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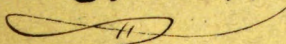
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Will Mrs Hinman

Accept this little
volume as a memento of
her Friend & Pastor.

The Author. —

New York
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"THE ELECT LADY,"

A MEMOIR

OF

MRS. SUSAN CATHARINE BOTT,
OF PETERSBURG, VA.

BY A. B. VAN ZANDT, D. D.

NEW YORK.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
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“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is
vain, but a woman that feareth the
Lord, she shall be praised. Give her
of the fruit of her hands, and let her
own works praise her in the gates.”
—Proverbs xxxi. 30, 31.

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“THE ELECT LADY.”



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY — FIRST IMPRESSIONS — DESIGN OF THIS MEMOIR.

“You must go and see Mrs. Bott.”— These were the words of my kind host, and uttered with an energy and earnestness of manner, which made them impressive, on the very first day of my first visit to Petersburg, Va. And as one and another of the congregation was introduced to me, the question was repeatedly asked, “Have you seen Mrs. Bott?” No one seemed disposed

to tell me much about the lady whose name was so often, and so respectfully mentioned, although there was an evident desire that I should have an early interview with her.

My curiosity was fully aroused, and I availed myself of the first opportunity for gratifying it, by a visit to one to whom I afterwards became a Pastor officially, but, in reality, a learner in more ways than one. From what had been said, I expected to see a matron in full maturity, if not beyond it. But when she entered the parlour, I found myself in the presence of one, who, though retaining the outlines of singular grace and dignity, seemed already burdened with years, and suffering under great debility. And yet there was a sparkle in that eye, and an animation in that countenance, which in-

icated a mind in full vigour, and a spring of vitality which might long resist the progress of decay. It was evident, at a single glance, that she had once been beautiful, and her beauty was of that cast which is not dependent upon a delicate complexion, or the glow and freshness of youth, but which remains in the harmony of regular and pleasant features, even down to old age. Her manner, marked by unaffected simplicity, and a hearty kindness, which could not fail to attract, had yet a quiet dignity which inspired respect. There was also that undefinable and mysterious air of goodness, which, somehow, surrounds eminent piety, and makes one feel its presence, and reverence its possessor.

No doubt, I was partially prepared for this effect. And yet, it is probable

it would have been very much the same, under any circumstances. There is something in these instinctive recognitions (if I may call them so) not easily to be accounted for; perhaps there is more in them, than ever was "dreamed of, in our philosophy." They are not to be confounded with the groundless likes and dislikes which often spring up at first sight, and which may, generally, be ascribed to the influence of some trifling circumstance upon the humour of the moment—the result of a given state of blood, or condition of the bile. With all due abatements for this source of prejudice and error, yet is there not such a thing as a moral instinct, which, if not infallible, is nevertheless so generally correct, as to be a valuable guide in the intercourse of life? It is not mere sympathy, for

it is found to exist in the recognitions of totally opposite characters. In a virtuous mind there is often an involuntary caution and distrust, amounting, in some cases, to a positive repugnance toward a bad man, of whose character, as yet, nothing is actually known. But though wickedness may sometimes assume an air of external propriety, and so effectually cover itself as not to arouse, or if aroused, to baffle, this detective instinct; yet real goodness, which seeks no disguise, and has an impress of its own which cannot be hidden or altogether imitated, will always make its presence to be felt alike by the good and the bad. The true coin has the stamp of heaven upon it, and though the counterfeit may obtain circulation, yet we know the genuine when we see it, and never think of questioning its intrinsic worth.

My brief interview with Mrs. Bott turned, mainly, upon the condition of the church of Petersburg, then vacant for a year past, and concerning which she expressed a deep solicitude. I left her with the strong impression upon my mind, that the prayers of such a woman were of inestimable value to any church, and that the Pastor, who could secure them in his own behalf, might feel his hands strengthened, and his heart encouraged to labour in hope.

I found it so, during the few remaining years of her life. And now that she has gone to her rest and her reward, I would fain perpetuate, in these pages, the memory of one, whose unpretending and extraordinary worth deserves a far worthier memorial. The few materials which could be gathered from the recollections and papers of

surviving relatives and friends having been placed in my hands, I have undertaken the task of preparing this little volume, in the hope that this bright and beautiful example of female piety and usefulness, though very imperfectly delineated, may yet serve to strengthen the faith, and arouse the activities, and encourage the efforts of some of the many "daughters of Zion," who are blessed with far greater means and more favourable opportunities, than she ever enjoyed.

CHAPTER II.

ANCESTRY—THE SPOTSWOODS—REVOLUTION- ARY INCIDENTS.

No person was ever more exempt from the pride of ancestry, than Mrs. Bott; and yet few persons in this country could have offered a better excuse for its indulgence. Her genealogical tree would be found taking its roots among the families of an ancient nobility. But rejoicing in the privileges of a far nobler birthright, even that of the children of God, she had, through grace, a better title to rank among "honourable women," than any which can be derived from the circumstance of lineal descent.

The name of Spottiswoode is coeval with the assumption of surnames in Scotland. The founder of the family was "Robert de Spottiswoode, Lord of Spottiswoode, who was born in the reign of King Alexander III, and died in that of Robert Bruce." In the line of this family are found some names distinguished in history. Among others, may be mentioned, "John Spottiswood, Archbishop of St. Andrews, and Lord High Chancellor of Scotland," celebrated as the author of "The History of the Church of Scotland," and who also, in 1663, placed the Scottish crown upon the head of Charles I., at Holyrood house. His son, Sir Robert Spottiswood, was created by Charles I. the "President of the College of Justice, and Secretary for Scotland." The prominent part which he enacted in

the cause of royalty, excluded him from the benefit of the "act of oblivion," in 1641. He was tried by parliament at St. Andrews, and sentenced to be beheaded at the market cross.

