Christ, when I felt somewhat calm in my mind; and these things alone were enough to sentence my soul to everlasting banishment. For my grandmother had told me that she thought Christ did love me, that I would be saved, and that she thought me good; and it was plainly seen that all this was done to make them believe that I was a Christian, while I was nothing but a miserable hypocrite, a presumptuous reprobate. And oh! why could I not be wise? Why would I drag my own soul into hell and make good Christians, whom I dearly loved, think I was good, and not tell them what I really was? I attended meeting every month, but very often I did not remember anything that was said; and if I would pay attention to the preaching for awhile

and become affected when the minister talked on experience, my mind would soon be drawn away, either to reflect on the condition of my soul, or on something worldly. But I must pass over many things here that crowd my mind. You spoke truly when you said you knew I could not tell you all I had experienced. I will now come to the year 1865, and a few months before you visited us the first time. I was taken sick in June, and I felt as though I would never recover. There was a heavy burden resting upon my mind, but I did not seem to have much fear of hell, for I felt that—

“If my soul were sent to hell,
His righteous law approved it well.”

But I had a great desire to be found in Christ, and be numbered with the redeemed. Christ said, “Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.” And this occupied my mind almost constantly. I very much feared that I had no right to think that I had been born again. I felt perfectly helpless, and knew if I were saved at all, it must be by Christ alone. I had thought I must do something myself to make me worthy of His love. I had tried, or rather had tried to try, but only grew worse; and in looking over my life there was so much to regret, and so little that was pleasing to the Lord, I knew that if myself or works had anything to do with saving my soul, I was forever lost. My friends were very kind to me during my illness, but no one said anything to me about the one thing that most troubled my mind; and I did so desire to hear Christians talk, and thought it would be such a relief if I could hear father pray, or some one preach. When I became convalescent, the same lady to whom I first spoke of my feelings was again visiting here, and when alone with her one evening she asked me to tell her all. I told her how sin-sick I was, and how helpless, and that there could be no hope for me, for none could be saved but the elect;

and if I were of the elect, if Christ loved me, I would have had some manifestation of it, and some evidence that my sins were pardoned. One evening, a short time after this, I walked out a short distance alone to pray. I felt like my heart would break, and although it seemed wrong and useless to implore God for mercy, yet I felt I must. I would only utter the cry of the poor publican; and almost before the cry had escaped my lips there seemed to be a great light enveloping me. I cannot describe it. It was so brilliant and beautiful that I felt I was going to be ushered into the immediate presence of Jehovah, and knew that no one could see God and live. I was seized with trembling; but when I arose and opened my eyes, my burden was gone. Jesus was mine now, and life would no longer be a burden, nor death a dread. My heart was like a glad child's, and such a sweet, blessed peace stole over me that I thought sin and doubts would never trouble me more. Everything seemed changed, and the moon, which before looked dark and frowny, seemed to be shining upon me as if it too might be glad I had found peace with God. But this delightful feeling did not last long, and before you came here I was sunk in the lowest depths of despondency. Your sermon the first day, which was the first preaching I had heard for a long time, seemed particularly adapted to my feelings. I had thought I had not a friend in the world; there was no one cared whether such a sinner was saved or not. But my heart was drawn out toward you, and I thought I would like to talk to you about my trouble; but when I came home you were engaged in conversation with father, and I neither saw an opportunity to talk with you, nor longer particularly desired it. That night while you were praying I felt quite indifferent, until you began to pray for a "poor sinner, if there might be one present, who was seeking the Lord's face, sorrowing;" and I found it difficult to control my emotions until you had finished. When we arose, I went into the

next room to recover my self-possession. You came in directly, affecting to want a drink of water, and asked me if I were not in trouble ; and you know what I told you. I was surprised indeed when you said you thought I was born again, and a fit subject for baptism. I told you in my letters afterward what kept me so long from taking up my cross and following the Saviour in the ordinance of baptism. And I thought I would not, dared not make an open profession of religion. It was too presumptuous, too assuming for one so sinful and insignificant ; but that saying of Christ, " He that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God," haunted me continually ; and although I felt unworthy, and still do, of the least place among His saints, yet I sometimes feel thankful that I was at last enabled to take up my cross and follow Him who is meek and lowly in heart. O, it is so sweet to trust in Christ, to lean upon Him, feel His love, and look to Him for everything ; and although our path in life may be hard, and death may take from us those we love, if Christ be our friend, we need fear no evil ; for will He not make us to lie down in green pastures, and lead us beside still waters ? and shall not His rod and His staff comfort us ? How I ought to praise Him, even while here, that He has made me, as I trust, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and desire to turn from the world with all its deceitful pleasures and vanities forever, to seek my all in Christ, and thank Him that He does, notwithstanding my wanderings and backslidings in heart, sometimes manifest Himself to me as the God of my salvation, and make me to rejoice with joy that is unspeakable. How can I describe this sweet peace, this quiet that sometimes steals over me, and most often it comes after a severe storm that I have thought would swallow me up in its dense blackness, so that the Sun of Righteousness could not get to me with healing in His wings. But, blessed be the name of Jesus, He walketh upon the storm, and with His gentle

and compassionate voice, cries, "It is I, be not afraid." O, if I could but be more believing, look more to Christ, and not so much to myself, how much faster and lighter would the steps of time move on, and how much more patiently could I wait until my change come.

But I fear I will tax your patience too severely. I have only hinted a part of my experience, but it will appear selfish to write more of my thoughts, unless they were more weighty. I have been obliged to pen my thoughts hurriedly, and if I have been paradoxical in some places, and in others tediously minute, I hope you will excuse me. With such a mind and intellect, how could I do anything nicely or to my satisfaction? Father has spoken words of comfort and consolation to me, but I would rather have the opinion of some one who loves me less. If you have doubts that I have been taught in Heaven's school, don't, I beg you, shrink from telling me so. O that the Lord would strengthen my weak hands and feeble knees if I am His child, that I may "walk and not be weary, and run, and not faint."

Hoping the Lord will keep you from error and guide you into all truth,

I am, as ever, your friend,

MARY PARKER.

LETTERS

The following letter contains some particulars of the sudden attack of Elder Parker referred to in the REMINISCENCES, which affected both mind and body, and from which he never fully recovered, although his death did not occur until about eight years afterward. It was written, as will appear, at his request when he was very feeble, and when her mother was a helpless invalid, and expresses her own emotions under the sad and trying circumstances, and her abiding trust in the Lord. The two letters which immediately follow this speak particularly of the last hours of her dear mother, of her own illness afterward and of the change which this bereavement made necessary in her home.

EWING, Hocking County, Ohio, April 26, 1869.

Elder Durand:

I shrink and almost faint at the task that is before me. Since you received that letter from my father a great change has taken place in him. He was complaining at the time the letter was written, and was then so nervous that he could scarcely feed himself; but he said nothing about it to you, thinking that it was only caused by becoming too much fatigued during a rather tedious journey that he had finished only a little while before, and that it would soon pass off. But it was not so. Those nervous symptoms seemed to increase rather than diminish; and that, together with his asthma, has kept him from attending any of his appointments abroad (except two) during all of the three winter months.

He preached at Scott's Creek on the second Saturday and Sunday in March, and the next Wednesday, the weather being fine, and his health, he thought, improving, he started to fill his appointment at Waterloo. He reached my brother's, in New Holland, on the evening of the 19th, where he was taken violently ill, sometime during the night, with bilious typhoid-pneumonia.

The physician succeeded in breaking the fever in a few days, but afterwards an abscess formed and opened in his right lung, and he has since been so ill that no one, not even the physicians, of whom three were called, had the least hope that he would recover. I went to my brother's as soon as I heard that he was so ill, and, with the exception of one day and night, when I was quite sick myself, I have been in constant attendance on him. He knew me when I got there and said, "I am so glad you have come to me, dear. I am so sick; but it is all right. Everything my Father does is all right."

He has borne his sickness, it appears to me, with almost supernatural endurance, and has never been heard to murmur or complain, no matter how severe his suffering. The disease seems to affect his intellect, and it is sadly impaired. Sometimes he will speak quite rationally, then again he will talk very wildly. His voice is very weak, but of late he wants to talk much. He will begin a subject, but before he proceeds far his ideas seem to desert him, and unless we can guess from his beginning what he was going to tell, we cannot make out his meaning. Of this he seems to be perfectly conscious, and says he is afraid that he will never know anything again. From the time that the abscess formed in his lung, we could discover no change for the better until some over a week ago. His cough became less violent and his lung has since been healing. As his body began to gain strength, his mind became more rational and he seemed to

realize now for the first time that he was far from his wife and home. The doctor said that his one thought now was to get home, and his mind had become so childish that his every wish must be indulged or the result would almost kill him. There would be a great risk to run, he said, in taking him so far while he was so weak, but he did not think he would get any better while there, and last Wednesday I, in company with my brother Eden, started to bring him home. He stood the trip to Bremen on the cars very well, and after resting at the house of a Baptist friend in Bremen two days, we resumed our journey. But this part of the journey, a distance of twenty-five miles, which had to be made in a carriage and over rough mud roads, proved very fatiguing to him. We reached home, however, last Sunday, and with the exception of being some weaker, I cannot see that the journey has made him much worse. On my return home I found quite a number of letters to my father, and among them a very excellent one from you. I read it to him and I think he understood the greater part of it pretty well. When I finished reading it he said, "O, it is so nice," and made me promise him that I would write you a line soon, telling you how ill he has been; and it is by his request, as well as that of my mother, that I write you these lines.

Father has spoken of you several times during his illness. At one time he said he would like to see you again. He had thought he could meet you at some of your associations, but it was all over now. The physician says he thinks that unless he takes a relapse he may possibly recover, but it will be a long time; and it will be several months, he says, before he is able to resume his ministerial labors, if ever. I have much feared that if he did recover his health he would not his soundness of mind, but the doctor assures me that as his health and strength return so will his memory and presence of mind. This is a severe trial to my mother, who is still badly

afflicted, and also to me, for my heart has always been so wrapped up in my father. But the Lord knows best, and His will must be done in all things. If my father's work is finished here I think he will be taken home. If not, I know the Lord is able to raise him up from this bed of affliction, and prepare him to still be of use in His cause.

I was sorry indeed to hear of the affliction in your father's family, but God's people are an afflicted people, and I know that the Lord will strengthen and comfort you in all of your trials, and enable you to speak comfortably to those of your family who may not be so strong to endure such trials. Ministers, I think, of all others are best fitted to endure these things. They are able to look at such things rightly, to meet them calmly, and submit to the Lord's will in every thing with patience. At any rate it has always seemed so with my father; and in every trial of my life, until now, I have sought words of comfort from him, which he gave so willingly. My parents are growing old and afflicted. As they are now I fear that I will not long be blest with their society here. But when every earthly prop is gone, and every dear tie broken, I hope I will be brought to cling more closely to Christ, and rest more steadfastly in his blessed promises. I drew much comfort from your last letter to my father, and I hope you will accept my thanks for it. I do not know whether he will ever be able again either to write or to dictate; but if he is, he will be glad, I know, to resume the correspondence with you. You correspond with Elder Barker, and I suppose you can hear from my father through him. Knowing myself as I do it is a great task to write to any of the Lord's children, and this is why I so shrink from obeying my parents wishes in writing to you. My mother and brother John wish to be remembered in love to you. My uncle, Albert Parker, and his wife, who have lately been here, also send love and kind wishes. Please give my love to your sisters. I have never

met them, but I am sure the Lord loves them, and I hope I love his children everywhere. Hoping we may have the privilege of hearing from you often through the *Signs*, if we cannot privately, and hoping also, the Lord will be with you through all of your trials, I am, I hope,

Your sister in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

EWING, Hocking Co., Ohio.

April, 1870.

ELDER SILAS H. DURAND :

Dear Brother :

I have been very ill, and if I write it will be with great difficulty, but I thought I would try, and hope you will pass by the many mistakes you will be likely to find. You will perhaps have learned, through the *Signs*, ere this reaches you, that I have no dear mother now. She was taken to her long, happy home on Tuesday evening, March 13th. It is the greatest sorrow I ever knew, but we have all been soothed and strengthened by Him who is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, and by the sweet assurance that our loved one is now enjoying the smiles of her blessed Redeemer, and is forever freed from sorrow and sin, and all the ills of this life. She had been complaining for about a month; but as she had been subject to such spells, and we had been assured by the physician that her disease would not cause death, we did not feel very uneasy. On Monday evening the doctor called and said she was doing finely, and that she would be quite strong in a few days. The next morning, which was her last morning on earth, she sat in her arm chair while I arranged her bed and hair, but I noticed she became very tired, and her face and eyes had a look I had not seen them wear before. At about one o'clock in the after-

noon she suddenly took very bad, and her suffering was intense until half an hour before she died, when she lay perfectly quiet, and seemed to have no pain in body or mind. She was conscious until the last, and when the doctors came she told them it was no use ; she was almost gone. I knelt beside her a few moments before she breathed her last. She drew me to her and, kissing me passionately, said : “ Don’t fret ; I am calm ; the Lord will take care of all of us.” They took me away then, but my brother Amos told me that she smiled, and all was over. Oh ! Elder Durand, if you could have seen the face of my dear mother after death, and noted the smile that lingered on her lips and lighted up her countenance so that it looked like that of an angel, you could not have doubted that Jesus had been there, and that she was now in the full enjoyment of that rest for which her soul so longed while here.

Soon after my mother died I was taken with a fainting spell, and the next morning had the same disease that caused my mother’s death. I was glad when the doctor told me, and felt greatly soothed by the thought and hope that I would soon be where mother and Jesus are ; but, for some purpose unknown to me, my life has been prolonged, and I find that I must still linger here in this dark world of sorrow, to suffer, sin and be tried. But in this, as well as in all things else, I would pray, Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done. Father’s health and mind have been much better since I wrote you last, and he preached twice this winter, almost as well as he used to ; but this great affliction is very hard for him, and he is very feeble now. It greatly distressed me when I lay sick to have him watch me so anxiously, when I felt that he so needed my care. I hope to soon be able to take care of him again ; and hope, too, that he may be spared to me yet a little while, until this wound is at least slightly healed. It is very hard for my father to live without mother, for their lives have

been so closely linked together. Mother was born in New Jersey, father in East Virginia; but their parents came to this state and settled in the same neighborhood at the same time. They married early, were awakened, received a hope in Christ, and were baptized at the same time; and his life will be very lonely now indeed.

When your letter came I was not allowed to see any one but my relations, but they let me read it, and it did me much good. I think the Lord put it into your heart to write just when you did. Let me thank you for writing, and for those pleasant words of fellowship you spoke. I had often thought that you, and all who read my poor letter that was published in the *Signs*, must certainly know that I am a dreadful hypocrite. The news of the death of your venerable and highly gifted father made me very sad. My parents also expressed their sorrow and sympathy at your great loss. Your family has had deep affliction; but few are so blessed with spiritual gifts and blessings. Your sister Bessie's communication in the *Signs* of March 13th, I have lately read. It was very comforting to me, and made my heart bound forth in love to her. Those are precious words our Saviour spoke, and that you quoted in your letter, "I will not leave you comfortless;" and He says, too, "I will come to you;" "I will never leave nor forsake you," and many other blessed sayings and promises we have, without which we would not know where to go, or how to bear up under the great waves of sorrow that go over us. We know, too, in times like this, that His promises are sure, and that he is not slack in performing them, when we feel them fulfilled in ourselves. Those books arrived safely, and I scarcely need tell you that we were highly pleased and comforted by them. Sister Sarah took sick some time in February, and has been confined to her room ever since; but I hear she is convalescent now, and hope she will be able to meet with the rest of the saints, in the house prepared for the

worship of God, on next Saturday. It is my father's intention now to sell the farm, and leave this vicinity by fall. I hope we will find ourselves settled among some of the dear people of God. May I not hope that when you have leisure you will indulge me with another of your comforting letters?

Your sister in affliction and sorrow,

MARY PARKER.

EWING, September 4, 1870.

MISS ROSINA B. DURAND.

Dear Sister in Christ :

Your pleasant and very comforting letter has been in the house one month, and yet remains unanswered.

I was taken very sick at the time of mother's death, with inflammation of the stomach, and a disease of the spine. I thought myself recovering when I wrote to your brother ; but the disease returned within a few days with most alarming force, and before there was any change for the better I was brought very near the grave. I am able now to go about and superintend the affairs of the house ; but still am weak in body and mind. My physician says I need not hope to recuperate otherwise than slowly, but I find myself much too frequently murmuring at my slow recovery, and the hardness of my lot.

When I look about me and see the many blessings that have thus far attended my pathway, and how undeserving I have ever been of any one of the blessings I have enjoyed, I feel that my murmurings and complaints should be forever hushed, and that the remainder of the days allotted to me here should be spent in praise and thanksgiving to Him from whom all our blessings flow. I have greatly missed the affection and kind sympathy of my dear mother in my affliction ; and who would not ? for what love can be stronger and of more

infinite value, except the love of Christ itself, than that of a gentle and affectionate mother? But still I have not *wanted* to complain, or wish her back again. In the realm of everlasting love and light how much better off are those of our friends whom we have reason to believe have gone there, than we who can scarcely ever get a glimpse of the eternal glories of God, and who, when we do see them, "see through a glass darkly." I cannot tell you, dear sister, how gladly I received your letter, and the interest its contents awakened within me. I know that I could not, were I in health, write a letter that would compare with yours, and I cannot hope to say anything to comfort you, or pay you for the pains in writing; but when I say that your letter did comfort a poor weak sinner, who, you say, you believe is looking forward to the same precious hope that you yourself enjoy, will you not feel repaid for your trouble?

I was much animated at the faint hope your letter gave me that I might have the pleasure of seeing you once in the flesh, and that we would once again be refreshed by the coming of your brother among us; but as it is now autumn, and we have had no other tidings that you are coming, I fear our hopes will not be fulfilled. Perhaps you will come yet; and I should be so very glad to have you come here, and would do all I could to make your stay pleasant. My father seems pretty well in body at present, though his mind is still impaired. He does not often attempt to speak in the pulpit. The news of the death of Elder Samuel Carpenter, one of the oldest as well as the most gifted ministers belonging to the Muskingum Association, has lately reached us; and it gives father great sorrow, as they had long been very intimate friends, and have met and conquered many difficulties together. Father has much to suffer and endure, but his kind Master, whom he has long served, will not forsake him in his hour of anguish and trial. His Bible and "bower," as he

terms his place of prayer, seem dearer to him than anything else ; and sometimes when I hear him speak of the goodness of God, and listen to his humble, affecting prayer, I feel strongly impressed that it will not be long until he, too, will be called away to dwell with Christ and the angels in glory. My sheet is almost full, and I fear to allow myself another. Your dear mother, sister and yourself will please accept my best love. We would all likewise wish to be remembered kindly to Elder Durand. If you are willing to bear with the poor return your letter meets, I hope to hear from you again, and may then be in a better mood to reply.

Affectionately your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

EXTRACTS

Between the years 1876 and 1887 a number of private letters were published in *The Signs of the Times*, and republished by Mrs. Alma F. McNaughten in a little volume entitled, very appropriately, "Collection of Gems," which contained also many other letters written by our dear Sister Mary. These letters are very interesting ; rich in expression of her deep and varied experience, and clear in statement of gospel truth. As that book has been widely circulated, however, we have not thought best to give them in full in this volume, but present a few extracts which have particular reference to scenes and circumstances mentioned in the REMINISCENCES, and to her own condition ; such as will help to bring her, in her peculiarly tried and afflicted life, more clearly and intimately into the acquaintance of her many loving and sympathizing friends who have never seen her, which is the object in publishing this book.

NEW HOLLAND, O., Sept. 19, 1876.

Dear Sister Helen :

I address this letter to you, but I write not alone to you, but also to your dear sisters and mother.

Through the goodness of God we arrived home safely. We were both greatly fatigued, but neither of us found much opportunity to rest, for we found our home too damp to stay in, with everything covered with mold, and one of my brothers and his wife very sick with typhus fever. This fever, with its almost always fatal consequences, has been prevailing here for a few weeks to an alarming extent, and the entire community seems overcast with gloom and dread. There is scarcely a day that we do not see the hearse pass by, amid the tolling of the bells, reminding us that one after another of our fellow-beings is being summoned by the Master to enter upon an eternity, either of endless punishment and woe, or of everlasting joy and light and peace. How terrible it must be to die without an interest in the blood which alone cleanseth from all sin ! But to enjoy a good hope through grace, and to feel within ourselves the sweet assurance that when the storm of life is past there is a home prepared for us in the paradise of God, is too sweet, too glorious for expression. There, too, we know that we shall be entirely freed from the terrible fetters of sin that so bind and annoy us here, and that we shall be clothed in "raiment clean and white," and that, instead of this vile body, clothed in its filthy habiliments of sin, we shall have a spiritual body clothed in the glorious robe of righteousness.

* * * * *

I would like to have spent a longer time in your society, as would also my father. He was deeply impressed with his visit at your hospitable home, and says he thinks of it every hour in the day.

Do you remember the first conversation we had about spiritual things, Sister Helen? In the morning, soon after

we arrived, I was lying upon the bed in your mother's room ; you sat down beside me, and in the few moments of the interchange of thoughts my heart was drawn toward you in a love that I trust is not worldly in its nature. Afterward, while conversing with your sisters, seeing how anxiously they desired to hear spiritual conversation, and listening to the few expressions of their feelings they gave, I felt the same warmth of love to them and your dear mother that was already kindled in my heart for you. The Apostle John says, " We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren ; " and when we meet those who at once give an evidence that they " have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him," though they be strangers in the flesh, yet do we feel a love and heavenly drawing toward them. Should not this strengthen our feeble hope, and sweetly assure us that we are the characters to whom the gospel is addressed ?

My health, as well as my father's, is about as it was when I saw you. I cannot see that my disease yields any, either to internal treatment or to outward influences. But I do think my visit to Kentucky invigorated my mind. The entire freedom from care, the new and delightful scenes, and the kind and sympathizing faces that greeted me everywhere, were very restful to the mind. My feeble strength has been greatly taxed since my return by helping attend the sick, and restoring our home to its usual order. Through the mercy of God my brother and his wife are now convalescing, and we have reason to hope they will soon be fully restored to health. I have often thought since we came home how nice it would be to have you visit me, Sister Helen. Can you not do so ? You and one of your sisters could come.

I beg you to excuse this poor letter, written in the midst of many interruptions. We send much love to all, your kind father included. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am,

Affectionately, your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, Ohio, Sept., 1877.

Dear Brother and Sister Cartwright :

Your welcome and kind letter reached me at Logan, where I have been staying most of the time since dear father's death. At the earnest solicitation of my uncle, Mr. Albert Parker, I went to his house as soon as affairs here were so that I could leave, fully expecting to remain there until winter; but a few weeks after my arrival there my dear uncle was torn from us, and taken up where Jesus and the dear saints reign in glory. It was a trying scene to me, so soon after witnessing the death of my beloved father, to stand by the death-bed of my next-best earthly friend, to see three little children suddenly bereft of a tender father's love and care, and my gentle, clinging aunt robbed of her earthly friend and protector; but I think I may truthfully say that underneath it all we have felt the "everlasting arms." My uncle lay a corpse in the house several days, and during the first two days the grief of his little son Frank was heartrending to witness; all efforts to console him seemed fruitless. Not only did he mourn the loss of his dear father, but he seemed bowed down with a sense of his own sinfulness and depravity, and was made to feel that where his father had gone he could never come—the separation must be forever. But blessed be God, who comforteth them that are cast down, He was pleased to reveal Himself to this tried and broken-hearted child as his Saviour and Redeemer, and to give him "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." To hear that child speak of the goodness of God in appearing to him in the midst of sorrow and mourning, and removing the great, the heavy load of sin, in speaking peace to his troubled soul, and making his bleeding heart rejoice with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, was truly wonderful. A lady

who stood by, listening with the rest of us, in breathless silence, to the sweet ascriptions of joy and praise that came from the child's lips, said: "You had been praying and calling upon the Lord, had you not?" "No," said, he, "I do not think I was thinking of the Lord at all. I was sitting on the sofa in the parlor, when, it seems, my mind was taken off of my sorrow, off of all earthly things, and was led up into heaven, where I saw Jesus and father, in a happy world, where no suffering could reach him." And here he again spoke of the goodness and loving kindness of God, of the vanity and emptiness of the world, and of the inability of ourselves to do anything to merit salvation, in a manner that rejoiced as well as astonished us all beyond expression. How true, I thought, that "it is not of him that willeth, but of God who showeth mercy."

On Saturday after dear uncle's interment, little Frank related his exercise of mind before the church at Scott's Creek, and was baptized the next day by Elder Barker, so that whilst the church mourned the loss of one of its most efficient members, still they have cause to rejoice that God's wisdom and power have been displayed in so remarkable a manner in their midst.

LOGAN, Ohio, March 24, 1878.

My Very Dear Brother in Christ:

You will see by this that I am still in a tabernacle of sin, though it is much to the surprise of my friends and the disappointment of myself. My doctor says he feels as though I am one come back from the dead; and I look very much like it, so pale and thin has my illness rendered me. I had a very bad attack in December last, and when I recovered the physicians advised me to go to a hospital, hoping by so doing I

might be relieved, if not cured. One of my brothers accompanied me to Columbus on the first of January, and gave me in charge of the president of Starling Medical College, and the Lady Superior of St. Francis' Hospital, of that city. I only remained there five days. My disease was pronounced incurable, and I was at once discharged. Medical men say I have an unusual amount of vitality, and may live and suffer a long while, but cannot get well. I hope and pray that the grace which has hitherto sustained me will still buoy me up, and enable me to wait patiently all the days of my appointed time until my change comes. The goodness of God to me has been wonderful indeed. Though so very ill, and suffering excruciating pain of body, I felt better in mind than I ever did in my life, and it seemed that I could almost see the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the great King, and the heavenly host praising Him around the throne. It is sweet indeed to stand upon the shore, and by an eye of faith catch bright glimpses of the glorious city just beyond. In the twenty-first chapter of Revelation we have a beautiful and vivid description of the holy city. As I lay thinking of the golden city, of its jasper walls, of the precious stones, the gates of pearls, I thought how beautiful it all is; and yet if God, the Alpha and Omega, the Bright and Morning Star, did not dwell in this beautiful city, what a poor place would it be to the child of God. If Jesus, our Redeemer and Saviour, were not there, how dull and lusterless would be the transparent gold of even this beautiful place. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Ah! this is what gladdens our hearts: the thought, the blessed thought, that Jesus is there, the glory and light of the place.

NEW HOLLAND, O., Oct. 4, 1878.

MRS. MATTIE S. KAGA.

My Beloved Sister in the Lord:

Your letters are both received, and the one bearing yesterday's date has just been read. Your sweet, sisterly devotion and Christian love are as surprising as they are comforting and soothing. I think my blessed Heavenly Father puts it into your heart, my dear sister, to feel thus concerned about me. Severely afflicted, and suffering untold agony of body and mind, a kind and gentle word from a loving heart is indeed a soothing balm to my aching and tempest-tossed mind. How aching and tempest-tossed my heart has been for some time no language could express. My afflictions never seemed so unbearable as they have of late, simply because I do not have that blessed assurance that underneath me are the everlasting arms. I seem to be without hope and without God in the world. In vain have I sought comfort in the word by prayer; the face of my dear Redeemer is hidden behind the thick clouds that my sins have formed between me and His blessed and soul-cheering presence. And when will it be removed? Will my blessed Saviour cast off forever? "Will He be favorable no more?" "O, that I knew where I might find Him," and "O, that I were as in months past," is the language continually of my heart. I said I *seemed* to be without hope; but thanks to His holy name, so long as there is a promise on which to lay hold, no poor, helpless sinner need be without hope. * * * "This God is our God forever; He will be our guide even unto death." O, the sweetness, the comfort, the strength that comes to us with such words. It illumines the soul with a rapturous gladness, a holy fervidness, a heavenly calmness that language cannot express. It contains voices more powerful than the ocean's roar. It bears music as soft and sweet as that the angels play upon

their harps of gold. It fills us with a light and warmth that surpass the glory of our midsummer's sun. When such promises flow in upon the soul, we feel that we are indeed being led beside the still waters, that we are come into the banqueting house, that we have entered the peaceful harbor, that we are held by the sure and steadfast anchor, and care not for the roaring billows or the raging storms without.

But I fear I shall weary you. You will please accept this imperfect letter, written under great bodily pain, as a response to both of yours. Except my brief, frequent letters to Dr. Little, this is the first letter I have written for many months. My health is no better, and my sufferings are excruciating beyond description. The pleasant autumn days have come, and will soon be gone; but the balmy air, the mellow, golden sunlight peculiar to this season of the year, have so far brought no tinge to my cheeks, or strength or vigor to my weakened frame. I am discouraged, and feel that

“When a few more days are wasted,
When a few more scenes are o'er,
When a few more griefs are tasted,
I shall fall to rise no more.”

I would like much to visit you, dear Mattie, but, unless I improve, it would be imprudent for me to attempt a journey of that length unaccompanied. I am very lonely, and if possible, do most ardently desire you to come here.

Thanking you for your dear letters, and hoping to be remembered often in your prayers,

I am, affectionately, your unworthy friend and sister,

MARY PARKER.

To Mr. Cornelius Myers, a very aged man living at Locktown, N. J., now deceased.

NEW HOLLAND, Ohio, Aug. 9, 1882.

Very Dear Brother in Christ :

Your kind letter was duly received. Words would fail to express the pleasure I derived from its perusal. I have read it over and over again, and your extreme kindness and the many expressions of love and Christian fellowship are sweetly and indelibly impressed upon my heart. My dear, departed mother was a native of your state, and that would cause your letter to meet with a welcome if there was no other bond between us; but while reading your precious letter, how my heart went out to you in Christian love, and I almost felt that you were here with me, a living presence, and that we were talking together face to face. What a blessed privilege I would esteem it could I see you and your aged companion, and listen to the sweet, old, old story of Jesus and His love. Methinks I should never tire of sitting at your feet, and quietly learning of you. The society and companionship of the aged is always very pleasant to me, though but thirty-two myself. I feel little interest in the society of the young and giddy people of the world. Their conversation tires me, and their vain talk affords me no pleasure. You say, dear brother, that erysipelas is one of your troubles. I, too, am afflicted with Saint Anthony's fire, or rose erysipelas. My limbs fill with water until the skin bursts, and the water leaps out to the amount of a gallon every twenty-four hours. The water is poisonous, and causes erysipelas. They ulcerate and slough terribly, and it is very afflicting indeed. Do you know of anything that relieves it? I have never found anything to relieve mine but cold water, which I use constantly. My dropsy is general, and since it attacked my body, over two years ago, I have not lain down night or day. I sit upright on a lounge, with my

feet upon a stool. Within the last month I have walked about my room on crutches, but it causes great pain and exhaustion. I wanted to answer your dear letter at once, but my limbs had quit discharging, and I was either in a stupor or in too great agony of pain to write. A few days ago one of them again bursted, and the discharge is sufficient to relieve both the stupor and the pain that precede it. I always find comfort when I think of Lazarus, of Job, and many others who endured a great fight of affliction. And O, it is such a sweet comfort to read or hear the dear children of God relate their trials and afflictions. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but out of them all the Lord delivers them. Blessed be His name, His promises are sure; and ere long I hope, dear brother, that He will come with power and great deliverance to each poor, trembling one, and give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Happy, glorious exchange! Then we shall realize that our light afflictions did work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

I do hope you will write again to me. I certainly think the dear Lord put it into your heart to write to me, for I do assure you your letter is a very great comfort. Remember me in love to your dear wife. With much gratitude and Christian love, I am your sister in affliction,

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, Ohio, August 9, 1883.

MRS. KATE SWARTOUT,

My Dear Sister in the Blessed Saviour :

Your most welcome and interesting letter was received a few days ago. I am very weak and stupid, both naturally and spiritually, and very illy fitted to write to a person like yourself, who is gifted in spiritual things; but I want you to

know that I appreciate your letter, and your kind motive in writing to a poor, weak worm, who, if I belong to the great Shepherd's little flock, am the very least and poorest of them all. It is very pleasant indeed to be held in kindly remembrance by our dear kindred in Christ, and to receive letters or visits from the brethren and sisters is the greatest earthly joy that comes to me amid my affliction and pain and darkness of mind. I am so glad that you described your affliction to me. It is a comfort to know that I am not walking alone in this troubled way, but that others are chosen in the furnace of affliction as well as myself. I can sympathize with you in your disappointment. When you are brought to the very gates of death, and feel that the peace which floweth like a river, and the sweet rest that is found only beyond the grave, shall soon be yours to enjoy for evermore, then to feel one's self slowly coming back to life and strength, to be obliged to mingle with the world and engage in worldly things, oh! is it not disappointment indeed? How often has this been the case with myself? How often have I been almost down in the valley of the shadow of death, and when I found myself obliged to turn back, how great was my bitterness! But, my dear sister, I think I was taught a useful lesson last winter, when at one time my friends and physician all thought me to be dying. All my natural senses seemed to be leaving me, and I felt like one just hanging upon the brink of another world; but though I had no fear, and all looked bright and shining on the other shore, yet Jesus seemed not yet ready to call me home. He seemed to make me feel that I must stay here yet awhile for His dear sake, because He willed it so; and I witnessed the life and strength slowly returning to me with a calmer degree of trustful resignation to His divine will than ever before, and I think I have ever since been able to feel and say, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." How thankful I have ever since felt for

this lesson, and how glad to be made willing to suffer trial, sorrow and affliction for His dear sake, if it is through this terrible darkness that I am to be purified before I reach the land of eternal light and glory. "By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation." We pray for grace, we long for holiness, we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we long for an answer to our prayers; but oh! how differently comes the answer from what we expected. Instead of worldly prosperity there often comes poverty; in the place of the longed-for ease and earthly happiness and great self-complacency, there come great tribulation and darkness of mind; and when "by terrible things in righteousness" He answers our prayers, He breaks our teeth with gravel stones, and gives us a stone for a pillow, instead of one of softest down. We are often surprised that our prayers are thus answered, and we exclaim, as did Jacob, "All these things are against me;" forgetting the while that He will try us as gold is tried, and that in the furnace of affliction He has chosen us. Dear sister, our affliction is hard for us to bear, for "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous;" but do we not sometimes sweetly realize that it yieldeth even to us the "peaceable fruit of righteousness?" Is it not one of the terrible things by which He answers us, as well as among the all things which work together for our good? Through all our afflictions, our headaches, our heart-aches, the awful sense of indwelling corruption and sin, shall not His grace be sufficient for us? Looking away beyond these things to the sufferings, the agony, the groans of the dear Saviour, who in all our affliction is afflicted, and who by His death brought salvation unto us, can we not find grace and comfort and help in every time of need? Oh, what a blessed Saviour He is to us, and how blessed we are through Him. What need we have to praise and adore one who has done such wonders for us.

You quote this passage in your dear letter: "Be thou faithful unto death," and very truly say, "There is no promise of rest here." But, my dear sister, in the promise that He will be with us even unto death, do we not find a great harbor of safety? And to those who look for new heavens and a new earth, if there is not rest, there is sweetness in the looking forward to the time when we can enjoy that perfect rest found only beyond the grave. The goodness of God is over all and extendeth to all, and to each one of us He metes out the proper portion and needful share of gifts. You, my dear sister, who are deprived of health, are blessed with a wonderful gift to expound the Scriptures, and comfort the tried little ones throughout the length and breadth of the land. Another may be void of the this gift, but may be gifted or blessed in another way, so that they may be useful in the Lord's vineyard; so that whether we live or die, we are the Lord's; and whether we have long life, or are early taken away, it is according to His will and goodness and love.

I have not been able to stand on my feet for a year; but with the exception of two hard attacks, which prostrated me entirely for a week, I have been freer from intense pain of late than at any other length of time since I took dropsy. It is a terrible disease, when, as in my case, the limbs burst, and erysipelas follows. Like any other disease that weakens and debilitates the body, it weakens the mind, and I am often like you, mentally depressed and filled with gloomy forebodings; but we must be patient. Ere long we, with all our troubles, shall pass away, and if not deceived, shall have beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." O shall not the glorified spirit, just awakened in the likeness of the blessed Redeemer, shout glad hosannas to Him who is Lord of lords and King of kings?

MARY PARKER.

The following is from a letter to Mrs. Neffie Biggs, of Williamston, N. C., who was herself a helpless invalid, and a remarkable example of patience under affliction, and of spiritual-mindedness. She was released from her sufferings four years ago. The letter is dated at

NEW HOLLAND, O., May, 1885.

No, dear sister, I have no hope whatever of ever being restored. Every remedy I have tried has proved of no avail, and I am thoroughly sickened with them all. If God sees fit to restore me, I know He has power to do it. I pray, O, so earnestly, if it be His will, to restore me; if not, to make me submissive. And sometimes, after He has shown me great and sore troubles, He fills me with such an overwhelming sense of His shining presence, my heart is so filled with His love that I feel I would not change my lot with the most prosperous and healthy. Out of the depths of human suffering and woe, I am lifted up to the shining mount of His infinite love. Oh! at such moments can we not almost hear the sound of angels' wings, and feel ourselves enveloped in the shining light that shines unto perfect day in the heavenly courts? In times of darkness and doubt, Heaven seems so vague, a something so very far off as almost not to exist at all; and a living, feeling, personal interest in and knowledge of Christ seems a thing almost impossible to our cold hearts. But in those seasons of light and spiritual warmth, when we have precious love visits from on high, how clear and real and rich and enjoyable it all is. Why, Heaven is right here, just in our poor hearts, and even the gloomy sick room becomes almost a hallowed spot, a place where we feel we must take the shoes from off our feet, for we tread upon holy ground. Paul says that our light afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Then, dear sister, can we not bear them yet a little while, until we are led to the borders of that land where

sorrow cannot come, and where God shall wipe all tears from our eyes? Over how many stony and slippery places, through how many a thorny path, hath our tender Shepherd helped us? And as we sweetly realize how securely we have rested in the everlasting arms, let us still lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, and quietly wait the final coming of our Lord, crowned with glory, immortality and life everlasting. Having the same sweet hope, knit together by the silken thread of Christ's love, our common affliction brings us together, dear sister, in a very close companionship, and gives us, as it were, a double portion of Christian fellowship and love. O, may God visit you, and all His afflicted and tried ones, often, with the joys of His salvation.

I have written this in great pain, and amid many interruptions. Could you see me, sister, you would be filled with wonder indeed, so distorted and swollen are my limbs, so enlarged my body, and so pallid my countenance. But I feel a delicacy always when I attempt a description of my condition, lest I may be supposed to overdraw the picture.

In much tribulation, your sister in hope,

MARY PARKER.

From a letter published in the *Signs*, and republished in "Collection of Gems," dated

December 15, 1885.

Blessed indeed are the inhabitants of that fair world; and blessed, thrice blessed, are the dead who die in the Lord.