Alexander Spotswood, famous as an early, and most enterprising Governor of Virginia, was the grandson of the Sir Robert mentioned above, and from him the family on this side of the Atlantic are descended.

The Governor's sons were John and Robert. Robert, the younger of the two, a captain under Washington, detached with a scouting party from Fort Cumberland in 1757, was killed by the Indians. John married Mary Dandridge, and Gen. Alexander Spotswood, and Major John Spotswood, of the Revolution, were his sons.

This last named gentleman was the

father of Mrs. Bott, and therefore entitled to a more particular notice in this place.

Major, or (as he was afterwards known) Col. John Spotswood, was a gentleman of education, elegant manners, and high moral worth; a man whose name is never mentioned in the neighbourhood of his former residence, even down to this day, without some expressions of honour and affection. It is well known, that in the colonial days, the sons of the rich were often sent to England for their education. Young Spotswood was sent to Eton, and having passed through the curriculum of that famous school, he returned to Virginia and settled in Orange county, having married Sarah Rowsie, a high bred, intelligent, yet gentle and pious lady. His domestic felicity was

soon interrupted by the ever memorable struggle of the Revolution. There was no class of men in the country, upon whom the principles of the patriots took a firmer hold, than upon the planters of Virginia. Though Spotswood was now a husband and a father, yet neither domestic ties, nor aristocratic descent, nor foreign education, could stop his ears to the call of his country. Leaving behind him a wife and three children, of whom the subject of this memoir was the youngest, Col. Spotswood repaired to the army of Washington. He was present at the battle of Germantown, severely wounded, and left upon the field as dead. Some British soldiers were already rifling his pockets, and had possessed themselves of his watch and other valuables, when their prospect

of booty was suddenly disappointed, by the arrival of a British officer. This officer proved to be Col. Thompson, an old college friend and chum of Col. Spotswood. Since their separation at Eton, the two friends had never met until now, yet their recognition was instant and mutual, and their extraordinary position, upon the bloody field on which they had fought in hostile array, did not abate one jot of their friendship. The wounded American was placed upon a litter, and borne from the field by the very soldiers who had been plundering him. Col. Thompson had his friend conveyed to Philadelphia, then in the possession of the British, and sent his own surgeon to attend him.

Col. Spotswood's thigh was badly shattered, and this, with other injuries,

detained him in Philadelphia for more than a year, before he could be moved. Not being able to communicate with his family, they had given him up as lost, and mourned for him as dead.

The surgeon who attended him during his illness, was Dr. Robert Welford, and he became so much attached to his patient, that at the close of the war he refused to return to England with his regiment, but determined to settle in America, and came to Virginia with his friend. Having married and settled in Fredericksburg, his name has been perpetuated in one of the most numerous and influential families in that section of the Old Dominion, one member of which even now adorns the profession of his great ancestor, and the Medical College of Virginia.

Col. Spotswood lived twenty years

after his return to his family, but most of the time a great sufferer from his wounds, which indeed ultimately occasioned his death. He was travelling to Fredericksburg in his chariot, when the horses took fright, and ran away. In jumping from the vehicle to save himself he re-fractured his wounded limb, and was unable to survive the shock. He died nine days afterwards, surrounded by a sorrowing family, which now numbered ten children, and deeply regretted by all who knew him.

Such was the ancestry and parentage of Mrs. Bott. It is recorded here, as furnishing the only light which we can shed upon the influences which surrounded her earliest years, and helped to mould a character, which in its matured development exhibited, in

beautiful symmetry, a combination of excellencies rarely equalled.

She was born at Orange Grove, her father's residence, Jan. 17th, 1774.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DAYS—MARRIAGE—SETTLEMENT IN PETERSBURG.

VERY little is known by the writer of these pages, of the early days in the life of Mrs. Bott. That important period which intervenes between childhood and maturity, would have been an interesting and profitable study, had we possessed the materials for tracing the various influences, under which her character was formed. Her education, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, was not what in our day would be considered very brilliant, though it was ample and excellent, and was probably received mainly at home through the

personal instruction given by her parents. She certainly had an adequate rudimentary training, and a mind sufficiently disciplined and informed to comprehend the exigencies of life, and to meet them as they arose.

Mrs. Bott possessed indeed many accomplishments, which in later life she turned to very valuable account. Her exquisite taste had been carefully cultivated; and in drawing, painting and fine fancy work, in which her mother also excelled, she has left mementoes in many a household of Virginia: frail, but beautiful monuments, at once of her skill, industry and benevolence.

But the mere "ornamentals" of female education, however graceful and attractive, will be dearly purchased, if obtained at the price of more substantial acquirements. They may redeem

from ennui many an idle hour, and shed an air of elegance around the dwelling which they adorn; but they have no attractions that can compensate for the discomforts of an ill managed household. They lose their charms, when coupled with mental imbecility, or practical ignorance, or the wasteful extravagance of a bad economy. There is no station in life, at least in this country, in which a lady can safely dispense with the knowledge of domestic affairs. Though endowed with exhaustless wealth, brilliant in all modern accomplishments, and learned in all the lore of the schools, no woman can be truly independent, who cannot cook her own dinner. At the hazard of darkening with a momentary frown the fair brow of some gentle reader, we yet venture the suggestion,

that any system of female education should be considered as radically defective, which does not include an early, practical initiation into the mysteries of good housewifery.

The sequel will show, that in this respect, Mrs. Bott's education had not been neglected.

Nor was she wanting in that general information, which is indispensable for a pleasant and profitable intercourse with society. Gifted with a strong mind and a retentive memory, she was able to appropriate from the various sources of knowledge within her reach, whatever might be useful to herself or others. Growing up under the immediate inspection of her accomplished parents, and in the comparative seclusion of a planter's home, frequently enlivened by the visits of the refined and

intelligent, she had ample leisure for reading and reflection, with the combined advantage of elegant and improving society. Under these influences her manners were formed, somewhat after the style of "the olden time," its patrician dignity mingling most gracefully with the native kindness of her own heart. Tall and graceful in her person, even when bowed under the weight of years and infirmity, she must have had, in her prime, somewhat of a queenly bearing. But if pride or hauteur ever had a lodgement in her breast, they never reigned there, and in after life were thoroughly expelled by the christian graces of meekness and humility.

In her twenty-seventh year, Mrs. Bott accompanied her father in, as it proved to her, a memorable journey.

It was to attend the nuptials of her eldest brother, John Spotswood, who was married to Miss Mary Goode of Whitby, near Richmond. It was there and then, that she saw for the first time her future husband. Dr. John B. Bott was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, a polished gentleman, of high attainments, and a christian character. Two more congenial spirits could hardly have met. Their acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, and friendship warmed into love. They were married at Orange Grove in 1801, not long after the melancholy death of her father. For twenty-three years she enjoyed the companionship of this devoted husband, whom she fondly loved, when he was suddenly cut off in 1824. They had but two children, a son and a daughter,

both of whom died in infancy. The first few years of their married life were spent in Manchester; after which they removed to Petersburg, where they continued to reside, until, each in their appointed times, they were called to that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," to "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Side by side their dust reposes in a little enclosure of "the old church yard" at Blandford, of which we shall have occasion to speak again hereafter.

CHAPTER IV.

PETERSBURG FIFTY YEARS AGO—BLANDFORD—TONE OF SOCIETY—ORIGIN OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—DR. BENJAMIN H. RICE.

SOME time in the old colonial days, two adventurous traders settled themselves on the south bank of the Appomattox a little below the falls. Peter and Thomas Jones, the forefathers of most of the numerous families of that name now in Virginia, were the enterprising men who possessed and settled the land on which the city of Petersburg now stands. A few rods west of what is now the junction of Sycamore and Old streets, Peter Jones

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opened a trading establishment with the Indians, and the place was called "Peter's Point," which name was afterwards changed to Petersburg. The settlement was established as a township in 1748. It is now a flourishing city, claiming a population of from 18,000 to 20,000. The high grounds east of the city, and separated from it by a low marshy meadow through which a small stream meanders, approach the river with a somewhat bolder shore. This is Blandford, now a suburb, but once having much higher pretensions, not only in point of business, but as the aristocratic quarter, the favourite locality for the residences of the "best families." The heights back of Blandford are crowned by the "Old Brick Church," a venerable relic of colonial days, surround-

ed by a "silent city of the dead," into which have been gathered the successive generations of a past century. At the time of Dr. Bott's removal to Petersburg, Blandford, though not in its highest glory, was yet a fashionable quarter, and became the place of his residence, from which, however, he afterwards removed to a beautiful situation on High street. But how changed the aspect of that suburb which was once the "court end" of the town! The massive chimneys which still stand erect, here and there, like lonely watchers over the ruins of former grandeur, and the traces of stunted shrubbery, struggling for life in neglected gardens, point to the spots where lived and reigned, in their brief day, the *élite* of Petersburg.

Mrs. Bott's position, and the natural

elegance of her taste and manners, readily gave her a place in this magic circle, and she mingled freely in its pleasure-seeking pursuits. But though admirably fitted to shine in the gay scenes of pleasure, or in the interchange of elegant hospitalities, yet the mere frivolity of fashion was never congenial to her taste. Her chosen companions were sought out among those who evinced a superior intelligence, and maintained a higher moral tone, than the generality. Among these, the most cherished of her friends was Mrs. Stott, a lady whose delicacy of feeling, refinement of manners, and cultivation of mind, formed her for a kindred spirit with Mrs. Bott. There was something touching and beautiful in their friendship, which lasted through their lives, and if there are recognitions and friend-

ships in heaven, it still survives. Mrs. Stott, after a residence abroad, returned to Philadelphia where she died a few years ago, and this little memoir has been delayed many months, in the vain hopes of being able to recover some remains of the long correspondence, which passed between these separated friends, who never met again on earth after their parting at Petersburg.

Though cherishing a higher tone of moral sentiment, than that which prevailed in the society around them, yet the two friends mingled freely and heartily in the general current of its worldliness. And that current was then very strong and very rapid.

Religion was at a low ebb in Petersburg at that time. "The number of communicants in any christian church was small, and the number of regular

attendants upon public worship, by no means considerable. The habits of the people were such as might be expected under these circumstances. Whilst the worship of God was neglected, fashionable amusements were followed with great avidity. Even among those who were the more moral, and respectable members of society, the Sabbath was a great day of visiting and feasting; card-playing, horse-racing, the theatre and the ball-room engaged the affections of those hearts, into which the love of a crucified Saviour had never entered.”* This dark but truthful picture is rather extenuated than overdrawn. Nor was this unpromising aspect of society peculiar to Petersburg. It is believed, that, with some slight modification, the picture might stand for a fair represen-

* Dr. Plumer.

tation of the moral condition of most of the towns and cities of Virginia, in that day. Throughout the country generally, religious influences were not so extended as they are now, and religious convictions had not taken so firm a hold upon the public mind.

Mrs. Bott was yet a stranger to the animating hopes, and self-denying duties of a christian. Nor was the atmosphere in which she moved well suited to withdraw her thoughts from the world, or lead to its practical renunciation. But, until made manifest by the power of his grace, God's "chosen" ones, are also his "hidden ones," and often are found where we would hardly have looked for them. Yet when he has a work for any of them to do, he also has the means through which to prepare them for their work.