So, my dear aunt who one year ago left your comfortable home in Ohio to join your only son in the far-West, and who but lately, with breaking heart, saw his noble form laid in the grave to rest, you "sorrow not as they who have no hope." Your darling boy is not dead, but only fallen asleep, to awake in the image and likeness of the dear Saviour. Seven years

ago this same dear boy, then a child of not over twelve, was made to see himself a helpless sinner. His dear father at the time lay a corpse, and the child would moan aloud that his sins, his cruel sins, had separated him forever from his father and from Jesus. A day and a night the child's state of mind was pitiful to witness; but on the evening of the second day the load was suddenly removed, and he was made to rejoice with joy unspeakable. It was wonderful with what wisdom and clearness he spoke of the Saviour's pardoning mercy and love, and how plainly the plan of salvation by grace alone was revealed to him. Has not his bereaved mother just cause to believe that he is now enjoying the fruition of the hope given him at that time, and that he did in very deed "die in the Lord?" Our dear sister has been called on to pass through deep waters of affliction, and she now feels that all the waves and billows have gone over her. She first stood by the death-bed of the husband of her early love and youth; then she buried two lovely children; next came the death of her last husband, the late Albert Parker; and now her dear Frank, who was just entering upon a noble, promising manhood, her only earthly support and reliance, has been called to join the happy throng above. But when the last earthly prop is gone and the dearest tie is broken, we are brought to cling more closely to Christ, and to rest more steadfastly in His blessed promises.

I have learned by bitter experience that it is when the heart tendrils are bruised and broken that Jesus comes near, and we are brought into a closer union and communion with Him, and come into a closer fellowship with His sufferings, and it is then that "with His stripes we are healed." Let the bereaved, the sorrowing and suffering ones be comforted. Jesus is nigh unto those of a broken heart; "a broken and a contrite spirit He will not despise." "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" and though sorrow endure for a season, yet joy cometh

in the morning. Darkest hours are just before the dawn of morning ; and when the morning of effulgent day bursts upon us, and the Sun of righteousness arises with its healing wings, suffering and sorrow will be forgotten, and weeping give place to joy and singing. When Jesus walks on the tempestuous waves and cries, "Peace, be still," how grateful is the calm. We can almost touch the hem of His garment, so near does He come to us, and great floods of love flow into the heart, and we marvel that we ever doubted or feared, when He has told us that He would ever care for us ; and when the last night for us is past, and we enter upon that final and glorious immortal dawn, to be united to our dear ones, never again to part, never more to sin or grieve or know distress, how blessed we will find it to be to "die in the Lord," and what glory and immortal light shall fill the soul, and with what gladness shall we sing the song and hear the soft, sweet music of redeeming love. We will then be in possession of that perfect love which casteth out fear, and realize in all its power and sweetness that "God is love."

The following letter was published in the *Signs*, and republished in "Collection of Gems :"

"But the sorrow of the world worketh death."—2 Cor. vii : 10.

My correspondents, who are inexpressibly dear to me, no doubt wonder at my long silence. The above passage of Scripture expresses a part of the cause of my inability to write, infinitely better than any expression of my own I could make. True, my continuous suffering of body, my frequent delirium from fever and chills, and the weakness and debility that naturally follow, are a very good excuse ; but had not my mind been surfeited with worldly sorrow, with human wrong and earthly care, the love that so often reaches out to the Lord's dear children throughout the land would have surmounted even this obstacle. Oh ! I wonder if the dear,

strong, valiant Paul ever felt the truth of this expression—if the force and fullness of it ever came to him through his own personal experience as it has to me. Often and often have I read this Scripture, but never did its full meaning strike me as it has during the past several months. I have sometimes thought, since affliction has cut me off from the world, that its sorrows and its joys could no longer affect me, that I was dead alike to the allurements, the snares and the temptations of them both; but alas! alas! how mistaken were my conclusions. Surely there is no place, no condition, in this life whatever where the child of God is free from snares, from temptation and sin; no place under the natural sun where Satan cannot be at you, after you, to torment and entrap you with his wicked devices. One says very truly, “If Christ is near you, Satan will be near you too; and if he cannot entrap you in one way, he will in another.”

While the pressure of worldly trouble has at times, as I think, driven me oftener and nearer to the dear Saviour's feet, and has shown me my helplessness and utter dependence on Him more forcibly, it has also filled my mind with sorrow of a worldly sort, with anguish and bitterness, and caused me to moan, to writhe and to cry out against the wrongs that have been brought to bear against me; and truly, most truly and sadly, has it worked death to my spiritual growth and enjoyment, so that when I would feel a desire to write to my spiritual kindred I could not fix my mind upon spiritual things, nor still the tumultuous throbbing of my overburdened heart long enough to write upon the things dearest to the Christian's heart. Oh! how I am made to deplore the weakness, the fleshly weakness, that has caused me to fall so deeply into the snare and temptation of worldly sorrow, so that often my reason seemed to give way, and the afflictions of body and mind threatened me. No words can express the awful darkness, the sorrow and despair, that I have struggled against,

and how deep and dark have been the waters I have passed through to learn this bitter lesson, that "The sorrow of the world worketh death." When sunk so low in these dreary waters, how fiery have been the darts that Satan has hurled at my soul; what devices he has used, and with what force has he brought human reason to argue against the longings of my soul after God; and how hard has he tried to break down the stronghold of my hope and faith and trust in the living and glorified Redeemer. How hard it is to thus bear the cruel thrusts of Satan, when darkness envelops us on every side. "A wounded spirit, who can bear?" How, indeed, can the trembling child of God bear the aching of a broken spirit, unless he be strengthened and sustained by mighty, reigning grace? But if through grace we can say, "Get thee behind me Satan!" and, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," then indeed may we account the victory ours.

How kindly and full of meaning came the words of the blessed Saviour to His disciples, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." How very good and wonderful seems His tender admonition, and how careful His vigilant watch-care. Oh! how sweetly is His forgiving and compassionate nature brought to view in the tender excuse He makes for us, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." If I am one of the favored number of the great Shepherd's "little flock," I can scarce believe there is one member whose flesh is so weak as mine, who is so prone to fall into by and forbidden paths, who so easily gives way to temptation, or who gives way so utterly to the sorrow of the world and fleshly weakness. Yet it strengthens even me when I think that Jesus knows the flesh is weak, and that having been "tempted in all things like as we are," He knows how to succor us when we are tempted.

"He leadeth me." Ah! who is it that leadeth me? Can it be Jesus, dear Jesus, that is leading me, weighted

down with worldly sorrow, sick with a sense of sin? He says He leadeth them into green pastures, besides the still waters; but can it be He that is leading me through these deep waters, through this fiery way? O bless His holy name, it is still the same dear hand that leadeth me; for does He not say, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned."—Isaiah xliii: 2. So that whether we are gliding sweetly upon a bright, clear sea, made glorious by the sunshine of righteousness, fragrant with the sweet incense of pardoning love, looking out upon scenes of green pastures, surrounded by clear, still waters, or whether we are tossed upon a dark, dark sea, sailing beneath a clouded sky, with no feeling sense of love, it is still Jesus that leadeth us; and not until the last sea is crossed, the last bitter draught drunk, the last storm-tossed billow passed, and the wondrous journey of life is done, can we triumph fully over all, and shout, Grace, free, atoning, redeeming grace. Jesus says we shall (in the world) have tribulation; and He further says that His word shall all be fulfilled. Then trouble must come to the child of God in some form or other. The wicked, David says, are not troubled as other men; and do we not find it true? Even the worldly religionists have no such trouble as Paul and his fellow-disciples, who were troubled on every side, and had fightings without and fears within.

I heard of a minister in this village a few evenings since taking for his text this Scripture, "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, it is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life."—1 Kings, xix: 4. The poor, tried, tempest-tossed child of God, methinks, can plainly trace his own travail of soul and experience in the hardships and trials and vexations of spirit

through which the great man of God had been passing, and has often, no doubt, said like Elijah, "It is enough ; now, O Lord, take away my life." But the minister above alluded to gave this Scripture a literal application, and said that Elijah had a fit of the "blues," or possibly a "bad liver." It appears to my limited understanding that the prophet was experiencing the same trial and bitterness of soul that Job and other godly persons did ; and that the Christian must suffer in this world, is verified by the self-sacrificing, sorrowful life of Jesus, who went mourning all his days, and who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The life and experience of the prophet Elijah has been sweetly comforting to me during the past months. The deprivations he suffered, the straits he was brought into, and the marvelous and striking manner in which God cared for him, showing that His little ones are indeed of more value in his sight than many sparrows, is such a comfort and strength to me. Again, when he was brought so low that he wished to die, alone in the wilderness, fleeing from a wicked adversary, how good and gentle and compassionate was our dear Lord, when He sent an angel not only to touch him, to arouse him from sleep, but to feed his famished soul, to strengthen his weary, fainting body, so that he went forty days on the strength of that food. How often the child of God goes to sleep when under great worldly trial. How sweet it is then to be touched or awakened by the Spirit, who gives us food, and soothes and comforts us as one whom the Father comforteth. After a long spiritual fast or hunger, weary with our journey, wishing the last scene were over, how strengthening is that food from above, the manna from heaven, the precious gospel truth, which so strengthens the soul, and refreshes and buoys us up for many long days. O the blessedness of that food, of which, if a man eat, he shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life ; and the efficacy of that water, of which, if we drink, we shall

thirst no more. O that I could be fed more freely with that wondrous bread; that I could drink more freely from that glorious fountain, whose pure crystal waters alone can satisfy one's spiritual thirst; that I could come nearer and nearer to the great throne of grace, where even such poor creatures as I can find rest and help in all their sorrow and need.

“But the sorrow of the world worketh death.” With what shame and self-reproach do I confess to you, my dear kindred in Christ, that I have often allowed the sorrow of the world, or the state of my financial affairs, to take up my thoughts almost entirely; and often, very often, have I cried out within myself, O thou of little faith! Under this deplorable state of mind I could not write to those I dearly love, and whose correspondence I so much prize. Dear friends, do not, I beg you, feel slighted or neglected. I feel that my letters, under circumstances the most favorable, could do no one good; and when I do write, my words seem so like the wrung out accents of a sorely-tried heart, are so like a tale of sorrow always, that I fear to annoy and trouble the dear household, rather than comfort and build them up in the faith. To each and all who have honored and comforted me by letters of comfort and christian love, I send special love, craving an interest in your prayers, and sometimes a place in your thoughts. To you, dear Elder William Beebe, I send warmest thanks, for the ever-treasured expressions of Christian love I had from you through a private letter to Sister Cordie Yeoman. May the dear Lord abundantly bless and strengthen you, and all the dear household of faith, for His dear name's sake, to whom be glory and honor and power and majesty now and forevermore.

With feelings of warmest christian fellowship and love, I am your unworthy sister in deep affliction,

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, Ohio.

The following was published in the *Primitive Monitor*, of February 15, 1887, and re-published in "Collection of Gems."

NEW HOLLAND, OHIO, January 16, 1887.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.—*Psalm ciii: 13.*

Only a few years ago, I was the petted, beloved child of most affectionate, tender, and goldly parents; but they have left me here in a cold world, and gone, as I hope and believe, to the mansions of eternal glory. Much has been written and said concerning a mother's love, but to me my mother's love was no sweeter, no more tender, no more pitiful and pure, than was the love of my almost idolized father. Amid the loneliness, the sorrows and afflictions, the many vicissitudes of my troublous journey of life, how I have longed for his wise counsel, his tender love and care. How I would prize one more pressure of the dear hand, one kind look of the eye, one more sound of the familiar voice; but all, all are gone, never more to return. Then how soothing came to me these blessed words, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Like precious love-tokens from a dearly loved friend, they flow into the heart, bringing the sweet incense of God's love, wafting sweet perfume, arousing the sweetest music in the heart, causing it to throb and vibrate, and, in flute-like tones, to send forth the music of redeeming love, as though some wondrous instrument had its golden chords touched by a master-hand. Having once known the tenderness and inestimable value of a dear father's love, one is better qualified to testify to the goodness and sweetness of that infinite love, which, though it is compared to the love of an earthly parent, yet is as incomparable with human love, and as much greater and higher, as His thoughts are higher than human thoughts. Dearly as we love our friends, deep

and fervent as our affection is, it sinks into insignificance when compared with that love which has no beginning and no ending, but is from everlasting to everlasting, world without end.

Oh ! how good and tender does the dear Lord's pity to me seem. Without earthly parents, smitten, lonely and afflicted, His tender love comes to me amid the gloom of it all ; amid worldly sorrow and spiritual doubt and darkness, when weary with bodily and mental pain, unable to sleep during dreary nights, His tender pity and love flow like glad sunbeams into my heart, dispelling the gloom and quieting all murmuring and unrest. " Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." " For He knoweth our frame ; He remembereth that we are dust." Could any words be more expressive of tenderness, more indicative of the fullness of His great love ? He knows our frame, knows all our human weakness, our proneness to err, our deceitfulness and sin, our liability to stray from His dear fold, from the bosom of His dear love ; yet He remembereth that we are dust. He knows that we have no righteousness, no holy attributes, but are poor, finite creatures, unrighteous and unholy. Hence, remembering it all, in infinite love He pities us ; in infinite mercy He redeems us ; and He loves, pities, and cares for us from everlasting to everlasting. What poor creatures we are in His sight ! Why should man, at his best state, find within himself anything to boast of ? " As for man, his days are as grass. As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." God is no respecter of persons : the handsomest, the noblest, the wisest, the most intellectual, are but dust in His sight ; and unto dust must their bodies return. The proudest that tread the earth must lie low with the most lowly. " As for man, his days are as grass." This shows how frail, how fleeting is human life.

“Swift as the the weaver’s shuttle speed our years.” Days soon glide into months, months into years; and ere we are aware, old age steals upon us, and we have passed our three-score years and ten. We find the grass is withered, and the flowers of our life have fallen away. We pass beyond the still, silent river, and the places that once knew us shall know us no more again forever. Seeing then how quickly the pulsations of our being must be slackened and stopped, how soon the frail life-cord must be snapped asunder; realizing that we “here have no continuing city,” let us not spend our time in laying up treasure here, that the moth and rust may corrupt; but let us strive to be rich toward God. Then we shall have no need to fear to cross Jordan’s cold stream; for a tender Father’s love has secured a safe passage for us, and provided a glorious landing, a magnificent and blessed haven of rest beyond the river; where the saints walk the gold-paved streets, clothed in white, and the glory of God and the Lamb illumine the place, and glad hallelujahs are sung in sweet and never-ending strains. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.”

O, how wonderful! that God, in all His wondrous attributes—His wisdom, holiness, infinity, omnipotence and omnipresence—is it not wonderful, indeed, that He, like a tender parent, can look upon poor, vile creatures, such as we, with infinite pity and love? Is it not enough to cause our poor hearts to swell? to make us fall at his feet and, whilst we wonder and adore, cry, “Unholy, unholy, and unclean?” “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” Dear kindred in Christ, we have but lately entered upon a new, untried year. The old year, with its joys and sorrows, its burdens and cares, has been cut off, as the grass, as the flower of the field. The future stretches before us, a veiled vista, which, try as we may, we can not see into. We

know not how many, and what, may be the vicissitudes of another year; yet, whatever of human joy or misery and woe it may bring to us, let us put our trust in the Father's love; let us remember that He does not afflict willingly, that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and that "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." O! that the sweet, tender pity of God's love may sweetly flow into each of our hearts, making *us* also pitiful to one another, causing us to cheerfully help to bear one another's burdens, quieting each murmuring thought, warming our affections, and bringing the peace of God, which passeth understanding, to our poor hearts, filling us with gratitude and thankfulness to the great Giver of all good. This is the first time I have attempted to step within the precincts of the pages of the *Monitor*, but the kind editor having done me the honor to ask me to write something for its pages, I felt to make the attempt. But I can do nothing, say nothing, to honor and glorify the name of Jesus, only as His blessed Spirit may lead me. It is long years since I sat under the sound of the gospel, and heard the watchman tell the good news of glad tidings to the poor, hence I am very ignorant concerning the blessed gospel truths, and can only speak and write upon what I trust I experience personally whilst being led in a way I know not, in paths I had not known. Truly it is a wonderful way! O, may the joy of God's salvation be restored to each of our cold, back-sliding hearts! Let us rejoice, that unto us a blessed Saviour is born, "which is Christ the Lord." One that remembereth we are dust; and, "Like as a father pitieth his children," so our Lord pitieth us in our weakness, temptations, short-comings and fears, and enables us to lift up the hands that hang down, and causes us to "mount up with wings as eagles, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint."

In Christian love, yours very truly,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from letters to Mrs. Alma F. McNaughten.]

In these extracts from letters written to a very intimate friend, the condition of our afflicted sister, physically, mentally, socially and spiritually, is made more clearly apparent, perhaps, than elsewhere in the book. In the intercourse between two where such sacred intimacy exists, there is perfect freedom, without the constraint that necessarily must be caused in some degree by the thought that others, perhaps many, will read what is written. In reading these extracts we come from day to day into the sick room for a little time, as one of the family. We hear the heavy breathing and half-suppressed groans of the sufferer; we see the look of pain and the expression of patient endurance; we hear the cries that the unbearable anguish wrings from the poor heart and trembling lips, as the crying of a child, and see the strength of a woman put forth in vain endeavors to hush the sobs. We see in these extracts the changes from day to-day, appearing in the variety of expression, as the mood is now dark, lonely, desponding, and again joyous, exultant. To-day she appears full of soul-troubles, as well as bodily pain and mental anguish, and is ready to count herself forsaken, friendless; to-morrow her face looks up at us from her couch radiant with joy and peace, and she is ready to sing for gladness of heart, because her dear Saviour has appeared to her soul, saying: "Peace be unto you;" and His presence has driven darkness from the soul and trouble from the mind, and has hushed even the throbs of pain in the poor, suffering body. These changes can only be understood in such measure as we have felt them ourselves. Few have known them in such a degree as not to stand amazed at what is measured out to her both of suffering and of gladness. To those whose own experience

has prepared them in any degree to understand and sympathize with these heart breathings, it will not be necessary to make any apology for this apparent intrusion upon the sacred privacy of a sick room, with its pains and various suffering, its cries and groans. The sick room of a child of God is, indeed, a sacred place; but no more so than the church. The entrance there of dear kindred in Christ is no intrusion, but often full of soothing power and comfort to the sick one, and of divine blessing to themselves, as many will find, while, in reading these pages, they have come into this pleasant room, in which the delivering power of Jesus and His sustaining grace have so often been richly displayed, and where songs of praise so often arise to His dear and blessed name.

On account of the great abundance of material much has had to be omitted from the letters, in making this book, which is just as good as what is published, in order that some of all that has been sent us may appear, and the book not be too large. This will account to any one for what they may miss in letters received by them. We have tried to omit no sentiment that does not elsewhere appear. In reference to the omission of what was said in the confidence of personal friendship, but which would not be appropriate in a book, our dear, clear-minded sister has given judicious direction. It will be understood by all that some of the causes of deepest trial and affliction are such as cannot publicly appear, as is the case with all.

We have not counted acknowledgments of personal favor, and expressions of personal gratitude, as among the things to be suppressed. Without them our kind-hearted, humble, grateful sister would not be truly known in her letters.

S. H. D.

NEW HOLLAND, O., Dec. 1, 1887.

Beloved Sister :

I began a letter to you yesterday, but was so ill I could not write ; and oh ! I have been so lonely, and my heart has yearned so for my own loved and peculiar people. Shut in, and out, as I am by my affliction from them, unable oft times to hold even a pen intercourse with them, I fear they will eventually drop me and forget my painful existence. Job says, "To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend ;" and I do crave the pity and sympathy of my friends in Christ. Yet if Jesus, the blessed comforter, be with me I ought not to complain. Though unloved, unlovely and forgotten, as I sometimes feel myself to be, how can I murmur if Jesus, the compassionate Saviour, the tender Father, be with me? Oh ! how I long to be with those who, veiling their faces with their angel wings, cry "Holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts!" How I long, indeed, to be with Him, to see as I am seen, to know as I am known.

I have passed through an unusual season of bitterness and trial of late. There seem to come times in our lives when chilling east winds blow upon us, when many things conspire together to add to our unhappiness. Though of sinners I truly feel that I am chief, so that I am often constrained to utter the poor publican's prayer, yet I do feel greatly to thank the dear Redeemer that I have been kept through faith, and by the power of God, to hold fast to the blessed doctrine of God, our Saviour, and that I have no confidence in the flesh. Oh ! how I long to see you, dear Sister Frankie, and converse with you upon the theme we both so love to dwell upon, the blessed theme of salvation by grace. I picture you now in mind, the beloved center of your little family group. How different my painful, shut-in-life from yours ; yet the same tender hand fills both of our cups, and in infinite wisdom and love has

directed our footsteps. How truly does He say in His word, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." It is a sweet comfort to me to think how strong has grown our mutual love, and how the dear love of God, as we trust, dropped like sweet-scented dewdrops into each of our hearts, has strengthened our love and fellowship for each other. But I cannot write more. My limb is so painfully swollen, and I jerk so, I can scarcely write at all. Remember me in love to all.

Your loving sister,

MARY.

December 25, 1887.

Dear Sister Frankie :

This is Christmas morning. Often and often do I wonder if indeed this is the anniversary of that glorious morning when the very stars sang together for joy because of the birth of the blessed Christ-child, whose coming into this world of sin betokened "peace on earth and good will toward man," who brought glad tidings to the poor, and whose own arm brought salvation to His beloved and chosen people. At any rate, I always feel that this day, above all others, if kept at all, should be one of solemn but glad thanksgiving. Jesus never told us to observe any such day ; but He *has* told us to eat the Lord's supper, and that when we "eat the bread and drink the wine," we are to do so in remembrance of Him : that the bread is an emblem of His body, the wine of His blood, His precious blood, shed for the remission of our sins. Whenever I was permitted to sit at the communion table it was ever a time of great and touching solemnity to me ; and the last time I had this privilege with the dear saints was at Waterloo. Dear father presided ; his remarks were so touching, and I was so overcome, that it was difficult for me to keep from sobbing aloud.

O, Frankie, I am so thankful, so very grateful both to you and to the ever-tender, gracious Father, that I have already received the much-needed help from the sale of my poor little book. May God bless it to the comfort of some poor tempted and tried ones, if there is anything in it to comfort. It has already been a great blessing to me financially. Dear sister, I am in too great pain to write, was very bad all night. I think I am going into one of those awful chills that leave me in such stupor. Pray for me.

Your sister in hope,

MARY.

January, 1888.

Precious Sister Frankie :

If I had been purposely silent the past month my conscience would have hurt me terribly. When your letter and box came I had just had a severe chill. Then three large carbuncles formed on my worst limb, just where it rests against the side of my lounge. The great pain caused fever and delirium, and the dropsical swelling became immense. Chill after chill came on, followed by intense fever and burning of the limb. If I fell into a doze I fell off the lounge, caused by the constant jerking whether awake or dozing. I am grieved that you were so anxious about me, and you have my heartfelt thanks for your kindness and love; but I am now too weak and full of awful pain to write intelligently. Frankie, *are* the brethren and friends satisfied or comforted by my imperfect writings? Tell me what they do say, or how they feel about it. I cannot see *one thing* in my poor letters that I think would bring honor to the name of the ever-blest Redeemer.

* * * * *

Dear Frankie, again I became too ill to finish my letter begun nearly a week ago, I have been in a half stupor all of the time, caused by the quantity of water about my heart; and oh! how I do suffer. But oh! the goodness and mercy of God; how very wonderful it seems when I realize how tenderly He cares for me and provides. In warmest gratitude and love to you and yours, I am affectionately yours,

MARY PARKER.

March, 1888.

My Dear Sister and Friend :

I mailed a business note to you this morning, but your dear, soothing letter having reached me since, I feel that I must reply, although I am in great pain.

Your tender words were as quieting, as soothing as the sweet lullabys of a loving mother to a poor sick child. Oh! how rich and great are the blessings my precious Saviour sends me, and none seem sweeter than your untiring devotion and affection. My mind has been so surrounded by dense darkness and gloom for some time I could see nothing but imperfections and sin in everything connected with myself, and amid my conflicts the mole-hills became frightful and threatening mountains. I became afraid those who read my book would think my sole motive in publishing it was to raise funds, and should it contain any merit of a spiritual nature, that would be lost and covered up by the one wretched idea. Forgive me that this letter is such a failure. I was lately in a chill for ten hours.

In deep affliction, your devoted

MARY.

June, 1888.

My Dear Sister Frankie :

I *could* not write last week, being too ill to hold up my head. The refreshing rain and cool breeze have strengthened me somewhat. The hot, dry weather of the past few weeks caused me to become very low in strength, and brought on frequent vomiting and distress. I have not been getting many letters of late, as I have been so long a time unable to send any. I have been greatly burdened and in much spiritual darkness, and, as is usual at such times, I feel friendless, most unlovely and unloved ; yet I know the dear Saviour is just the same, that His tender mercy is new to me every morning, and that His love is forever round about His children as the distilling dew. O, Frankie, you cannot know how your love and kindness humble me, and how unworthy and sinful I feel, and can but weep and cry, " Oh, my leanness, my leanness ! "

You ask me about myself. The accumulation of water in my body and limbs has greatly and rapidly increased ; my chills are more frequent, as well as more severe, and I have had rheumatism in my arms and limbs. The other case of dropsy in this town is in the same condition I am—or her dropsical limbs, I mean. The doctor says she cannot last long. She is now on the township. Oh ! will the dear Lord see fit to take me before I come to *that*. Surely I cannot endure the severe and sudden changes sure to occur during the winter months, if I should live till that time.

I have felt anxious and troubled about you, dear Frankie, for you were so anxious about your mother ; you usually write, even when I am silent, and I fear she is worse. O, sister, you have been blest in having even one parent spared to you so long. Try to school yourself for the parting that must come ere long, and be thankful you have a husband's and

child's tender love, and that *your* loss will be her eternal gain. * * * Ever since the hot weather began, it seems, my financial weights have been unavoidably heavy. O, Frankie, the dear Lord will certainly give you special blessing for your most kind and self-sacrificing efforts in my behalf. When I am no more, I want you to feel that you made my burden much less heavy, and that my days here were made much more comfortable by the blessing of God upon your efforts; for be assured, dear one, were it not for the funds received for the little book I know not how I would get along, or how I could bear the expense my affliction and wants would necessarily bring upon me. Oh! the dear Lord certainly *will* give you the satisfaction and comfort that is the outgrowth of cheerful giving. Give my best Christian love to Elder Hanover, and all who may inquire for me, those of your own household in particular.

Ever yours in love,

MARY PARKER.

October, 1888.

Dear Frankie, precious Sister and Friend:

Brother John brought my mail last night at 9 o'clock P. M. There were seven letters in all, and all containing the precious gems, the rare jewels from our Heavenly Father's rich magazine of grace. No letters had come to me for several days. A gloom and heaviness of mind weighed me down, so that I could not even appear cheerful in the presence of friends. Pain of body, various trials, financial weights, with a mind that *would* be anxious and "troubled about many things," with my sins and imperfections making me appear so hateful that

"Myself could hardly bear
This wretched heart of mine."

I felt, too, all the while that dear Jesus was the same, that my dear kindred in Him were the same, but I could not see how one so vile, so ignorant, so low, could be loved by one who is holy, and by the beloved and chosen people. But oh! those dear white-winged messengers, two of which came from a foreign land, across the deep blue sea. Truly they came to me as "good news from a far country;" and they tell the dear old story, the same sweet story we love so well on this shore, the story of Jesus and His matchless love. Oh! what a sweet story it seemed to me, as it was so sweetly told by that dear old brother across the sea. How sweetly he spoke of Jesus as suffering for us, saying, "He remembers the wounds, the prints of the nails, the thrust of the sword, the pain He suffered for us," and we are not content until He tells us that "it was for you." How beautiful and true it all seemed, but I had never seemed to think of it just in that way, I mean that the dear Redeemer remembers it now, in all His glory, His majesty and might on the throne, crowned as He is, not with thorns, but with the glory given to the only begotten of the Father, Jesus, "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." In my seasons of great darkness, Frankie, I seem to myself to be little better than an infidel, only I *know* there *is* a God; but I seem not to feel it, I seem void of all sense of His loving presence, His care over *me*, His love. Then when the clouds break, and such an overwhelming sense of His wonderful love, His tender watch-care, His unbounded goodness to *me*, a vile sinner, comes to me as it did last night by the coming of your letter and the others, I am indeed amazed, overcome with unspeakable joy.

I had been so troubled about you, dear, lest you were ill; but the dear Lord in mercy provided for all needs, and blessed you and family with usual health. Oh! my sister, it all seemed *so* much, *too much*, and I could not quiet myself suffi-

ciently to fall into slumber until long after midnight, so happy was I, so filled with a sense of God's goodness, mercy and love. Whilst I read your loving words, and learned of the goodness of God in so blessing your efforts in my behalf, how my own conscience condemned me, and how unworthy I seemed of *your* love, much less the love of Jesus. From the depths of my heart went out the cry, "unclean, unclean!" and I felt humbled in the sight of the living God, and so low in my own eyes; and I could but fall at His feet, and, whilst I wondered and adored, cry, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." In moments such as now the manifest presence and goodness of God seems as plain to me as to the children of Israel, when He went before them in a pillar of fire. In my helplessness, I am made to see more clearly my need of Him every moment, realize the greatness of His power and helpfulness, and that without Him I can indeed do nothing.

Dear one, I often feel deeply condemned on account of my worldly mindedness, my proneness to be, like Martha, anxious and troubled about the things of this life, which you say truly, are but husks. But, dear sister, I am so powerless to help myself; and the Lord tells us to provide things honest before men, and to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.

When the dear Lord, without any help or effort on my part, provides means for me to render unto Cæsar, it certainly fills me with greater thankfulness, as well as greater humbleness of heart; therefore I trust it is not a grasping spirit or a covetous one which causes me to feel anxious about unavoidable indebtedness. I can write no more, as I am utterly tired out. With a deep, life-long sense of thankfulness, and love,

I am your afflicted

MARY.

January, 1889.

Dear Frankie :

Your letter came last night, and, as usual, it brought comfort and rest and sweetness to my tired, tempest-tossed soul. I lately had a chill lasting twelve hours, in which I suffered more than any one can know. My bad foot is now one mass of ulcers, and the flesh nearly all ready to fall off the three misshapen toes. Oh! surely I cannot endure much longer, but can only trust in Him who has always been my help, and I know will be to the end. Should I never write you again, dear, remember always that I loved you, and am deeply grateful for the much you have done for me. I am so sorry for your troubles, and weights, and sorrows, yet look up to the hills from whence cometh our help, and trust you are journeying on to a land of peace and rest, to awake in the image and likeness of the divine Redeemer. And now good-bye, dear sister, and if this be the last, we have the blessed hope that we will meet in the bright, glad beyond, never more to part, with sin and sorrow forever washed away, and where death shall be swallowed up in victory and everlasting life.

In deep affection,

MARY.

February, 1889.

Dear Precious Sister :

Life to me the past few months has been unusually full of trial and suffering, and I am, oh! so weary of it all, and wish it would please the dear Father to call me where

The wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest.

Since my unusually hard and long chill I have been much prostrated. My bed sores and foot are much worse, yet when

I feel that one who has everlasting strength is "strengthening me upon my bed of languishing, and that He makes all my bed in my sickness," I then feel that I can bear even my great pain, and indeed all things, through Christ who strengthens me. Oh! why is it, if I am truly a child of God, that I am so often in doubt and darkness? Why, when I feel the dear Saviour's presence, I can so praise and adore, and everything looks so bright, and my soul's salvation so sure; then when He withdraws "a stone's throw" I am ready to faint, and think surely I will sink beneath the waves, and cry out, as did Peter, "Lord save, I perish?" How often my frail life's bark is tossed by the pitiless waves of a Galilean sea; yet Jesus has never failed yet to soothe and quiet me by His, "It is I, be not afraid;" has never failed to speak His sweet, "Peace, be still," to the raging billows, and give me a sweet calm. Oh! the safety of His sheltering care, the sweetness of His love. It grieves me so, because I cannot always feel His presence, cannot always sit at His dear feet and learn of Him, in whom alone "there is fullness of joy, at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore." You seem to me, dear one, to have grown so far ahead of me in grace, in spiritual knowledge, and your letters manifest so much more of the indwelling spirit, and the meekness and lowliness of Christ, than do mine, and while I rejoice for your sake, I loathe myself for being so worldly, and so often troubled about many things. It is so good of you to speak so soothingly about my financial future; yet I trust the dear Lord will provide in the future as He has in the past. Oh! I am *so* weary, so tired. Forgive this long, dull letter and remember me in love to dear mother Ashbrook, brother Tommy and Roy.

Your very poor little sister,

MARY PARKER.

April, 1889.

Dear Frankie :

I have at last taken my pen to try to write, but doubt whether the excruciating pain and feeble strength will allow me to finish a letter. It is so hard for me to give up this one means of intercourse with one between whom and myself so strong a bond of true and tried affection exists, and so sweet a bond of Christian-fellowship and love. Your last comforting letter, which I read again and again, hanging upon the words as the bees hang upon the fragrant bloom, each time culling sweetness, comfort and both spiritual and intellectual strength, should have met with an early reply, but my weak, painful condition has been such that I had not the energy, heart, or whatever it takes to actuate one in such a condition, to effort of any kind. I have not improved the least in health, in any way. On the contrary, the accumulation of water increases. The chills, the pain and ulceration are greatly aggravated. The physicians again think and talk seriously of taking the risk of tapping, although they say I am too weak to bear it. What intimidates me is the fear of being left alive in a still worse condition, and a necessity of often repeating the operation, which usually follows this artificial means of discharging the water. Dear Frankie, your words did not sadden me, but seemed rather to inspire me with new strength, and oh ! so much comfort. Whilst it is my longing desire "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better," still if it is His infinite will, for some purpose unseen to us, to leave me here to suffer, and also, as I trust, to suffer with Him, that I may be glorified with Him, what a sweet comfort to me, in my orphaned condition, to feel that you, dear Frankie, desire my presence, my companionship. Oh ! it is hard to look out on this great beautiful world, knowing that all its beauty and fullness belong to the Lord, to *our* Lord, and yet feel, oh !

so keenly, that in the vineyard where I am placed, there is no place where I, poor, helpless and unworthy, feel that I have a right to lay my head. Yet did not dear Jesus feel something of this when He said, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head?" Dear Lamb of God, He who was able to call legions of angels to His aid, to suffer thus in His *human* nature, and that, too, that he might have pity and fellowship for his suffering children. Oh! is it not wonderful? So great a self-sacrifice would need to be upheld by a superhuman effort and strength. What an example ever to me is the case of poor Lazarus. Friendless and homeless, full of sores, no human hand to soothe by the gentle touch of love, no human heart to pity. Even the crumbs from the rich man's table denied him. But soon the scene changes, and we behold the same poor beggar caressed, tenderly nurtured in the bosom of Abraham. * * * I commenced this letter several days ago, but my foot and limb caused me such severe pain I was forced to quit. I had a dreadful night, and until 2 o'clock to-day suffered so I just thought I could not live and endure the pain, but have become some easier. Oh! how strengthless I feel; how I cling to Him in whom alone I can find strength, and who soothes me by His beloved presence. Nearer and dearer my blessed Saviour becomes each day of this painful life-trial. How I long to see Him as He is, to be with Him, and be like Him. Surely the passionate longing I feel toward Him, both in His matchless glory and His humble humanity, can be nothing less than His divine love implanted within me, whereby I am made to cry, Abba Father. * * * Many precious letters lie here unanswered, but I cannot write much in this awful condition. I must cease now, on account of the dreadful pain.

Your devoted and suffering

MARY.

July, 1889.

My Beloved Sister :

As you will doubtless suppose, my silence has been caused by the unusual severity of my affliction. My chills have occurred every few days, followed by great prostration. I have been raising blood for several weeks, but finally took a hemorrhage, throwing up a great quantity of blood, which caused great weakness. I have had several sinking spells, and would be unconscious for quite a while. Last Sunday I was in one all the afternoon, and seemed more dead than alive. My entire condition has, from some cause, been greatly worse. Oh! dear sister, my trials are great, but does not Jesus have charge of the furnace, and will He allow its fires to consume me? Oh, no; I by faith believe not. Oh! it is sweet through it all to feel that the shining presence of the Son of God is in the furnace with me, and sweetly shields my soul from its flames, whilst, as I trust, the dross is being consumed. Your dear, precious letter was sweeter to me than the perfume of rare flowers, more consoling than ten thousand expressions from the lips of an unregenerate person. In my weakness and pain I perused its pages again and again. You say you thank God for my love and esteem. Ah! dear, you cannot know what a source of comfort yours is to me in my loneliness and pain. * * * (Several days later.) The next week after you were here I became so greatly worse, that I did not even know enough to miss or long for your letters, and the fact that you had lately been here seemed more like a dream than a reality. I had chills every other day for a week, and my other limb swelled painfully and became inflamed from the hip to the ankle. I was very delirious and suffered beyond description. I was so depressed in mind, even the beloved countenance of the blessed Redeemer seemed veiled and a cloud enveloped me whose darkness I believed not even the Sun of Righteousness could dispel. I am some

better physically, and if not deceived, I have at times sweetly felt that, "Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face." Every evening about twilight I become quite flighty, and my reason for a time seems to desert me; but toward morning I become myself again. Oh, Frankie, it is so terrible to suffer in this way, to struggle so to maintain one's mental balance, and yet to feel it slipping away in spite of all efforts. That the dear Lord will not suffer this condition to become permanent is my fervent cry. With love to your family and dear Mother Ashbrook,

I remain your loving, suffering

MARY.

November, 1889.

My Beloved Sister and Friend:

I have been silent a long while but could not avoid it. How many times in the midst of pain and partial delirium have I caught myself calling your name. Then when I would arouse myself to the fact that many miles lay between us, and that only in spirit could I commune with you, my sorrow and loneliness seemed like a crushing weight. Since I last wrote you I have been changed into my winter quarters. Oh! the terrible suffering, both of body and mind, cannot be told. Great clusters of carbuncles, as large as one's hand, have appeared wherever there is any pressure of the flesh against the bed. It is past description and none can imagine just how it is. This trouble is far worse than it ever was before. My face is much swollen and flushed with fever, and the almost transparent whiteness the water produces causes me to look well, save about the eyes and mouth. John and Lottie made my room very pretty with new wall-paper and curtains; and I have the best little stove, which throws out an even heat. You don't know how much it will add to my comfort,

and how thankful I feel to the dear Lord, to those dear ones who sent me money, and to you, my more than friend, whose self-sacrificing efforts have done so much for my comfort. I am not at all worthy, but oh! in sincerity of heart and spirit my poor soul cries out to be made worthy, and also for divine blessing upon your life; and may the Lord cause you to feel in your heart that it is "blessed to give." When the great goodness of my living, risen Saviour, together with the generous kindness of those in whom the fullness of His love dwells, rises up before me I am speechless with a glad, happy thankfulness I can find no words to express. Oh! how near and dear it seems to bring Jesus to me. All the while, during the awful pain of the long, sleepless night, last night, would my heart overflow with thankfulness, and my mouth speak aloud His praise. But, dear, I am too painfully ill to tell of it. Have had two chills since Sunday, and have those terrible carbuncles on both limbs, where they press against the bed. My agony cannot be told, yet I am very happy amid all this pain, for surely Jesus cares for me, is near me, and His presence is better than bodily ease. May heaven's richest blessing rest on you, dear, and your little family, is the prayer of your weak sister,

MARY PARKER.

January, 1890.

My Beloved Sister :

A number of times during the past month have I attempted to write, but was forced, through intense pain and weakness, to abandon it. I have had an attack of the malady prevalent throughout the land, "La Grippe," which almost took what little vitality and strength were left me.

You ask if I had any pleasant tokens at the glad Christmas time. O, yes, infinitely more than I deserve. So many letters and packages came by mail that Brother John looked

like a veritable "Chris Krinkle" when he came from the office, so that my heart was one glad song of thanksgiving and praise. How much good the kind expressions from the heart and pen of our dear Father Dodd did me I can never tell. It is such a strength to know that I have his prayers. * * * (Several days later.) I had a relapse of La Grippe since I wrote the preceding, and was brought very low. I desire to write much more but cannot.

Ever your loving sister,

MARY.

June, 1890.

Beloved Frankie :

A week ago I was seized with violent cramps, and when partially recovered from that attack I took a hard chill, followed shortly by another, and now have two of those dreadful carbuncles on my best limb, while the other is intensely inflamed and painful by my having to recline on that side. I feel so weak, and think my summons may come at any moment. Oh! how often I think of you, and of my own dear and peculiar people, especially where I know they are met together to worship God, and have felt in spirit I was with them, and held sweet communion with the saints, and had a view of the closeness of the union with Christ and the church, the Bridegroom and the bride. Oh! to me there is something so beautiful, so secure and so glorious to contemplate in this close and wonderful union. The one cannot exist without the other, and in this glorious unity there is the only sure foundation for the sinner's hope. Oh! to *think* we are saved by grace, redeemed by His blood, and brought off "conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved us."

I can give you no idea, Sister Alma, how very near the gates of death I have seemed to draw of late. Oh! that it would please the dear Master to call me home, where this life

of death will be forever over. Last week Elder John Hoppes and wife called to see me. I was suffering terribly from suffocation, but was glad even to look on their faces; but when I tried to say a few words in a low whisper, I got so smothered they all had to leave the room. I have had two chills this week, and the limb the least affected looks just like it had been scalded. The left limb is discharging water, and is terrible to see. Pray for me, dear sister, that the waters of affliction may not overwhelm me. Surely the dear Lord, who feeds the ravens, and who said, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows," will not allow me to suffer from want. May heaven's richest blessings be yours in life, is the prayer of your faithful but suffering friend,

MARY PARKER.

November, 1890.

My Dear Friend and Sister :

Doubtless you think me very neglectful, but could you know my weakness and suffering, my awful sense of suffocation, and weary heartache, you would not wonder at my long silence. Many letters from dear brethren and sisters from many parts of the United States lie before me unanswered.

The past summer has been a season unusually and intensely trying to me. I have also had mental and heart trials that no one knows but my dear Helper, my gracious Burden-bearer. You can have no idea how dark seems the cloud which envelopes me. Oh! for more grace, more faith, a closer drawing to Him whose tender tones come to His people in the "still small voice." I desire always to praise, adore and bless Him on whom we are told to "cast all our care;" but oh! with what halting, feeble steps do I go forth to serve Him. How stammering is my tongue, how cold and insipid the utmost zeal I can make manifest! So far short do I fall in all my attempts to honor and serve Him, that I feel to cover myself with dust and cry, "unclean, unclean!" Oh!

how I long for your companionship! We who seem to be led in the same shadowed paths, whose spiritual sky is so often overcast, could we but converse face to face once more. When will these dreary, earthly nights be past, and we behold the bright dawning of eternal day? Now, dear, I cannot write more, I suffer so, but I feel rich when I can claim Jesus as my friend.

Write soon to your faithful friend,

MARY.

January 30, 1891.

My Beloved Sister :

Now I am making the attempt to write again, but fear it will be a miserable failure, as already I am making blunders. Oh! the awful suffering, the pain and weariness; will it never cease? Will the tired, tempest-tossed body never find rest in that blessed sleep, "from which none ever wakes to weep?" Everywhere that the flesh has to rest against anything are sores, great painful sores. But why tell of it? It is the same old story. None but Jesus can soothe me, none else give me ease; and oh! that I could more fully put in Him all my trust, lay on Him all my burdens; for sweetly He will give His weary, fainting children rest. How often, when the weariness and pain get so heavy I *cannot* bear them, do I feel *Him* becoming my strength in weakness, a blessed burden bearer in all my heavy trouble and woe.

It is after nightfall, and such a dreary, dark night, not unlike the night-time of the soul when one seems to be "without hope, and without God in the world." I have been listening to the patter of the rain, and it would seem sufficient to lull any one to sleep, but the suffering which racks my poor body will not allow me to sleep. Your last letter was a great comfort, and I thank you so much for the effort made for my sake to write it. I know it must cost you a great effort to write such a letter, burdened as you are with

such heavy social and domestic cares. Ever since the winter set in I have suffered more, and the dropsy is worse. Oh! the intense pain in body and limbs, the gasping for breath, the bleeding sores, the weight of the heavy limbs on my ulcerated feet, with all the agony endured in those terrible chills, it often seems too great to bear; but the dear Saviour knows all my burdens, and He will not try me further than I can bear. Give my love to the dear ones in your home circle, as well as the brethren and sisters at Pleasant Run.

Ever yours,

MARY PARKER.

April, 1891.

My Beloved Sister :

Your letter, together with one from a dear sister in Georgia, came last night, and they were deeply comforting. Such expressions and assurances are of more value to me than silver and gold. I cannot write much of a letter, for I am not any better. My best limb is now very painful, swollen and inflamed, and the deformed one worse than it has been for years. I don't know how to bear up under the awful suffering and the mental weights. I have had pleurisy of the lungs again, and had to have medical attention all last week. It makes me feel lonely to know dear Father Dodd is no more. One by one we are crossing the mystic river, one by one are reaching the golden strand. Soon *all* will be gathered home to die no more; blessed thought!

I hope soon to see you face to face once more, dear sister, if my life is spared. The goodness of God is still round about me, the everlasting arms underneath me. Oh! may *His* love be your stay and mine, is the prayer of your unworthy loving friend,

MARY PARKER.

April, 1891.

Very Dear Sister Frankie :

I am very sick, but will try to write a brief letter. I am sick both in body and mind, and feel lonely indeed. Oh! that I might see a gleam of light from the Sun of Righteousness to illumine my benighted mind; but sometimes all sense of the pardoning love and mercy of the dear Redeemer is lost sight of in the overpowering influence of my weakness and sin. Oh! that I could be removed from this world to the home above, has been my cry for years. Yet when I think of the indwelling sin of my deceitful heart, I think it a wonderful mercy that I have not been appointed a place among the wicked, who go down into the pit of everlasting torment. But I know Jesus is merciful, kind and good, that God is just and holy, and peace comes wafted across the tempestuous waves, and the sound of a voice saying sweetly, "It is I, be not afraid." Oh! the goodness of such a merciful God! The thought of it even now brings tears to my eyes, and peace and joy to my lonely, tried heart, and I feel that I could bless His dear name forevermore. I was so comforted by your last letter. Do you hear from Sister Rumney, or Brother and Sister Casse, of England? I was much comforted by their letters. It was indeed good news from a far country. I am very partial to English people. My mother's people came from Devonshire, England, and many of my intimate friends are of that nationality. You, dear sister, have my heartfelt thanks for your kindness to me, the poorest of the flock. May the dear Lord abundantly reward you; I cannot.

Your affectionate little sister, I hope, in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

April, 1891.

Very Kind and Precious Sister :

Your box, laden with its helpful contents, came last evening on the five o'clock train. How unworthy I feel to be again the recipient of your unbounded kindness. Now, dear, I beg you not to continue copying further for my new book. If I have your dear name among the list, I will be satisfied.

I am so glad there is being added to your pleasant little band at Pleasant Run such as are to be saved, and that the little ones come with glad, eager feet to the mother, the Church, telling what great things the Lord has done for them. Blessed be His holy name !

I had a sore to open on my bad limb about a month ago about as large as a three-cent piece. Now it covers all the front of the limb, and is giving me great pain and trouble. The neighbors seem so anxious and sympathetic about it, as do also this dear little family. The people here are very good to me. Indeed *everybody* is good to me, the blessed Lord best of *all*, for He filleth all in all, and is the author of all good. Oh ! may He bless you and yours, and keep you ever, is my heartfelt prayer. I just fall asleep while trying to write, I am so worn out for sleep. My limb pains me so I am just suffering from the want of sleep.

Do write soon to your afflicted, loving

MARY.

[Dear friends and kindred in hope: In submitting the foregoing extracts for publication, which I have culled from near fifty letters received since compiling "Collection of Gems," I have selected only such as I think will most fully answer the numerous inquiries sent to me from, nearly every state in the Union, respecting Sister Parker's situation physi-

cally and temporally. While trying to avoid sameness or repetition, I have described her situation in her own language, though tongue or pen is quite inadequate fully to describe the dreadful suffering she hourly endures, day and night, without an hour's respite. Yet her faith and trust in God, and her sublime fortitude amidst her deep afflictions, are equally wonderful. With kindly Christian greeting to all, I ask an interest in your prayers for a weak sinner saved by grace, if saved at all.

ALMA F. McNAUGHTEN.

From the *Signs of the Times*.

NEW HOLLAND, O., March 26, 1887.

MISS EMMA L. SMITH.

Dear Sister :

I presume you, like others, have become discouraged in writing to one from whom you receive no response. I greatly miss your pleasant, cheerful letters, yet my condition has been such, my pain has been so great, that I could write no letters.

* * * * *

You requested me in your last letter to write my thoughts upon the portion of Scripture which reads thus: "Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."—Eph. iv : 26. How singular that you should make such a request of me, who seem the very poorest and feeblest of the "little flock," if one at all, who am so ignorant, and who have been so long deprived of the teaching of faithful ministers.

The Apostle begins the epistle with an exhortation, earnest and fervent. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith

ye are called ; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." What anxiety the Apostle here shows himself possessed of, that the saints should walk worthy of the high and important vocation wherewith they have been called, and that they grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption. That they "grieve not the Holy Spirit." How terrible the thought that we, poor, dependent creatures should grieve the Holy Spirit. How softly should we walk before Him in love, in all lowliness and meekness, being careful of our walk, our actions and our conversation, that we grieve not our dear Lord and crucify our Saviour afresh. O, my sister, how can we read the teachings of the New Testament and not be filled with a burning desire to walk worthy of the high and wonderful vocation wherewith we are called? The reading of the chapter in question fills me with such a multitude of conflicting thoughts and emotions that to arrange them on paper in an intelligible and satisfactory manner seems quite out of my reach. Memory takes me back to the happy, golden days when I was baptized, when

"On the wings of His love
I was carried above
All sorrow, temptation and pain."

And the almost unalloyed rapture of peace and bliss that came to me when I went down into the watery grave, was only surpassed by the dense darkness that soon after enveloped me, and seemed to effectually shut out every ray of light from the glorious Sun of Righteousness. I had thought to walk, O so softly. All sin, all earthly passions, seemed dead. But alas ! how soon I knew they had but slumbered, to awake with renewed strength upon my startled senses. It was at this time that the words, "Be ye angry and sin not ; let not the sun go down upon your wrath," rested with great weight upon my

mind, causing great disquiet and unrest. I was at this time young and inexperienced in everything. We (my father's family) fell into great domestic affliction. My mother became a helpless sufferer, my eldest brother lost his wife, bringing to our home two motherless little boys, who had whooping cough. I left school and assumed entire charge of the household. I had much care, that, with my inexperience, caused me often to feel and act irritable. In all the ignorance of babyhood my feet were continually slipping, and I was prone to look to self for help, instead of casting my burden on Him who so tenderly promises to care for us. How Satan would come to me in cunning craftiness and strive to make me give up all for lost. How he would whisper in my ear, "Ah, you were such a fine Christian, such a pious girl; hundreds of persons stood on the banks and saw you baptized, with tears in their eyes. They thought you were changed, and believed you were redeemed; and oh! how you have deceived them and your dear father and mother." I could neither eat nor sleep, and I resolved to tell the dear saints at the next church meeting that I was deceived and had deceived them. But, blessed be the name of Jesus, His foot-steps were recognized upon the tempestuous waves, and His dear voice whispered, "Peace, be still," and I was enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Never again, since that time, have the words, "Be ye angry," etc., seemed to me so like the rod of vengeance or correction, but more like an exhortation to a serene and Christian deportment. All Christians have alike their human weaknesses, but some seem naturally more given to fits of ill temper and anger. The mother, with her many household cares, the training and care and burden of numerous offspring, has much to try her; her delicate organization becomes overstrained; she is nervous, irritable, and often angry. Such an one should be pitied and excused. But when we, with little or no provocation,

give way to anger, and utter unjust, unkind accusations against our fellow-beings, let us quickly repent and beg forgiveness, both of God and those we wrong. Elijah, who had such power in prayer, and to whom the Lord on different occasions made himself so wondrously manifest, was a "man of like passions as we;" so that when we mourn our shortcomings we are not to give up our precious hope because of them, but rather seek to crucify them and to keep them under subjection. "Be ye angry and sin not," appears to me to mean that should we be angry (which we certainly will be at times), we should not sin by using bad language, by speaking bitterly, unkindly and harshly, by committing deeds of violence, or manifesting an angry, vindictive or resentful spirit; remembering that He whom we profess to follow, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He was buffeted, He threatened not. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," also appears to me to mean that whatever may have been our cause for anger, whatever perplexities and vexation may have beset our pathway during the busy scenes of the day, let not the curtain of night, as it draws its peaceful shades about us, find our minds filled with anger and wrath. Let not the going down of the sun find us in this state; for if ever there is a time when the child of God feels the need of tranquility of mind, it is at the coming on of nightfall, when the body is about to be laid down to that rest so like, and emblematic of, the sleep of death.

* * * * * * *

Dear sister, the Lord has graciously given me strength, during intervals of comparative freedom from smothering and pain, to write this letter. I write under a compulsory feeling, as though it was the will of Him whom I love to serve that I do so. If it is anything to you, and the brethren Beebe see fit to publish it, you may send it to them. I cannot, unless the coming summer and spring breezes increase my feeble

strength, keep up a private, personal correspondence with those I so much love, and I may, if permitted, occasionally address them through the *Signs*. With a fervency of love, craving an interest in the prayers of the dear household of faith, begging those who feel so disposed to still favor me with their words of comfort, I now commend you all to the love and ever-tender watch-care of our ever-dear and blessed Shepherd, who careth for His sheep, and allows none of them to be plucked out of His hand.

MARY PARKER.

September 2, 1888.

MISS EMMA L. SMITH :

My Beloved Sister :

This is Sabbath, bright, clear and dreamy, with the mellow sunlight and mild, autumn, invigorating breezes, which, to me, make up the blending of the most enjoyable elements in nature, and is of all seasons the most peaceful and delightful. I have wanted for so long to write you, but I could not. It was all I could do to live during the hot season, and letter writing, much as I love it, was altogether out of the question. The stillness and loneliness of my room seem oppressive. I have just taken one of my little, unrefreshing slumbers, from which I awoke in great bodily pain. For some time past during my waking hours I have felt greatly burdened, and mourned the absence of my best of friends ; and after sleep the weight seems to bear down upon me with almost unbearable force. I ask myself why this awful weight? Jesus is not dead, is not gone, is not changed, and why all this disquiet, this terrible heart ache and despondency that almost overpowers my reason? Is it caused by physical derangement, or is it the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with which the world has nothing to do?

Is it that there is "In my heart an aching void the world can never fill?" I have an oppressed feeling much of the time as though I were guilty of some gross offense, as if I had committed some certain sin, which causes the blessed Saviour to withdraw His dear, divine favor. Do you ever feel so? Dear Emma, how often I wish it would please the Lord to direct your footsteps to our town to teach. Sister Lottie said the other day we would certainly have to importune you to come.

I had so many dear, comforting epistles of love from loved ones this week. They were all so consoling and uplifting, and each one seemed a rare, precious jewel from the dear Master's hand.

I know this is a poor letter, but I am unable to improve it.

Your suffering sister,

MARY.

October 30, 1889.

My own Beloved Emma :

How I would love to have you here in my quiet room to-night. All is quiet, oh! so quiet, with only the ceaseless ticking of the clock and my own sad thoughts for company. I have been alone nearly all of to-day, and sometimes was delirious; and to describe the awful feelings that would come over me, when I could not realize where I was, who I was, or what time in the day it was, are beyond all powers of description. With what tender, anxious longings have my thoughts gone out to you this week in my loneliness and sorrow. I say sorrow, for, dear sister, I do have great sorrow, and I do often feel very lonely, but not alone, for in all the weariness and pain I cry, and reach out my helpless hands to Jesus, who

"Soothes my sorrows, heals my wounds,
And drives away my fears."

Yet I do long for human sympathy, and such love and condolence as I know you would offer, could you know all my trouble, and see my intense, unconquerable pain. Oh! if it would only please the beneficent Father to take me home. What longing fills my heart as my thoughts linger on the word "*Home.*" How full its meaning! I can never in this life have a home. But oh! to look beyond this world, beyond the grave, to the shining shore where dwells Jesus, with all the blood-bought throng. That is home indeed; where the weary find rest, where the sick are made whole, where the hungry find food, and the poor become rich. I had a dear letter from Mattie Derr this week. I was so pleased, for it does seem sometimes that my dear spiritual kindred have forgotten me in my loneliness and trial.

Dear sister, the day you left here going East, Elder Tommy Williams was on the same coach for some distance. I can scarcely be reconciled that you should not have become acquainted. I cannot tell you how my heart goes out to you. I long to lay my weary head on your arm and beg you to love me just a little, to be my friend always, and not tire of me. I fear I will indeed be a burden to you. Give my dear love to your home folks, Sister Ward and any who may remember one so unworthy. Don't forget me, dear, nor fail to remember me at a throne of grace.

In love,

MARY.

January 29, 1891.

My own Precious Emma:

Shall I introduce you to the enclosed, or do you recognize it at a glance? I know you got one of my pictures of Elder Lines, but I wanted you to have one since I am "shut-in."

* * * * *

Dear Emma, when you first came under the shadow of the sheltering wing of the church do you remember how calm and unruffled were the smooth surface of your seas, how almost uninterrupted were your joys and comforts in the God of your salvation? Do you not read, my dear, that we are to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you," for "the trial of your faith is more precious than of gold that perisheth?" And now, dear one, if you are in heaviness, if you are deeply, sorely tried, think it not strange, but rather rejoice that you are thought worthy to partake of Christ's suffering, that you may also reign with Him in glory. O, how I wish I could comfort you; but I know not how to administer a balm, even were I capable, which I am not. I, too, am in heaviness, and would love to tell you about it, but oh! this suffering body. The throb, throb, of my painful, terrible sores, makes it such a heavy task to write at all. Remember me in love to Sister Ward, and all the dear ones with whom your lot is cast.

Lovingly, your suffering

MARY.

NEW HOLLAND, O., August 6, 1886.

ELDER S. H. DURAND:

Very Dear Brother in Christ:

How varied and intense were the emotions the perusal of your letter awakened in my heart. It acted as oil upon the troubled waters, and as the panacea that my aching heart particularly needed. Your views so coincided with my own that I was rejoiced beyond measure. The weary hands that for

some time had hung down were lifted up again, and I was filled with joy in the Lord. The Saviour says His sheep hear His voice, and they follow Him, "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." How striking and true is this illustration. How quickly can the child of God, who is taught by the spirit of truth, discern the sweet voice of truth. It is a voice they love to hear and to follow; it bears to them sweeter melody than the finest earthly music, no matter how exquisitely it is rendered, for this dear voice awakens within their poor hearts the heavenly music of divine and redeeming love. Coming from Christ, who is the truth, and the source and fountain-head of love, it encircles and binds all the children of God together. Human love is sweet, but infinitely more sweet is the love we feel for each other in Christ, our Redeemer and Head.

Your letter brought so much comfort and strength to me, and caused a peace and quietude to flow into my heart that I had not felt for some days at least. It is so seldom I hear the dear voice of truth, and my soul can take no pleasure in the voice of error. My thirst cannot be satisfied upon the wine of Babylon. I am all alone, save that I trust I have the blessed Comforter, who, the Saviour tells us, shall guide us into all truth. Your views upon faith gladdened my heart, and lifted a heavy weight from my mind. I believe faith to be the *gift* of God as well as grace; and the "getting" or "exercising" of faith by any power of ours seems to me very like the way some talk about "getting religion." The one seems to me to savor just as much of works and human power as the other. The "faith cure," as it is carried on here, goes hand in hand with fleshly sanctification and "holiness." Many of their journals have been sent me, and it shocks me to see the presumption of poor, sinful beings. In one journal is the announcement of an "all holiness" meeting to be held

at the Faith House in Columbus. I am personally acquainted with the founders of this house, and its principal is now in the Insane Asylum.

Such characters are, I think, spoken of in Isaiah as "walking in the light of their own fire and in the sparks that they have kindled." The wife of this person was heard to say at a children's meeting: "I am pure, even as Christ is pure; I am holy, even as Christ is holy." Is it not deplorable that any should so pervert the Holy Scriptures? And are we not told to "have no fellowship with these unfruitful works, but rather reprove them?" Pardon me for so enlarging upon this subject. I can scarce forbear writing still further, for I have been so beset, annoyed and grieved by the adherents of the faith-cure system that my mind is much wrought upon concerning it. Through it all, however, the passage I first quoted, "My sheep hear My voice—a stranger will they not hear," sweetly comforts me. If I have said anything contrary to the spirit or teaching of truth, I beg you to tell me.

Sunday morning. I began this letter several days ago, and thought I should also write an answer to Sister Bessie's dear letter and send with it; but I find my strength will not allow. During the two weeks of extreme heat I was too ill and oppressed for breath to see callers, so, yesterday being a pleasant, breezy day, twenty-three persons were admitted during the day. I said a few words to each one, and all last night I was weak, nervous and oppressed. This morning I feel that one of my hard spells is coming on, and I must bring my letter to a close. May the mercy of God ever overshadow you, and His love be round and about you now and for evermore,

MARY PARKER.

Extracts from letters to Mrs. Amanda L. Dulin, of Georgia :

NEW HOLLAND, O., Nov. 5, 1887.

My dear Sister in Christ :

My long silence has been caused by repeated illness and increased suffering, and I trust you will therefore pardon what may have seemed to you indifference or neglect. Oh ! it is most wonderful how much the human frame can be made to endure, and yet the painful, feeble life go on and on. I have just been thinking of what the dear Saviour says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," but "in Me peace." Everything our great King says we know will come to pass, and how consoling to our doubting, sinking souls it is to meditate upon it. "Though heaven and earth pass away," says Jesus, "not one jot or tittle of My word shall fail till all be fulfilled." When we know that He said we *shall* have tribulations, why are we so grieved and surprised when we find it come to pass in our lives. Just as sure, dear sister, as is the existence of the Great Being Himself, so sure is it that His dear followers shall go up to the gates of paradise, "through much tribulation," having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." To you and me tribulation has come in the form of mental and bodily pain, in the destruction of all our dearest earthly hopes, aspirations and reliances.

There are "turned-down leaves" in your life and in mine, where now and then the mind will go back and brood over the sentences indelibly written there with tears that welled up from our bursting, aching hearts. Tribulations certainly have fallen thick and fast all along our journey of life ; but, dear one, can we not take courage when we reflect that the dear Captain of our salvation told us that it should be so ? If all that makes living in this world most desirable has been taken from us, if health and home, father and mother, and our earthly substance be gone, are we not sweetly assured that

such afflictions, or tribulations, "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and whilst viewing these things do we not see that the declaration of our dear Saviour and Redeemer is being fulfilled? But whilst it is as sure as the everlasting hills that we shall have tribulation in this world, it is just as certain that, turning to our dear Saviour, putting in Him all our trust, casting on Him all our burden and cares, and believing in Him, we shall have peace; not such unstable, transitory peace as the world gives, but "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." How very sweet when amid the darkness of the mighty deep, above the roar of the storm-tossed waves, there comes a voice, saying, "Peace be still." Blessed, soul-cheering peace; it stills the awful swaying of the ship, it breathes strength anew into its sails, it shows that the great Captain is at the helm, and that our bark will yet anchor safely within the beautiful haven of eternal rest.

Oh! that we could sail often to the borders of this fair land, that we could look often, even through the veil of the flesh, at the glory that awaits us when we shall have entered into that final, perfect "rest that remaineth to the people of God."

September 22, 1887.

This is a most beautiful day. All day yesterday the rain fell in torrents, the sky hung low and intensely dark, which made one think of Longfellow's lines:

"The rain is falling, falling, solemnly and slow,
Caw, caw, the rooks are calling; it is a sound of woe."

It did seem a "sound of woe," indeed. But this morning the sky is cloudless, and the mild September breezes and glorious sunlight brighten and gladden the whole earth. Of all the four seasons of the year autumn is to me the most enjoyable. The mild, gentle breezes, the mellow sunshine,

the soft music of birds and insects, the quiet that usually pervades the whole, no one, it seems, could fail to enjoy. Oh! if I could but draw a useful lesson from the beautiful scenes without, from the quiet and brightness of nature; if the glorious sunlight of God's eternal love could but shine through the dark clouds of sorrow that envelope my life and my weary soul, what comfort it would bring. Such a day of soft, heavenly breezes, of cloudless skies in the soul, after the dark and dreary and rainy day is pleasant indeed. But

"Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days be dark and dreary."

And if we could but feel that the dear Lord "maketh the clouds His chariot," that He rideth upon the storm, then would we be patient, waiting His will.

A few days ago I received a good deal of comfort from the words of Jesus, "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." How soothing must have been these words to the sorrowful Mary as she sat pensive and sad at the feet of her adored Master. How sweet do they seem to our poor souls, when the dear compassionate Saviour assures us of His love, and teaches us that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, can separate us from His love, nor take from us "that good part," which our souls have desired and chosen. How blessed and rich we are after all, though we be ever so poor within ourselves, and poor in this world's goods, if "we have chosen that good part." Oh! for an humble, trustful mind, a longing and willingness to sit quietly at the dear Master's feet, a calm resignation to His infinite and holly will, and grace to look to Him for help in every time of need, to trust in His blessed promises. How sure are all His promises, how infinitely tender His love and watch-care to those who, like the Mary spoken of, "have chosen that good part."

How storm-tossed has seemed my soul for some time past. Turn which way I may, nothing but trouble, darkness of soul, and adversity of circumstances meet me. How very truly did Paul say, "The sorrow of the world worketh death." Not death to the body, nor eternal death to the soul, but death to all feeling sense of His love; death to all hunger and thirst after the living water and the living bread. Death, did I say, to all hunger and thirst after the living Bread? No, no! for if there be any life at all, any spark of His dear love within the soul, surely I thirst, surely I long for some token of it, some evidence that I have been born again, and that I have a right to the "inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." But how can one utterly helpless and destitute claim any right to such an inheritance? What have I ever done to merit it? Simply nothing.

"What was there in me to merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father, I ever must sing,
Because it seemed good in Thy sight."

* * * * *

It is night-time with my soul, my sister, and it is night-time in nature. The curtain of night stretched its dusky mantle over the earth long ago. I am left alone in my room, the other occupants of the house long since having sought slumber. It is storming outside, and the wind sighs and moans most piteously. But there is a home where no night ever comes, and no sorrow, or sickness, or pain, or death. Oh! may He "who neither slumbers nor sleeps," spread His dear, sheltering wings about us all; and when our last day here is spent, our last sun gone down, may He take us to the bosom of His love to join in the song of redeeming love.

Affectionately your sister,

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, O., January 26, 1887.

MRS. SARAH TOOTH.

Dear Sister in Christ :

Your precious letter, mailed the 24th, reached me last evening. You do not address me as sister, and you may not be a member of the visible church, but I feel assured, from your words and your gift, that the love of Jesus is in your heart. If it were not I am sure you never would have felt a desire to help a poor creature such as I. Words fail me to give expression to the thankfulness to you, and to the dear Lord who put it into your heart to thus remember me. Your letter was a blessing both naturally and spiritually, for it is a comfort to me to learn that my poor letters have been blessed to your comfort. May you sweetly realize that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and may the love of God flow into your heart, and fill you with thanksgiving and praise unto Him to whom alone praise and adoration belong.

Yes, it does seem as though the able writers of the *Signs* are led more deeply into the beautiful mysteries and glories of the blessed gospel, of late years. They do not spend so much time and occupy so much space upon controverted points. But I do not want you to think I consider myself among the able writers, for oh ! I am all ignorance, all depravity within, so that I often feel like crying, as Paul did, "O wretched one that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" Who, indeed, can ? Certainly none but Jesus, the ever-blessed Saviour, who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Thanking you from the depths of my heart for your kindness, and commending you to the Lord's loving care, I am, your unworthy sister, in hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave.

MARY PARKER.

January 29, 1886.

From letters to Miss Ruth Holcomb, of Trenton, N. J.

Dear Sister in a Blessed Saviour :

It is something very unusual for me to address a person I never met, but having read a letter from you to a dear friend and sister, I cannot quiet the promptings of my mind in any way but to write you. All day long, and at night during the hours when pain will not allow slumber to rest my poor pain-racked body and brain, the impression to write you will not be hushed. If I am not deceived when, years ago, the dear Prince of Peace came to my troubled soul and in accents sweet, and with a "still small voice," said, "Peace, be still," the tempest ceased, and I was made to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." I was then given a spiritual, a glorious relationship with you; but, since learning your name and your place of residence, I have come to believe we are also naturally related, and bound by the ties of consanguinity, I feel that I must make myself known, insignificant as I am, and little as I possess of personal worth to recommend myself to you. My dear mother's name was Hannah Holcomb, and she was born in a village called Lambertville, not far from Trenton, N. J. Her people were natives of England. Grandfather's given name was John, and he was a botanic doctor. I deeply regret my imperfect knowledge of my mother's people, but my grandparents both died before my birth, and being always in school until four years previous to my mother's death, I have had little opportunity to trace the family history; but feel that it is just possible, indeed quite probable, that you and I are some distant relation at least. What think you, my sister? From your letter that I was privileged to read, I am quite sure I could love you; but as you know nothing about me you may feel otherwise. I have been a helpless invalid from general dropsy and other diseases for four years,

though I have been in delicate health since my twentieth year ; and I am now thirty-five. I have waded through deep waters, I have sunk in deep mire, and have felt all the waves and billows of human suffering and woe pass over me at times, but, blessed be the name of God, He has kept me by His almighty power, He has made me to lie down in green pastures, He has led me beside the still waters, and in all my bitter sorrow and woe His rod and His staff have comforted me. Ah ! my sister, it is after the angry flood-tide has swept its raging billows over us, that the still waters seem so grateful, so calm, so sweet to us. Even in my short life it seems that wave after wave, billow after billow, has swept over my head, and if the dear Lord had not pointed me to His stronghold, and bid my weary, heavy-laden soul find rest, I certainly would have gone down to the regions of despair. I have learned by sad experience that trial makes our faith in God grow stronger, and that at the destruction of each darling earthly idol, which we thought were props for our slippery feet, we are brought to cling more closely to Jesus, and to rest more steadfastly on His sure and blessed promises. There have been times when His steadfast love and watch-care over me have been made manifest in such a marvelous manner as to leave no room to doubt ; times when I have been fed and cared for, as it were, by the "ravens ;" when assistance came in so unlooked for, and even unasked and unlooked for a way, as to make me feel that His love was very pitiful and tender, and that He would, indeed, never leave nor forsake me, and that He also knew, without my telling Him, just what I had need of. In instances of this kind my poor soul overflows with thankfulness and love, and I feel to love and praise my dear Redeemer far beyond what I can find words to express. Thus do we realize "It is good to be afflicted, it is good to mourn, it is good to weep ; for in it all, through it all, we shall be comforted. I shall have to close now. Dear sister, will you

not do me the favor to write me? Until within a day or two I have not been able to write so much as a line for several weeks. I may not have such a privilege again for days or weeks, so uncertain is the state of my health, I am so oppressed for breath at times. I feel of a truth that "I know not what hour the Son of Man cometh;" but oh! my soul longs and faints to escape from this prison of clay and soar to the mansions of bliss.

MARY PARKER.

March 11, 1886.

My dear Sister and Cousin :

Since it has come to light that the same English blood courses in our veins, have we not a right to address each other as relatives? And how closely drawn is the sweet chain of relationship since we believe we are related both naturally and spiritually. It does seem most wonderful how events are brought about; yet a great Providence rules all things, and directs the steps and destiny of man. We all think we can trace a family resemblance in the features shown in your photograph.

Sister Ruth, I am very ill, indeed, and can write but a line or two at this time. How I, too, wish you could come to me. I am vain enough to think you would love me a little at least. I am passing through heavy trial, but I cannot despair when I think of the suffering of the dear and lowly Jesus, and that I am but drawing nearer, and coming into a closer fellowship with Him through suffering. I have lately met with a financial loss, and my little all of this world's goods is in a condition that I may possibly be left almost in want. Pray for me, sister, for, at times, I feel it is all so heavy I cannot, cannot, endure it. Then again I feel strengthened. Oh! I would that earth and its trying scenes were forever over. The little bouquet you sent me was fresh and fragrant. Let me hear from you soon.

In much love, MARY PARKER.

July 4, 1886.

I am weak and dull and in great misery, but my heart goes out to you in love and tender longing, and I am going to try to write you a little at least. The evening your dear letter came I was raving with pain, fever and delirium, so I did not know of your letter until next day, when I was once more "clothed and in my right mind." Oh! sister, dear, the Lord did regard your desire, and sweetly gave me the hearing ear and the understanding heart, and never did words come to my aching heart with more sweetness and comfort than through your letter. I seem to grow worse, and my mind is enshrouded in gloom most of the time. I pant and long for the end, yet shrink and dread the monster death. I still cling to my hope, and believe Jesus will save my poor soul, yet the flesh is full of dread, and an indescribable something comes between me and the light of the Sun of Righteousness, so that I cannot feel the abiding trust I so much long for. It may be that when the trial is to be met, then the strength and calmness will come. I have heard it said we do not need dying faith until the moment comes. I know my saintly father feared and trembled sometimes when he thought death near; but when it did come, he seemed a marvel of strength; and oh! how sweetly, how calmly, did he breathe his dear life away. Since I last wrote you I have received a precious letter from Elder Chick, together with an excellent cabinet photograph; also a pleasant letter from Sister Mary Woolford, of Maryland. Oh! how happy it makes me amid all the gloom of my sickness, helplessness and many trials. To get letters from those whom Jesus loves, and who are dear to me through Him, is the sweetest of all my earthly comforts. I could not keep back the tears when I read your sweet pen-picture of our fancied intercourse at the Holcomb reunion; and then I looked at my swollen, deformed limbs, and thought had it not been for the ravages of disease,

imagination might have been reality, and we might, indeed, have met face to face, and have enjoyed sweet companionship. Those flowers were fresh and fragrant. Each letter I get from you seems to draw the cord of relationship more closely about me, and I feel my heart throbbing with love that will survive even this fleeting breath. May the dear Lord guard and bless you. Please write soon.

May 1, 1887.

The day your last dear letter came I was trying to write to Elder Vail and wife, in acknowledgment of their letter and photographs. * * * This is Sunday, and the people are moving to and fro to their various places of worship. The sun shines brightly without, the air, no doubt, is balmy and the birds are singing their sweetest songs. How all these changes and beauties in nature speak, and show forth the praises of the wondrous Creator. I have had so much cause to mourn my unbelief, my inability to lay hold of God's blessed promises, and to rest in the knowledge of His self-existence, and His willingness to save a sinner such as I, of late ; and oh ! how wretched, how weak, how lonely do I feel when the storms rage, and the voice of the blessed Redeemer is not heard saying, "Peace, be still." Though feeling so burdened, so cold, so far from my dear Saviour, yet it is a comfort and strength to know that He is the same loving Saviour, the same everlasting Father, the dear "Prince of Peace." How sweet, too, is the thought that He has told us to cast our burden upon Him. Oh ! let us look to Him, dear Ruth, instead of trusting in the puny arm of flesh. How well have I seemed to learn the lesson, "vain is the help of man," and the importance of the holy injunction, "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of."

Dear sister, I did so enjoy Elder Chick's last letter to me. His wife sent a word of remembrance, which pleased me greatly. I do so want to write to him, but have not felt able.

I will send you a little keepsake I embroidered for you, trifling of itself, but when the hands that made it are folded away, if you are still here, you may like to look at it. In spirit I seem near you, and in the great beyond we will meet to part nevermore. Please write as often as possible and believe me ever your loving,

MARY.

July 26, 1887.

My Beloved Cousin and Dear Sister in Christ :

Your welcome letter came last evening, just at dark. Had I received it earlier, unfit as I am to write, I should have commenced a letter to you. My silence, dear Ruth, has been caused by the weak and suffering condition of my body. I suffocate when I exert myself in talking, moving about on the bed, or using my arms in any way. No, dear, I do not get any better, but decidedly worse ; and the severe trials my helplessness subjects me to rends my very heartstrings. Two weeks ago I was so ill my brother and wife had to bathe my face and hands and give me stimulants all day to keep life in me. I will never forget the horrors of that terrible day. I felt that every next moment would be my last ; and where was the calm trust, the eager looking for the coming of the Lord ? Ah ! it was all gone, and Satan filled me with doubts and fears, and tortured me with all the vile thrusts he is capable of. When I thought to pray the heavens above seemed as brass, a darkness as a weight bore me down, and enshrouded me as a dark and gloomy cloud. The *thought* even of death appalled me. A funeral procession passing my window caused me to shudder, for soon, I thought, my poor body must be like that ;

and where, O where, would be my soul. I did not seem to fear hell or punishment; but when I thought of the separation of the body from the soul all seemed blank—a chaos. There was no heaven, no Jesus, no compassionate Saviour in view. All that long and terrible day until twilight did this awful feeling enshroud my soul. When all of a sudden a light, a glory burst upon me, and for one brief moment it did seem my soul must leave this prison of clay and soar away to the glorious mansions I had in view. But only a moment did it last, then the old hardness of heart, the inability to pray, and wretched unbelief, became the ruling element of my soul. The promise to us, dear, is that, “As our days, so our strength shall be;” and when you and I are afraid to die, afraid of almost everything, ourselves the most, let us remember that “our appointed time” has not yet come, and until it does the strength according to that day will not be given us. David says, “The wicked are not troubled as other men, therefore they have no bands in their death.” Having no fear of God before them, they rush headlong into eternity, into perdition, without a fear, a thought, or trouble. They have no bands in death, nothing to hold them back, nothing to fill them with fear and trembling. But the poor, trembling child of God, who sees nothing but indwelling sin, with all his “righteousness as filthy rags,” with nothing to commend him to a holy and just God, is filled with fear. We know Jesus can and will save His people; but Oh! “what is there in me to merit esteem, or give the Creator delight?” When you and I are so filled with fear and trembling at the thought of leaving this prison of clay, let us remember that our now glorified and risen Saviour once suffered the same in His human nature, though in far deeper degree of pain and anguish and woe. Let us look at Him in the garden of Gethsemane, where He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and when He cried, in the anguish of His soul, “Father, if it be

possible let this cup pass ;” and even when groaning in all the agony of His ignominious death upon the cross, he cried, in anguish, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” I believe that some of us may have to mourn an absent Lord even when we come down to the very gates of death. Our Sun may be beneath a cloud, but He is there just the same ; and when His light bursts through the darkness will it not be the light of immortal glory ?