The first Presbyterian church of Petersburg owes its origin, under God, to the enterprise and labours of the late Benjamin Holt Rice, D. D. Up to the year 1812, the town had been only occasionally, and at long intervals, visited by ministers of the Presbyterian denomination. In the summer of that year Mr. Rice was returning southwardly with a missionary commission from the General Assembly's Committee, to seek a field of labour. "Whilst travelling in the stage, it was powerfully impressed upon his mind, that Petersburg, a town which he had rarely if ever visited, was the place where he could most effectually serve his Master, in the ministry." So strong was this impression, that he determined at once to spend the coming winter in the town, and make full experiment of the

practicability of gathering there a Presbyterian church. He visited the town for a few days during the summer, and towards the close of the year his stated labours commenced. There were but two members of the Presbyterian church in his congregation at the time. But by the close of the following year, he was enabled to organize a church of about twenty members, who unanimously chose him for their Pastor. He was installed by the Presbytery of Hanover, at their spring meeting in 1814.

CHAPTER V.

PREACHING OF MR. RICE—ITS EFFECTS—
PROGRESS OF THE INFANT CHURCH—
MRS. BOTT UNITES WITH IT—“LEAVE
THAT BOOK WITH ME.”

THOSE who knew, and often heard Dr. Rice, in his maturity, or in the mellow ripeness of his later years, can probably form some idea of what his preaching must have been, in the vigour and fervour of his early days. To an uncommonly strong and logical mind, he united an excellent judgment, great practical wisdom, and a heart of almost feminine sensibility and tenderness. Perfectly conscientious, he was also perfectly fearless. In

manners the most kind and conciliatory, yet in expression he was the most pointed and direct. His faithful, earnest words were tempered with a tearful solicitude, and his transparent character revealed, in every act of his life, the governing impulse of love to Christ and to the souls of men. Those who knew him only after his health had been greatly impaired by chronic disease, and who did not know him well, might be easily mistaken in their estimate of his mental power, and pulpit excellence. But those who knew him well, knew that he was seldom surpassed in either. His "record is on high," and on earth his "memory is blessed," in the living witnesses of his usefulness in many places, and in that monument of his early labours and success, the noble first Presbyterian church of Petersburg.

Our narrative left the youthful Pastor just entered upon his work in a town where irreligion and worldliness were fearfully prevalent, and Presbyterianism was scarcely known. Some Scottish merchants, and others from the north of Ireland, were, indeed, familiar with it, and favourably inclined toward it, from their early education. But, as we have seen already, only two persons could be found in communion with the Presbyterian church, and the great mass of the community knew but little of, and cared still less about, the distinctive truths of evangelical religion.

Mr. Rice preached, at first, in a large unfinished store-house on Bank street, occupied by Mr. John Gowan, who though not then, nor for fourteen years afterwards, a pious man, yet

from the effect of his early education, felt a deep interest in the success of the enterprise. There was something of novelty about the place, the manner and the matter, of the young missionary's preaching, which had its attractions. Considerable numbers frequently attended, and we can readily conceive the earnestness, pathos and power, with which the truth was delivered, by such a man as Rice, yet in the freshness of his manhood, and under circumstances such as these. Some came from curiosity, some from admiration of the preacher's talents, and some from the better motive of a sincere desire to be instructed in the truth. "In simplicity and godly sincerity," with great plainness, and yet with singular adaptation and eloquence, the doctrines of grace were set before their minds. Nor

was the preacher content to sow the seed and leave it, but ever watchful for its springing and growth, he was on the alert for every indication of promise, and prompt to improve it. The directness and pungency of his discourses awakened some attempts at opposition among the "baser sort," but they soon found that intimidation could never succeed with a man, whose calm courage was only equalled by his discretion, and whose fidelity was the result of his manifest sincerity. The divine blessing attended his labours, and the word of God proved to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword."

After the organization in 1813, the infant church continued to grow and thrive, as a vine planted in the garden of the Lord, and watered with the dews

of divine grace. A plain, but comfortable, and substantial edifice was soon erected on Tabb Street, which remains to this day, now in use as a Masons' Hall. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered every two months, and up to 1821, it is believed this solemn season never passed without the addition of some members to the church.

Mrs. Bott and her husband were among the earliest who connected themselves with the communion of this church. We have no means of ascertaining the exact time at which they made a public profession of religion, but on the roll of members, their names are recorded as, numerically, the thirty-third and thirty-fourth. We are also without information on a more interesting point, and that is as to the

aspect of the truth which first arrested her mind, and the character of her spiritual exercises at this important period of her life. In a case like hers we should have been glad to trace, from some private memoranda, the progress of the conflict between sin and grace, when a crucified Saviour first challenged the allegiance of a heart, in which the world had reigned supreme, and which it still courted by its most flattering allurements. One little incident we have heard, which is supposed to have had some connection with her earliest serious impressions. A pious and excellent lady, who was one of the first that united with the infant church, called on Mrs. Bott, with a copy of Hannah More's "Practical Piety," intending to leave it for her friend's perusal, if an opportunity to do so of-

ferred. She did not like to propose its loan directly, lest it might seem officious. Nothing occurred, however, to favour her intention, and she was about to take leave without accomplishing her object, when Mrs. Bott quietly remarked, "Leave that book with me." To what extent its perusal was blessed to her soul, or whether it only served to indicate that she was approachable on the subject, and to direct towards her the attention of Mr. Rice, is uncertain. But this at least is known, that the zealous pastor, who knew her sterling qualities, laboured very faithfully and successfully in leading her to give herself to Christ and to his church. She always regarded him as her spiritual father, and he always esteemed her as a most valuable accession to his flock. In later life, when

his estimate had been verified by the abundant fruits of her piety, he often said, "There is but one Mrs. Bott in an age." Blessed is the minister who has such fruits and pledges of his ministry for his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming."

CHAPTER VI.

CHARACTER UNDER A NEW ASPECT—ILLUSTRATIONS OF IT, FROM PRIVATE MEMORANDA.