It is a comfort to me to think of the last scene of my dear father. He had been such a valiant soldier, such a godly man, and when the physician told him he could not recover, for a few moments he trembled like an aspen leaf, but soon recovered calmness, and, pointing heavenward with a radiant countenance, said, “ I shall soon be up yonder.” He became paralyzed and speechless before death, but a short time before the summons came he motioned us all to him and took leave of each, kissing me with a fervent, lingering caress. After that he slept away as peacefully, as sweetly as a new born babe. Never will I forget the hush, the solemnity, yea, and the heavenly influence that came over all in that death chamber. Just as the sun rose above the eastern horizon on that bright May morning, did his soul take its flight to the glorious scenes and joys in the glad and beautiful world beyond. * * * Oh ! that the dear Lord may give us patience and a quiet resignation to His righteous will, is truly my prayer. But we must remember that patience and resignation do not come to us all at once, but “ tribulation,” says Paul, “ worketh patience ;” and again, “ This light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” You speak of the comfort and blessing of those dear sisters under affliction, whose articles appeared in the *Signs*, and mourn that you cannot have the same sweet foretastes of the heavenly joys. I feel the same way, at times, yet I cannot give up my own precious hope because I am not

thus blessed. I think I have had just such blessings accorded me, at times ; but most of the time it is just the reverse, and I feel nothing but barrenness, coldness, hardness of heart, and an utter inability to speak words in prayer.

Some say that if one lives circumspectly as a Christian he will never fear death. If that be true, then I am not a Christian, for I cannot be hypocritical enough to deny the fact that there are times when death fills me with shuddering. Then again there are seasons when I can sweetly feel that, come life, come death, "I know that my Redeemer liveth ;" and I believe that He will cause me to triumph over death, and to exclaim : "Oh ! grave where is thy victory ? Oh ! death where is thy sting ?" Now, dear cousin, I have written just a mere hint of my trials. It may not be the experience of the true child of God, but it is the truth ; and if I am found among those who are left without the gates of the Holy City, it is a just and holy God who decrees it. I am powerless to "add one cubit to my stature, or to make one hair white or black." You ask if I can lie down. Oh ! no ; I sit day and night on the edge of the lounge, with my swollen, deformed foot and limb in a vessel of cold water. I can recline a little on my right side, just for a few moments ; this is all the change I get. The weariness, the pain, the trial of my affliction, is beyond expression. Oh ! that it were all over, the last pain, the last dread scene forever past. Surely, beyond it all, beyond the grave, there will be rest and peace. Sometimes when I think of "the home over there," with Jesus forever present, evermore to behold His face, to worship at His feet, to be in His likeness, to meet the dear prophets, apostles, dear father and mother, all the blood-bought throng, it fills me with rapture I cannot contain, and alone on my sick bed my lips speak forth His praise. Let us be patient, dear Ruth, all will be well after awhile ; it will not be long, at best, before, if our hope deceives us not, we shall

indeed mount up with wings as eagles ; we shall run and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint. There God shall wipe all tears from our eyes, and we shall have peace and rest and joy and gladness for evermore. May His wondrous love overshadow you, and His perfect love flow into your heart, casting out all fear.

Write again and often, and, though most unworthy, I wish you to think of me as

Your ever loving cousin,

MARY PARKER.

August 15, 1888.

Dear Ruth :

I can only write you a line. I have been greatly worse ever since the hot weather set in. * * * Oh ! when will the dear, glad summons come ? When will I see the dear, benign countenance of my well-beloved, and hear His voice saying : “ Child, thy Father calls, come home ? ” Oh ! would it not be sweet, would it not be blessed to thus fall into His dear, everlasting arms, nevermore to suffer, never again to sin, to be sick, weary and so, so tired ; yet this wondrous joy will come, and will be mine for evermore, if I be not a deceiver and am not deceived.

Although my afflictions do not lessen, neither do God’s mercies lessen, for they are new to me every morning. I am glad you have so many sweet gospel privileges, and that you are blest with the hearing ear and the understanding heart.

April 29, 1889.

Though so very weak and unfit to write I feel I must try to let you know that at least you have my love, my sympathy and prayers in your sorrow and bereavement. Yes, dear Ruth, I know all about the awful hush and stillness that fills the house, and our sorely-bereaved hearts, when the dear one lies

silent and cold, with eyes closed, ears that no longer hear, and lips that no longer respond to a kind word, or a tender caress, yet if we are enabled by grace divine to look away from these trying scenes "unto the hills from whence cometh our help," how sweetly do we at once feel soothed, how tenderly does the love of Him who is a father to the fatherless entwine itself about us, and uphold us with the strong, everlasting arms. My weak arm that would, oh! so gladly, encircle you in your trying hour, is too weak to uphold you, too short to reach you; but God, who is your refuge and strength, is a very present help to you in your trouble. A wide space lies between you and me, which neither of us can pass over, save in a length of time; but this dear Friend fills all space, and to His dear, everlasting arms I can alone point you. Casting all your burden on Him you will sweetly realize that He will sustain you. I am so glad your dear heart remembered and turned to me in your hour of trouble, though I feel, oh! so keenly, my inability to comfort you. You were not out of mind a moment on the day of your father's burial; and especially did my heart go out in prayer for you after the laying away to rest, and the return to the silent, lonely house.

Oh! sister, do tell me all about yourself and your plans for the future. Since I wrote the letter which recently appeared in the *Signs* I have been very low. I would love to write more but am becoming so exhausted I cannot. May the God of all grace be your comfort and stay.

September 12, 1890.

I think of you often, if I am silent, and never tire of looking at the pretty, delicate glass, with its tiny "forget-me-nots," and its delicate design, and as often as I look at it I think of you. It is twilight and I am alone. How solemn

seems the stillness, how lovely the rosy, delicate sunset glow that still lingers in the west, where the sun sank out of sight. When my thoughts take a backward range, and view the past of even one day, how regretful I feel ; how unsatisfactory is the very best act or motive that has actuated me ; and the words the Psalmist used seem the most fitting prayer I can offer : " Cleanse thou me from secret faults." The heart seems such a sink of sin, the motives by which my entire being seems actuated appear so selfish that I feel that away down in the heart there must be numerous faults I do not see ; but the eye of the Holy One sees all ; and so not only does the Publican's prayer fit our case, but also David's : " Cleanse thou me from secret faults," comes to us, as though it arose from our hearts alone.

Last Monday I had the hardest and longest attack of suffocation I ever had. Some Baptist people called to see me, and I had them come into my room, and in a low whisper tried to speak words of welcome. I soon became so bad they all withdrew from the room, and oh ! the anguish I suffered on account of the labored breathing. The violent throbbing of the heart was too intense to be described. I could not see the dear ones again, which gave me great sorrow. It is wonderful, indeed, how much I am made to endure and yet live on and on. Oh ! that it would please the dear Father to call me home. Yet I desire to not only say, but desire, that His will be done.

Remember me in love to your sister and Sister Lawshe.

Lovingly,

MARY.

NEW HOLLAND, O., Jan. 2, 1888.

ELDER S. H. DURAND :

Very Dear Brother in Christ :

Your dear, kind letter came duly to hand. No words of mine can express the comfort and satisfaction it gave me. The kindness of the act itself of writing to one from whom you could expect no answer in return, or if you should have an answer one that would prove so poor a recompense for your trouble, naturally awakens my gratitude and admiration. Living a life of almost utter isolation from the people who love and speak the language I understand and so dearly love, to receive epistles of Christian fellowship and love from any of the dear people of God is a comfort and blessing to me the rarest, the most choice, the most to be prized of anything that comes to me in my afflicted, isolated, life. Years have come and gone since my dear father was taken home to dwell with Jesus and the holy angels in the abode of the blessed, but I have not ceased to mourn his loss or to miss the spiritual counsel he was so willing and able to give.

The words of approval, of kindly encouragement your letter contained came to me as "oil upon troubled waters," and I thank you so much for writing them. You say you are glad I am having my letters put in a volume. But *I* am not having it done. The work was undertaken by my friends without any thought or desire on my part. I do assure you, my brother, I could not be so presuming as to wish to lay before the public anything *so* imperfect as my letters are. It was not until I was importuned again and again by Sister Mattie Thomas, of Indiana, that I gave my permission to have her undertake the work. Her health giving way entirely, I thought it had fallen through with, when I learned that it had been taken up by a dear, intimate friend of mine in Ohio, Sister Frankie McNaughten, who had it in the hands of the

publisher before I had time to offer any resistance. She is a lady of education and culture, and of excellent judgment, yet I greatly fear her affection for me has allowed her to overlook faults in my letters that to others will appear most glaring. I was too ill all summer to think or even care about the work, and it has been completed as utterly without my oversight as your own. I have not seen the book ; but since I hear of its completion a feeling of humiliation has possessed me that nothing but fervent prayer, and the reading of the dear Master's words can soothe or quiet. Do you ever feel ashamed and humiliated on reading your productions, or after you have made the effort to speak in the dear Master's name ? I consider all who write or speak for the comfort of His people, and the honor and glory of His dear name, as servants, into whose mouths He puts His precious truth. All are alike dependent upon the one inexhaustible fountain-source. The most powerful, learned and eloquent preacher is just as dependent as I, who, if I have any gift at all, have one so small as scarce to be perceptible. But if the dear Master has seen fit to give me even the "one talent," am I not just as much in duty bound to make proper use of it, instead of hiding it, as you, my brother, to whom so *much* is given ? Being so deeply troubled a few evenings ago, I prayed earnestly that I might find comfort in the blessed word to relieve me of the awful weight and shame I felt on account of my imperfect letters being given to the public. The book opened of itself to the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and on reading the parable of the talents I felt oh ! so sweetly soothed and comforted. They seemed like words spoken specially to me, and I felt willing to allow my letters to go out among the Lord's afflicted people, no matter if it did wound my pride to have anything so personal, so open to criticism, go out into the world. Surely if *one* of God's little ones can receive *one* morsel of comfort from them I ought to feel well repaid. My

affliction has become a part of myself, and when I write, especially to those who know of its severity, I am prone to make much ado about it; to see this in print is exceedingly mortifying, yet when I consider that it is all in our dear family, our Father's household, and when I remember how much comfort I have had from the description you and your late brother James gave of his sickness, I try to think perhaps the dear Master has a purpose in this also; to bring comfort to some poor soul, who, like myself, is sorely afflicted. Do you think I view the matter rightly, dear brother, or do you fear our dear people will be mortified on my account?

Tell dear little Edith the sick woman was pleased to learn of her sympathy, "and to have baby Mildred's kiss." Dear little Edith's heart is young to ache at the recital of human suffering.

I want to be remembered in much love to your wife and sister Bessie. Desiring to be remembered in your prayers, and wishing you all a very happy New Year, I close.

MARY PARKER.

MRS. VINE LOOFBOURROW :

My Beloved Sister and Valued Friend of my Youth :

With what a mingling of sad and pleasurable emotions was my mind swayed as I opened your dear letter, read the sweet, soothing words of Christian fellowship and love and found that, poor and unworthy and insignificant as I am, I had been made the recipient of your sympathy and generous charity. "Faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity," says the Apostle. In this instance I believe the Apostle means *love* more than mere giving. But what greater evidence can be manifested by the child of grace that he is in possession of the love of Christ than a desire to *give* to the helpless and afflicted. Oh! may His dear love

flow richly into your heart on this Christmas morn, may you by faith behold the babe of Bethlehem as the Messiah, and recognize in Him *your* Saviour and Redeemer, and with one of old say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" Oh! is it any wonder that those "wise" men of the East; after many days of travel, were exceeding glad when they saw the star, and that they laid their rich treasures at the feet of this wonderful babe? How it chastens one's soul to trace the footsteps of this dear one, "meek and lowly in heart," born in a stable; his childhood spent amid poverty and want; in His manhood scoffed at and derided, and called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber; later on mocked, spit upon, crowned with thorns, and forced to carry the heavy cross until He fell beneath its weight. See him, too, in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating as it were great drops of blood, in anguish more deep than human tongue ever could utter, crying, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass," yet in holy submission saying, "Thy will, not mine, be done." And then upon the cruel cross, nails driven through the tender hands, thorns piercing the dear, beloved forehead, suffering all those three long hours, and then saying, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Then at the very last to say, "It is finished!" Oh! would it not melt a heart of stone? What was it He had finished? The work His Father gave Him to do, the saving of His people from their sins by giving His life for them.

"Oh! for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break."

Wonderful, indeed, is a love that will make such a sacrifice. But wonder of wonders does it seem, when we apply it to ourselves, when we read that Jesus, whose name is "called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," suffered all this to redeem poor

sinners. We do not so much wonder as we view the church as a whole; but to think that we, who seem as nothing in His sight, should have an interest in His blood, should be partakers of so glorious an inheritance! It all exceeds our comprehension, and seems wonderful beyond expression. Oh, the blessedness of His love! Sweeter to the needy and the hungry poor than honey or the honey comb. Often upon my bed of pain do I ask myself, if I really know anything about His love, if ever I have tasted of its sweetness, or felt its power in saving and cleansing my poor, sin-polluted soul. What was it that caused a light, softer, more brilliant than the rays of the setting sun, to shine about me when I first found peace, and which now sometimes manifests itself when in anguish I pour out my soul to Him, if not His wondrous love? Oh! surely it is Jesus who speaks, "Peace be still," when the pain and sorrow beat so heavily upon my frail bark, and I, with bitter anguish, cry, "Lord save or I perish!" And it is surely His divine love and power that make my almost unbearable affliction *bearable*, and cause me by faith to look beyond it all to the land of never-ending peace and rest, where my sin-stained, weary feet shall soon stand. In that sinless home, dear sister, you and I will meet never more to part. Most truly do you say that life is not what we would like it to be. All is confusion and turmoil here. But did not Jesus say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace?" and oh, how sweet His peace is when it comes flowing into the soul. Last night, all the long night, I was in so much pain, pain of body, anguish and sorrow of soul. But this afternoon the goodness of God seems so sweetly made manifest, Jesus seems so near, so precious to my soul, there seems to be so much love and unity between His people and Himself, that my soul seems sweetly uplifted, and my heart goes out in praise to His name, and in love to His people everywhere.

I have indeed, as Mrs. Haney told you, been exceedingly ill. The life-current in my poor, pain-racked body runs very low at times. I feel that I am brought down to the very brink of the silent river. But I do not fear, for surely Jesus will go with me even there. His rod and His staff will comfort me. I seem only awaiting the glorious appearing of my Lord and Saviour. He has verified His promises to me in this life; He will not fail me at last; and though my "waiting time" seems long and tedious, yet it will ere long all be over, and the freed soul will then enjoy in all its fullness the love of Him that "filleth all in all."

Please accept my heart-felt thanks for your Christmas gift. So many sweet Christmas tokens have come to my sick-room, and, notwithstanding the severity of my pain, I am so happy in the unbounded love and care of my precious Saviour, and the love and kindness and sweet fellowship of His dear people.

Sincerely and affectionately your friend and, I hope, sister in Christ.

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, O., May 25, 1890.

MRS. SARAH BOYD,

Dear Sister in Christ:

Sitting here alone in my sick room, striving to still the ceaseless, terrible pain which racks body and mind long enough to at least write a line to you, thoughts like this arise in my mind; "How can any one care to get a letter from such a bundle of imperfection and sin as you are;" and such a sense of my utter unworthiness to occupy a place in the affections and esteem of any of the Lord's dear children comes over me as I cannot describe. But who ever finds any

satisfaction in looking at *self*, especially if they have been brought to feel the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," and to know the plague of their own deceitful heart? It was kind of you to write again to me; after having written once before and getting no response. I remember well when I received your former letter, as well as much of its contents, but I was very ill at the time.

I sympathize with you in the troubles that hang over your life; but a stronger hand must help you. A mightier power than we controls the events of life, and metes out to each of us the "mixture of joy and sorrow" which He designed for us. We know that each portion which comes to us, be it bitter or sweet, helps to make up the "*all things*" which work together for our good. We can not often see the sunshine through the dark cloud, yet *it* does shine, nevertheless; and for every heaven-born child the Sun of Righteousness will shine throughout time and eternity. Our dear Eld. Durand paid me the promised visit. He came "in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Years of pain had passed over me, until at least ten were numbered, since I had listened to the sweet story of Jesus and His love, told by one of his dear servants, and the "certain sound" of the gospel trumpet fell as sweetest music on my ears, and my hungry soul was filled with satisfying *food*. So long as life lasts I will look back to this sweet "Bethel" in my life, and raise an anthem of praise to the Lord for thus having regarded the low estate of His hand-maiden, in sending one of His ministering servants to tell me the glad, sweet story, and to cause me to "joy in the Lord, and to rejoice in God, my Saviour." Oh! if I could at all times lay aside the *many* weights, and the sin which doth so easily beset me, and look oftener to Jesus, *dear* Jesus, the author and finisher of my faith; if I could oftener "mount up with wings as eagles," and "run and not weary, and walk and not faint," how much lighter would seem the burdens that so weigh

me down, and how much easier it would be to wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change come. "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." The spirit is willing to suffer all things, the pain, the sorrow, the disappointments and heart-aches. It would "put on charity which is the bond of perfectness;" but the law of sin that is in our members is a hindrance in everything, and, try as we may, long as we may, "we *can not do* the things that we would," which causes us to cry, "Oh! wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Who, indeed, but Christ Jesus our Lord? Is it not a comfort to read that even the dear, inspired apostle was brought just where you and I are brought, even to the feet of Jesus? I did not think I would have strength to write this much, as for the last ten days I have been much worse. How often am I made to cry, "How long, O Lord! how long? O come, Lord Jesus, come and call Thy weary child home."

Your sister in Christian love,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from letters to Dr. and Mrs. B. F. Coulter,
Philadelphia, Pa.]

NEW HOLLAND, Pickaway County, Ohio.

Dear and Much Esteemed Brother in Christ:

I owe you an answer to the very interesting and welcome letter which you were so good as to send me some weeks ago. But while on the one hand I feel a desire to answer your letter, on the other hand, I have such a crushing and painful sense of my inability to do so, that I shrink from making the attempt. For some time past, I have not only felt unusually "shut up" in soul, but have been bowed down with a sense of my sinfulness. Oh, what a busy, wary enemy Satan is.

There seems no place under the natural sun where he cannot bring his Satanic wiles to bear against those who desire to worship the living God alone. Here upon my bed of pain, shut out from the world, safe, it would seem, from his fiery darts, his wicked trail may be seen and felt. At a time and place, where I least expect it, he casts his fiery darts. "Behold," says Jesus to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." I wonder if Satan does not desire to have every one of the lowly followers of the dear, meek Nazarene. Yet, if we be really and truly "rooted and grounded in Him," we know that none shall pluck us out of His hand; for does he not say, "thou art graven on the palms of my hands?" Thus hope, sweet hope, rises like a beautiful and shining beacon light above all our fears. Armed with the preparation of the blessed gospel, we are enabled to lift up our bowed heads and say, "get thee behind me Satan," and to overcome all the powers of Satan and the world that are brought to bear against us. Just here election comes in as a blessed stronghold, for how could hope point us to any light if we did not hope and trust that we were one of the elect, one among those "who were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world?" What a sure foundation the believer has on which to build "the good hope through grace." What a safe harbor in which to rest from the roaring billows that beat upon our trembling bark, from the world, the flesh and Satan. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I," says the Psalmist. The precious Rock, out of which flow rivers of living water. The fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. To the poor, sin-polluted soul, sick of its own leprous disease, weary of self and of the filthy rags of self righteousness, stripped of all good, whither can it flee, but to this eternal rock for safety? To whom can it go for pity and help, but

to Him, who bids the weary and heavy laden come to him and find rest? Oh! the fullness, the sweetness of the blessed gospel promises. Sometimes, amid all the changing scenes of my changeful, tempest-tossed life, I seem to catch a faint glimpse of the beauties of holiness through a glass darkly, and my cold, hard heart seems animated and warmed with a little of the glow and warmth that I trust is reflected from the rays of the sun of righteousness, and I feel something of the "healing in its wings" applied to my poor, sinsick soul. A little while before day dawn, this morning, I awoke from one of my brief, unrefreshing slumbers, feeling a burden of soul that seemed too heavy to bear, when these words came quickly into my mind; "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to thee." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He will sustain thee." I felt that I had neglected to seek the Lord as diligently as I should; I had been indifferent to his word, cold in prayer, neglectful of going to Him with the simple trust and faith of a little child; hence the crushing weight that so bore me down. Oh! to have Jesus for a friend, to hide in the rock that is higher than I; to go to Him with every heartache, and all our woes, and find underneath us His dear, everlasting arms. Is it not wonderfully precious and sweet?

Trusting you will be so good as to write again to me, desiring to be remembered to sister Coulter and all the dear, dear saints in Philadelphia, I am, unworthily, your sister in affliction and trial,

MARY PARKER.

December 31, 1890.

Very Dear Brother and Sister:

I am reminded that only to-morrow and the old year, with all its events, will have passed forever away, and will have glided into another, to us unknown, untried year. Truly,

“swift as a weaver’s shuttle speed the years,” and time, with its ceaseless, rolling wheels, is hurrying us along with it to the final end. Does it not almost startle one, sometimes, when in silent meditation we watch the ceaseless tick of the clock, and realize that each brief second takes along with it so much of this life, and that from the very moment life begins, we begin to go down to the grave, the end and final resting place of all humanity? Yet the child of God, sick of self and sin, deeply realizing that this life is but a vain show, and that all is vanity, can truly say with Job, “I loathe it, I would not live away.” And we are deeply thankful that away beyond the shifting scenes of life, beyond the clouds, the doubts, and struggles against Satan and sin there is a haven of eternal rest, where Jesus, who is at the right hand of God, is as willing as he is able to save all who come unto God by Him. Dear brother and sister, I can hardly myself tell why, but the dear saints whose acquaintance I have made through the medium of the pen in your city, are inexpressibly near and dear to me, and many times during the day, and the long, tiresome nights, I have you all in tender remembrance. Some weeks ago my left limb, which for several months had been discharging at least a gallon of water in twenty-four hours, suddenly ceased to discharge, both limbs inflamed and swelled until they looked as though they had been in boiling water, and pained and burned just as if they had. My entire body, neck and face became swollen and distorted almost beyond recognition. One long, hard chill would succeed another, and the pain and distress were indescribable. After a little over a week, blisters formed on the feet and limbs, and they began again to discharge. But the dripping is still too scant to give me the relief I so much need. I am in almost constant agony. If I can keep my body perfectly free from motion, I suffer less; but when I move about the pain is so great I scarce can bear it. I realize that only a mere breath or turn of the hand would

break the frail chain that binds me to earth. Surely I cannot stay here until the coming of another Christmas-time. But in that bright world, to which my spirit turns with anxious yearning, will not the star of Bethlehem shine with resplendent lustre, and will not this same Jesus, this Blessed Messiah, who for our sakes suffered the ignominious death of the cross, take us into the bosom of His love, Himself wipe away all tears from our eyes, and clothe us in spotless robes, "Our house which is from heaven?" Oh, the blessed, blessed thought! I often wonder, if the twenty-fifth day of December is indeed the birth-time of Christ, why it is spent in the indulgences of the natural appetites, and in festivities; and why even the Lord's children do not move softly on that day. Yet the Lord and Master told us to do nothing in commemoration of His birth, but to commemorate His death in the breaking of bread, and the drinking of the fruit of the vine. Christmas day was very quiet in my sick room. A heavy snowfall set in at early dawn and continued the entire day. I sometimes think amid all my pain I have more to be thankful to my dear Master for than any other creature. But oh! when I can only lie back on my pillows, oblivious to everything save the awful pain, unable to think, read or pray, or hear of the compassionate Saviour, then how dark everything becomes. No Bible, no praying, no sense (only just through a glass, O, so darkly) of the dear Saviour's presence and love. Oh! then it is that this awful life becomes scarcely bearable, and the promise that He is with me even unto death, is almost lost sight of. Pray for me, will you really? and oh! do be patient with me; do not tire of me: and write me your dear, soothing letters, when amid the toil and rush of your busy, useful life you find time.

Truly, affectionately yours,

MARY PARKER.

February 8, 1891.

My Dear Brother in Christ Jesus :

From the parlor just across the hall, soft sweet notes of music are issuing. My niece is playing some minor air, and as its delicious melody is wafted to me, so like a breath of perfumed summer air, my soul seems stirred with varied, uplifting emotions. Life seems really full of many beautiful and enjoyable things, and many delicious drops of sweet nectar are dropped into the cup of our earthly life, along with its bitterness, sorrow and woes. It seems to me that nearly all the good in our life here, the reaching out of the soul after the pure, the bright, the beautiful, is like the beginning of an endless rivulet that will flow on throughout time and eternity; and that it is so interlinked with the life to come, that it will not stop with the laying down of the body, but that it will flow onward and upward into that ceaseless river of eternal life in the world without end. If music sung with earthly tongues, played upon instruments of wood, is so delightful to one's soul, what will be the music of redeeming love, sung by angel voices, played upon harps of gold. Then shall we have put off all these filthy habiliments that so grieve and annoy the soul, and shall be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." The weary soul shall bathe in seas of heavenly rest, and with all the redeemed that have gone before, join in the song of Moses and the Lamb. "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." Sinful and unworthy as I know I am, feeling the while that I am "black as the tents of Kedar," through faith in God's blessed promises, Brother Coulter, I cannot help looking forward with anxious, eager delight to the time when the veil will at last be lifted or removed, and when I shall enjoy these beautiful things in all their fullness, and when, having awakened with the likeness of the divine Redeemer, I shall sweetly realize that "in His

presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore." In your last letter you spoke of how you were fed, and your soul elated, with the beauties presented, as the scriptures unravelled themselves while you were writing upon them, and the revulsion of feeling that came over you when you attempted afterward to partake largely of the same delicious food from the perusal of your writings. You said that it was because you had eaten, you were already fed, already satisfied with food and drink. How often I have experienced just such trouble, but it had not occurred to me to view it in that way. It is nearly always the case with me, as the sweet honey flowed into the earthen vessel, my soul has been made to rejoice in the God of my salvation while writing, but when I would attempt to read what I had written, there was a revulsion, an utter loathing, just as one cannot partake of more food, no matter how delicious, after the appetite had been satiated. Your interpretation of the subject greatly comforted me. Does it not remind you of the "manna" that fell for the Israelites, which was so delicately delicious when fresh, but which became obnoxious if left over and tasted the next day? I have often thought of it in the same light, that it was the same way with the heavenly manna. It is not the case, though, after we have feasted on the rich food as it is handed down by the undershepherds, which, after a time will be very delicious, when we go back (in retrospection) and take up basketsful of fragments. How often when we are hungering and thirsting for spiritual food, and our hope dwindles, we think, to almost nothing, have our minds recurred to some beautiful, comforting sermon we have listened to, and hope revives. We are fed and comforted, and we thus gather great "baskets" of food from the fragments. Your pictures are a great comfort to me. I have had many precious visits with my dear Philadelphia friends in the silence of the night, when there was no sound of a human voice or

foot-fall; nothing to be seen, nothing heard, save the distant howl of the watchdog, and the fierce outcry of some great owl, whose solemn notes only added to the deep loneliness; then I would look at you all, and hold sweet communion with you amid all my pain. Oh! what a blessed privilege to be able to know and love you through the medium of the pen. Best of all is the sweet hope that we shall meet face to face, and love each other in the happy home on high, and that we shall walk hand in hand in the New Jerusalem above. O, brother Coulter, it does seem, at times, I *cannot* endure the painful throbbing of the sores, the weight, the sickness, the difficult respiration and the long, almost endless, weary nights, to be succeeded by weary days, and other weary nights. Nothing to look to for help, but only to gain strength through fervent, intense prayer. And often when I just fall helplessly at His feet, clinging alone to Him, rest, sweet rest, and ease and submission are given. Oh! it is very, very wonderful. Write often; write just as you feel. Such words are given you as I seem particularly to need.

Affectionately your sister,

MARY PARKER.

MRS. MARGARET CRAVEN.

My Dear Mother in Israel :

I was made very happy yesterday on receiving a package containing a dear letter from you, and also your picture. How glad I am, dear mother, to be introduced to you through our dear brother Coulter. It seems to me but another precious jewel added to my rich store, but another link in the indissoluble chain binding me to my blessed Redeemer. What a sweet, rare privilege it is to be able to speak often one to another through the medium of the pen, even though we cannot see and speak face to face. I have been the recipi-

ent of so many beautiful letters, rich with the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and notwithstanding the severity with which my poor body is racked with pain, I never before was so happy in the love of my precious Saviour, and the love shed abroad in the hearts of His people, the fullness of which "filleteth all in all," and emanating from the great fountain source, it flows like a peaceful, mighty river throughout the lower courts of Zion, dear Zion, the seat and city of our King, who reigns in the beauty of holiness. Your picture is lying on my desk beside me, and each moment, as I rest and look up from my paper, your motherly countenance beams upon me in maternal affection, it seems to me. I have been so long sick, I feel much like a little helpless child, and with a child's hunger and longing, I long to take your hand, and with its kind touch on my weary brow, hear you speak such soothing words as only the mother's heart can feel. Oh! I am a great sufferer; how great none can know; my own tongue cannot tell. My arms, my hands, my feet, my limbs, and anywhere that there is any pressure or weight against the flesh, there are painful sores. But the dear Lord has never failed to strengthen me upon my bed of languishing, nor taken from under me the dear, everlasting arms. Brother C. writes me that you, too, are always in delicate health. You have my heartfelt sympathy. May the Lord bless you is the prayer of your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

May 30, 1890.

MR. E. B. WALTON;

My Dear Brother:

I would have tried to acknowledge the receipt of your excellent letter before this, had it not been for pain and weakness of body, which made it impossible for me to do the things I longed so greatly to do. I have had two of my bad

attacks since I received your letter, and was brought very low, both in body and mind. It is marvelous, indeed, how much my poor, suffering body is made to endure. Surely the dear Lord sustains and upholds me by his mighty, reigning grace, or I could not endure the terrible waves of affliction that do cast their bitter, pitiless surges against me. I feel, sometimes, as though I am brought to the very brink of Jordan's stream; that I can almost hear the water wash the shore, while angels voices beckon me to the other side, where all is joy and endless peace. At such times a sweet solemnity prevades my being, that nothing, not even the raging billows of disease and earthly trial, can very greatly disturb. Even nature in all its glory and beauty, even the golden light of the king of day, seems touched with the magic wand of decay, and over everything is a voice crying, "what is life? It is but a vapor that soon vanisheth away;" and as the flower of the grass, soon shall we all pass away; the richest, the noblest, the most intellectual, shall lie as low underneath the sod as the poorest, the most debased, the most ignorant. Truly man in his best state is but vanity. But the soul can never die. How solemn is the thought. "Black as the tents of Kedar" is the soul, unless it has been plunged in the fountain of that blood which alone can cleanse it from its blackness, and make it "whiter than snow." Can it be that I have had that precious blood applied to my sin-sick soul? Was its sin cleansing power ordained before the foundation of the world to save my poor soul from everlasting punishment? I can only answer by the witness I trust I feel within, the evidence I have that His holy spirit communes with my spirit, the love I have for his people, the hating of what I once loved, the loving of what I at one time hated. But over all is the felt-sense of His dear, pardoning love as it comes unmerited and unbidden into my poor heart, causing me to cry with rapture, "my Lord, and my God!" and in the midst of darkness and doubt, and fiery trials within

and without, to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Not merely to *say* it but to *feel* it in all the depth of its sweetness and meaning. It is said "flowers from pressure yield a sweeter perfume;" so I believe when the child of God is bowed down by affliction and trials too heavy of themselves to be borne, Jesus draws nearer, becomes more sensibly the Burden-bearer, and the sweet influence of His blessed grace, the rare perfume of His pardoning love, are more manifest. I feel to be the very poorest of the poor, the vilest of the vile, with sins that fill me with utter loathing of myself; yet in the burdens that come upon me, *too* heavy for mortal to bear, I feel sweetly the help and presence of this gracious Burden-bearer. He seems to dwell so near, to be such a very present help in all my trouble, that I really find no room at times to doubt. Yet I cannot praise Him as I would like, nor tell those about me, only in a most imperfect way, "what a dear Saviour I have found."

Since I received your letter I have had a visit from Elder Durand, and the privilege of hearing him tell the "glad tidings of salvation to the poor." If I mistake not I was granted the hearing ear and the understanding heart, which we know are among the dear Master's choicest gifts. I ate until my soul was fed and comforted by the unadulterated food that was dealt to me by the dear under-shepherd; and again and again do I go back and gather precious fragments left me from that bounteous repast. Oh! surely I do love God's people. How I am enraptured to see them come, and sad when they go out from my sick-room to return no more, perhaps, forever. Elder Durand has done much for my temporal comfort, for which I feel to trust he will be blessed and rewarded. Please accept my warmest thanks, dear brother, for your kind and generous gift. In my severe affliction I know not what I should do, if it were not for the kindness of the house-hold of faith.

Please remember me to the dear saints in Philadelphia, I will ever remember you as one who has given me the cup of cold water, which shall not go unblessed. Would love to hear again from you.

In deep affection your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

August 30, 1890.

Dear Brother Walton and Sister Amy Barnsley :

I owe you both a letter, and as I am not able at present to write two letters, I trust your goodness of heart will cause you to pardon me if I write you conjointly. I wrote to you once before, quite a long letter, and when nearly done fell to jerking, and let the letters fall into the vessel of water I am obliged to keep within reach to bathe my burning limbs in ; after such a misfortune I was too much fatigued to write again. It seems my condition becomes more and more painful and almost unbearable. But in my most painful condition I no longer look or hope for much respite from extreme suffering. Its effect upon the mind almost frightens me, as I note the deficiency of memory, the dullness of intellect, the utter inability to meditate, or give expression to the few thoughts that flow into my poor brain, when I attempt to write. I think of you all very often. Your "little bundle of love," as you sweetly termed your church, sister Amy, is very dear to me. Deprived of going to the house of the Lord to worship with the saints anywhere, one branch of the dear, beloved body seems just as dear to me as another, when they "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Truly does David say, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Wherever there is *love* there is *unity* ; wherever there is a lack of love, which is charity, there

is confusion. Weeks and months often pass by without hearing any of my kindred in Christ speak the language familiar to me, one that I can understand, whose music alone is sweet to my ear, and which has that certain sound which Paul speaks of in the 14th chapter of 1 Cor. You cannot know how lonely I feel, only when my inmost heart goes out to the "Lord's afflicted and poor people all over the land, and especially to those with whom I correspond. Sometimes when I read the inspired language of Paul, the eloquent outpourings of Isaiah, the sweet heavenly music that flowed from the heart of King David, my soul seems to hold communion with them, and I am so uplifted by the thought that in the great, sweet Beyond we *shall* be eternal heirs with those exalted spirits, if I am not clinging to a false hope. And how can that hope be false which is centered and stayed on the cross of Christ, when the true language of the soul is,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Having no one to talk to of my inward struggles, feeling so often cast down, so that I cannot even look toward Calvary's mount, when in my heart there is an aching void *nothing* can fill, I often feel, I think, as did Elijah when he told the Lord he alone was left of all the prophets. Not any of the good people here seem to feel poor, and ignorant, and helpless; for they speak of their ability as "workers," as "helpers," as givers of the most needful thing in saving souls, *money*. But I am destitute in every way; then some dear brother or sister writes like you do, and oh! how I am cheered, how I am comforted, how like delicious music falling upon the ear are the sweet sounds they send forth. How I am strengthened to know that the wisest have learned that there is no confidence to be put in the flesh, no good in our nature, no help in man; and that vile and helpless and poor, we can only fall at the feet of Jesus and cry, "God be merciful to me

a sinner.," Then comes into my mind these words, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Great indeed is the peace of the child of God, when stripped of all self-righteousness, he seeks that righteousness which is found in Christ Jesus.

* * * * *

In the city of our God no sickness can come, no sorrow, no more thirst ; and there God shall wipe all tears from our eyes. How I long to enter that City, the fair Jerusalem above, to go no more out forever. But I must wait the Master's time and call.

Pray for me, dear brother, that I may wait patiently the appointed time.

Your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

From a letter to Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Walton, dated Sept. 24, 1890 :

* * * * *

I think I have been made to feel the insufficiency of my own efforts, and that it were useless to undertake one step in my own strength ; but at no time do I feel more forcibly the truth of the blessed Saviour's words, "Without me ye can do nothing," than when I attempt to write or converse with those "who have been made wise unto salvation." I know that all of the Lord's children feel their weakness, and that when they think of the "depth of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God," they sink into insignificance in their own sight. But it is a positive fact, that in being taught the sweet gospel truths by the watchmen on Zion's walls, and in studying the scriptures, I in my sore affliction have less opportunity to obtain gospel

knowledge, and to grow in grace, and "unto a perfect one in Christ Jesus," than almost any one else. During the mid-summer I could not read at all, and it was not until this week, brother Walton, that I read the "Signs," in which was your experience, brother Coulter's letter to Eld. Bundy, and a most able article on Predestination by brother Morgan, of Texas. If you did not read it, please do so. Brother Morgan has not been a Baptist long, is only twenty-one years old. Is it not marvelous the depth of knowledge his article evinces. brother Walton, I feel deeply grateful to you for your many kindnesses to me. Your letters, your generous gifts, have brought much sunshine into my dreary, darkened life. You all seem very near to me; but until I read your experience I did not feel so like I had seen you face to face, and that heart had spoken to heart. How my heart swelled with emotion as I read of the deep sorrow and travel of your soul, of the bursting of the prison bands, and of the coming forth into the light and liberty of the gospel.

* * * * *

How sweet, too, that your dear wife and you can go hand in hand "up the holy hill of Zion," that both have tasted the wormwood and the gall, and can now enjoy the luscious grapes of Eschol, with the milk and honey.

* * * * *

I hear through sister Amy that you are convalescent, sister Walton. I do not hope to ever again take a single step; and so long as the painful life goes on it will be thus. But when I think of the Beyond, it is *life everlasting*, and eternal rest, and I am soothed and comforted. Remember me in love to all.

Affectionately your sister, I hope, in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from recent letters to Mrs. Amy R. Barnsley, of Philadelphia.]

June 6, 1890.

My dear Sister in Christ:

You said in your kind letter that you had no pretty, delicate language in which to clothe your thoughts. Neither have I; neither, indeed, did the apostle Paul seem to think he had, or he would not have said, "I came not in excellency of speech, or of wisdom." But he came, thanks be to God, in what was infinitely better and of more value to his fellow travellers and sufferers of the household of faith, in the wisdom and might and power of God, telling them the sweet story of Jesus and his love, in plainness of speech, so that the most ignorant and unlearned could understand its beauty and sweetness, as it flowed with such earnestness from the dear apostle's lips. I often think that the gospel of itself is so beautiful and grand that it needs no embellishing; and that it is all the more beautiful and sweet when told simply, clothed in plain language. How strongly does one's heart go out in Christian love to the dear, valiant apostle Paul and other noble defenders and expounders of the blessed gospel of peace. As we read their soul-inspiring epistles, do not "our hearts burn within us" with the same holy fire; and do we not feel, at the time, that we are with them and that soul responds to soul? If we are so happy as, like Paul, to "fight the good fight, to finish our course," have we not the sweet, blessed hope within us that in the Jerusalem above we shall see and shall sit down with the dear apostles and with all the prophets? And what gives me most joy of all is the blessed thought that we shall see Jesus, the *same* Jesus who ascended up on high, the same dear, lowly Nazarene who suffered here that we might live, and who is now exalted at the right hand of God, having conquered all things and put all things under His feet. The thought that we shall fall asleep and awake in His likeness, is it not sweet, is it not wonderful beyond our poor finite powers to conceive or express?

September, 1890.

Your dear letter was very pleasant to me, sister Amy, and I thank you for your kindness in having sent it. How very good has been the dear Lord to me in carrying my burdens for me, in opening a way for my temporal needs to be supplied and in giving me the sympathy, the help and great kindness of so many of His beloved people. The evening mail brought to me a lovely letter from sister Bessie Durand, and one also from brother E. B. Walton. They came to me as "good news from a far country." The blessed truths they contained, the dear, encouraging words they both spoke, came into my desolate life like the refreshing dew, and was "sweeter than honey and the honey comb." They caused my soul to "mount up with wings as eagles," and for a few brief moments, at least, I seemed to stand upon the mount as did Moses, where the beauties of the fair, promised land stretched in unsurpassed beauty and loveliness before me, and I trust I was given a sweet foretaste of the purple grapes of Eschol, and the pleasant fruits that grow on the borders of that fair land, while the milk and honey flowed sweetly into the soul. But as the heavenly manna, which fell every day for the children of Israel, would not keep over until another day, so the sweet incense and delicious fragrance of these happy foretastes and feastings of the soul will not abide with us, so that we can tell of it in all its beauty and fullness; and though my soul enjoyed a bounteous feast last night, my heart seems barren and cold to-day; though I would gladly share my soul's pleasant repast with you, my dear young sister, the broken vessel seems empty, the pleasant fruits have faded from sight and I feel that I have no sweet, gospel food to offer you. Oh! how helpless we are without the divine help. What empty, broken vessels, unless our blessed Master keeps pouring in the wine and the oil.

Elder Durand told me that you had but recently been brought into the fold of Christ. The apostle tells us to think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, "for the trial of your faith is more precious than of gold that perisheth." I trust that He, under whose wings you have come to trust, may be pleased to lead you gently, tenderly along; that He may ever shield your footsteps from the thorns that so pierce us by the way, and land you safely in the haven of eternal rest.

I did not know, until you informed me, that Elder Staton is your pastor. I am sure he is a very kind undershepherd, who will be very tender with the tiniest lambs, of whom there are many in the great Shepherd's dear flock. How good that He carries such in the dear bosom of his love, when they cannot walk alone, healing all their bruises, binding up their wounds and Himself wiping their tears away. No wonder that to all such the name of Jesus sounds so sweet that it

"Soothes their sorrows, heals their wounds
And drives away their fears."

October 12, 1890.

You, dear sister, with your precious Church privileges, enabled to meet around the Lord's table, to enjoy the fervent hand-clasp of your spiritual kindred, hear their familiar voices, and sit with them in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus," whilst the undershepherd tells the "old, old story," which is ever new, ever sweet, and which bears on its zephyr-like wings, not only "peace on earth, good will toward men," but also "good tidings of great joy"—you can scarce know the dreariness of one whose feet are also turned Zionward, but who is deprived of such choice blessings. Then,

too, you have your sweet home-duties with their endearing, ennobling influences. The love of your devoted husband, of your sweet little household pet; the affection of your brothers and sister, and the devotion of your self-sacrificing mother; all these blessings encircle your life like a band of gold, bringing into it much fragrance and bloom, and, it would seem, leave little room for "thorns amid your roses," were it not for your delicate, uncertain health.

April, 1891.

I was delirious when the evening mail came in last night, and your dear letter was laid on the stand near my couch. Here I found it in the stillness of the night, and its contents were as a cooling draught to a thirsty soul.

Oh, the love of our dearest Lord and Saviour! How sweet to feel ourselves being encircled by His love, which provides a spotless robe of righteousness which hides all our blackness and sin, and covers us as the snow now covers the earth. Dear sister, I cannot tell you how very thankful I am to the dear Lord for having spared to you your dear mother, and raised her up from her bed of languishing. How you are blessed in having your mother spared to you thus far on the toilsome journey of life. Oh, it seems so long since I felt the soothing, gentle touch of my dear mother's hand or heard her endearing words. Only in memory and in my dreams do my beloved parents come to me. I was so glad to see the names of dear brothers Coulter and Walton in the last "Signs." Amid the rush of business, the mingling with the world, it is marvelous how their minds are so stayed on the Lord.

In devoted love, I am your friend and sister,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from letters written to Mr. and Mrs. John M'Connell, of Philadelphia.]

Under date of October 5, 1890, she writes :

My Dear Brother in Christ :

I desire very much to write you this morning, but find my hand trembles and jerks so I don't know that I shall be able to write at all legibly.

This is a dark, gloomy Sunday morning, with a close oppressive atmosphere, and low, overhanging clouds, that are dropping slow, drizzling rain. Although I delight in autumnal weather, with its soft, mellow sunlight, its pleasant breezes, its rich and varied tints, yet a day like this causes one to feel with the poet, that autumn days, like this, are "the saddest of the year." My people have gone to their place of worship. They often laughingly remark as they shut me in, that I can't run away or get into mischief. For it is years since I stood on my feet or took a step. It is terrible to suffer hunger or thirst and be powerless to move. Once since I have been helpless a coal of fire fell from the grate when I was alone. I tried to throw water from my couch but failed to extinguish the fire. I could not even crawl, and the smoke and fright soon caused me to sink down unconscious. My brother, who had been to the country, came just in time to save my life and the house. It was a terrible experience, one I never shall forget.

Brother McConnell, I cannot tell you how pleased I am with my precious little book of Psalms, with its elegant flexible binding. I read in it so much during sleepless nights. * * * When my very soul seems overwhelmed within me because of the sins and inward corruptions that come like a thick cloud between me and the light of the Divine Redeemer, when I come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me, that sweet passage about our love for the brethren will enable me to lift up "the hands that hang down,"

and has sometimes strengthened "the feeble knees," when nothing else would. Oh! may His love fall like distilling dew into *your* chastened, contrite heart, my dear brother; may your weary hands be lifted up, may darkness and doubt flee away, and the spring-time of your soul appear, when the singing of birds shall be heard, and you be made to rejoice with joy unspeakable. This is my wish, my prayer for you; for I know that your soul was "exceeding sorrowful," and that if a song rose to your lips, it would truly be a "song in the night." He does "give songs in the night," and also "giveth His beloved sleep." And sweet indeed is our slumber when we sleep on the bosom of Jesus our beloved.

I wish to be remembered to your wife, and will you not remember me in your hearts and in your petitions to the Holy One? Thanking you, oh! so much, for your kind attentions to me, I am, very unworthily,

Your sister, I hope, in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

About ten days later she writes:

My Precious Brother and Sister in Christ:

The next day after I last wrote you I was taken violently ill, and it was thought by all who saw me, I was very near the door of death. * * * Oh! that these terrible storm-clouds were *all* forever past, the last painful scene ended, and the day dawn of perfect rest and peace were come upon me. * * * I hope you will not feel displeased, when I tell you what is indeed the truth, that my brief pen acquaintance with you, and the sweet comforts that come to my bedside in the gifts of the invaluable little desk, the lovely volume of Psalms, and lastly, this long-needed Bible, have brought you very near, and caused you to seem a very dear and precious brother and sister in Christ. The Bible is so light, I can hold it in my lap quite a while.

To Mrs. McConnell, November 9th, she writes :

My Dear Friend :

I did not think when I had your bright, spicy, cheery letter, which made me laugh sometimes, and did me more good than medicine, that it would be so long before I could answer it, but I have been in such a suffering weak state I could write to no one. * * *

My dear friend, you say you are outside the beautiful, pearly gates of the new Jerusalem, but are you not a mourner there? Do you not love to hear the watchmen declare the "good tidings of great joy?" Do you not love to partake "of the crumbs that fall from the Master's table?" Oh! I think your heart, your inmost soul will answer, "yes." Then, dear friend, why can you not say, like Ruth, "where thou goest I will go, thy God shall be my God, thy people my people?" * * * Pardon me for urging this sweet duty upon you. Please remember me in kind, grateful love to your dear husband, also your little daughter.

In December she writes :

My dear Brother and Sister :

When I look about me and see the many useful and beautiful things that have come to me through the promptings of your kind, generous hearts, I am filled with wonder. It all seems more like a beautiful dream than a reality. * * * Believe me, had I made a list of things most needed I could not have done better. * * * My brother was so delighted, for my sake, with your beautiful Christmas gifts, that he wished me to tender you his sincere regards and thanks on my behalf.

Oh! that the tender, beneficent Saviour, who feedeth the ravens, and who noteth the fall of even the tiny sparrow, and who hath said that not even a cup of cold water given in His

name shall go unrewarded, may richly bless and reward you, that He may cause the sunlight of His beautiful love to illumine your pathway, and that the "Sun of Righteousness may arise with healing in His wings." * * * Oh! it is sweet to love our spiritual kindred, sweet, very sweet, to hold intercourse with them, if it be only through the medium of the pen. * * * Each epistle of love and christian fellowship but draws the golden chain more and more closely around my heart. * * *

Dear Mrs. McConnell, you will have to get used to my profuse adjectives. I *do* love my friends, and I love to say so. I love to call them by endearing names. * * * Added to my usual chronic complaints, I have had, during the past week, pleurisy of the right lung. It causes my arm and hand to ache and weaken, so it is very painful to write. * * * May the dear Lord watch tenderly over you and guide your footsteps in the "narrow way," and finally take you to the dear bosom of His love, is my prayer. * * *

To Mrs. McConnell, under date of June 20, 1891, she writes:

Dear Friend:

I have wanted so much to write you since I have known you were home from the associations, but have suffered so during the long days I could not. * * * I cannot tell you how glad I was to receive a letter from your dear husband just after the Southampton meeting. It was so good of him to take the trouble to write to a poor sick woman who has so little to recommend her to the notice of the Lord's dear, chosen people. * * *

Since the long, hot days have come, I seem to loathe food. * * * I have been alone so much of late. When I can read and write I do not mind it; but the past month I have

not been able to do either, and the dreary hours have dragged so wearily. My spirits have sunk to the lowest depth. The beautiful, green earth, the glad song of birds, the refreshing rainfall, all failed to inspire me with one glad thought. Even my hope in Christ seemed a mystic dream. Out of the deepest of this gloom I was one day suddenly, and oh! so happily brought by these words coming in to my mind, "He loveth at all times. He sticketh closer than a brother." By these blessed words there was a removal of the awful weight, an uplifting of my soul to Jesus—Jesus the "lover of my soul," and a new song filled my mouth, even praise to His holy name. Oh! how sweet, after days and nights of rowing upon a dark and starless, storm-tossed sea, to be brought by an invisible presence into a calm, safe harbor, or to be allowed to sit beside "still waters," or to rest under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty. Oh! my friend, have not you also learned that, to the weary and heavy laden, this is the sweetest, safest resting place ever a poor sinner found?

Mrs. R. M. Benedict, of Indiana, to whom the following letter is addressed, is one whose unremitting attention in various ways has been of untold benefit to our afflicted sister. It is copied from *The Signs of the Times*.

NEW HOLLAND, O., Jan. 21, 1891.

My Dear Sister:

Your kind but urgent and repeated request for me to write upon the beautiful story of Ruth weighs upon me with such force that, incompetent as I know myself to be to treat upon a deep, glorious subject, I feel called upon to make the effort.

Our story opens with the coming of the Messiah, "When the judges ruled" Israel. For from the union of the gentle and virtuous Ruth with the good and noble and wealthy

Boaz was to spring Obed, the father of Jesse, who was the father of king David, from whom the great Branch in prophecy was to spring ; who, we are told, was a " Root out of Jesse."

At the opening of our story a severe famine lay waste and barren the land of Judah, and brought great suffering to the inhabitants. Elimelech, with his wife Naomi and his two sons, left their home and went into the land of Moab, where plenty reigned, and where the sons, Mahlon and Chilion, were married to two Moabitish maidens, named Orpah and Ruth. It is supposed that the noble heart of this good and loving wife and mother, Naomi, surrounded by the love and protection of her husband and children, was happy and content, although she had left the scenes familiar and dear to her girlhood, and gone to a strange country, among a people of a different nationality, who worshipped a god not like unto our God. But when the beloved husband was taken from her by death, and then the two only sons, she was heart-broken indeed. Standing alone upon the threshold of her broken household, is it any wonder if the poor woman felt there was nothing left her but the ashes of life ? With swelling heart, and eyes swimming with tears, how she must have looked longingly toward the land of her nativity, where in those early days, before the bitter winds of adversity had swept away her earthly possessions, and snapped asunder the dearest earthly ties, she was the happiest of maidens, the most joyous and prosperous of wives. In this awful agony and desolation, how like balm must have been the love and fidelity shown her by both of her daughters-in-law. Orpah, it is supposed, really thought she loved her good, kind mother-in-law well enough to forsake the scenes of her childhood and follow Naomi to her former home ; yet she no doubt secretly clung to her gods, just as the natural man clings to the frivolities and vanities that form his idol of worship. But Ruth, dear,

tender-hearted, loving Ruth, whom the mother had entreated, as well as Orpah, to go back to the loved homes in Moab, still clung to her. Methinks I see her lovely, impassioned, tearful face as, with her young, strong arms thrown about the poor, bent form of Naomi, she cried, "Entreat me not to leave thee." Oh, the depths of meaning, the deep fervency of love, contained in the word entreat. "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Wonderful utterances. Who but a poor, helpless sinner, sunken in the miry clay, whose very soul has been stirred to its deepest depths with the desire in the heart to have his feet set upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, could utter such a fervent cry? And it must be that Ruth, dear, loving Ruth, had tasted the bitterness of sin, had seen the folly of all earthly hopes and vanities; else she too, with Orpah, would have gone back to her gods instead of so clinging, as we might here say, to the mother, the Church.

When Naomi at last reached her native city, poor in spirit, aged and almost destitute of this world's goods, how very sad must have been her feelings. Yet how many of us in this day are made in a great measure to taste and drink the bitter dregs of wordly loss and adversity. But Naomi still had some good, true friends; and as they greeted her, calling her by her familiar name, she said, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara [signifying bitterness, or one who weeps]; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." The tie between this poor, afflicted woman and her daughter Ruth must now have become strong indeed. Here the human and divine love sweetly blend and run together as two drops of water flowing into one; for Naomi's God was now Ruth's God, and her people Ruth's people. What a dear daughter did this Moabitish maiden prove to be to the destitute and sorrowful Naomi.

“Let me,” said she, “now go to the field and glean after the reapers.” And the mother bade her go. What a pleasant rural scene must have opened to the view of this grand young heart as she left the heated city and walked through the shady walks of the country, where the fields ripe with the golden harvest stretched their broad acres in ocean-like waves before her. Here the newly heaven-born soul was led into green pastures and walked beside the still waters, and her soul must have been filled with the sweet song of redeeming love. “And she gleaned in the field after the reapers.” Ah! what rich golden grain it was to her. How eagerly must she have picked up the “handfuls” dropped “of purpose” for her. For “it was her hap to light upon a part of the field belonging to Boaz, a near kinsman of Elimelech.” How kindly did the rich owner of those harvests treat the lonely stranger. How soothing to her trembling soul were his words. “Why,” said she, “have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?” But Boaz answered her, that he had heard of all her kindness to her mother-in-law. Is not this the way the dear heavenly Master speaks to us when we first begin to eat of his rich harvest, when we taste his wondrous love and grace? Do we not find that he has known and loved us, even before we knew him? For “No man,” says Jesus, “can come to me unless the Father, who sent him, draw him.” Boaz said unto Ruth, “The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou hast come to trust.” Oh, how sweet to the poor, the weary, the heavy laden soul, to be thus led into the golden harvest; to rest and trust quietly under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty. Ruth’s reply to Boaz was, that his words had comforted her that he had spoken friendly to her, though she was not like his handmaidens. Here we see the humility every child of God experiences, the feeling of insufficiency,

and the lack of good qualities in themselves which they see in the brethren. "I am not like thy handmaidens." Therefore she was so surprised to receive words of kindness, expressions of favor and love, from the dear Master, when she had no goodness, no spiritual beauty such as she saw those have whom she knew had a right to his protection, kindness and love.

After Ruth had gleaned until even, and had beaten out the grain, having about an ephah (a bushel and a half) of barley, she went home and told her mother-in-law all that had transpired during the day, and of the kindness of Boaz. How great was the mother's joy while she listened to the glad story, and learned that the one who had shown her daughter such kindness was her near kinsman. And how the inhabitants of Zion, the church, are always rejoiced when any come with singing unto them, telling what great things the Lord has done for them. As the church always bids the newly heaven-born soul to be buried with the Lord in baptism, and thus be espoused to the Bridegroom, so did this mother tell Ruth what to do and where to go. How graciously did Boaz receive the virtuous, humble maiden. How careful was he to have her preserve her purity. "All the people of my city," said he, "know that thou art a virtuous woman." And behold how he sent her away laden with the golden sheaves of his love, that which was the bread of life. She had upon her a veil, which covered her. So do we ever behold the King with a veil (the flesh) between us, until this mortal shall have put on immortality, and we be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. But the golden sheaves covered the length and breadth of the veil, thus serving as a shield to cover Ruth from any evil imputations from the idle, evil loafers of the city. So does the righteousness of Christ take away from us the sting and reproach of sin; and though still sinners in a sinful world, if we go forth laden with the fruit of the Holy Spirit,

sin cannot harm us, and our "light will so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven."

As Boaz was not long in performing his promise to Ruth, in redeeming her inheritance, and espousing her as his wife, so neither does the Lord fail, nor is he slack in performing his promise to Israel. And from this natural union between Boaz and Ruth do we trace the lineage of Jesus, "a root out of Jesse," "the offspring of David," who was to shed his precious blood to redeem the bride, the Lamb's wife, and present her a chaste and holy virgin, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. O the depth of the riches of love such as this! Like Naomi, like Ruth, sorrowful, destitute, with none to help, none to redeem her inheritance, whither would she go but to the Lord of harvests, whose rich fields waved in golden beauty before her eyes? Did the Lord send her empty away? Did he not spread his garment about her, cover her with golden sheaves, and grant her a right to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, eternal and in the heavens? Was ever an inheritance bought with such a price? Was ever such a spotless purity found as that gained through the washing in His blood? Is it any wonder she was a "bride adorned for her husband," in spotless white, "all glorious within," decked with the jewels of such love? O wondrous union! O rapturous love, that crowns a marriage like this! To meditate upon it, to be able to catch a faint glimpse of its richness, its beauty and purity, through a glass darkly, fills the soul with unutterable joy. It is like a strain of heavenly music, methinks, such as John heard the harpers sing and harp upon their harps of gold in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of our wondrous King.

MARY PARKER.

[In connection with the foregoing article upon Ruth, we will give portions of a letter written upon the same subject to Mrs. E. B. Walton, of Philadelphia, dated February 7, 1891.]

My Dear Sister in Christ :

Your interesting and most touching letter is before me. For some time my mind has been led to study upon the beautiful Book of Ruth, and at the request of a beloved sister in Indiana, I wrote some of my thoughts upon it for the *Signs*. Your dear letter causes my mind to dwell so particularly on the following verse that I can not well refrain from expressing my thoughts ; “ Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord ; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly to thy handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thy handmaidens.” *Ruth ii. 13*. What pathos and depth of contrition do we find these words to contain, spoken by this humble Moabitish woman, who, for the love she bore her mother-in-law, Naomi, had left the dear, familiar scenes and friends of her native country, and had come to seek a home and friends among strangers, in a strange land. She was of heathen birth, brought up under different circumstances, among a people of different habits and customs from those of the Jewish people, with whom her lot was now cast. She may have felt that she was inferior in her personal appearance or manners to the maidens with whom the rich Boaz was accustomed to associate. Her words seem to imply that in some way she felt inferior ; for she said to Boaz, “ I am not like one of thy handmaidens.” Therefore she was greatly surprised, and no doubt very happy, when the wealthy, kind owner of the field in which she had come to glean, spoke words of kindness to her. Is not this the way every child of God feels, my sister, when in their poverty and bitter helplessness, they turn to the Lord ? When they come out from the world, which has no longer any enticements for them, nor enduring ties, and they are led by an

invisible hand into the fields of the dear Master's rich harvests, where they find "handfuls" dropped "of purpose for" them, and the kind Master comes to them and speaks words of comfort and welcome, are they not, like Ruth, both happy and surprised that they should have found favor in His sight? Coming to this rich, fruitful country, which hath "quiet habitations," from the land of natural heathendom, feeling ourselves to be strangers unlike any one else, full of corruption and sin, with what surprise do we find ourselves gleaning in the rich harvests of God's mercy and love, and allowed to eat and drink at the Master's table; and instead of being counted as foreigners, finding ourselves treated as fellow-citizens with the saints. No wonder that we, like Ruth, feel like humbly bowing ourselves to the earth and saying, "Why have I found favor in thy sight; seeing I am a stranger?" When by the light of the Sun of righteousness the child of God is made to see and feel the evil that dwells within his heart, how great is his anguish, and how unlike other followers of the meek and lowly Jesus he seems to be. Sitting at the Lord's table with our dear spiritual kindred, how lovely they look to us; how unlike ourselves. Truly do we feel "I am not like one of thy handmaidens."

We see our dear brethren and sisters manifesting all the fruits of the Spirit, but ourselves unworthy the Master's notice or love. But was not Ruth comely in the sight of the rich man? Can we not take courage from this illustration, my sister? She must have been beautiful and comely in the sight of Boaz, though she, herself, felt so inferior, for even before Ruth saw him, he was caring for her. How restful and cheering must his words have been to this weary, lonely woman, for she says, "thou hast comforted me." In like manner does the dear Saviour love every humble child, no matter how inferior, how poor or vile they feel, and His protecting care is about them, even before they know Him. When our dear,

compassionate Lord speaks comfortingly to our sorrowful souls, our hearts are made happy, as was the heart of Ruth, and we "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." As Boaz fulfilled all his promises to Ruth, making her his wife and purchasing her right of inheritance, so does our glorious Lord keep his covenant promises to Israel, redeeming his elect bride and giving, as a sign of eternal redemption, His own blood. How the mind loves to linger upon such a gloriously beautiful theme. But the more we contemplate it, the deeper it seems to our finite minds, and the more unfathomable. How unfailling are all the promises of God. In the New Testament we see fulfilled all the phrophecy of the Old. The promised Messiah came; and, when upon the cross, He cried, "it is finished." Then there was a fulfillment of the law, the work of redemption was complete. There comes to my mind the beautiful figure of the rainbow as a covenant between God and His people. It is used as an emblem of peace, and is an evidence that the Lord will never destroy the earth by a flood. In like manner is the death of Jesus a sign that the law shall never destroy the Lord's chosen people. In all the radiant hues and rich coloring of this emblematic "bow" of peace, does the love of Jesus come between them and endless punishment. Here "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The Lord says, "when I bring a cloud over the earth, my bow shall be in the cloud." So, whenever the clouds of fear and doubt, on account of sin, come over the soul, the bow of promise in Jesus shall be seen in the cloud, and his dear love shall shed its rainbow hues round about us now and forever more. As no storm-cloud is too dark for the 'bow' to show itself, so no storms that sweep over the sin-sick soul can be so dark but that the promise of the gospel shall be seen. Amid all your darkness of mind, dear one, which touches a tender, answering chord in my own sorrowful soul, you own that you

love God's people ; and the apostle says that is one of the evidences that you " have passed from death unto life." May you rest under the shadow of the Lord's sheltering wing.

In much love I am truly, the least of all,

MARY PARKER.

NEW HOLLAND, Pickaway Co., O.,

January 7, 1891.

MRS. M. M. HASSELL.

My Beloved Mother in Israel :

If on the receipt of your most precious, beloved letter, I could have written you, amid the warmth and glow of my great joy and thankfulness, that one like yourself should write to a poor, sinful, ignorant child such as myself, if I could have told you of the love, peace and joy I felt, and of the deep emotions your letter awakened in my soul, then might I in some degree have made you feel with what warmth of love I regard you, and what a blessed privilege and favor it seems to me to be honored with an epistle of love from you. But the coming of your letter found me unusually ill, and the extreme suffering has so weakened my mental and physical powers as to render me wholly unfit to write letters. I am still in a suffering condition. Just a little while ago some ladies called to see me. One, a strange lady who lives in a distant town, remarked, " If I was under such terrible affliction, I should think myself justifiable in taking my own life ; in doing so I would expect to be saved, too, if in your condition." How such words grieved and shocked me, when, in all my pain and trial, my blessed Saviour is so good, so kind, so pitiful and tender, soothing me as a mother would soothe. " As one whom his mother comforteth," so does He comfort me, and like " as a father pitieth his children," so does he love, pity and strengthen me upon my bed of languishing, making " all

my bed in my sickness." How, then, could I grieve and offend such a dear, blessed friend by forcing myself out of the position in which He in His wisdom and love chooses to place me? Am I not as clay in His hands? Has He not power to do what He will with His own? And oh! how sweetly does he manifest himself to me amid my pain; how closely does He draw near at times. How He causes a soft, radiant light, like the glory of the sun, to shine about me, at times, as I pour out my soul to Him in prayer. But oh! my sister, it is not always that light and hope illumine my sorrowful pathway. There are times when darkness so thick as to almost be felt envelops me; when there seems no dear Jesus near, no power or inclination to pray, no hungering for His word, nothing, it seems, but just fear and doubt and sins black as the tents of Kedar. Then it is that Job's kind of comforters annoy me, Satan harrasses me, and my afflictions seem like great mountains, as witnesses against me, causing all to see, with myself, that I am no Christian, no object of the dear Lord's special care. But no darkness is so thick or so lasting but that I trust my blessed Saviour's love and smile can, at times, penetrate it; no billows beat so fiercely against the frail bark, but that His sweet, "Peace be still," can sometimes be heard above the roar of the storm, and the "still small voice" sends sweet music into the soul, attuning it to sing the song of redeeming love. How I sympathize with dear sister Slade in the dark shadows that you say so often hover over her. In the beginning of this wondrous spiritual journey of life, the darkness of my mind often amounted almost to despair, and my soul was much of the time bowed down with such a sense of sin and guilt, that had I been a thief, a liar, or murderer, I could not have felt much greater condemnation; and I mourned the absence of the Saviour's presence almost continuously. But since trials so fiery, sorrow so deep, pain so great, have come upon me, my hope and

trust and faith seem stronger. So sweetly, so forcibly has He manifested Himself to me as my Saviour and Redeemer, my Friend, my life, my hope, my ALL, that it seems there is no room or cause for doubt. May it be His will to lift the cloud that hangs so heavily over the mind of your dear daughter. May He take her under the shadow of His wing, and may His soothing presence and love be felt in her heart. I read the account of your losses and trials with deep interest ; and oh ! how it strengthened me to hear of your abiding faith and trust in our blessed Saviour. I think I can faintly realize something of your meaning, when you say, " I feel sometimes that I have just begun to live." In the love that I trust I feel, and see flowing into the hearts of the Lord's dear people from the great Fountain Source, binding them so closely, so sweetly to Jesus and to one another, through His precious blood, I am filled with such joy, such ecstasy as I have no power to describe. The great joy of this love, its wealth and depth, sweetness and power, are made more powerfully manifest in my poor, isolated life of late than ever before. Letters, dear, spiritual letters, have come to me from almost all over the land the past few months, all telling the same sweet story, speaking the same familiar, soul-comforting language. So different is this language from that which I am accustomed to hear from the unregenerate, so sweetly does it accord with the language of my soul, that often while reading I stop to wonder why it is that I am permitted to know and hear this " joyful sound," this "*certain* sound," that is such delicious food and music to my soul ; and I can but exclaim, " Who is it that maketh thee to differ ?" None but Jesus, who opens the eyes of the blind, and sets the captive soul free. Dear mother, you say you did not know I so kindly regarded you. I wish I had strength to tell you how sacredly and closely is your image, and the memory of your beautiful writings, associated with the memory of my own dear mother, how much she prized your letters ;

how she treasured each paper, and how often your name was on the lips of both my parents in the happy, golden days of my childhood. But I write under most unfavorable circumstances, with my body writhing in pain, and must close. There has not yet been an enlarged, revised edition of my little book, neither is there one copy left of the present one. There is talk of another publication, but I cannot tell whether it will be in the near or distant future, or whether there will be one at all. Our dear sister Bessie Durand is contemplating the attempt ; but it seems so unnecessary, and the letters so void of any good, I have no heart to assist.

Remember me in kind love to Elder H., brother and sister Slade, and all who may inquire after me. Oh ! dear mother, pray for me, that my weary soul may not faint. Write again if you can, and excuse this disconnected letter.

In much love,

MARY PARKER.

From the *Signs*.

December 26, 1889.

MRS. M. M. ROUNSAVELL.

My Dear Sister :

Your kind favor of December 22d reached me yesterday, on the glad, bright Christmas morning. Both your helpful, efficient Christmas gift, and your dear words of christian fellowship and love, came to me as sweet incense, or as manna from the divine hand of him who gave us the blessed gift of his dear Son, which brought "peace on earth, good will to men." You sent me, you said, the purest wish of your heart, "God bless you," which was to me the breathing of the effectual, fervent prayer of a purified heart, which availeth much. For O, my sister, God answered your prayer ; for amid all the intense pain and weariness of my clouded, storm-tossed life

there came to me with the bright Christmas dawn a thankful joy, a sweet, quiet happiness, as it were the whisperings of that "still, small voice" which brings upon its zephyr-like wings that peace which passeth all understanding. My whole inner being seemed infused with that light which shineth in darkness unto perfect day; and my blessed Saviour seemed so near that I desired to walk, O, so softly, before Him in love. As one Christmas token of love and tender remembrance after another came to me during the livelong day, until my couch was quite filled with tiny parcels and boxes, I wondered if in all the world there was one sinful creature who had so much cause for thankfulness, or who felt so gratefully happy. Aside from my severe affliction, my helplessness and my shut-in life, there seemed but one cloud to mar my peace; that was my extreme unworthiness, and the painful sense of my inability to love and thank the divine and gracious Giver with singleness of heart.

* * * * *

Persons of every religious denomination in the land come to my sick-room. I have many kind friends among both ladies and gentlemen; but, my sister, I often feel lonely in the midst of it all; and amid the most animated conversation with the worldly, my thoughts, my affections, will go out to that blessed people who alone know the "joyful sound" of the gospel, and to whom the rainbow of hope and peace casts its bright-hued, effulgent rays. Never more do I expect to go to the house of the Lord to worship in the earthly courts, but trust ere long I may join the church triumphant above, where I can join in ceaseless singing of the song of redeeming love, and chant the praises of our risen Saviour and Lord. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your expressions of love. I never can understand how or why any one should love me in the least, and so I often think myself unloved and forgotten by those I hold so dear. Sister Eva Sayer mentioned your name in her letter, as a sister who was active in procuring sales for my little book.

I never forgot you, and when I saw your name I did not feel it was that of a stranger. O sister, it is only just recently that I felt at all reconciled to my book, or that I could take courage to look inside its pages. I was so grieved because so many things I meant to be strictly private came before the public; but now I no longer care, and am glad after all that they were published, as many have expressed themselves as having been comforted by them. They were a great help to me financially, as my expenses are unavoidably heavy. You have my thanks for your share in the helpful work. A daughter of Elder Wm. L. Beebe, in Canada, has greatly helped me in this way. Give my best love and thanks to sister Kate Beebe, and tell her I am grateful for her love. May she, the daughter, also, of a noble servant of the Lord, never have to wade through waters so dark and deep as have fallen to my lot. When I saw the obituary of sister Eva Sayer's father, I wanted to write her some word of condolence, but was so poorly I did not feel that I could write. Please remember me in love to her, and the family of dear Elder Wm. L. Beebe. I answer your letter thus early, because I am now "clothed and in my right mind." To-morrow I may be unconscious or delirious. Do please write soon again, and excuse this long letter, written amid all sorts of interruptions.

In deep affection, very unworthily yours,

MARY PARKER.

From the *Signs of the Times*.

[Extracts from letters of Mary Parker.]

Dear Brethren Beebe:

I send you for publication in the *Signs* portions of some letters written by our dear, afflicted sister, Mary Parker, whose name calls forth feelings of warm affection and deep sympathy in the hearts of so many throughout our land. The letters entire would be read with great interest, as well as others which we have received from her; but it is my purpose now to send only enough to show particularly her suffering condition, to give an expression of her state of mind, and to let the friends who so deeply sympathize with her afflictions know of her grateful appreciation of their expressions of love and sympathy, and of their kind ministrations to her necessities.

To sister Bessie, December 2, 1889, she writes:

“My dropsy is much increased. The swelling is greater in neck, face and arm than ever before, and at times I have great difficulty to get my breath, and sometimes it causes great stupor. One of our wealthy citizens, who is suffering from chronic disease of the stomach, sent to Columbus for an eminent specialist. Some of my friends brought him to see me. He said he had been much among the afflicted, had been a surgeon in the late war, but never had he looked upon such suffering. When my limbs were unbandaged he was touched so that he sobbed like a child. Yet he is a man of the world, given to profanity, and is often charged with being heartless. There were no dry faces in my room while he told of the indescribable sufferings of such a case. He said one thing

surprised him beyond all else, the calm serenity of my countenance. O, I thought, here is a secret that you, with all your scientific knowledge, know nothing about; for truly 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him,' and nothing but the amazing grace of God can quiet the waves of mental and physical suffering that cast their pitiless, unceasing surges upon me. Oh! my sister, how greatly you are blessed in being permitted to worship under your own vine and fig tree, and in having the privilege of enjoying sweet spiritual intercourse with your spiritual kindred. You cannot realize how hard it is to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, or while sitting by the streams of Babylon, with its turbulent waters washing in upon your troubled soul. How intense becomes one's longing to see Zion, dear Zion, the city of our solemnities, the seat and habitation of our glorious King. How sweet and tender then become our remembrances of Zion, of the glorious feasts we have enjoyed while we have partaken of the manna which fell from the lips of him whose feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, of the dear familiar faces we met there, of the sweet smiles and tender pressure of hands. O, for the cool, green pastures of my Father's house, and the still, small voice, so full of restfulness and peace."

To my wife, under date of December 21st, she says:

"Very Dear Sister, and Dear and Precious Friends and Kindred in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:

The dear letter, laden with its helpful contents, came to me last night. I would that I had a gifted pen, that I might be able to portray to you the deep gratitude that fills my heart. As it is, emotions too deep for utterance permeate my entire being; and any language I am able to command seems too tame, too empty and cold to express the feelings your great,

unexpected kindness stirs up in the inmost recesses of my being. When I opened your letter, saw its contents, and read your words so fraught with delicate feeling, so full of the sweet incense of divine love, it seemed that my Saviour drew near, saying, 'Peace! be still!' and there was a calm. The dear voice spoke peace to my troubled soul, the sweetness of which cannot be told. There came to my wearied heart "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Truly did I feel to be taken into his banqueting house, and His banner over me was love. Love to the ever-blessed Redeemer; love to those who are rooted and grounded in him. The dear little family who so willingly share their home with me offered congratulations, and sister Lottie mingled her tears with mine. But I seemed like one in a delicious dream, like one suddenly lifted to that delightful realm, to bask and bathe in the sunshine and river of God's eternal love. I not only seemed brought unusually near to the wounded side of our dear Lord and Saviour, but also seemed sacredly near, and to hold sweet intercourse and divine communion with you and each member of your dearly loved household. O, there is a mysterious something about this invisible intercourse that I cannot define; yet it is just as real to me as is the felt but unseen presence of Him who was with Moses in the mount. Oh! the wonder and sweetness of God's eternal, redeeming love, and the wonderful, enlivening, interlinking and blending, as it flows from the great fountain-head into the heart of each chosen one, binding them all sweetly, closely to each other and to their adorable Head, through the efficacy and cleansing power of His shed blood. How sweet is the tie; and how it animates and gladdens our so often cold, aching hearts when we feel its soothing power flow into the soul.

"You said in your dear letter that you wished you might be able to write words that would be consoling to my wearied

spirit. The dear Lord sweetly answered the breathing of that prayer, for almost every word in your precious letter came into my soul like softly falling dew, refreshing and gladdening, and filling me with that peace which it is said passeth understanding, and which is past all human power to describe. The very sensible and delicate manner in which you laid the subject of the very helpful gift before me, and the manner and spirit in which it should be accepted, was very soothing, and took away any feeling of humiliation or wounded pride. How very unworthy I feel to be thus tenderly cared for and remembered by my dear Saviour and his beloved people. O may the blessedness of giving be felt in each heart that cheerfully gave so precious a draught to one weary and oppressed, and may the everlasting arms shield you all from every wintry blast. Dear little Edith's gift seemed particularly touching, and I shall treasure it so long as life lasts. May the rich blessings and love of our gracious, covenant-keeping God ever shield and guard her tender footsteps. The same mail that brought sister Bessie's last dear letter brought one also from sister Anna Jenkins, of Philadelphia, containing a Christmas present. Those letters came to me as water to the thirsty, or food to the hungry, and brought such restfulness to my soul as I cannot describe. A day or two afterward I took severely worse; had two chills in close succession of from eight to twelve hours' duration. Then came inflammation and increased pain and swelling of both limbs. * * * Until yesterday my suffering knew no bounds; yet so great has been my consolation in Christ, so very near has dear Jesus been to me, ever filling my room with his dear, invisible presence, bringing a hush-like gladness, a quiet resignation, a sweet restfulness, that I have no power whatever to describe. Oh! I cannot tell any of these sweet festivities of my poor, sad soul. But you have all sat down under this wondrous shadow with great delight, and know all about its depth and

breadth, and how unutterable is its sweetness. When so many temporal and spiritual blessings thus pour in upon my poor, maimed, suffering, shut-in life, I wonder if any are so unspeakably blessed, if any of all God's creatures have just such and so much cause for deep, unutterable thankfulness. Will you not, dear ones, thank each brother and sister who so kindly added to the very efficient Christmas gift? Could they know what a load of anxious care they have helped lift from me they would certainly feel in some measure repaid. So intense is my pain that I write while under the influence of a powerful opiate taken hypodermically (medicines taken by the stomach have no effect whatever); and that may be the reason I find it so impossible to say what I wish to say. From the depths of my heart, I do most tenderly and sincerely thank you all, and thank God for giving me such kind friends. You speak of the sum sent as being small. To me it seems quite a little fortune, and is the more helpful because, through the dishonesty of persons owing me, who take advantage of my helplessness, I have not been able to collect my little personal funds since last August, and the severity of my afflictions calls for almost daily expenditure. A dear brother in Canada sent me seven dollars some time ago. Thus you see, as sister Bessie truly says, 'While there is a pressing down on the one hand, there is an uplifting on the other; and ever and always through the thick cloud does our covenant-keeping God cause to shine his bright hued rainbow of peace and hope.' Truly He is a God slow to anger, very pitiful, and of tender mercy.'