THE foregoing pages have exhibited Mrs. Bott, as the elegant, accomplished, intelligent, yet gay and worldly-minded lady. We are now called to depict a very different character; let it not be imagined, however, that religion had abstracted or impaired, in any degree, those natural or acquired graces of mind or manners, which had distinguished her before. The love of God, dwelling in the heart and manifesting itself in acts of laborious self-denial, is not inconsistent with the ut-

most refinement. True religion will withdraw its followers from the whirlpool of fashion and folly, but it by no means results that they should be less intelligent, amiable or accomplished by the change. It is a groundless assumption of the thoughtless devotees of pleasure, that those who prefer the exercises of piety to the dissipating amusements which piety forbids, must of necessity be given up to melancholy, and be just fit for the cells of a convent, if not for a lunatic asylum. The folly of such an assumption would be obvious to all, did it not perpetuate itself in the false impressions which the young are apt to entertain, from the manner in which religion is sometimes represented by its friends. Renouncing the world as their portion, and forsaking its sinful pursuits, they may go to the

opposite extreme and neglect those social amenities which give a charm to society. Rebuking that idiot frivolity, which, all-engrossed in the gayeties of the present, never gives a thought to the stern realities of the future, they may also frown upon innocent enjoyment, and make their religion to be always associated with severity and gloom. It is, therefore, a lesson worthy of inculcation, that religion, so far from lessening, adds new lustre to the graces of a cultivated mind and manners; and though her pathway is through the vale of humility, yet it is the way of pleasantness and peace.

Mrs. Bott was a bright example of this; she was a lady, no less when she frequented the little circle for prayer, than when she shone in the saloons of fashion, and none should imagine for a

moment, from the earnest self-communings which follow, that her religious days were not also her happiest days.

The manuscript from which the following extracts are taken, was not known to be in existence until after Mrs. Bott's decease. It bears no date except the occasional mention of the month and the day. From internal evidence however, it is plain that it must have been written during the years 1818, and 1819. It is perhaps needless to say, that it never was intended for any eye but her own. The wonder is that it was not destroyed, as there is little doubt that many similar papers were, under the influence of that delicate reserve which she always manifested in regard to her own religious exercises and experiences. It appears to have been her habit, continued, to

some extent, down to her latest attendance upon the public means of grace, to note down, at home, the text and scope of the sermon, and those reflections and exercises which it awakened in her own mind—a practice, by the way, worthy of imitation on many accounts. It brings back the mind, in the retirement of the closet, to the impressions made upon it in the sanctuary. It thus deepens and perpetuates those impressions. The truth is more distinctly apprehended, and more firmly held in the memory, by the effort to recall, and recast it in the mould of our own minds, and to give it expression in our own words. An attempt to do this, may often reveal to us, our grievous inattention, and want of interest in the instructions of the “living word,” and thus prompt us more earn-

estly to "take heed how we hear." Moreover, it cannot be otherwise than a pleasant and profitable exercise, in after life, possibly when deprived of our privileges, or confined to a chamber of sickness, to revive, by the aid of such memoranda, our past opportunities, and re-awaken the thoughts and feelings of other days. How much valuable instruction given in the pulpit is comparatively lost, from the want of a deliberate effort to fix and treasure it up in the memory! Many hearers seem to suppose, that all the benefit to be expected from sermons, is to be found in the transient impressions which they may produce at the time, and they appear to forget the intimate relation between growth in grace, and "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." May not this fact go far to

explain the slow progress in both knowledge and grace, which we sometimes observe among those who are blessed with the most faithful and edifying pulpit ministrations ?

In the manuscript referred to, we sometimes find simply a record of the text and the preacher as thus :

“ 1 Cor. i. 30. ‘ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.’ Our pastor, the Rev. B. H. Rice, preached from the above.” Such a brief note may have but little interest to others, but who knows how profitable and suggestive it might have proved to her ?

“ Rom. xiii. 11, 12. ‘ And that, knowing the time, &c.’ A pious young man by the name of Kollock lectured on these verses at prayer-

meeting at brother Gordon's. He also delivered a sermon at our church from the words, 'How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, &c.' May almighty God bless this most excellent young christian, and make him a successful labourer in his cause, and when his course is run crown him with everlasting glory!"

"Nov. 17th. (1818.) Sabbath morning, and Sacramental occasion. The text, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. 'But we preach Christ crucified, &c.' Four discourses were delivered from the above passages of scripture, by Mr. Kirkpatrick of Manchester. He laboured hard to convince us of our sins, and of our lost and ruined condition. He brought our blessed Saviour to our view, as the only hope of salvation, and he endeavoured to awaken our gratitude to this

divine Saviour, by most eloquently describing the sacrifice which he made for us, by descending into this wicked world, to take upon himself our nature and our sins."

"Nov. 20th. Mr. Rice preached this evening from Col. iv. 5. 'Walk in wisdom towards those that are without, redeeming the time.' We were exhorted to be sincere in our profession of religion; to seek the grace of God most earnestly; to show the fruits of our faith by good works and a prudent and circumspect intercourse with the world; to be charitable and benevolent towards our fellow men; to lay hold of every opportunity to show a christian disposition; to return good for evil; to neglect no occasion to drop a word in season, and to do all to the honour and glory of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

“O my heavenly Father! enable thy poor, frail servant to be sincere in her profession, purge and purify her heart from the dross and corruption of this world, from covetousness and all foolish desires and hankerings after things here below; make her satisfied with the station in which thou hast placed her, which is far too good for such a sinner. Assist me, blessed Lord, to subdue every evil and angry passion, may all resentments to my fellow mortals be entirely done away, let thy blessed Spirit be my guide, daily increase my faith in Christ, and make me thine and his evermore, Amen!” This discourse seems to have made a deep impression upon her mind, as we may infer not only from the fervent prayer annexed, but more from the remarkable conformity of her

life to the exhortations of the preacher. In all the points insisted upon, no one could more fully exemplify the precept of the text.