* * *

To sister Bessie, under date of February 10th, she writes :

"I do assure you, nothing but the increased severity of the terrible malady, which holds my body so securely in its grasp, could have forced me to be so long silent to you and

your dear family, to whom I feel so grateful, and so deeply indebted. When last I wrote to sister Clarice, acknowledging my gratitude to you all for your assistance and kindness, I was not as well as usual. I gradually became worse. For weeks I was unable to take nourishment, scarcely enough to sustain life. Before I began to recover my usual strength I took influenza, which greatly aggravated all my chronic symptoms. To attempt a description of my sufferings would be vain indeed. I tried to be patient, tried to pray for resignation, but an intense longing to be released would rise paramount to all other desires. In vain did I think of Jesus bleeding, dying upon the cruel cross, the cruel nails driven through the tender flesh, the pain, the thirst, with the terrible weight of the sins of His people upon Him. To think of it now melts my heart; but in the agony of my own excruciating pain it all caused no tear, no melting of my selfish, sorely tried heart. 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' I feel that I long for death, and shrink from future suffering to a degree that grieves my precious Saviour, and causes Him to withdraw His peaceful presence from me; for I do not feel the warmth in prayer, the nearness to Him who is "the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely," that I have so much of the time been blessed with since affliction drew its dark mantle so securely about me. The words of Job often came forcibly to my mind: "Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and shall I not receive evil." When so many blessings are strewn along my pathway ought I to fret when I find thorns amid the roses? Though He slay me, shall I not still trust Him, still cling to Him as my Lord, my life, my all? * * * How I would like to go with you to the house of the Lord to-day. Oh, may the dear Shepherd give abundant food to His servants to hand out to each trembling soul, and you feel yourselves being led into green pastures, and beside the still waters; and may you all drink

deeply of that 'river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.' * * * I cannot tell you what a blessing the precious Christmas gift sent by the dear ones of your place has been to me. In the increased pain there was an increased need of outlay. * * * * *

The last extracts which I will make are from a letter written to me, April 11; "There are certainly times in my poor, shut in life, made up, though it be, entirely of small things, when I feel very like I think Moses felt when he said, 'I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.' It seems to have been one of my weaknesses from my childhood to be most silent when I feel most deeply. In just such condition I find myself now. I want to tell you how thankful I am, first, to my blessed Saviour, then to you; but I cannot. Tears fill my eyes and my heart swells, but you know nothing of the conflicting emotions. My blessed Jesus knows, and that comforts me. But words seem to be fraught with no meaning nor weight at all when I would attempt to tell you of what I feel. When I opened your letter and saw the amount the order called for I could hardly believe that I was not dreaming. When I did realize it, such an overwhelming sense of God's great goodness came over me, of His goodness in thus making me the object of His care, of His giving me such a friend as you have proven yourself to be, of His opening the hearts of those dear brethren and sisters to minister to one whose face they never saw, as I have no power to express. I feel ever since like a little child whose fears and repinings have all been hushed and sweetly quieted within the mother's arms, while reposing upon the bosom of her love. * * * I am so glad you mentioned the subject of your discourse last Sunday. It was a comfort to me. I never heard one speak about those beautiful portions of Scripture; but for several months it has dwelt in my mind with great beauty and sweetness. I was led to reflect upon it by seeing a beautiful rainbow from my west

window one morning ; and the thought that came to me while viewing the lovely sight made me radiantly happy. But my dull perception is not capable of taking in the comfort and beauty of the Scriptures you alluded to as I think yours would be, and I would love dearly to have heard your sermon upon it. If it would please the Lord to exercise your mind to write upon it what a comfort it would be to many besides myself. How strikingly similar is the description of the rainbow as the covenant between God and His people in Genesis, and that in the New Testament, in Revelations. How beautifully do the two books, the entire Scriptures, blend, thus making line upon line ; and what a blessing that we can sometimes read them with an understanding heart, and receive the dear promises as made to such as ourselves. * * * If you can tell any one of those who ministered to me of my gratitude, I would be glad.”

In a letter of a later date, referring to my expressed desire to publish some portion of her letters, she says : “ Should you have parts of my letters published, if you could make my thanks to the brethren more pointed or personal, I would be glad.” In another letter, which is not now by me, she expressed a fear that she might appear mercenary, and a desire that it might be understood that it was not so much on account of the pecuniary value of the gifts that she prized them so highly, greatly needed and helpful as they were, as it was because of the love and sympathy thus manifested. There are other and even more heart-rending descriptions of her sad condition physically, and many other expressions of gratitude to the dear friends for their kindness, besides those included in the above extracts. It is proper to say that these descriptions are given in answer to questions from us, which were prompted by a desire to know whether help could be rendered, and how it could be most suitably done.

Who can read these touching expressions from one who has been a helpless sufferer for so many years without deep emotions of sympathy? It is good to have the heart so stirred to its depths at times by the contemplation of the extreme afflictions which the Lord is pleased to lay upon some of His dear little ones, and so feel the fogs of selfishness, that so constantly rise from this vile nature of ours, blown aside by the heavenly wind, so that the tender and helpful sympathies of our spiritual nature may appear. The Lord has many stewards of temporal things whom He has made able and willing to dispense them when cases of need are brought to their knowledge; and there are many who have not been given the stewardship of temporal riches, who yet obey the apostle's exhortation to "put on charity" and "bowels of mercies" and "loving-kindness," and who, as cup-bearers in the house of our King, visit the afflicted and sorrowful with refreshing and cheering sympathy, comfort and love. This dear sister is one of the many who cause us to wonder at the heavy burdens of suffering which the weakest can bear when sustained by the invisible power of grace, and to wonder that upon the gentlest and tenderest should be laid afflictions which would cause the strongest to sink in dismay. The Lord is pleased in this way to show the sufficiency of His grace, and cause His strength to be made perfect in weakness. She herself has been manifest as a cup-bearer, having refreshed and comforted and helped many of the Lord's dear children by her words and her patient life.

The first present she acknowledges was sent by the friends at Southampton; the last one by them and by friends in churches of the Delaware and Salisbury Associations. The amount of both was less than fifty dollars. In being favored to send this liberality to our dear sister, many grateful expressions are returned to us personally which belong to all whose contributions we sent, and to many others who would be glad of the opportunity to join in giving the needed help.

It is now my intention, if the Lord will, to visit her on my return from attending my published list of appointments in Kentucky, perhaps on Monday, May 12. Should I be enabled to do so I may afterward have something more to say to the readers of the "Signs," and especially to those whose hearts the Lord has touched and filled with his boundless love, which reaches out to, and embraces, all his afflicted poor.

SILAS H. DURAND.

SOUTHAMPTON, Pa., April 21, 1890.

From the *Signs*.

VISIT TO MARY PARKER.

On Monday afternoon, May 12, I got off the cars at the pleasant village of New Holland, Ohio, where I was met by Mr. John Parker. After a short walk we reached his house, and I entered the room occupied by his sister, Mary Parker. On the eighth day of September, 1868, I had last seen her at her home near Logan. Her father, Elder John Parker, and her mother were both then living. It was a pleasant home, and I can never forget the pleasant little family group that lovely morning as I bade them good bye, and was taken by her father to Logan, on my way to my next appointment. She was then about eighteen, a member of the church, and in good health; and a pleasant and prosperous future in this life might well have been predicted for her. But the Lord's ways are not our ways. In other ways than we would choose, and far different, He prepares those who shall be His in that day when He makes up His jewels, that they may reflect His image and show forth His praise. A path of sorrow and affliction, and of

physical suffering that is indescribable, was the one marked out for this dear sister by her loved and loving Saviour, whose tender love is infinitely beyond that of the tenderest mother.

What a change ! How different the scene from that nearly twenty-two years before ! Then a bright, cheerful girl, standing in the glow and buoyancy of youth and health, looking hopefully toward the future, but with an evident desire to be a true follower of the meek and lowly Saviour. Now a lonely woman, long used to pain and weariness of body, father and mother gone, shut in from the busy scenes of the world, separated from her kindred in Christ, and knowing well what soul-trouble is. As I entered the room and looked upon her careworn, suffering, patient, pleasant face, I recognized something of the features and expression ; but I remembered more especially the trials and hopes and joys that she has expressed in her letters, the features of her inner life that we have thus become familiar with ; and in sweet fellowship and sympathy I took the hand of our poor, dear, lonely, afflicted, highly favored sister.

She sits upon the edge of a lounge, the only position possible for her. Pillows are piled up at her right side upon which she can recline her head a little for a short time. She sleeps but a few minutes at a time. Her left foot is in a sad condition, requiring frequent attention. Her left limb above the knee is fifty-three inches around. This will show the difficulty in maintaining her slight position upon the couch, which must be cushioned with firm material, nothing soft. She sometimes gets a little sleep while her head reclines forward, but is then liable to fall from her seat.

But I will not undertake to speak of her condition physically. It has been described in her letters, probably as well as it could be. It would be difficult to fully present the reality. She asked me, " Do you think I have exaggerated my case ? " " No," I replied, " it could not have been exaggerated." I

wondered how she could read and write, for she can hardly bear the weight of a small book on her lap. Some things that might be for her advantage and comfort were suggested, and had been thought of by her. The liberality of brethren and friends has helped her somewhat, and will more fully help her to obtain what will be of service to her. There are enough of kind, sympathizing hearts and willing hands only waiting to know how help can be intelligently given. To them I will say that her brother has a pleasant home which he shares with her, and from himself and his wife and daughter she receives such kind attention as they can give. It will be readily understood that a family in moderate circumstances can barely supply what is absolutely necessary in so extreme a case as hers. I have asked her to get such things as she thinks will be an advantage to her, some of which we spoke of when I was there, and let me know the cost. For I have the assurance that many are anxious to help provide her with anything that will render her condition more comfortable.

I will state for the information of those interested that I brought to her from friends where I had been, \$18.25. Since my return from the West, brethren and friends have handed me for her sums amounting to \$45.50, which I have just sent to her. And I will now say that I will cheerfully serve any who are impressed to make me the bearer of their liberality to her. I wish all who are minded to contribute in this manner to give me their names and addresses, not to publish, but that I may have a record of them. One kind friend sent me two dollars for her anonymously. Brother Hiram Horton sent with his contribution the hymn No. 609, Beebe's collection :

“ Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in christian love.”

I was at her house four hours. At four o'clock I spoke to her and a considerable company of her neighbors and friends.

I read the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm for a subject. Very poor my preaching appeared to me, as it most generally does, and far short of the glory of the sublime theme. But the power is in the word, not in the earthen vessel ; in the gospel, and not in the manner of preaching it. If it were not so I could never go on trying to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. The Lord was pleased to bless the word spoken to the comfort of our dear sister, for whom the appointment was made, and who was the only member of the church before me. Whether it found a lodging place in any other heart I do not know.

A few sentences from a letter to sister Bessie will give a glimpse of her feelings, and will show how encouraged the poorest and weakest of the Lord's servants should be to go whenever the Spirit moves them to go, notwithstanding any apparent obstacles that may be in the way, and to "be instant in season, out of season," preaching the word, however unprepared and unfit they may feel for so exalted a work: "Your dear brother has come and gone. Like a golden beam of sunlight after clouds and rain was his brief visit, falling into my darkened, shut-in life. O how my gladdened soul drank the honeyed sweetness, the delicious nectar that flowed to me through this earthen vessel, with its interlining of pure gold, from the great fountain source. How sweetly did my weary soul rest, and bathe and bask in the sunshine of that love which made 'heart to heart responsive beat;' for your brother seemed to utter no sentence which did not find a responsive echo in my hungry, half-famished soul. And is it any wonder, since, with but one exception, I have not heard the voice of one of the Lord's dear under-shepherds since I heard Elder Danks at the Indian Creek Association? It must have been eleven years ago. Your brother's coming seems so like a beautiful dream; and I feel to move softly, quietly, lest I awaken and find it only a delicious hallucination. I had

prayed so earnestly that his visit might fall on a day when I would be 'clothed and in my right mind;' and how graciously did the dear, indulgent Lord grant me my petition. O, Bessie, dear, I forgot that I was ill and suffering while listening to the words that fell from your brother's lips."

Our dear sister has been, as she wanted to be, a true follower of the dear Saviour; but it has been for her, as it must be for all His followers in some measure, a path of peculiar suffering. Those who follow Him must go where He went, which none would voluntarily do; for He went through sorrow, pain and death. In all who know the power of His resurrection there must be a knowledge of the fellowship of His sufferings, and a conformity to His death. Only through partaking of His sufferings can any partake of His consolation and joy. In many different forms the afflictions come to the Lord's people. He assigns to each what is best for him. However greatly they may seem to differ in kind and degree, the final result is the same in all, for it is to humble them before the Lord, that His name alone shall be exalted in their salvation. One may be so afflicted in loss of kindred and friends and possessions, and in extreme bodily pain, as to excite sympathy in all, and cause friends to sit silent in astonishment, as in the case of Job, and yet be favored with such a holy and sublime trust and confidence in the Lord, that not even his own hand apparently raised to slay him can destroy it. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Another may be favored with all temporal blessings, and yet be so lacking in the felt power of spiritual life that no true comfort is enjoyed here, and so weak in faith that death is a constant source of terror.

How many sad sufferers there are among the Lord's dear people! Our afflicted sister recognizes and sympathizes with the sufferings of others. Sad, inexpressibly sad to our human view, as her own case is, I cannot but regard her as highly favored of the Lord, to be kept so exercised upon spiritual

things ; to be given such holy trust in the Lord, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, to keep her heart and mind through Christ Jesus ; to be so “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ” under all her sufferings that she is made an example of the power of God’s grace to sustain the weakest of all His dear children under the heaviest and bitterest trials, and of the power of His love to call forth “songs of sublime adoration and praise ” in the deepest night of affliction.

Your brother, in hope of eternal life,

SILAS H. DURAND.

P. S.—I have just received a letter from which I will quote the following : “ Once more, my good, kind brother, I owe you thanks and gratitude ; but I feel at just as great a loss for means or words whereby I may express the emotions of the mind as I did at the other times. And since you know my deficiency in this way, will you not kindly take it for granted that at heart I feel the deepest gratitude and thankfulness to the blessed Giver of all good, to you, and to the dear souls who have so generously ministered to my needs? I would I could see each kindly face, each dear brother and sister into whose heart the dear Lord caused this beautiful charity for one sorely afflicted to flow, and by the pressure of the hand, the gratitude in look and speech, cause them to feel what a weary burden their kindness and sympathy have lightened, and how sincere and deep is the thankfulness in my heart.”

S. H. D.

Extracts from *The Signs*.

March 16, 1890.

MRS. DIANA MORRIS.

My Dear Sister in a Precious Saviour :

Your letter was indeed quite a surprise, but a very pleasant one I assure you. It awakened many emotions within me, and brought to mind many tender and pleasant memories of the happy past. What a flood of tenderness wells up in my heart at the mention of father and mother, especially if spoken by one who personally knew them, and appreciated their goodness and worth. I often ask myself if it was because he was my father, and I loved him so, that his preaching seemed fraught with so much power, earnestness and eloquence ; that it appeared so deeply touching, coming straight from his heart, and going to the heart of each believing hearer.

* * * * *

Well and wisely ordered by divine providence is it that we cannot look into the veiled vista of the future and see what it has in store for us. Surely had this wisdom been given me I would have sunk by the wayside, and doubtless taken my own life. But as it is, the deep waters that have surged their bitter waves against me have not been permitted to overflow me ; neither have the furnace-heated flames burned me. A hand more powerful, more tender even than that of an earthly parent, friend or lover, has ever led me along, and underneath it all have been the everlasting arms. Oh ! was it to show me the tenderness and power of His wondrous love that He stripped me of earthly, human love ? Was it to show me how strong He is that He took so nearly all my strength ? Was it to show me how helpful He is that I was made helpless, and to show me the sweetness of His being

near that He removed father, mother, and spiritual kindred so far from me? Blessed be His name. I would that my stammering tongue were loosed, or I had the pen of a ready writer, that I might tell you how near, how dear, how sure, how sweet, is the love of Jesus made manifest to me, a sinner; to me who am so vile, and so less than nothing in and of myself. O, my sister, if I could but tell you of His goodness to me here upon my bed of languishing! It is seven years, I think, since I walked or could get off my bed. Alone much during the day, and all alone in my room during the long, pain-filled nights, what would I do if it were not for the invisible presence of my precious Jesus? How surely near does He seem at times! how sweet are my communions with Him! how great my rejoicing, as one rich blessing after another is brought to mind! Ah, these are blessed songs given me in the night, indeed, when no human hand can aid me, no human touch soothe my pain, no human eye drop the pitying tear.

* * * * *

March 27, 1890.

I am in such a state of intense suffering that I cannot hope to answer your letter; but as you wish my consent to the publication of my letter, I thought I had better write you, for fear I become so much worse as to be unable to answer the request at all. I do not know what the letter contains, but if it would be any gratification to yourself or to your dear afflicted brother to see it in the *Signs*, I certainly cannot object.

* * * * *

A daughter of the late Dr. Taylor, of Perry County, paid me a brief visit recently. In early girlhood we were very intimate friends. She had read my book of letters, but when

she saw me she said, "O, Mary! I never dreamed you were like this." Three times she attempted to look at my limbs, but each time grew white and faint, and would have fallen had she not quickly hurried away. One night last week I suffered almost beyond all power of endurance. I could get no rest. About three o'clock I fell into a troubled slumber, when my body and limbs jerked so that I fell off the bed, overturning the bath tub and hurting my limbs terribly. By the time I got things about me restored to order my strength seemed gone. With feelings of bitterness I asked myself, Why do I suffer all these things? Sheer exhaustion caused me to fall asleep, and never did I slumber so sweetly. I thought I was carried to a large building where were many people. I sat by myself in a door, when everything about me changed to great light and beauty. Looking upward, the heavens above seemed one endless sea of smooth, crystal-like whiteness, while there appeared upon its surface a seraph or angel, whose brightness and dazzling whiteness and purity exceeded anything I ever saw or heard described. O the serenity, the peaceful happiness of the benign countenance, and the perfect purity that seemed to form the whole of the crystal whiteness. While gazing, entranced, enraptured, I heard a voice say, "It is to make you pure, all pure, within and without, like what you see, that you suffer what you do." I answered, looking down at my distorted limbs, "I will bear it all, and it will not be long until I can change these garments for one of spotless purity." I awoke with these words upon my lips, "I will try you as gold is tried; I will refine you as silver is refined. In the furnace of affliction have I chosen you." This was but a dream, my sister, and no doubt some would say it signified nothing; but to me it was a sweet vision in the night, and it quieted me as nothing else could have quieted me. It filled me with a glad happiness, and was sweet food for my tired and weary

soul for many days. How thankful we should be that amid the darkness of sin, unbelief, and the fiery darts from the enemy of our souls, we are given sweet songs and bright visions in the night.

* * * * *

Give my love to the dear, sick sister. Tell her it gladdens me to feel that we will soon meet on the "shining shore," to suffer and sin no more. I send special love to your mother. How glad poor father was to meet her on the railway train that morning, though too sick and weary to talk much to her. I am so glad you wrote to me. It is pleasant to renew the friendship of youthful days, the more so when friendship is sweetened by a stronger, sweeter tie, which, though begun on the shore of time, may be strengthened and reunited in the land of never-ending bliss. Please write me whenever you can, even though you get no response. You cannot know just how much I prize letters from my kindred in Christ. Many dear, unanswered letters are before me now, which I desire to but cannot answer. I am very tired indeed.

Affectionately yours in deep affliction,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from a letter to Eld. Harvey Wright of Indiana, acknowledging a present of money from the sisters of the Lick Creek Church, of which he is pastor, and published in the *Signs*]

October, 1890.

How thankful I am for these precious love tokens. How they come into my darkened, painful life, like cheering sunshine, and how they help to lift the weary load of debt and continuous needs that my untold suffering lays upon me, none

can know save those who have in like manner been bereft of health and home, and father and mother, and all who feel any special right to look after and care for my imperative wants.

How mysterious are the ways of Providence ! How various are the ways in which the Lord works and brings about events in human life ! Everything of an earthly nature is uncertain and transitory. Yesterday I saw the hearse pass my window containing a beautiful, white, flower-strewn casket, in which lay the lovely form of a bright young girl. Here again was another instance of the mysterious, incomprehensible dealings of Divine Providence. In her death, a beautiful, luxurious home is robbed of its sunshine, its chief joy. A grief-stricken father is robbed of his only daughter ; a heart-broken mother parts with her closest companion, her darling child ; schoolmates mourn the loss of their favorite ; the principal sheds tears when he sees the vacant seat of his dearest pupil. Everywhere this bright young life, which like a blooming plant has been plucked from the stem, will be mourned and missed ; whilst I, sitting here in my room, lonely and alone, could drop out of this life scarcely leaving a vacancy. My dearest friends could but be glad that at last the aching heart had ceased to ache, the painful body ceased to suffer pain. But what can we say to these things ? It is the ruling and working of the infinite and mighty God. Who dares question His doings, or say that He has not the right to do what He will with His own, the same as has the potter power over the clay ? Feeling that I am nothing but a burden to my dear spiritual kindred, and an unceasing care to the dear ones under whose roof I am placed, much as I long for death I feel that from the depths of my heart I desire to say, "Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done." Sometimes in the midst of all the deep suffering and gloom that surround me I am permitted to look away beyond it all, beyond the grave, to the world of perfect peace and rest, where my tired soul

shall at last be pillowed upon the tender Saviour's breast, where He Himself shall wipe all tears from my eyes, and give me a home at last, a home where the hearth-stone can never be left vacant, where there will be the missing of no beloved footfall, where no heart will ever bleed or break, but where, with dearest ties united in one unbroken chain, we shall sing the praises of our Redeemer forever, and forever adore our wondrous King. * * * * *

I want to thank all my dear kindred in Christ in the east who have so kindly sent me tokens of sympathy, by helping me to bear the heavy weights affliction has laid upon me. O! if you could know how you have helped me, how your love and assistance have eased the awful heart-pangs, how my heart reaches out to each of you in love and gratitude too deep for utterance, you would certainly feel that it was indeed blessed to give. O! will you not bear with me? Will you not think of me, now that winter is coming and a cold, gray dress is being spread over the earth, and when, during the long nights, others can cover up in warm, soft beds, I must sit on the edge of my bed alone in the cold? O! will you not then think of me, and ask the Lord to give me grace, and if it be His holy will call me to Himself?

Begging you all to cast over this imperfect letter the sweet mantle of charity, and asking the dear sisters of Elder Wright's charge, who sent me their helpful token of sympathy, to accept my love and lasting thanks, I am, very unworthily, your sister in hope of a better life beyond the grave,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from the *Signs*.]

January 17, 1891.

MR. SAMUEL BRADBEER.

My Dear Father in Israel :

I fear my failure to acknowledge the receipt of your dear, kind letter, together with your generous, helpful gift, has caused you much anxiety. * * * Through the mercy of God the past week has found me clothed, and in my right mind, and able to again take up my feeble, imperfect writing. The very choicest of all my blessings, save the consciousness of the dear Saviour's presence and pardoning love, is this sweet intercourse I am permitted to enjoy through the medium of the pen with the dear people of God, who are the objects of His everlasting love and choice, and who in former times, we are told, spake often one to another. The same love is shed abroad in the hearts of the Lord's children to-day ; the same drawing together of the golden cord that unites us to one another and to Christ Jesus, through His redeeming blood and power and love. Oh ! if it were not for this love how could we bear up under the deep afflictions that beset us in this life ! If in this life only we had hope, would we not be of all creatures most miserable ? How great and wonderful seems the love that could save a wretch so vile as I ; that could take me up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock, establish my goings, and put a new song into my mouth, even praise to God. Wonder of wonders ! unworthy, vile and sinful as I feel myself to be, that unto me, who truly am the least of all saints, should this grace be given ; yes, given. So many claim that they seek, and of themselves, or through personal efforts, obtain this great salvation ; but Paul says it was given to him ; and to every sin-sick soul, sunk in the depths of corruption and sin, must this grace be given,

freely and unconditionally, or alas! they are lost throughout time and eternity, and must sink to the regions of everlasting torment. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Blessed gift! What sweetness does the word contain! We are often made happy by gifts from friends, as I, dear father, was made happy by your gift, and those of other dear, kind kindred in Christ Jesus, at the glad Christmas time. But who ever gave a gift like the one given when on that glad morn the wise men came from the far country of the east and saw the Star of Bethlehem, and found the blessed babe in the manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and knew it was the gift of God's dear and only Son, sent from the courts of heaven, "made a little lower than the angels," "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," and who by the shedding of His own precious blood was to save the Lord's chosen people from their sins? Is it any wonder that one who had so long waited for His blessed coming, cried out, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation?" O blessed gift! O glorious legacy! whose bright effulgent dawn brought to a perishing people such "glad tidings of great joy," and proclaimed to all, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" each appellation containing a world of meaning, of might and power; yet the same who is called "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" the same lowly Nazarene, pitiful, merciful, crowned with thorns, and who wore the purple robe. O blessed Jesus! dear Saviour of our souls! will it not be glorious when we awake with his likeness, to dwell with him forever!

* * * * *

Remember me, dear father, in love to your family, and the saints with whom you labor. Sincerely thanking you for

your gift and comforting letter, trusting I may hear again from you, and commending you to Jesus, who is love, I am, unworthily your sister, I hope, in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

[Reply to a letter from James Trask, of Illinois, who has been afflicted since 1854, and helpless since 1876.]

NEW HOLLAND, O., February 18, 1891.

Dear Brethren Beebe :

I received the enclosed most touching letter a few days ago. I would at once respond privately, but the dear, afflicted brother forgot, I suppose, to give his address in full, thus leaving no way open by which I can speak any word of comfort or sympathy, save through *The Signs*. If you will kindly give Brother Trask's letter space I would be glad, for I feel that the Lord's children are all as one family; and when one member suffers all should know of it, and should extend to him all the pity, help and comfort that it is possible for mortals to give. Surely, "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light:" and we feel that nothing but the light reflected from the Sun of righteousness could show Brother Trask, or any other poor sinner, the vileness and depravity of his heart. In no heart does He begin the work of grace but what He makes it perfect unto the day of Jesus Christ. It will not matter to Brother Trask nor myself on that glorious morn of the resurrection that our poor, painful limbs have been so drawn and deformed; for if we have our garments made white in the blood of the Lamb, our bodies shall be raised spiritual bodies, fashioned like unto the Son of God; and rest, sweet, longed-for rest, will be the more sweet because of the toil, the weariness, the unrest and pain we have undergone here. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." Not rest for a moment, an hour or a day, but rest throughout

eternity. Oh! can we not afford to toil, to suffer, to endure hardships, while here, where we have no continuing city, when we are so sweetly assured that these afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and that at the end of this toilsome journey there is such rest, such joy, such beauty and holiness, as we not even can catch a glimpse of here, save it be now and then through a glass darkly, Oh! very darkly? When I studied over the darkness of mind under which poor, dear brother Trask seems to labor, I was reminded of this Scripture, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." I know of no better message to send to the poor, weary, tempest-tossed brother than just these few blessed words. "Trust in the Lord, and stay upon your God." "For this God is our God forever: He will be our guide even unto death." Are not such promises a refuge and strength? Is not our God a very present help in all our trouble?

My poor brother, I too have distress so deep, pain so great, that were I to attempt a description it would sound like wrung-out sentences from a frenzied heart. To no one can I look for strength, to no one turn for help, but to Him who is a present help; and it is only through effectual, fervent prayer that I am enabled to quiet myself and endure on until the blessed sound of that dearest of all voices calls, in accents sweet, "Child, thy Father calls: come home." O, sweet words! Truly are they good tidings of great joy to the weary soul.

May the dear Lord strengthen you upon your bed of languishing. May He make all your bed in your sickness, shed the light of His blessed Spirit about your soul, and cause you to trust and rest in His everlasting arms, is truly the prayer of your sister, who is also sunk in the depths of human suffering

and woe, but whose eyes are lifted up unto the everlasting hills, from whence cometh her help.

In deep sympathy, with much love to all the dear ones in the Lord, your sister in a blessed hope,

MARY PARKER.

[From the *Signs*.]

NEW HOLLAND, Ohio, January 19, 1891.

Dear Brethren Beebe :

I am all alone in my room. It is half-past nine o'clock, and the little family have sought refreshing sleep in their rooms up stairs. All day to-day there has been a constant dropping in of callers, and not until half-past eight o'clock to-night did the droppings-in cease, and we were left to meditate upon the scenes that transpired during the day, and alas ! to lament the little that has been said and thought about Jesus during the entire day. With tender, regretful emotions do I call to mind other and better days in the dear little home where my dear father and I lived in close retirement, when

“ Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song ; ”

and when, after the fall of the curtain of night, I would listen to my father's dear voice while supplicating at the great throne ; and I often felt, as did Jacob, “ This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” How lonely and sad seems my mind to-night, because Jesus, that dearest of friends, the blessed, heavenly guest, has not come in at the closed door of my heart, and warmed the cold and weary soul by His dear presence and the sweet manifestations of His love. But amid the storms and dark waves that so tossed with fierce tempest the frail ship of my weary life is not Jesus

near? Though I cannot see Him, as I stretch forth my own helpless hands, with arms too weak and short to save, will he not walk to me on the water? Will not His dear, everlasting arms catch me and hold me within their restful embrace when I cry, "Lord, save, or I perish?" As oft as I look up from my paper, through the lattice of my open window the silent rays of the moon beam upon me. As the poet sings;

"The moon that nightly rules the sky."

But from whence does it receive its useful light? From the sun we are told; just as the church of God, which Solomon sings of, is "fair as the moon," and derives its light from the Sun of Righteousness, the immaculate Son of God. As the moon which now shines so beautifully over all the earth, with its pale, subdued light, shining upon the land and sea, rivers and mountains, making the whole earth a thing of beauty, though wrapped in its mantle of night, has no power, no warmth, no beauty nor light, only as it receives it from the natural sun, so in like manner is the church, the body of Christ, powerless and useless, an absolute nothing, without the King of holiness. O the depth and breadth, the great wonders which are presented to our limited, finite perception when we enter this unexplorable channel of infinity. So deep, so great are its mysteries, even Paul, who was exalted to the third heaven, and saw things not lawful for a man to utter, was made to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" To-night, as I look from my window out upon the bright, calm, moonlit scene, the myriads of stars studding the blue vault of the heavens, I wonder how any thinking, rational being could look upon a like picture and not have his thoughts uplifted to the great Being who formed all these wonders and beauties. Could the atheist really believe in his heart that such things

are the result of nature? Even those who claim so much for evolution must own there is no effect without a cause; and if these wonderful planets owe their origin to mere natural forces, what is the origin of that power and force? Must there not be some wonderful creative power back of all that? Besides, how could they believe that this wonderful earth, with all its appurtenances, is kept in proper limits, made to keep up its regular revolving upon its axis, if an infinite wisdom and an unseen power did not rule all things.

To-night, while most of the inhabitants of this hemisphere are wrapped in slumber, He who neither slumbers nor sleeps throws His everlasting arms of protection over the good and the bad, the saint and the sinner, keeps the billows of the mighty ocean within bounds, controls the huge monsters of the deep with the same stroke with which he keeps the tiny brooklet in its course, cares for the minnows, feeds the ravens, cares for the tiny sparrows, not one of which soars on high, or falls to the ground without Him. How sweet it is to put one's trust in such a wise and holy Being, who has all power in heaven and in earth. Very truly does the holy word say, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed." Firmer, stronger, more immovable than the strongest, most lofty mountain is the everlasting Rock of our salvation. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." In this river of God's love do we not find a balm for all our wounds, a panacea for all our sicknesses? And do we not long for

"A thousand tongues to sing
Our great Redeemer's praise?"

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed

on Thee." What a depth of meaning to the child of God have these words! This is the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. When, after long days and nights of rowing upon a storm-tossed sea, unable to see any light upon the shore, feeling that we are forsaken and lost amid the darkness of the awful deep, how sweet to hear the still, small voice, sweeter than the sweetest music, saying, "Peace! be still!" Feeling ourselves hushed into quiet, as tenderly and sweetly as a babe cradled in the mother's arms, with peace filling every avenue of the soul, do we not realize that Jesus is with us on the storm-tossed waves, and that the delicious quiet and restfulness that now comes over the soul is indeed that peace which passeth all understanding? When this great wave of peace sweeps over the soul, how all turbulent evil passions are made to slumber. Being taken into His secret pavilion, resting under the shadow of His wings, the troubles and trials of this transitory life dwindle into nothing, and our soul is full of love not only to our Saviour, but to His people. The sweet and holy power of the Spirit rests upon the soul, quieting all murmuring, and makes us willing to suffer, to bear all things He in His wisdom lays upon us, and makes us glad, yea, causes us to rejoice that we are thought worthy to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, that we may reign with Him in glory.

Dear kindred in Christ, we have recently entered upon a new, untried year. Though to me, pinioned as I am to this couch, the days and years drag slowly, wearily along, yet in the silence of many a midnight have I been made to note the ticking of the clock, and as seconds glide quickly into minutes, and minutes into hours, I almost start at the rapidity of time; and deeply do I realize that "swift as a weaver's shuttle speed the years." But how it comforts one to think that each swift moment brings us nearer to our "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and that soon, if we are the chosen vessels of mercy, we shall enter into that

sweet, everlasting rest that remains to the people of God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

During the glad Christmas time, though suffering very severely physically, many hearts made generous by the love of God, were made to remember the poor, lame and halt one of their number (if one at all), and my weary heart was cheered and made happy by the many useful tokens and the dear letters of love that found their way to my sick chamber. Could you all know how it humbled me, how unworthy I felt and how happy, and how my gladdened soul went out in love to each dear brother and sister, and, most of all, to my ever-blessed Saviour, I think you too would be made to rejoice with me, and to render praise to our glorious Lord. I suffer too much and am too weak to privately respond to all these heaven-sent blessings, letters and gifts; and that no one may feel neglected, I take this means to tender them my thanks. How sinful, unworthy and poor I feel; how unfit to have the love of Jesus and his beloved people; yet since my unprofitable life is still spared to the opening of another year, my prayer is that the rest of my days may be spent in loving God's people, in sweet intercourse with them, and in honoring and extoling the name of Jesus. With deep, abiding, unfeigned love to all the household of faith, whose love and prayers and patience with me I so much crave, and commending you all to the faithful care of the Saviour, I am truly the least of all, if one of your number at all.

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from letters to Mr. and Mrs. Silas H. Durand.]

We have left these letters to be the last looked over. There is not a page but is of some special interest ; but much of it is of a purely personal and confidential character, and of that which would be appropriate for the book we design to select, so far as we can, only what has not been presented with sufficient fullness elsewhere. Of course, in a correspondence with so many anxious, sympathizing friends, the same things must be, in substance, many times repeated ; for to each must be told something of the same, sad story of suffering, the same heart-rending details ; and those to whom she writes, when the soul is lifted in heavenly joy and praise above the pains of the afflicted body, will hear the same old story of wonderful grace and love through Jesus Christ. The variety that there is in the daily breathings of such a life as this of our dear sister, passed in such a sick room, cannot be of continued interest to those whose hearts are still satisfied with the things of this world. To them there must appear a weary sameness in the sad recitals of renewed consciousness to pain from day to day, and an unmeaning monotony in the repeated acknowledgment of the same heavenly blessings, received again and again. But there are those to whom these things are of never-failing interest, whose hearts are always touched by the story of suffering, whose emotions of sympathy make them wish to hear, over and over, all about the affliction and pain, seeking in what way they may soothe and soften, if not remove, the anguish ; and whose hearts are glad when they know that the Lord has put gladness in the heart of the afflicted one ; who never tire of hearing the same words of prayer and thanksgiving, and the same songs of praise overcoming the groans of pain in the exercised soul, any more than they tire of “the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,” or of “the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear, shining after rain.”

One most interesting and solemn thing to meditate upon is the cause of the changeful moods in the daily history of a tried and suffering soul. When the dear Lord withdraws His presence, and hides His face, there is darkness, gloom, doubts and even questionings, sometimes, as to the Lord's ways, as was the case with Job. At such a time, pain seems more painful, and wrongs and cruelties are more deeply felt. But when the dear Saviour again appears, how changed all things appear. Light and gladness spring up, and seem to brighten everything, and the peace of God so "keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus," that only kindly, forbearing and forgiving thoughts and feelings arise, even toward those who have done, and are doing, most grievous wrongs, as in the case of Stephen. At such a time the whole being breathes forth the words, "Thy will, O Lord, not mine, be done."

What a wonderful life is this of Mary Parker! How wonderfully has she been tried; tried beyond what can appear in these pages, or in any description from her pen. How wonderfully, also, has she been sustained, and what wonderful power has been given her to tell of the goodness of the Lord. The credit and praise are in no part due to her, nor does she claim or want it. A poor sinner saved by grace, how carefully and sweetly does she ascribe all power and praise to the dear name of Jesus. But what a witness she is of his love and faithfulness, and of his saving power and grace. Who that has tasted of the love of God can read what is written here without being melted under its power, and filled with praise. I can truly say, that while preparing what is in these pages to appear in its present form, going over it again and again in hours taken from needed rest, I have sometimes felt such a fullness of love in my heart going out to the God of Salvation, to this dear sister and to all the afflicted and poor people of God everywhere, that the place has become a Bethel to my soul.

S. H. D.

February 24, 1890.

Dear Brother and Sister :

As you two are one, and your dear letters followed each other so closely, and as I am forced to economize in the matter of strength, I trust you will pardon me for addressing you both at one time. I think I feel my intellectual and spiritual deficiencies more, and realize more forcibly the truth of the dear Saviour's words, "Without Me ye can do nothing," when I attempt to converse either face to face, or with pen and ink, with those who "are wise unto salvation," than at any other time. * * * Oh ! you cannot know how deeply I feel all this. What an unstable, fluctuating thing is the human, finite mind ! With all our boasted self-control, how very little does it lie in our power to control our own minds. Your letter, sister Clarice, came to me first, and must have passed mine to sister Bessie somewhere along the mail route. After reading your letter, with its thoughts and feelings, which seemed in sweet accord with my own, I felt the dear chain which interlinks one heaven-born soul with another drawn sweetly, closely about me, while the dear presence of our divine Redeemer seemed to fill my soul with its holy incense, and I was made to rejoice once more in God, my Saviour. In a day or two your husband's letter was received, which so filled me with quietude and strength, that I felt exceedingly happy, and so deeply thankful to the Giver of all good for the sweet Christian fellowship and love I was permitted to enjoy with the dear saints, and for the interest you both manifested in one who feels so unworthy.