The following meditation marks the beginning of the year 1819 :

“ This is the commencement of another year. I feel humbled and self-condempned when I reflect how unprofitably, how sinfully, and how ungratefully, I have spent the last year. How many excellent and impressive sermons have I heard to but little account! how many blessings have been daily renewed to me, for which I have showed but little gratitude! O my Lord! thou art my God, in thee do I trust. I pray thee to make my convictions of sin stronger, and my sorrow and repentance sincere. Pardon me, gracious Lord, for the sins of my past life, for

the sins of the past year, and of this day, and every day. Increase my faith in thee. Lord, the temptations of Satan are strong. Oh! strengthen thy servant against them, give her a watchful spirit, that she may keep her lamp burning, and awaiting the coming of her Lord. In that awful hour let her not be found wanting. Oh! change this stony, flinty heart, and give me a heart of flesh; smite the rock, and let the waters of genuine repentance and love flow forth. Merciful Judge of the universe, this confession and petition are before thee. If thy poor servant hath asked aught amiss, pardon her, and grant what thou seest best for her. She asks all and everything in the name of her Redeemer, Amen!"

These few specimens might perhaps be sufficient, to show the kind of self-

communings to which Mrs. Bott was accustomed. But they illustrate also the spirit and tone of her piety, at this early period in her religious life. And as they are so evidently written down only for her own inspection, they afford glimpses of that interior life, which is the true exponent of the character, and the thing to be mainly sought for, in the biography of private individuals. We can give no adventitious interest to our little memoir by the record of stirring events, or strange situations. And though it must greatly depend upon the state of mind in the reader, whether these examples of devout meditation can even fix the attention, yet we may presume upon the sympathies of those hearts which always respond to the accents of true piety, and extend this chapter by a few additional extracts.

“WEDNESDAY EVENING, Jan.—(1819.)

“Our Pastor gave us a most impressive discourse from Psalm cxxxix, dwelling particularly upon the last two verses of this truly beautiful supplicatory Psalm, 23d and 24th verses, ‘Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’

“Gracious and eternal Jehovah, may the truths that I have heard this evening sink deep in thy creature’s heart. May she never forget that thy all-seeing eye is continually upon her, and may she act constantly under that belief. Grant, Lord, that this truth may ever be present with me wherever I go, or in whatever situation I may be placed. In my intercourse with so-

ciety, may I look to thee, and remember that thine eye is upon me, and may my conversation with others be tempered with truth, humility, temperance, and forbearance. O my heavenly Father, I love thee! I fear thee! Thou knowest my heart better than I do, let me not be self-deceived. Oh! if I am deceived, help me, I most earnestly beseech thee, to fear thee, to glorify, and to worship thee. I humbly hope that the reflections which I have had on this sermon may serve to restrain me from sin, and grant, dear Lord, that every individual who had the privilege of hearing it, may profit by it. Gracious Lord, evermore be our Intercessor, Amen!"

"January (1819.) We have been again allowed the blessing of going to the house of prayer, and have heard a

discourse from 1 John iv. 8, 'God is love.' We cannot for an instant doubt the love of God. It is revealed to us every day that we live, in his forbearance, in his patience, in all the comforts of life. But oh! how conspicuous is that love in the gift of his beloved Son, the Saviour of lost sinners! When I reflect on this love to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation, I am amazed and disgusted with myself, that I should be so worldly minded, so tied down to this poor earth, so dependent on its smiles or its frowns. Have I not read these words, in the same Epistle of the blessed John? 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' The world as created by our heavenly Father is very good, and we

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ought to love it measurably, but to keep a continual watch over our hearts lest we love it too much. What a consolation it is, to know that 'God is love!' All creation declares it. But I, a poor, miserable, blind sinner, does he love me? is it possible? Yes, I am at this moment a proof of his love; but for it I should now, instead of enjoying the blessed privileges of this day, be in torment. O my God, let not thy creature be a castaway. There is so much sin mixed with all she does, that she sometimes almost gives up hope of being saved. Oh! if I am saved, it is all of thee, all of grace. I again repeat that I have not a single merit to plead, sin is so completely blended with my best services. I look to my God, I pray, I weep, I importune, I find much to comfort and encourage me,

in reading the sacred volume. At other times, I feel great and distressing doubts about my situation. I feel as if I was a hypocrite, a deceiver. O my Father, bestow thy grace upon a most unworthy creature, the chief of sinners, who ardently desires to be born again, by faith in her blessed Redeemer. Grant that I may, in future, go on to the end of my pilgrimage looking to Christ."

What a graphic picture of a mind struggling between faith and fear! What an example of the experience common to all eminent christians, of alternate light and darkness, rejoicing and trembling! What an apt illustration of the apostle's language, in the 7th of Romans, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members,

warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The following extracts may show, that unavoidable absence from the sanctuary, though a grief to the pious heart, yet does not of necessity imply the want of sanctuary blessings.

“ Feb. 1819.—We have been again prevented from going to the house of the Lord. The ways of the Lord are mysterious, and past finding out, but I most implicitly believe that every thing is ordered by him in infinite wisdom. Can a shadow of doubt cross my mind for a moment, but that he orders all things most wisely, most perfectly ? Dare I

for an instant to think otherwise? Enable me then, O Lord, (since I cannot go to thy house,) to be watchful over myself this day, to keep my heart, thoughts, and affections from going astray from thee. Make me diligent in using every means of grace, that thou hast so bountifully bestowed on me. Thou hast given me thy blessed word to read and meditate upon. Thou hast enabled me to possess the writings and experiences of some of thy most renowned saints; and above all thou hast given thy blessed Son, who is ever ready to hear the petitions of those who offer them in faith. Dear Lord, my heart overflows! I can find no words that will convey the feelings of my heart at this moment, but thou knowest its secret throbbings. Thy mercies so numerous to such a sinner!