Elder Durand, most sincerely do I thank you for your expressions to me of the kindly regard with which you assured me I am held by the dear kindred in the East ; also, do I thank you for your frank expressions concerning the trouble to which I alluded in my letter to sister Bessie. Your words

greatly comforted and strengthened me. * * * I am deeply pained to see those who profess to be led by the spirit of Christ, whose fruits are love, meekness, gentleness and a freedom from all malice, governed by a spirit so directly the opposite. We learn that our divine Master is a God of love—indeed, that He is love; and when we are in the exercise of His blessed spirit we, too, are *governed by love*—love to Jesus, love to one another, and good-will towards all. How often does Jesus admonish His followers “to love one another;” and Himself declares it an evidence of His indwelling spirit when we do love one another. How sweetly do these words fall upon the ear, coming from His own dear, divine lips: “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” “As I have loved you!” Oh! how precious such words. How has He loved us? Why, so dearly that He gave even His life for us, that He *saved* us, even though we were dead in trespasses and sins. Did He see anything beautiful in us? Were we not every one as “black as the tents of Kedar?” If, then, *He* so loved us, ought not we to find it easy to love one another, to forgive one another, and overlook each other’s faults? Oh! dear ones, I want to be gentle with those who err, ever ready to forgive, and desirous to have them turn from the error and evil of their ways. How terrible it must be to feel bitter against one of His little ones. But when under the influence of the Spirit which “thinketh no evil,” how easy it is to *love* our brethren, how pleasant “to dwell together in unity,” and to sit under the shadow of our King Emanuel with great delight. * * *

I have written too much I fear, but do pardon me. I would love to say many more things which can never be told on paper. Will not sister Bessie, or some of you, write me ere long? Oh! that the sweet fellowship and love that has so pleasantly begun may have no interruption, but that it may be strengthened and the link reunited on the shores of

immortal glory. Remember me in love to the saints everywhere, sister Bertha, sister Bessie and the dear little ones.

Dear brother and sister, do overlook anything amiss I may have said. I do not want to wrong any one, or speak evil of any one. Better that a millstone be about my neck. I am so glad the dear brethren in the East are "keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace" in unbroken fellowship and love.

Very unworthily your sister in affliction and trial,

MARY PARKER.

August 20, 1890.

MRS. CLARICE E. DURAND.

My Dear Sister :

Your dear husband's letter came to me day before yesterday morning. I had been unconscious for a day and night, and, I am told, very delirious. It was caused by one of my terrible chills, which seldom, and, indeed, never now, fail to occur once a week. I asked my brother to write a card for me acknowledging the receipt of the money-order, as I could not hold up my head. Oh! my sister, it made me so happy to feel that, in my bed, the dear everlasting arms were underneath me amid all the pain and disquiet, and when I lay helpless as an infant in every way; and that, while I could not even ask or desire a blessing, the dear compassionate Saviour held one in store for me, in thus opening a way once more through His dear people to have my many imperative needs supplied. You would not wonder, my sister, that my heart overflows with thankfulness, and my eyes with tears, when I think of your dear husband's kindness, and you, his family, and the many dear ones of the Master's household whose hearts have been moved with compassion

toward me, could you have been in my sick-room the past several weeks and have seen my suffering and my needs. Since your husband was here I have had letters from sister Barbara Grafton and brother Milton Dance. Sister G. spoke so kindly of you. She must be a lovely sister. Sister Clarice, I do so want to make something for you, something you can keep, perhaps after I am gone. But I have been so oppressed for breath I could not do any art needle-work this summer. You have all done so much good for me. Oh! you *can never* know *just* how much of the weary, weary burden your dear, thoughtful efforts have lifted from me.

August 28, 1890.

I do hope and pray that you may be both spiritually and physically benefitted, invigorated and refreshed by your Northern tour, and that your visit may be to the glory of God and for the good of his "afflicted and poor people." Elder Durand, this one expression of our dear Lord clearly describes the people of God. "Afflicted and poor." They are also called in the New Testament a "peculiar people." * * *

Often I am filled with wonder when I read of the same lowly feelings from the pen of the wise and the learned, that I do from the most illiterate. All feel the same soul-sickness, the need of the same only physician, the same self-loathing and the same hunger and thirsting after the righteousness found only in Christ Jesus. This striking similarity was brought so forcibly to my mind when I read the letter of dear brother Gibson you enclosed in yours to me, and then meditated upon the beautifully written letter I had just received from our dear brother Coulter, of Philadelphia. The one showing the lack of any natural schooling, the other bearing the marks of much mental culture; yet grace, like a beautiful jewel, shone just as brilliantly all through the one as the

other. Both gave forth that "*certain sound*," whose sweet music never falls from the lips or pen of any but the heaven-taught. And the language which falls familiarly upon our ear, and which we can understand, proceeds only from those who have found all their own righteousness "as filthy rags." But the language which flows in upon me now from every side is a strange one, which tells of the wonders man can do, how many souls they bring to Christ and of the many "who have accepted Christ." O, my brother, this is a strange language to me. How it would strengthen me could I tell you all that is in my heart, and how severely and strangely I have lately been tried. I have wanted to write to you, yet I *always* hesitate to do so, feeling my ignorance as I do. But just at this time I feel more than ever wholly unfit to write you, and have great lack of spiritual food and knowledge. Have you ever been made to sit down by the cold streams of Babylon, while its turbulent waters sent their noisy, discordant sounds in upon your weary soul? Do you know just how hard it would then be to "sing the Lord's song?"

* * * * *

I think it causes me the more to look away to Zion, dear Zion, that "*quiet habitation*," "whose builder and maker is God." Not the poor, frail structure of sinful, presumptuous man, who builds upon the sand, and when the storms wash upon his frail structure it falls to the ground. I do not want to harbor unkind, unjust feelings toward any, but the language of my soul is, "Come out from among them; be ye separate;" and I cannot feel otherwise if I do endure persecution on account of it. * * * It seems so good, when I am very ill and helpless, when *needs* come up that cannot be put aside, not to be so distressed as to how the bill is to be met. It seems very strange and enjoyable, also, to have the various conveniences which the liberality of the dear brethren have provided me with, through your solicitations. It had been so

long since any unusual comforts had been provided me, I had become so accustomed to practicing self-denial that I scarce can realize it is poor, insignificant, burdensome I, who am thus pleasantly provided for. The air pillows, the desk I had made to order, and, above all, the dear, most-convenient little invalid reading desk, sent me by that dear, kind brother, John McConnell, are blessings for which I cannot be half thankful enough. The neighbors seem wonderfully delighted about it, as do also my brother and wife. The invalid desk is just wonderful in the many useful ways it can be adjusted, and the comfort I can take in reading, writing and taking my meals. Frequently does some one remark, "that minister's visit was a most fortunate thing for you." Surely, dear brother, the dear Lord sent you as a ministering spirit to me. The past three months have greatly tried my physical strength and powers of endurance. No tongue could tell how intensely I have suffered for breath, and how distressing was the delirium, how unbearable the pain. But the cool, balmy days of September, with its mellow sunlight will soon be here, when I trust I shall feel better. Physicians have all told me I might look to be worse always during the heated season. Brother John Barton, of Arizona, was lately on a visit to brother Stipp's family in Oregon. They wished me to take the treatment of Dr. (brother) Green, of Atlanta, Ga., who makes dropsy a specialty, and brother Barton kindly offered to furnish the money. Brother C. W. Anderson and many others had urged me to try the same treatment; but I had a correspondence with Dr. Green long ago, and on learning the nature of my disease, he declined to undertake my case.

Please give my dear love to Elder William Quint and all the dear ones in Maine who may think of me. If only I could have a long talk with you, face to face; but if such privilege were granted, doubtless my sense of ignorance and inferiority would utterly silence me.

November, 1890.

I am some better, but so nervous and weak from recent suffering I can scarce write at all. Will you not, dear brother, kindly thank the dear friends who sent me this last blessed offering? Oh! what am I, that I should be thus favored, thus kindly, tenderly cared for by dear Jesus, and His beloved people? How often do I ask Him to guide me in these blessings, which fall from His hand as distilling dew, causing me to do all things with an eye single to His glory, and to even spend these offerings in godly fear; for the money coming to me in this way seems as something sacred, to be handled carefully and prayerfully.

Even in all the darkness, the pain, the sorrow of my poor life, how many of God's choice blessings fall, how His goodness and love shine through the darkness, causing me to see much beauty. Amid the thorns and brambles, many radiant and fragrant flowers spring up, which proclaim the goodness of God, and show forth his praise. But it seems to me when I set about to write I paint my pictures all dark, and leave out all the radiance and beauty and gleams of sunlight. When I get stronger I will write you and your dear wife as fully about the condition of my room as possible, if my heart does not fail me. I feel in the mood to write now if I could still the wild throbbing of heart and nerves; but I cannot. Tell dear little Edith I want to write to her but am too sick.

December 2, 1890.

I promised in the last brief line I wrote to you to write you more fully concerning the heating facilities of my room at night. * * * No matter how cold the body is, the bad limb is burning hot, and it is not an unusual thing for me to be forced to wet the bandages in ice-water before morning.

Of course this is not the case only in very cold weather. They always put in a large piece of coal on retiring ; but if they would fill the stove it would suffocate me ; I could not bear it. I have always tried to endure these things, as I have my affliction, and have accepted them as inevitable. But recently I have wondered if it would be doing wrong for me to get one of those self-feeding stoves which needs to have the fuel replenished only every twenty-four hours, and which would keep my room an even temperature day and night. This, my dear friends, would be the only way possible to in any way alleviate the discomfort of the cold weather. But would it be right, situated as I am financially, to make such an outlay? * * * What would you all advise me to do? * * * After all, perhaps I had better just try to be "content with such things as I have," remembering that it is just poor, unworthy, insignificant Mary Parker, and no one else, who must suffer, and that I don't deserve one-half that I have. My people are very patient with me. I know it is hard on them to have one in my condition so ceaselessly and so long. Surely, surely, the end cannot be very, very far off, the suffering has seemed to so increase the past few weeks. O for patience and grace to bear until the end. Sister Bessie's words to me were so soothing where she wrote, "Jesus will help you bear the pain. He knows all about it." Yes, I believe He does ; and often when I just give up, and think, Oh ! I *cannot* endure it longer, I feel His soothing presence, and, "He giveth His beloved sleep." Sister Clarice, your letter was indeed a solace to me.

January 1, 1891.

MY DEAR SISTER CLARICE :

Very greatly do I desire to write to you and sister Bessie, your husband and the dear little ones. There are many things

I wish to say to you all, but I continue to suffer so, to be so very weak and ill, that if I write at all it must needs be briefly. About the time Elder Durand wrote me concerning the base-burner stove my limbs which had been throwing off, I think, a gallon of water every twenty-four hours, suddenly quit discharging. One long, hard chill succeeded another, both limbs became inflamed, intensely painful and swollen, while the body, face and neck swelled to a degree that made me almost unrecognizable. This continued over nine weeks then the left limb again opened, but the discharge is too scant to give me the relief I so much need, and my sufferings seem very great. Both limbs look as if they had been dipped in boiling water, and both have to be bandaged in wet cloths, to do which, quite consumes my time and strength. My stove is the greatest earthly comfort I have. But for it I know not what I should do. It causes me to rest better at night, as I do not have to be weighted down with clothing, and the temperature of the room is uniform both day and night. It is so much cleaner, and does not emit any gas or smoke. Sister Lottie is greatly pleased. Brother fills the magazine morning and evening, and no one has any care with it whatever. I know not how to be thankful enough. The little card for a "shut-in" came to me Christmas day, and as I read the beautiful poem I could not restrain my tears. No words of mine could better express my feelings. I presume you have heard of the society called the "Shut-In Society." Some years ago a lady was visiting here who is now a missionary in Japan. She told me much about the society. A short time afterward I got a postal from the lady president informing me that my name had been sent them, and I was now a member. The society has its seat in Brooklyn, N. Y. A number of letters soon followed my "installation." They send me a little magazine called the "Open Window," from which I occasionally get some delicious crumbs of comfort ;

but the most of it is Arminian. Dear little Edith's and Mildred's very pretty Christmas tokens were among the pleasant offerings that made me so happy on the glad Christmas day. The dear Lord bless their generous little hearts! How I would love to caress and thank them face to face. You asked me about fruits: I enjoy almost any kind except apricots and plums. Apples are really a medicine for me, but they were a failure in this locality. Day before Christmas a friend in southern Ohio sent me a basket of russets, which are a great treat. Often when my meals are brought, I am suffering so I cannot touch anything. When smothered very much I dare not take food.

* * * * *

Two kind sisters, of Mays Lick, Ky., sent me a Christmas box, in which was turkey, nuts, candies, and oranges. It made me so happy to be thus kindly remembered. Brother and Mrs. McConnell's box contained many things, both beautiful and useful, which gladdened my heart. Oh! the goodness of my blessed Lord; the kindness and watch-care of my indulgent heavenly Father! It causes my heart to melt and my eyes to fill with tears; and all the while I am so sinful. I cannot read of Jesus, write about Him, or seek Him in prayer, so oblivious do I become to everything save the pain of this sinful body. But, surely, my sister, before the coming of another Christmas morn I will have entered the portals of eternal day,—will have passed beyond the gates of death to awake in the likeness of the dear Redeemer, to "be clothed upon with my house which is from heaven." This is "New Year's Day." How the going out of the old year and the coming in of a new untried year, the events of which we know nothing about, fills us with sober, chastened thought. How the goodness of God, as a sheltering being, has been round about us all thus far on the rugged journey of life. How helpless do we lie in His hands, and how dependent we are upon His

goodness and mercy for all future time. Sister Clarice, your letters have been very precious and dear to me, and all the while I feel we are being brought into a closer, sweeter union. Oh! what is one half so sweet as the love of our dear Jesus shed abroad in the heart, binding us to Him and to one another through the divine influence? I must close as I am growing sick and faint. Tell the little darlings the sick woman would love to send them something if she could only walk about to get it. Kiss them for me.

Sincerely your friend, and, I hope, sister in Christ,

MARY PARKER.

April 10, 1891.

Thank you for the new thought regarding what I should do. I have begun as you suggest, and will, by the help of the Lord, do all I can. You can help me by praying. Oh! will you not? and ask Clarice and sister Bessie to ask the Lord to guide my pen and control my thoughts. Do you think I can do what you say? If only I did not despise myself and all I do. With this I send you some matter to use or destroy. Will send you what I write soon.

April 22d.

I send you another roll of manuscript in two numbers. It has been written under great adversity, and amid all sorts of interruptions, and is, oh! so full of imperfections. I feel very timid about having any of you read it, yet, if any of you could have witnessed my pain, have become fully acquainted with my condition the past two weeks, I think you would wonder, indeed, that I have done the little I have, even this

imperfectly. Many times I can write only a line, a sentence, a thought. I had two severe chills the past week, and the week before pleurisy of the right lung, and had to have a physician all the while. It has been utterly out of the question for me to have the photographer come; and my expenses have been so increased, I fear I may have to give it up, if well enough. I shall have to go into my summer quarters just as soon as I gain a little more strength. I am using wine, which seems to invigorate me a little. A card or a line, after you decide as to the merit of the writing I now send, would be a relief. I have made no copies; I could not. It is sent you just as it first occurs to my mind. I am thankful, O my brother, for your kind, encouraging words. Sister Bessie's letter, reaching me Saturday evening last, was most soothing to my lonely heart; for I felt like one forsaken and forgotten all of last week; and oh! I was so sick in body. Dear Attie C. (the dear Lord bless her) continues to send her breathings of the pure incense of dear Jesus' holy, purifying love. There has an incident occurred in my spiritual journey; I so want to tell you all of it when I get able, if I can do it.

April 30.

Your letter, and one from dear sister Attie C., came yesterday, but I was too ill to open and read them until today. I have to be sick, indeed, when anything like that takes place. My chill lasted over twelve hours; then came fever and delirium, with swelling, inflammation of the limbs, obstinate vomiting and the most excruciating pains of both body and limbs. When the attack first seizes me, until I can get myself under the influence of opiates, I think I *cannot*, Oh! I *cannot* endure it. It is so hard, when so cold and sick, to have to charge the syringe and use the hypodermic treatment,

but I have it to do. I break so many hypodermic needles, and they are so costly. My attack was as severe this time as any I ever had. I feel as though a great storm had passed over me, and I now experience the calm that usually follows such an outburst. These attacks seem to consume the water, and I hope to be better when I again gain strength.

* * * * *

Indeéd, it would be impossible to give you even an outline of the countless needs afflictions such as mine call for. To know them one would have to be here awhile. A lady said to me the other day, "how very little do the kind friends who write to you know of your real condition." It is very true. * * *

Since last I wrote you, I have received from brother Coulter and other dear friends, in Philadelphia, sister Maria Reese, of Kentucky, and sister Benedict, sums amounting, with \$5.00 from my tenant, to \$16.00. Now, dear brother, I feel that the dear Lord looks after me, that He will care for all my needs; and I feel it would be wrong for me to take the money you sent, who are one of His dear, faithful servants. Since He has opened the hearts of others to minister to me, I must return the money; but I do not want to act rashly. If you will tell me I may return it, I would feel much relieved. I trust you will understand my feelings. I have been open and frank with you, and I beg you to help me do that which is right. Surely, I have no wish for *money* only enough to defray my absolute needs. The money the sister sent me I will retain; but, my kind brother, I cannot feel that it is right to retain yours, since my present needs are already supplied. When I can dispense with fuel my burdens in that line will be lessened. Since I first began to receive help I have paid several debts. I think if I can get my rents in the future (\$5.00 a month, out of which comes repairing and delinquencies.

EDS.), I can get along, at least I trust there will be no need of further appeal.

* * * * *

I mention these things that you may have a better idea of my weights. But oh! I do not want to burden my dear spiritual or earthly kindred. But I am helpless, helpless in all its bitter meaning. I can only be still, and know that He is God, quietly submitting to His will, who "works and none can hinder," trusting and hoping that it all helps to make up the sum of the "all things" which "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

May 11, 1891.

How very near and dear you and your dear family seem to me. As the acquaintance and intercourse lengthen, the dear, tender cord of sweet Christian fellowship and love strengthens, and the natural and spiritual regard deepens; at least it is so with me. I have finished the little story, and it is, like everything having any of my individual marks or characteristics, very, very imperfect. Had it not been for so wishing to fulfill your wishes, and above all, had not your words of approval stimulated and strengthened me, I should never have completed it, though I confess it cost me no *mental* labor. You wrote, "do not study what you will say, but just write your thoughts as they come into your mind." If it possesses any merit, the credit is all due to you and my blessed Lord. If you wish to change anything, or to suppress anything, do not hesitate to do it. The poem is one I read many years ago. I could not rid myself of the impression to write it. Do as you like about inserting it.

* * * * *

During the 12 or 15 hours in which I am in those terrible chills, I am in such a state of mind that the time is ever afterward an entire blank to me ; I can recall nothing. Day after to-morrow, if I am not in a chill, the artist will come from Washington C. H. to take a negative for the book. I have not been able to move, but feel better for a day or so, and hope to move soon. You will remember to pay to yourself the money you have advanced ; and, as I have been so *obedient* as not to disobey you with regard to the money, you must favor me in paying *all* expenses out of the book funds before you send a penny to me.

July 2, 1891.

Your kind favor of June 30th reached me last evening. It is all of the goodness and tender mercy of God that I am so wondrously blessed with the Christian love and fellowship, the sympathy and unselfish friendship of you and your dear family, and not that I am at all *worthy*, or that "there is anything in me to merit esteem," or cause the hearts of the dear people of God to be thus kindly drawn toward me. But oh ! it is precious to us when we feel His wondrous love flow into our hearts, and then go out to our dear kindred in Him, who are all alike "chosen in the furnace of affliction." Your preface is all that I could wish it to be. I have no suggestions whatever to make. There is nothing to jar on even my sensitive nature. It was good of you to send your manuscript to me ; but, indeed, you ought not to have taken such trouble, for I speak truly, my brother, anything that you or your dear wife or sister would write or do for me would always seem *just* right, I am sure. You all seem to understand my feelings, needs and desires, all save my glaring defects ; these your abundant charity causes you to pass by, I suppose. Do please not to hurry or weary yourselves over the work. There is

nothing to cause haste in the matter. I thank you, oh! so much, for your dear, kind, solicitous inquiries about my temporal needs. But the money dear sister Bessie sent me, and sister Susie Saunders, together with a sum sent by dear sister Rounsavell to-day, will procure all the comforts within my reach. Oh! I am so happy, thinking of the wonderful, wonderful goodness of my adorable Master, my Heavenly Lover and King, that I can scarce keep quiet upon my couch of pain. And then the *love*, the sweet and holy incense that flows from the one great Fountain Source into the heart, permeating for the time every fibre of our being, the true "*fullness* of Him that filleth all in all," and going out to each dear brother and sister, binding us so sweetly, so closely together, and in His wonderful omnipotence and omnipresence filling *all space*, so that nothing intervened between spirit and spirit, thus causing soul to commune with soul. Oh! my brother, this is the kind of *joy* that is "unspeakable and full of glory;" and my poor, stammering tongue cannot tell it, my feeble powers cannot utter it. Your dear wife wrote me such a dear, consoling letter while you were at the last Association; another also more recently. Oh! how it surprises, yet gladdens, my poor, lonely heart to learn that the dear people of God do love and remember me. Yet we read that "love begets love," and surely I do love all who bear the mark and impress of my blessed Saviour. My bad ulcer is paining me terribly, and the odor is very bad; but the limb is still "weeping" copiously, so that bodily pain is much lessened. For this I also praise and bless the Lord.

Pray for me all of you. Your letter was very consoling indeed. I am glad if the Lord so will that we are to see each other in the flesh once more. You all become nearer and dearer, as does also my precious Saviour, and, I think, all of this beloved people. How blessed the hope that we will all meet beyond the river of death, never more to part.

July 10.

I am terribly prostrated, and have been in a stupor all the week. Any undue excitement or over-exertion is sure to result in the utter prostration of all the powers, and stupor and semi-unconsciousness hold me like a vice until my system again rises to its normal condition, and the powers of recuperation again begin to work. It is as distressing as acute suffering, for I am conscious of all that is said and done about me, yet am as powerless as the dead to arouse myself to action.

Sister Alma McNaughten came Saturday, my brother and wife and little daughter, a nephew and wife, the wife of my dear, deceased soldier brother and her husband, came Sunday. Other friends called, numbering twenty-one in all. Altogether it was too much for me. Tell dear sister Bessie I received her most comforting letter last night, and will write to her all about my visit with sister Alma McNaughten soon as I become strong enough.

* * * * *

How precious, above all things else, is the marvelous kinship with the blessed Saviour and those bound to me through him. How sweet to my soul, amid all earthly sights and sounds, is the conscious feeling that "One greater than Solomon is here," whose presence is so infinitely more dear than that of any other. How sweet to feel that though our Prince and Saviour is so high, yet will he make his dwelling with the lowly, with those who are of no consequence in the sight of men.

With much love to all, I am your unworthy but trusting and loving sister,

MARY.

October, 1889.

TO MISS EDITH :

Will my dear little friend, Edith, please accept this small offering as a token of love from her sick friend in Ohio? If it could give her the pleasure her little gift gave the poor invalid it would be all I could wish. I have showed both the perfume bag and your letter to all my dearest friends, who have admired and enjoyed them almost as much as I. The lady who teaches the small children, said, "Poor little thing! I know just how hard she labored to write and spell her words correctly." And her kind, blue eyes filled with tears. The school-buildings are just across the street from here, and this lady sometimes sends her little pupils to my sick room with their slates and charts for me to see how nicely they work. I enjoy having them come *so* much, for I dearly love little children. I am glad you and little Mildred enjoyed a play in the straw. Have all the fun you can, my dear, you and sister; for after awhile you will be too large to have such nice times. I often think of you, and wonder how you look; if your eyes are blue or dark, your hair golden, or brown, or black. We used to have a little girl just your age, you know, whom we loved, O so dearly; but she is no longer here; but in her stead has come a tall, fair girl, who can drive her mama out riding, and take horseback rides herself on our lovely drives.

I trust you will sometimes think of your sick friend, who can never go out into the lovely sunshine, to enjoy the beautiful flowers and trees, and hear the birds sing. I hope you will write to me again in some future time. Kiss mama, auntie, and sister Mildred for me. Give my kind regards to your papa, and believe me your true and ever grateful friend,

MARY PARKER.

[Extracts from letters to Bessie Durand.]

NEW HOLLAND, OHIO,

June, 1884.

MISS BESSIE DURAND.

Very Precious Sister in Christ:

Weak and ill in body, and feeling a painful sense of my inability to write, yet I am constantly filled with such heart-yearning toward you, such an irresistible desire to once more address you, that I have concluded to lay all fears and scruples aside, and be governed by the promptings of my heart. Sometimes I feel so ashamed of my letters, that are so like myself, so *full* of self, that I can but cry out, "Oh! what have I done! Why have I allowed any of my imperfect letters to appear before the public?" At such times I think I will never write again; I will hide myself in the seclusion of my sick-room, and will never more write a line of either praise or complaint. But such resolves are made only to be broken, and I write, it seems, dear sister, not because I so much want to, but simply because I feel compelled to. Oh! my sister, if you could only come to see me, as do others; if I could but look into your dear face, and exchange thoughts about our joys and griefs, our fears and hopes, what an inexpressible pleasure it would be. You say you wish I could sit under the sound of your brother's voice. It would indeed be a very great comfort. I can never forget with what liberty and ability he proclaimed the glorious gospel, and with what comfort and sweetness it was received by us all, when he was at our dear home church, at Scott's Creek. How good it is to think of your brother, and other ministers, who, in the midst of error and delusion still remain steadfast in the truth.

* * * * *

How important it is for Christians to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called," and that they adorn the doctrine by "a well-ordered life and a godly conversation." * * * I should deem it a precious favor, indeed, to see you, and hear you converse upon the things that we both hold so dear. You speak truly; I have many kind friends, who greatly lighten the weary, weary load of affliction by their tender ministrations. There is scarce a day but I receive flowers, some choice fruit and other tokens of thoughtful kindness. How I wish I were worthy to be the recipient of such attentions from the dear ones of Christ's kingdom; but I feel all the while, Oh! so sinful, so insignificant, so unworthy. I send much love to your brother and wife, also to the dear saints with whom you meet. May the Lord be very near you, dear sister, shed His love abroad in your heart, and enable you to rejoice with joy that is unspeakable. I really did not mean to write at so great a length. Thanking you for your precious letter, and asking you to write again, I am, affectionately,

Your unworthy sister,

MARY PARKER.

July, 1884.

When the heart is filled with emotion, either sad or joyous, how inadequate seem all words to express our feelings. When the heart throbs and palpitates with intense love, how far short does our language seem to express the fullness of it. So it is with me since your dear letter came. What happy emotions were awakened, and I thought, O if I could but see you, if I could but hold your dear hand and tell you how much I love you, how surprised I was that you should care to write to me. You have often been in my

day dreams, and when asleep many times I have dreamed you were with me.

* * * * *

Your letter found me prostrated with one of the severe attacks which I so frequently have. I was brought unusually low this time, was very weak, and it did seem to me and my friends that the frail life-cord must break asunder, and the pain-tossed body at last be at rest. But I am now in my usual state, save that I am weaker. I had great mental depression, was bowed down under a painful sense of loneliness and desolation, and each sentence in your letter came to me like a ministering spirit, soothing the aching heart, and bidding, "Peace, be still" to the weary, troubled spirit. Surely you were made an instrument to comfort a tried little one, if I dare make so high a claim. When thus the wine and the oil are poured into our hearts, and the song of redeeming love is awakened by the chords being touched by some congenial spirit, how sweet are the vibrations, how soft and low the tones, and how like music wafted from the far off, sinless shore, it seems to us. Little less beautiful and sweet could be this song when sung by angel tongues, and chanted upon harps of gold; for, methinks, it is the same glad song of grace, free grace, that we begin to sing when we first lay aside all self-righteousness, and find righteousness and peace in our great Redeemer and Head; only we shall take it up in a gladder, more uninterrupted strain on the bright shore of immortality. Oh! how wonderful is redeeming love! From the one great source, the Fountain of eternal life, it flows into the heart of each chosen child of grace, and is a golden chain which binds heart to heart, and causes the children of the Lord to love one another through all the vicissitudes of this life; and it is this love that causes us to bear all trials and sorrows with calmness and fortitude. Was it not the love of God, my sister, that calmed your heart and mine when death claimed those we held most dear.

Whither should we turn but to the great giver of all good? Had not the everlasting arms sustained us in those trials, my dear sister, we should certainly have sunk under the weight of them.

* * * * *

No doubt that anguish of mind is infinitely harder to endure than physical suffering, for, "a wounded spirit who can bear." To feel that the heavens above us are brass, and that all beneath our feet is one sea of dark despair, oh! this is hard indeed. But though "sorrow may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning." And what a morning it is, after the clouds are parted and the Sun of Righteousness has risen, "with healing in His wings." Then, indeed, does He "bind up the broken-hearted, appoint liberty to the captive and bid the wounded spirit be free." Just across the hall my sister-in-law is playing on the piano, and the melody is very sweet; but how much sweeter than earthly music is the music of redeeming love, when it flows into the heart, making sweet melody unto God. But how few are the moments when I am favored with this delightful music. How long are the days and nights when not a note is touched, not a sound of it is heard, when not a spiritual song can be sung by me. Cold and lifeless, apparently dead to all spiritual things, I almost give up in despair, and think, surely, the love of Jesus never had a place in my cold, sinful heart or I would not feel thus. Then it is that everything I ever wrote or said upon spiritual things, seems but a voice to condemn me, and I resolve to be silent ever afterward. But ah! we are not our own keepers; we cannot be governed by our own carnal wills, and it is well that we cannot. Please excuse pencil, as I am too nervous to use pen and ink.

August 29, 1885.

A lady down town just sent me a lovely basket of fruit and flowers. How I love to gaze on their beauties and inhale their delicious sweetness. Is it not wonderful how many beautiful things God has provided for us, and wonderful, too, that He has given us the sense of sight, taste and smell, that we may fully enjoy the delights of His creation? My heart swells with gratitude to the great giver, and to the kind friends, who, notwithstanding my unworthiness and utter uselessness, so generously remember me.

* * * * *

When I wrote your brother, I very much desired to answer your precious letter, also, but felt one of my attacks coming on, and so hastened its close. My fears were soon confirmed, as in a short time I took a chill, which lasted five hours, and from that time I was conscious of nothing for twenty-four hours. Physicians say that these attacks are all that prolongs my life, but oh! how I dread them. My body so fills with water that if it did not pass into the limbs, and, by bursting the skin, free itself, I suppose death would inevitably ensue. I can remember nothing that occurs during the attack; am conscious of nothing save the awful pain and intense burning of my limbs. An indescribable solemnity fills my mind before and after the attack, that I cannot account for, unless it is that I am so near the silent, unseen river of death. It must be that when we enter the abode of the blest, where Jehovah dwells and reigns in all His majesty and power, that great solemnity will fill one's soul. How wonderful to think that just across that silent stream dwells Jesus, the dear Saviour; and about Him are the apostles and prophets, of whom we have so often heard. O, to be released from this body of suffering, sin and death and be clothed with immortality and light, to awake with the likeness of the dear

Redeemer, and dwell with Him forevermore—how blessed it would be. How very weary of suffering and of life I have become, and how intense is my longing to be at rest. I so dread the coming winter and the frequent changes that attend that season. Yet I want to remember that it is a tender, loving hand that leads me; and I would patiently and quietly submit to all of His wise dispensations. My sister-in-law brought to my bedside, a few days ago, a drawer from my bureau, containing some clothing, in the bottom of which I found two old *Signs*. One of them contained a poem entitled, “Songs in the Night,” written by your dear brother James, who is deceased, and the other contained his christian experience. The poem, to me, is exceedingly beautiful, full of love, of inward hope, and doubts and struggles. This verse expresses forcibly, the feelings of my own soul :

“The silent, shadowy hours move onward slowly,
But a sweet sense of joy abides with me;
One thought alone makes the night watches holy,
The blessed thought that I am still with thee.”

I thought of your brother as one among the bright throng who, clothed in white robes, in spotless purity, tread the golden streets, and behold the King in all His wondrous beauty. Dear sister, sometimes I am filled with a restless longing to see you, and others, whom I love in the Lord; but I quiet myself with the thought that we will meet in heaven, and love one another far better than we possibly can here. I have so often wondered how your niece is, and if she has regained her health. Please give her my love and sympathy. When the pleasant autumn days, with their invigorating breezes, give place to the grey, clouded sky, and the cutting winds, I may not be able to write; but I shall think of you every day, and often during the sleepless nights. You will pray for me, will you not, and ask the gracious Father to sustain me? Oh! the pain, the anguish that I have, and the

awful hallucination that sometimes comes to me in the darkness of night. With Job I can say, "He scareth me with dreams;" and "wearisome nights are appointed unto me." But when I can also say with Job, "When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold;" and, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" when I can realize that the afflictions work for me an eternal weight of glory, then I am strengthened to bear it.

Dear sister, I have been several days writing this imperfect letter, and am grieved that it is so uninteresting; but I cannot control or guide my thoughts much more than I can my destiny. I had a letter from sister Watie Beard, of Owego, N. Y., some months since. She did not request a reply, but I love her so that I may yet take the liberty to write her. Should I not, will you please give her my best love.

* * * * *

O, if I could fall sweetly asleep, to awake in the likeness of the Redeemer, how good it would be!

August 8, 1888.

Last Saturday I was greatly pleased to find, among my mail, a picture of your own dear self. How can I thank you for showing me such kindness? Nothing could have pleased me better, and I prize it more than a jewel of the rarest setting. * * *

I would love to write you a long letter; I would greatly, also, love to answer your brother's kind letter, but oh! I cannot. Every day since I received his letter, when at all conscious, I have thought, to-morrow, or in a few days, I *may* feel better, then I will write such a letter as I may not be ashamed to own; but oh! my sister, almost all of my to-days and to-morrows have been alike—so filled with pain, weariness and

extreme weakness, that it is simply impossible for me to write a readable letter of any length. * * * I do so wish you could sometimes sit beside my sick bed. How it would soothe and relieve my weariness, and the sense of loneliness that so often weighs me down. Not always do I rejoice in the dear Saviour's love; and when all feeling sense of His presence is gone, my sick-room seems a prison indeed. No matter how numerous nor how pleasant my company, if the dear Saviour's presence seems gone I feel lonely and greatly depressed, and nothing gives me joy or comfort. I cannot pray at such times, my heart is so cold and hard; and yet I know Jesus does not change, and it adds to my guilt and self-loathing to know that I doubt one who is always "pitiful and of tender mercy," and who is the same "yesterday, to-day and forever." There are times, too, when I have neither physical nor spiritual strength, that the thought of immortality and eternal life gives me no joy, and heaven itself seems so veiled in mystery and doubt that the thought of it gives me no comfort, no longing to be there. At such times I can no more realize that pain, sickness and death are not there, and that sin cannot enter, than I can, of myself, remove the dark clouds that cause such wretched thoughts. But oh! sometimes these doubts are removed, the clouds and mists rolled away and I once more "mount up with wings as eagles," and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Then how quickly the scene is changed. Then the smallest gift from a friend comes to me as a choice blessing from my beloved Father's hand. My prison-like walls become the walls of a palace. There are many things I would love to say to you, but cannot now. My brain seems all in a whirl, and my feeble strength will not allow much exertion. When the weather becomes cooler I may become stronger; then if the dear Lord enables me, I will write you. I cannot ask you to reply to this brief, imperfect letter, yet I would be deeply grateful if you would write to me.

May, 1889.

From an adjoining room softest, sweetest strains of music are issuing from the piano, accompanied by my niece's well-trained soprano voice. There is something intoxicating to me about music. Its delicious sweetness vibrates through my whole being, exciting every nerve, quickening every pulse-beat, and inspiring to loftier, nobler thoughts and aspirations. Could one be held for a definite length of time under its soul-inspiring spell, would not the mind be capable of wonderful powers of thought, and would it not be glorious to write under its sweet influence, causing other souls to think *our* thoughts, to feel what we feel, and to reach out after the good and beautiful there is in this life, when it is so interlinked with the beauty and sweetness of the eternal life? In through my open window, this bright morning, comes the exhilarating air, the soft, south wind coming as the tender whisper of some kindred soul from the spirit land, who has gone up "through much tribulation." I ask myself, is it the diseased body, so closely allied to the mind, that causes me so often to feel myself almost as much out of the body as in it; that brings Jesus and those of heaven so near? Or is it because I am so often brought so near apparently to "Jordan's stormy banks," with my trembling soul looking wistfully, longingly for the time when I shall be landed safely upon the glorious, immortal shore? Yet how changeful are my moods, how frequent the fluctuations to which my tossed-about mind is subject. One day I may be with Moses upon the Mount, sweetly viewing the beauties of the promised land; the very next, Giant Despair may hold me like a vice, and I be seemingly as far from the feet of my blessed Jesus as they who have never tasted His love, never felt his pardoning mercy. * * * Soon after I wrote to sister Lefferts I had a hemorrhage of the lungs, which so cut down my strength that almost any effort would cause me to relapse into unconsciousness, sometimes

for hours. Besides suffering from the ulcers on my limbs, my bed-sores are very painful, and lifting my heavy body so much with my hands, they also become so sore I can scarcely use them at times. About a month ago two lady acquaintances came to my room, accompanied by an Indian medicine woman, whose Indian name, she claims, is "Princess Neaskaleta." She says the famous Dr. "O.," of Canada, who was the protégé of the Prince of Wales, by whom he was educated, is her brother. My condition appeared to awaken all her woman's sympathy. Waking or asleep, she said I was constantly on her mind. She begged me to allow her to try her skill on me, herself becoming my nurse.

To convince me it was *my* welfare she sought, she said she wanted no money. I took her remedies but a day and a half, when I became violently worse, and my sufferings so increased, that it seemed impossible for me to live. Every one about me was moved to tears. The medicine was too strong, both stimulant and sedative, and increased the action of the heart so its throbbing could be heard, and was painful past all description. I sincerely pitied the poor woman, who, though born a savage, seemed truly refined, and generously kind. Her disappointment was great, and when she bade me "good-bye" she said if she could have cured me, it would have made her very happy. Oh! yes, my dear, dear sister, I know you would bathe my painful limbs; and in so doing you would be fulfilling the dear Master's injunction, "So ought ye to wash one another's feet."

* * * * *

It is one of my chief studies to be as little care as possible, for deeply do I deplore my inability to help myself. I keep all of my papers and books on my bed, my work-box on a stand, with writing material and almost every thing I require.