Oh pardon her, and take her whole heart, and daily give her new strength and faith in thee. She acknowledges herself the weakest and most frail of the human race. Her desire for faith and piety, if she is not greatly deceived, is sincere. She is most certain that she can do nothing for herself; she feels her need of a Saviour; she knows that she does not yet see clearly, and prays, earnestly prays, that she may be blest with more light. Thou wilt not cast out any that come unto thee in faith. Oh blessed, comfortable words!"

We conclude this chapter with a memorandum occasioned by the death of a friend.

"Saturday the 11th of April, (1819). Departed this life our dear friend and neighbour Mrs. E. P. We have reason to hope that she died reconciled

to God, and is now enjoying heavenly rest in the arms of her dear Saviour. During her long and painful illness she evidenced her faith by her patience and resignation. The Lord had laid his hand most heavily upon her, but she meekly kissed the rod, and appeared to say, 'Lord, thy will be done.' * * * Her bodily sufferings were greater than any that I ever witnessed, so that they would draw tears from those around her. But such was the support which she received in this painful trial, from her heavenly Father, that she never murmured nor complained. Oh! how great was her faith and trust! Almighty God, enable me, I implore thee, to sustain every affliction that thou seest fit to lay on me, with the like faith and submission. Dear friend! thy sufferings in the body were ex-

treme, but thou art now with that precious Jesus, whom thou didst love and trust. Thy petitions to the throne of grace, I trust, will be heard, in behalf of thy husband and children and mother. Most earnestly do I offer mine, that thy prayer for them may be heard, and that they all may become followers of Jesus, and be pardoned and accepted through faith in him. Almighty God, grant that I may be permitted to meet this beloved friend in glory, with all her family, and all that I am most interested for. O Lord, I am interested for all the nations of the earth; my earnest petition is that all may be brought into the fold of Jesus Christ, and be saved through faith in him."

CHAPTER VII.

PIETY IN ACTION—THE CHRISTIAN WIFE AT HOME—TASTEFUL EMPLOYMENT—“LOVE, HONOUR AND OBEY”—CARE OF ORPHANS—HOSPITALITY—DEVOTION AND ACTION.

If any reader should infer, that the piety which found expression in the language of the extracts which have been given, was confined wholly to the closet, it would be a very mistaken estimate of the religious character of Mrs. Bott, even in its earlier days. The intense activity of her mind, and the natural energy of her character, would not permit her to be an idle dreamer, where there was work to be done. Whatever engaged her heart,

would also occupy her hands. The struggles of her own soul, only made her more solicitous for others' good. The exercises of the closet, only prepared her for the self-denying duties of active usefulness. Her piety was not of that type, which is wholly self-engrossed, and which lives only in one's own feelings and frames, and becomes therefore intensely egotistical, an idle sentimentality, a dreamy mysticism. Nor on the other hand, was it of that sort, which is characterized by a neglect of self-culture, in the hurry and excitement of a ceaseless activity; a piety which lives without introspection, and which often ends in an awful defection. In the whole religious life of Mrs. Bott, devotion and activity were happily blended. Keeping her own heart with all diligence, she was

enabled the better to be a follower of Him, "who, when he was on earth, went about doing good."

We have alluded to that early training which had qualified her to be the mistress of her own home. Let us take a glimpse of that home, now that the sweet influences of piety had added another charm to its attractions.

On the northerly side of High street, in Petersburg, and standing far back from the street, may be observed a neat cottage house, with two wings, and an ample shrubbery and flower garden in front of it. This was the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Bott, at the period of which we are now speaking, and her residence for some time after the decease of her excellent husband. The grounds offered an inviting field for the display of her horticultural taste

and skill, and bore witness to its exercise. She had a passion for flowers, which with her, was something more than an ecstasy of admiration over a rose-bud, or the arrangement of a bouquet. She understood their properties, classification and culture, and she loved to linger among them, and with her own hands, promote their growth, by careful cultivation, whilst she enjoyed their beauties with an appreciative taste. In this delightful occupation, she gave free scope to her fancy, and spent much of her time, until she found or feared that it was a temptation and a snare, by trenching upon other duties; when she had the self-denial to give it up. A near relative, of kindred spirit, (Mrs. M. B. L. to whom, the writer takes this occasion to say, that he is largely indebted for the materials of

this little memoir,) visiting her garden one day, observed the absence of some favourites, and the want of the former attention in the appearance of others, and remarked it to her. With a pained and humble look, she replied, "I can not pursue anything I like in moderation. I neglected more important matters for my garden, and shall have to restrict myself in this." This was said in such a decided manner, as to preclude all further remonstrance.

In her deportment towards her husband, she literally fulfilled the apostolic injunctions of affectionate submission and obedience; she loved and revered him with all the fervor of her warm heart, and it was beautiful, as it was edifying, to see this strong minded, intelligent, energetic lady, to whom the whole circle of her acquaintances was

accustomed to defer, herself deferring to the wishes, opinions and directions of her husband, looking up to him with a childlike simplicity, confidence and submission. And she had her reward, for never was a wife more loved and cherished, never one treated with greater deference or consideration than she was. It may be treading on dangerous ground, but the cause must justify the boldness, if we venture to add, that a more careful regard to the inspired precepts, which should govern this relation, would banish discord from many an unhappy home, and secure the highest dignity, influence, and happiness to the sex, beyond what is possible from any assumptions of independence or superiority. No wife needs to fear a diminished personal importance, from a subjection to her hus-

band, in the Lord. If the sex only knew their power and would use it, in the sweet and gentle influences of love and piety, as sisters, wives, and mothers, there is no assignable limit to which it might not reach ; they could, absolutely, revolutionize the world.