* * * * *

Is it not a wonderful evidence of God's marvelous care to know how he makes all my bed in my sickness? I have told you these facts that you may know how entirely I am alone in God's hands. Ah! my sister, I have passed through deep waters; and could I explain all, no one would wonder at the weakness that caused my frequent allusions to my pecuniary embarrassment in those private letters. It does seem I am most unfortunate in having about everything I write brought before the eye of the public. Oh! sister Bessie, if only you were with me now, if only I could tell you the many things I would love to say. * * * You can never know how much I love you, although I never met you "face to face;" can never know how often at night, alone in my room, I really seem to talk to, and be with you, and with what a warmth of affection my heart goes out to you. * * * Since I began this letter, Sunday has come; the family have all gone to morning service, which only lasts a little while, so I am not alone in the house long. Oh! the stillness pervading the entire house as I realize I am alone. Yet, not alone; no, not alone, if Jesus, the lover of my soul, be near. And is He not near always, "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble?" What a comfort to know that at all times He is the same, that He changes not, no matter how far we may stray from the fold, how cold we become, nor how much we doubt our interest in His redeeming blood. This one blessed truth is such an anchor to my soul, when I have no heart to pray, feel no sense of His love, no desire to read His word; and it shines like a gleam of light through midnight darkness. I am growing so weary, my pain so intense, I can write very little more. Since I received your two last dear favors (for which I am deeply grateful), there came a precious letter from sister Lefferts. Oh! she must be a dear jewel of our Master's setting. Please say to her that though somewhat better, I know not how soon I may be brought low again.

If I do not answer her soon I beg she will not think it is neglect. Kiss the dear little ones for me. Tell dear Edith I would certainly prize a bouquet from her tiny hand. How pleasant it must be to you to watch, as it were, the beauty of those precious, unfolding buds. O, how much need have those who have the oversight of little ones, of the guidance and strength and care of our God, in whom alone we can find wisdom to direct their tender footsteps. Commending you all to His loving care, hoping to hear from you soon, I am yours in christian love and fellowship.

September 30, 1889.

About the time I received your last letter, I had been moved into the room I occupy during the summer. Words fail me to express the agony it threw me into. I was delirious for over two weeks, and during that time could not realize where I was. I thought the passers-by on the street were all in confusion, and all going the wrong way. So painful was the delusion that racked my brain day and night, I would often cover my eyes to try to shut out the unfamiliar sights. * * * My body is immense, and the pressure on the lungs very distressing. During the hot weather my digestion gave way so I could not taste so much as a strawberry without enduring the most excruciating pain. I lived entirely on bread and milk. I have not been able to lie down, as you do, for eight years. I dread the coming winter more than I can tell. All night long I must wring cloths out of cold water to cool my burning limbs, while my body and arms are convulsed with chills. Often my skirts are saturated with the dropping water from the bursting limbs, and must be wrung frequently during the night. Sometimes my lower garments freeze, yet my limbs

burn, and when the ice-cold cloth is applied the steam will arise as from a heated stove. Oh! if it would only please the blessed Lord to release me. Yet I do not want to complain lest a worse thing befall me, or lest I grieve one who is infinitely good and wise. Notwithstanding my painful condition, I have, in the midst of all sorts of trials, been made to very sweetly realize that the Lord is gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Very often, when in the world I have had tribulation, the dear Saviour has seemed to draw so near that I could touch the hem of His garment. I could as clearly hear His sweet tones saying, "It is I, be not afraid," as could the apostles, when He bade the tempest cease and gave them peace. The blessed foretaste He has given me of the joy that is to come is better to me than health, better than wealth; His dear love is better than any earthly affection. Since I began writing I have received one of the loveliest bouquets and a glass of jelly from Delaware, Ohio, and I have yet to learn by whose generous hand it was sent. How unworthy I feel to receive such blessings, yet how grateful to both the earthly and the heavenly friend. A lady, last night, gave me a beautiful water pitcher; and as I think of these rare gifts, and the other blessings which "are new every morning," and which drop from the Lord's beneficent hand as distilling dew, I am both humbled and exalted, both made sorrowful and glad; for oh! I ought to be better, ought not ever to murmur. More often than you can imagine, my sister, do my heart and thoughts go out to you with tender yearning.

June, 1890.

My Own Precious Sister:

The tiny clock in my pretty, cozy room just struck three. Three or four weary hours to drag their tedious moments by before nightfall. And what change shall the night bring?

Only an increase of pain, it may be partial delirium, and the weary waiting for the dawn of another day. What a life, you may say; and truly, if this were all of life to me, it would be terrible indeed, and I, of all creatures, most miserable. But into the thick darkness and clouds of this life comes the blessed sunlight of God's wondrous love, shining all the brighter against the dark background, lighting up the darkness with its cheering rays, causing me to feel that though the cloud in which I am enveloped is dark indeed, its lining is of silver. O the blessedness of the love that is without beginning, and has no ending! It encircles each helpless little child, who hungers for it; for all such were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Without merit, how sweetly may we rest in the everlasting arms.

I have been greatly worse since I last wrote you, and I am very weak. Yesterday was "Decoration Day," and a most trying day to me. As I saw the vast procession, with their garlands and wreaths of flowers, move by, a great sea of human souls, I thought, Is Jesus leading them? Then came His words, "Let the dead bury their dead;" and though I think it right to give due honor to departed loved ones, especially those who sacrificed their lives for their country, yet I believe the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus are better off in their closets, or "where two or three are gathered together" in His dear name. * * * Turning down my lamp, I gave myself up to meditation and prayer, and to the enjoyment of the lovely moonlight night. Hour after hour passed, and it was near midnight before the family came in from the festive scene. Amid all my pain and loneliness I am sure I was happier than I could have been to join in their festivities; for I was permitted to rest in green pastures and "beside still waters," while the "still small voice" spoke cheering words to me. How near, how dear does the blessed Saviour become to one thus left alone. What a blessed hour

to approach the throne in prayer; and how one comes from the sacred place soothed and girt about with everlasting strength. And to think that "unto me, who am less than the least of all is this grace given." I feel *so unworthy*. But it seems that Paul, who had such marvelous visions, and who was taken to the seventh heaven, felt just as poor, just as vile and sinful, as the very smallest child. What a blessed comfort it all is to me.

You will find enclosed a little slip taken from our weekly paper concerning your brother's visit and sermon. The assistant editor was among the audience. I think every one present has since called to tell me how much they enjoyed the sermon, and how glad they were for my sake. Sister Lottie was so kind, so willing to have preaching here, I feel to bless her for it, and to thank the dear Lord for it all. How sweetly was my hungry soul fed, and how often now do I go back and gather up the fragments and feel rested and refreshed thereby. Oh! it was a precious season to me, one I shall always remember with tender thankfulness.

My dear sister, two weeks ago I had one of my terrible chills, and last week another. Very probably before twenty-four hours I shall have another. The one that came on two weeks ago lasted all day and part of the night. The pain in my bad foot and limb seemed more than I could endure. Only through fervent, intense prayer did I find strength to endure. For several hours I vomited constantly, then brother came in from the farm and procured ice for me, which relieved me, and allayed the internal heat and intolerable thirst. Until after the chill leaves me I seem to know nothing of what goes on about me, and am only conscious of the severe suffering. My brother thinks the attack two weeks ago the most severe I ever had, and it was exceedingly prostrating. I do not feel that it will be possible for me to live through the heated season. It has been on my mind constantly, dear sister, to ask you, if I should be taken away first, if you would not take

charge of my writings, the same as if they were your own.

* * * I know my letters have very little merit, yet I suppose my peculiar affliction renders them of interest to many. I speak truth when I say I have had hundreds of letters from all over the United States and Canada, and even a few from England, telling me they were comforted by them.

* * * Oh! my sister, it is hard for me to read or write, as I can only finish a sentence or two, when all must be laid aside until I can lift my body in another position with my hands. How many long letters I have written you, in mind, the past few weeks. How my heart yearns for your advice, your love and your spiritual companionship. If only you could come in and sit beside me sometimes. Ever since your first letter appeared in the *Signs* you have been very dear to me. I had a precious letter from sister Alma recently. She is, indeed, a most lovely sister. I do wish you knew her better. * * *

Dear Bessie, none can know of my heart-felt thankfulness for benefits received, unless they were just where I am, just so powerless to help themselves, subject to needs that cannot be laid aside. Yet I would rather suffer for the common needs of life than to accept assistance from one where it did not come freely. * * *

Sunday morning. All is stillness in my room again. My brother and family have gone to their place of worship. No doubt in many places the Lord's peculiar people are assembled in His earthly courts, and my heart goes out to them with longing to join in the delightful worship. To-day is the yearly meeting at Deer Creek Church. There are some precious jewels who will be present at their meeting to-day, and my heart yearns toward them in fervent love. O my sister, I feel very weak. It requires all the strength I can summon to arrange my bed, and the things about me, and dress my sores. You cannot know how sick and faint I grow sometimes while dressing the bad foot. * * *

July 23, 1890.

A day or two after I mailed my last letter to you, I had a very hard chill, with all its attendant bad symptoms, and terrible sickness and pain. Two days elapsed, then came another; the day after that, still another. * * * It nearly takes all the life out of me. It would be absurd to attempt a description of my suffering. During those hot days I was really more dead than alive. * * * Oh, what a blessing has been the pecuniary aid I have received through your dear brother. I cannot cease to thank the Lord and His beloved people. My brother's dear little family have been very kind to me. Eva, poor child, was greatly alarmed, and my own countenance was scarcely paler than the child's, while I was so ill. The doctor is trying to heal my right limb, but it seems not to yield in the least to his treatment. Elder T. Cole came to see me lately, on purpose to have his friend, Dr. Batdorf, of Grand Rapids, examine me. I will enclose a copy of his diagnosis, which seems very correct, and agrees with the diagnosis of other learned physicians. This doctor has a large Sanitarium at Grand Rapids.

DIAGNOSIS OF MARY PARKER.

She has a fungus growth in stomach, the result of some injury; which is the seat of all her trouble. It has been long growing, is of a dark purple color and is covered with festering sores. She lives, that is all. The bowels are paralyzed, and the growth in stomach greatly obstructs her food. She is intensely nervous. Cries a great deal. The heart is much affected. Blood thin and acrid. No good flesh to speak of.

Might *possibly* be reached through surgery, or by absorbents—not by remedies the usual way.

J. C. BATDORF, M. D.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

November 26, 1890.

I want, oh! *so* much, to write you a letter, but cannot. My bad attack came on the same evening after I mailed the letter to sister Clarice, and oh Bessie, dear, I did think I could not bear it; it seemed harder and harder. Surely the end is not far off. Sister Clarice asked me why I could not have my room warm at night. It is because breathing is so difficult. I struggle so for my breath at night; it often awakens my brother and wife up-stairs. They are very patient and kind to me, and, besides, I have gotten used to do many things, that few invalids could do for themselves. I will try to write more satisfactory if I get better; my head seems more involved now than usual. Yet I have numberless blessings for which to give thanks to the gracious Giver. Many thanks to sister Clarice for her interesting letter with kind solicitations and suggestions for my comfort.

* * * * *

Jan. 8th, 1891.

How appropriate was the beautiful poem you sent me to this particular season of the year, when we are so forcibly reminded of the rapidity of the revolving wheels of time, the going out of the old year, the coming in of the new.

How blessed it is, as we contemplate future struggles, and coming events, and realize how powerless we are to take care of ourselves, that we have a stronghold in which to seek refuge, a mighty God who never slumbers, to watch over and take care of us. How great is my desire to love, honor and obey Him in all future time better than ever before, to seek knowledge and solace oftener in His word, and to be found walking more closely in His dear footsteps.

Sister Bessie, if only you could come to me this afternoon as I sit here, the only occupant of this little house, what a joy it would be. Oh! you cannot know how deep, how tender and true is the regard I feel for you. * * * * Oh, this love that has its origin, as we trust, at the great Fountain Source! How it softens the rough places over which we are made to pass. How it sweetens the bitter cup of sorrow and trial, causing water to spring up in the desert, and abundant food in the desolate land. If not deceived I have recently experienced much of the sweetness and power of this love of Jesus flowing into the heart, and going out to His dear children throughout the land; and Oh! it is so much better, more enjoyable, more like our blessed Saviour, to *love* than to *hate*, is it not, dear sister?

I wrote sister Clarice one week ago to-day, also a letter to brother and sister Coulter. Feeling much fatigued I thought I would rest awhile, and write to you next day. But in an hour I was unconscious, and shaking with one of those chills of fifteen hours duration. My room was full of callers all the afternoon, and until after night, but I knew not who was present, or anything they said. These attacks being so frequent and severe, I only just begin to recover a little strength from one when another must be gone through with; but the goodness of God is made manifest in a powerful manner, if I am not deceived, and His dear "presence disperses my gloom," and truly, at times, "makes all within me rejoice," I would like to tell you of the joy I experienced when, with my soul bowed down with woes too heavy for me to bear, I poured out my heart to Him in prayer, and His presence came like a shining light, brighter than the rays of the sun, softer and fairer than that of the moon, and I was made to rejoice with "joy unspeakable;" yes, *unspeakable*; for I can neither describe the scene, nor tell of the power and sweetness of the felt presence of Jesus in my soul. * * * Notwithstanding

my unworthiness, my heavenly Father showers countless blessings daily in my path. So many dear letters, sweet Christmas-tokens of love have come to my sick-room the past month. * * * * Oftentimes amid so much pain, I long for death, immortality, everlasting life, and rest, as I long for no earthly thing. Yet God knows just when to call me—how long to leave me here; and I do know that “To live is Christ, to die is gain.” Living or dying, to the child of God it matters little, since Jesus is ours, and we are His. Oh! is it not a blessed thought? I had a lovely letter from our dear sister Hassell, and I felt it such a blessing to me. * * * * How grateful I feel to the dear ones in Philadelphia, whose kindness knows no bounds.

* * * * *

February 2, 1891.

I have put off writing to you from day to day, hoping each day would bring a little less pain, and a little more strength. But, alas! it seems useless to hope, or look forward to anything but suffering for me in this life. When I read dear brother Anderson's most touching letter to your brother, in the last *Signs*, I felt as if I should try never to complain again, so much heavier are his woes, so much more intense his great conflict of suffering than mine. But though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; and, indeed, dear Besie, the awful pain is greater than I can, of myself, bear. It is only through the help and strength that come to me from the Lord, that I am made to bear it at all. It is the anguish and terrible outcry of a soul sunk in the depth of human suffering, going out to a pitiful, merciful Father, an all-wise God of power, whose “eyes are over the righteous, and whose

ears are open unto their cry." He gives me resignation and strength to bear on, till the much-longed-for end, for oh! blessed thought, I know that time will come when suffering and sorrow will end in everlasting life. * * * Elder Jenkins wrote me a dear, encouraging letter, inviting me to write for the *Signs* as often as I have strength; and he also sent me a very generous present of money. Was he not kind? Dear sister, will the published letters have to be copied? You see I am wholly ignorant concerning such matters. O my sister, I feel that I ought not to allow you and your dear brother to undertake such a labor for one like me; and I fear it will be an imposition not only on you, but on the dear kindred at large. I wish you did know how like nothing myself, and all that pertains to me, seem.

* * * * *

February 13, 1891.

O, your precious letter! Coming to me when I was so weak in body, so poor in spirit, bowed down in bitter anguish, sick with a sense of my imperfections and sin, every word was a soothing balm, every sentence a panacea for the wounds and bruises of my sin-sick, wearied soul. Can it be, I ask myself, that such sweet consolation is meant for me, that such words, coming from your heart, could be penned to comfort such a poor, little, insignificant creature as I? Surely you cannot know; you cannot see into my poor heart, with all its deceitfulness and sin, or words like those would never have been written, never have flowed from your soul into mine, so full of the sweet incense of God's purifying, unchanging love. Softly, quietly, do I seem to rest, with the halo of this heavenly incense about me, clasping it closely, lest it leave me.

Every letter I receive from you seems but an added link in the golden chain of friendship and christian love which

binds our hearts so closely. This love we both hope will never be broken, but will draw more sweetly its shining links about us on the eternal shore of our bright home above. Tender, loving memories cluster around the word *home*, even when it relates to our earthly habitation; but what emotions stir and vibrate through the inmost recesses of the heart, when we think of the "home of the soul," which hath sure foundation, where there is no sickness, no sorrow, no death, no sin. What a contrast between the earthly and the heavenly home. * * *

The same day I received your dear letter I got one, also, from Elder G. H. Tussing, now pastor of the dear home church where I was baptised, and where, for thirty-seven years, my dear, departed father preached the "unsearchable riches of Christ." The dear members there made up a little sum and sent me, through Elder Tussing, as a token of their sympathy and kindly remembrance. I cannot tell you how I prize the tender love that prompted these precious ones to thus remember me, who was ever the poorest of their little band. To be thus thought of by the friends of my childhood, who, notwithstanding my unfitness, gave me a welcome among them, touched my inmost soul and filled it with gratitude to my blessed Saviour, whose love and watchcare can be traced in indelible way-marks through it all. The many choice blessings that flow from my heavenly Father's hands into the darkened pathway of my life, are wonderful indeed. Sister Bessie, I often long to see you that the sweet confidence existing between us might be perfect. But of late, this intercourse by letter, the interchange of thoughts and experiences seems so full, so sweet, that I scarce can realize that we *do not* see face to face. Surely there is a striking similarity in many of our ideas, our thoughts, our longings and experiences.

In deepest love, your sister

MARY.

March 29, 1891.

I do not any more even doubt the existence of the living God, nor the efficacy of a Saviour's blood; and, best of all, I firmly believe that His eternal purpose in the redemption of His people, and their resurrection from the grave, will be fulfilled. But *I* seem so cold, so blind, so faint, so far removed from His dear presence and love. I have so little warmth in prayer, little delight in the Word; and if I did not feel the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which brings to one's soul the blessed promise that it shall be filled, I certainly would give up all hope that when the Lord comes to make up His jewels I shall be among them.

To-day there came to me such dear, consoling letters. One from our dear sister, Attie Curtis, every sentence of which seems to me like an outburst from a pure crystal fountain of love, which is filled to overflowing; and oh! what delicious music it sends forth—how like the soft, low sound of some gently-flowing brook, or the glad song of some happy bird, do her letters, full of praise, seem to me. The other letter was from our dear brother Coulter, and its delightful contents was as a soothing balm to my hungry, lonely soul. Oh! my dear sister, when I compare myself with any of the dear brethren and sisters who write me, how I am filled with wonder, and the more wisdom I see they possess, the greater seems my lack, and the more incompetent I know I am of myself to write one word to the honor of God. I cannot send forth one note of praise to Him without the help of Jesus, for he says, "Without me ye can do nothing." How very deeply have I been made to realize this blessed truth in the dark winter-time, with its chilling winds, that lately swept over my soul. It is said that trees become more firmly rooted in winter, when stripped of their green foliage. Can it be so with Christians, when they stand leafless, and

fruitless, with chilling blasts beating upon them, and no beauty to be seen? Do they become more firmly rooted and grounded in Him who is their righteousness? I hope so, at least. Tell me, my dear one, if such dark night seasons often sweep over your soul. * * * I am alone to-night. Outside the wind blows, and the rain-drops make music, as they fall from the eaves. But I like to be alone sometimes, alone with my blessed Jesus, even if my heart be cold, and no uplifting, heavenly thoughts stir my soul. Still I believe that round about me are the arms of everlasting love, and that I will be shielded from every evil. * * * My love to sister Terry, through whose kindness I received such a helpful gift, and to the dear ones of your brother's charge. Good-night, my sister, may your slumbers be sweet, and may you and I meet on the shining shore, where the curtain of night never falls, where we can praise our dear Redeemer forever.

May 17, 1891.

About three weeks ago I noticed a small red lump just above the ankle of my bad foot, about as large as a three-cent piece. Now it is as large as a teacup, and has given me much trouble and pain. This, and various things, have occurred to prevent me writing to you sooner.

* * * * *

You spoke of sister Emma Smith. I think she is the sweetest, dearest creature I almost ever saw. I had a letter from her Saturday. She is going to make a tour of the Western States. She is a constant, hard-working teacher, and I fear her health is giving way. She says she can hardly wait for the coming book. Several others have said the same. I fear they anticipate too much, and will be sadly disappointed.

O sister Bessie, I have so yearned to see you. Especially at night do my thoughts go out to you with unutterable warmth. Your letters are soothing to me, and I find myself turning to you often, and I feel it would be a great relief if I could have a long talk with you. My brother in Logan has lately sent me a package of various kinds of fruit. I was so glad. His oldest son is a rising physician in Columbus. The dear boy runs down to see me sometimes. He seems so noble and good; is only twenty-two. How is your dear niece, Anita, and her baby? I imagine how Edith and Mildred enjoyed having the darling baby cousin visit them.

* * * * *

Some weeks ago, just after the 11 A. M. train came in, a gentleman rang the door bell, and asked to see me. He introduced himself as John Nixon, of Logan. I knew his people, but had never met him. He began at once to relate a most wonderful experience to me. He said he had been a saloon-keeper a number of years, and a worse place of the kind, he said, could not be found in the valley. Connected with the sale of intoxicating drinks was also gambling. He said there was no crime from which his hands were clean, save murder, and that was in his evil heart. One day, as he sat in his saloon, it seemed some one said to him, "This is the road to everlasting punishment." Looking about him, and seeing no one, a terrible fear seized him. He was like one in a dream. The next thing of which he became conscious was finding himself in a little, old school-house on a back street, in which colored people were holding a protracted meeting. He stood up and told them of the voice he heard, and asked them what to do. They got him to the mourner's bench, and all prayed for him, but with no relief; and for three days he went there, but continued to feel worse. Next he went to the Presbyterians, and they told him to pray and exercise faith, still he

found no relief. From the first he closed his saloon and never again opened it. He now began to wander over the hills, and stay in the dark ravines, praying and calling upon God for help. Finally he went to the dear little meeting-house where father used to preach, and heard the first gospel sermon of his life. For the first time began to learn that others had felt just what he was then feeling. After a time he found peace, and now he is rejoicing in hope, and grace seems beaming through his soul, lighting up each lineament of his face, which, strange to say, bears no marks of dissipation. Oh! it was just sublime. If I only had strength to go on telling you. He read my little book while in trouble, and said it helped to strengthen his belief in God; and he came all the way up here, especially to see me. He seems so innocent and good, one would never suppose he had been a bad man.

He said he had an engagement to go with a party to Columbus, on a gambling and drinking carousal at the time when he became convicted; and he says no one knows how his old associates tried to draw him into their vile net again. His story reminded me of the poor maniac among the tombs. He is now a member of Scott's Creek Church. Is it not marvelous, the way the Lord leads about His children, and instructs them?

It is night-time with *me* to-day. Last week I was upon the mountain top, having such glorious views of the fair land beyond, while I enjoyed the flow of milk and honey. But now I am sojourning again in Egypt, with no pleasant fruits, or fair scenes to cheer my soul.

I feel condemned to send you a mere worldly commonplace letter, but one can draw no water from empty vessels, neither can we, of ourselves, open the prison doors. If it were not that my soul hungers for the bread of life, I should be cast down indeed.

June 23, 1891.

For the past six weeks I have lost so much sleep on account of extreme nervousness and pain, that every time I attempt to write I am almost constantly falling off to sleep, and I make all sorts of ill-looking marks. I am not suffering at present as I did some weeks ago, for my left limb has burst in two places, and the water is almost pouring out, which is giving me needed relief. How I do feel to praise and bless my dear heavenly Father for such a respite from distress and pain, for I know it is all of His tender mercy and care, and the answering of the fervent cry of my soul to Him for help. He is indeed very pitiful, and of tender mercy, and has been so near, so dear and so gracious to me in my loneliness and pain, I feel if I had ten thousand tongues, I could never sufficiently sing His praise. About the time of my last writing to you an ulcer had appeared on my left limb. It has baffled all skill of the physicians, and is constantly spreading, and is now as large as a saucer. * * * The pretty wrappers sent me by sister Abbie Clark, of Maine, are indispensable, and I now look upon her work as another provision of Him who has promised, and does provide. * * *

A great change is certainly taking place in my physical condition. What the result will be, time alone can tell. I was so ill during the association at your place and at Warwick; yet I was with you all in spirit, and had some very precious and sweet manifestations of the omnipresence of God, the workings of His Holy Spirit, and the love and unity between Himself and His people; also, the sweet fellowship of the saints. I truly felt once, during prayer, on the last day of the Warwick Association, that, in spirit, I was permitted to join that dear assembly; and I had a blessed feast and foretaste of heavenly joys. But I cannot tell you of it, dear Bessie; you know I cannot, with this mortal tongue or pen, because it is

“*unspeakable* and full of glory.” Even now, while gathering up a few fragments, as I write, the glory, joy and sweetness I cannot tell, flows into my poor soul. O, the wonders we see in this pathway that leads to the portals of eternal day! Even the faint glimpses we have “through a glass darkly,” causes us to wonder and adore. More and more do we see of the wisdom and goodness of God, as we journey onward and upward; and nearer and nearer are we brought to where Moses stood upon the mount, permitted to look into the land of Canaan. Darkness and doubt encircle us for a time, but anon the clouds part, and we find that the Sun of Righteousness shines with greater radiance, when the clouds are sundered. I have not been able to read the blessed word since I am so weak and exhausted for sleep, and it has grieved me; and while so low I did not enjoy anything, did not seem to have one uplifting thought. The beauty of the green earth, the bloom and fragrance of flowers, the song of the happy birds failed to inspire me with any love or zeal toward my blessed Lord; and my soul was troubled.

Then came the words, “He loveth at all times;” “He sticketh closer than a brother.” Tears of gladness at once filled my eyes, and my soul was made once more to rejoice in God, my Saviour. Then the words of David were brought to my mind, “He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust;” also, “He is not an High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” Then was my soul made glad, indeed, and I felt that, no matter what my feelings, no matter how cold, lifeless and barren I felt, Jesus, dear Jesus, is the same, now and forevermore. * * * I had such a beautiful present last Friday from that dear young sister, Larue Beebe. It is a large, morocco-bound gilt hymn-book. I prize it greatly, and am so thankful. Sister Kate Beebe also sent me some photographs, and among them were dear sister Rousavell and brother, and sister Jenkins. How very

thoughtful it was. I have had a few brief but very precious letters from Elder Jenkins. He seems very near to me. How good the Lord is to give me so many dear, kind friends among those I have never met. Sister Benedict, of Indiana, is wonderfully kind to me. I hope I am thankful.

* * * * *

I am suffering, but no earthly physician can help me; but you know there is a "Balm in Gilead," and the Holy Physician will apply it in his own way and time. Am very lonely now, for I cannot bear any one in my room.

June 30, Tuesday morning.

Just how cheering and soothing to my lonely heart was your dear letter how much fragrance seemed to flow into my soul as again and again I perused its pages, I have no language or power to express. You have felt these things, dear sister, and know by experience that their sweetness cannot be told. I can write but a brief line this time, as I am very weak, but much more free from excruciating pain than I have been for a long time, and I feel to praise and bless the great Physician, whose balm has seemed so marvelously applied to my poor, suffering body, as well as, I trust it has, to my soul. * * * The swelling is so reduced that I feel almost like a new person, and oh how my soul does praise and thank God for it. I know I may suddenly be plunged into greater suffering than ever, but I can only pray and praise, trust and bless His great and holy name, knowing that "To live is Christ, to die is gain." I know, also, that hitherto He has given me strength according to my day, and I can trust Him to the end. Oh! my sister, holier, more wonderful seems our God to me every day; and it is blessed, even in this

tabernacle of sins, to *live*, when "our life is hid with Christ in God," and when, in Him, we live and move and have our being," and when into our poor lives there flows even a little of that blessed *fullness* "that filleth all in all." Little by little are these blessed things unfolded to my darkened mind; clearer and clearer do they seem; though I know that until the veil be lifted their dazzling beauty cannot be known. But then how glorious it will certainly be. Do you know, dear sister, that sometimes I feel so closely, so warmly drawn toward you and sister Clarice, and others, when soul speaks to soul, as we seem to do sometimes in this interchange of thought, that I feel, though we never meet, it must be that we will meet in the great beyond, and in some way recognize each other as kindred spirits; not as we should here, but in some way that we cannot know now, but will, when all things are made manifest; when all mystery is cleared away, and we, with spotless robes, have entered fully into the final rest, that remains to us, and into the glory of the Most High.

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Very much I wish to say but cannot. My brother and wife in Logan are to come here the Fourth and return the same day. It is fourteen years since I met them. Sister Alma McNaughten is also expected.

Sunday morning, July 27, 1891.

All last week I was brought so low, where it seemed I lay at the very edge of the silent, solemn river of death. Heavy clouds of darkness and doubts as to my interest in the dear Saviour's blood also encompassed my soul, while all the waves and billows seemed to go over me. So very sick,

nigh unto death, with no feeling sense of the invisible presence of Him who has been more to me than wealth, health or friends, my anguish was too great for utterance. Over and over again would come the words of Job, "Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him," and again, "He maketh the clouds His chariot," so that my soul was sustained, and my strength upheld, notwithstanding the turbulent waves that beat about me. Though sinking in deep waters, I could say, "Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." How in my loneliness and pain I turned to you and sister Clarice, and I felt how short, how puny is an arm of flesh, even though it be the arms of those so dear; for though you would both come to me if you could, would minister to my needs were you present, alas! many miles lie between us. I do hope I can still trust in Him, who is a very "present help in trouble." Since sister Alma was here I have felt more than ever alone.

* * * * *

Dear Bessie, I am too ill to write. I do so long for some word from some of you, which would certainly give me strength. Pray for me, do; and do not forget to write very soon. You will excuse this note, dear one, written when I scarce know what I do. Oh! that the end would soon come. But God's holy will be done.

Lovingly,

MARY.

CONCLUSION

“Who hath despised the day of small things?” was asked of the Prophet Zechariah. In keeping with this the Apostle Paul says: “God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence.” We find also recorded for the suffering children of earth, “The Lord loveth whom He chasteneth, and scourgeth every one whom He receiveth.”

We often wonder why the blessed Saviour lays so heavy a hand on some of the dear members of His body, why He keeps them so long in the furnace. Then comes the answer, “I will try them as gold is tried, I will refine them as silver is refined,” with the promise, “I will never leave nor forsake them;” “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer.”

This little book is sent forth, trusting that the testimony it bears to the loving care and faithfulness of Him who is “a Father to the fatherless,” may be encouraging to many who are walking in the vale of sorrow and temptation. Had our beloved sister relied entirely on her own judgment, these pages would never have seen the light. It was with misgivings and hesitation that she ever yielded to the request of many friends and kindred in Christ, to allow her letters to appear in print, feeling most deeply her imperfections, and that what she has written is very defective, often using her pen to beguile weary, painful, lonely hours. With this consideration, we feel an assurance that every inaccuracy will be looked upon with an indulgent eye.

It is simply marvelous that she can write at all, that she has any control of her thoughts and pen, so extreme is her

suffering ; yet it is a comfort and sweet satisfaction that in whatever flows from her pen there is the shining and sparkling of truth, as clear water from a pure fountain.

The distresses and deliverances through which she has passed have prepared her all the more to "weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice." In perusing these gleanings from our sister's pen, I have been deeply moved ; these sentiments breathed in her sick-room have awakened tender emotions, and the abiding trust and living faith that have enabled her to endure with fortitude, have often been strengthening to me, and to many far and near, who have read her published letters, as well as personal ones. These letters have searched out others who are afflicted, and, from beds of languishing, they have sent her loving responses, feeling that she was a "companion in tribulation." We hope still others may be cheered, comforted and refreshed as they read her words, even when tears of sympathy fill the heart.

The fruit of her pen has, at times, been to me like an inspiration, filling my heart with praise. I will mention one occasion : It was after a day spent in the assembly of the saints, though, in spirit, I was outside. While the followers of Jesus were sitting together in heavenly places, listening to the "joyful sound," as it dropped like the rain, and distilled as the dew, I longed to enter in and enjoy the feast ; yet my cold, hard heart appeared to shut me out, feeling most deeply my entire unfitness, while partaking with them of the sacred supper.

That evening, filled with gloom and surrounded by darkness, I took up sister Mary's book of letters, gathered into a volume by sister McNaughten. Soon was my heart melted at the rich manifestations of a Saviour's love to this stricken one, hidden in the cleft of the rock, and "in the secret places of the stairs." As I read on in the still hours of night, her

sweetly-expressed thoughts touched the secret springs of my soul, as never before, and I cannot express the love and sweet fellowship I felt for her, whose face I had never seen.

The gently-falling rain was pleasant music—was as the “voice of many waters,” and my soul was lifted in silent songs of adoration to Him who “turns the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of waters.” How unsearchable is the wisdom of our God, who planted the stars and covered the earth with beauty, and who has power

“To clear the darkest skies,
And gives us day for night,
Make drops of sacred sorrow rise
To rivers of delight.”

It is in “passing under the rod” that our sister is enabled to speak words of consolation to others who are receiving its afflictive strokes.

For many years has she been unable to rise from her couch, or even to lie down in bed. Often crushed with aching sorrow and again, joyful through hope, and exalted in praise—thus have these thoughts dropped from her pen. Her life, so blighted in earthly hopes, has found a compensation in the ripening of her faith, which, at times has been as a shining light that reacheth unto perfect day.

She was early separated from the home where she learned to lisp the sweetest of all earthly names, “mother,” and where she first knew a Saviour’s love and felt her sins forgiven. Then do we find her mourning “the broken ties of happier days.” Ever alive to all that is beautiful around her, from the grandest scene to the blade of grass springing at her feet; early associations became very dear to her sensitive, clinging nature. Even the hills and trees and sunsets, which she had watched with fascination, and the rooms where last words were spoken, all beckoning and calling with yearning nearness, till her heart is breaking, and, like Mary of old, “she

goes to the grave to weep there." But all her tears are bottled by Him, who brings joy through the channel of suffering. If she had not been tried, she would not have come forth as gold; if she had not been fearful and "tempest-tossed," she would not have beheld Jesus walking on the waves, allaying all her fears; if she had not felt herself sinking in the stormy deep, she would never have realized the strong hand of her Saviour lifting her above the heaving billows; and, if her sky had not been overspread with dark, dismal clouds, the beautiful rainbow of promise would never have appeared to her rejoicing eyes, or the star of Bethlehem beamed its heavenly radiance upon her.

Though disease has long held her body with a strong hand, the silken cords of divine love have held her soul still firmer, and soothing, indeed, are those bands. Time after time, since chained by affliction, has she almost touched the eternal shores, and how bitter was her disappointment when she found herself returning to pain and sorrow. After a glimpse of heaven, where the glory of the Lord is the light thereof, how poor is earth with its changing, fading scenes.

Deprived for years of meeting at any place of worship, her soul has often sung in plaintive tones,

" How pleasant, how divinely fair,
O Lord of Hosts thy dwellings are !
With long desire my spirit faints
To meet the assemblies of the saints."

Our beloved and suffering sister, while longing for the message, " Child, your Father calls, come home," yet is still submissive to His holy will, feeling an assurance that " all things " are working for her good, and that " at evening-time it shall be light." Jesus is her theme, and the dew to her soul; and she has so beheld His glory that she can truly say, " Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips." " All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes

and cassia." "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars." Yea, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely."

May the savor and fragrance of His precious name be as "ointment poured forth" to all who are pinioned to a bed of pain. And may the Holy Spirit seal a blessing home to every heart who seeks His face sorrowing, and who is looking for the "footsteps of the flock," as for "hidden treasure," and for all who love the appearing of Jesus. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

BESSIE DURAND.

Southampton, Pa., Aug. 24, 1891.

APPENDIX

New Holland, O.

To the Honorable Committee of Arrangements for the Holcombe Reunion, to be held at Mount Airy, New Jersey, on Wednesday, August 12, 1891, this brief article is addressed:

As it is not at all probable that any of the Holcombe relatives who reside in Ohio will be present at this pleasant assembly of our people, I trust I will not be intruding, or be deemed presumptuous if I, a descendant of the Holcombe family, send you a line in behalf of the Ohio relatives, by way of remembrance and kindly greeting. My mother, who has long since fallen asleep, was born in Lambertville, New Jersey. Her maiden name was Hannah Holcombe. She was the daughter of Dr. John and Rachel Holcombe (the latter's maiden name being Rachel Burroughs). Dr. Holcombe moved to Morgan County, Ohio, when my mother was twelve years of age. There were four sons and four daughters all of whom married and raised families. But all are now dead except the youngest brother, Mr. John Holcombe, who resides on a beautiful farm in Perry County, Ohio, and two daughters, one living in Kansas, the other in Perry County, O., in the town of Corning. There is an enormous progeny of the descendants of Dr. John Holcombe, many of whom are well-to-do respectable members of society in various localities of Ohio.

I think by striving to give you a pen-acquaintance with your cousins of the "Buckeye" State, I can truthfully say I need tell you nothing that would make you ashamed to own us, or to cause you to shrink from extending to us the welcoming hand-clasp of relationship, or to deny the close and binding tie of consanguinity.

I am myself a hapless, helpless invalid, shut in from day to day, from year to year, unable to go about and enjoy the beauties of this fair, beautiful earth. But it has pleased God, amid all the weariness and pain, to give me a sweet resignation to His holy will, and to enable me to look beyond this world, to one where sickness and pain can never come, and where He who heals all our sicknesses has a healing, holy balm for even the malady of sin, and who Himself will wipe all tears from our eyes. Were it not for this affliction I would dearly love to be one among you in your pleasant gathering; and, believe me, I will be with you in the spirit of vivid thought and remembrance. Your place of meeting being near the birth-place of my dear, good, noble mother, is to me a sacred spot, around which my fond affections cluster; and nothing of an earthly nature could give me greater pleasure than to stand on the ground that once bore the impress of her dear feet, and to look upon the scenes that she so loved in childhood, and of which she often told me when I, a little child, sat upon her knee.

Oh! who that have ever had bestowed upon them the fond, unselfish love of a good mother can help feeling an interest and love for the scenes and place of her birth? and who that have felt that love can help having their affections go out to the person or persons through whose veins runs the same family blood? I am not ashamed of my mother, my mother's people, nor the good old English blood from which we are descended; and next to the stars and stripes, next to America, free and true, I love dear old England, and those who are born and bred upon her soil.

Since it is impossible for any of the Holcombe relatives of Ohio to be present at your grand reunion, may not one of our number hope to be welcomed within your hearts and your precincts through the medium of the pen? and when you gather round the festive board, and invoke the blessing of

God upon your united hands and hearts, will not some one at least remember your suffering, "shut-in" relative in Ohio, and ask for a blessing for her? In behalf of the Holcombe relatives in this locality I tender you all sincere love, and our very kindest, best of wishes. I am glad that this pleasant family reunion is kept up, and our excellent cousin, Dr. Geo. Holcombe Larisan, of Lambertville, has excited our warmest admiration, on account of the deep interest, and the very active part, he has taken in bringing this family reunion about, and keeping up the pleasant family relationship and intercourse. Craving a place in the kindly remembrance of you all, and commending you to the care and keeping of the all-wise God, I am, sincerely and affectionately,

Your cousin, of Ohio,
MARY PARKER.



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