As the mistress of a family, Mrs. Bott verified the wise man's description of the virtuous woman, as "looking well to the ways of her household." Through her systematic and efficient management, order, neatness, and comfort, reigned in her abode. Her thoughtful care extended to all the wants of every individual under her roof. Firm and decided in her management, yet "the law of kindness" was ever on her lips. Her servants were the objects of her deep solicitude, which was not manifested in impatience

and fretfulness at their stupidity and faults, but in providing for their comforts, and in diligently instructing them in their duties, and especially in seeking their spiritual welfare. Many a long and sleepless night has this accomplished lady watched beside the bed of a sick servant, to see that the medicines were properly administered, mingling religious instruction and prayer, with these offices of heavenly charity.

It has been mentioned already that her own children died in infancy, but she was called, nevertheless, to exercise the cares, and bear the responsibilities of a mother. She had, at one time, seven orphan nieces and nephews left to her care, but with her they were orphans no longer, if tender assiduity could compensate for the loss of their

natural guardians. The difficult and delicate task of their nurture and training, was not reluctantly assumed or carelessly discharged. She saw the hand of God in it, and gathered from it consolation for her own bereavement. "Miserable sinner that I was!" said she, "when my heavenly Father took from me my darling babes, I was most rebellious, and said, 'Why was I thus afflicted? what good could come of it?' I now see that it was all done in wisdom and love. I was unfit *then* to have the training of immortal souls. He took them, and sheltered them safely in his own bosom, and so left vacant in my heart, and in my house, a place for these orphans." How faithfully and well she discharged her sacred trust, in the training of these children, may be inferred, from the spirit in which it

was undertaken, from the life-long and deep affection and reverence of the objects of her pious care, and from the manner in which they have honoured their instructions by their lives. They have all turned out well, nearly all of them pious, and some of them most honoured and useful members of society. One of them is now a distinguished minister of the gospel, and pastor of an important church.* Another is the excellent wife of a minister, and the head of a flourishing female Academy. From a very interesting letter written by this lady, we extract the following reminiscence of her childhood's days:

“ From my earliest childhood I remember aunt, as a devoted christian. Even when a wayward child, impatient of restraint, and often fretting under

* Rev. John B. Spotswood, D. D., of New Castle, Delaware.

the discipline to which she conscientiously subjected me, I remember saying to John, one day, 'If there is only one person in heaven, that will be aunt Bott.' I cannot remember any time previous to her taking Archibald, Robert, John and myself, into the drawing room (that west wing) before breakfast, and there praying with us, and hearing us recite portions of scripture. We committed (at least I did) the whole book of Psalms, all of the Proverbs, several chapters in the New Testament, and all of the first book of Watt's Hymns, at these morning recitations; five verses was our *task*, more if we *chose*. She began this before uncle established family worship. I well remember the Sabbath evening that the family altar was first reared. I was already prepared for bed, when

aunt came and told me uncle was going to have *prayers*, that Mr. Rice had preached a sermon that had determined him to commence at once. He always read prayers, but aunt, when she prayed with us, used her own language. Even after family worship was established, she required us to meet her in the drawing room, and recite our verses before breakfast."

Another of her nieces says, "Well can some of us remember to have seen her tall form glide on tiptoe, into our sleeping apartments, noiselessly, for fear of waking us, to see that we were comfortable, or secured from exposure to cold; and on finding any awake, a kiss was impressed tenderly upon our cheeks, our pulse felt, and a whispered injunction to look to our heavenly Father for protection and blessing."

During these years her house was the seat of an elegant hospitality, and she "used it without grudging." There are some still living who have not forgotten the days of delightful social intercourse, enjoyed in her ever open house. With a bland affectionate smile of welcome she met her friends, and without ostentation or parade, but by many graceful, winning ways, made them feel that she was glad to have them with her. Her house, as long as she had one, was the welcome home of ministers visiting the town, and in this, as in every thing else, she manifested her regard for the sacred office, esteeming those who held it, "very highly in love, for their works' sake." One practice, in which she persevered down to her latest day, may be mentioned here, as worthy of all commenda-

tion. It was her habit, at a set time, and every day, to pray for her own pastor, that he might be blessed of God, in his person and in his family, in his closet and in his study, in his pulpit and in all his ministrations, when he went out and when he came in, and that his teachings might be blessed to herself and others. She often commended this habit to others, and gave her own experience of its benefits, in the increase of her attachment to, and profit by, the ministry of God's servants, as an argument for its adoption. Though capable, beyond most of the captious and critical, to distinguish and appreciate pulpit excellence, yet she never was heard to utter a disparaging remark about any sermon. If a discourse had any good thing in it, that was the part which would re-

main in her memory, and be the subject of her conversation. It is related that on one occasion, when her friends were on the watch to hear what she could possibly say in behalf of a wretched failure in the pulpit, of a "wandering star" who had somehow stumbled into it, she quietly remarked, that "he had an excellent text."

To get good and to do good was her constant study. Her neighbours enjoyed her kindly intercourse and polite attentions, and the presence in any abode of sickness or sorrow, was enough to insure her hearty sympathies and efficient aid. Nor was she unmindful of those, who sometimes experience, in crowded cities, the desolation of an utter loneliness, and even among christian people the coldness of an utter neglect. She would call upon

strangers moving to the place, and upon those who came only for a transient abode, and proffer those attentions which true politeness knows how to bestow, and which piety may often turn to a valuable account. She knew how to be obliging and useful, without being officious or intrusive. She knew how to combine the secluded exercises of the closet, with the outgoing labours of active usefulness. With the flame of devotion burning brightly upon the altar of her own heart, she had wherewith to kindle or keep it alive in the hearts of others. By a systematic economy of time, though always busy, yet she was never in a hurry; and besides the varied and sometimes perplexing cares of her family, her servants and her garden, she yet found leisure for the appointed times, which were

religiously set apart and scrupulously observed, for private meditation and prayer. Though averse to writing, she yet maintained an extensive correspondence with relatives and friends, not more from the promptings of attachment, than as a religious duty. Besides being always in her place at the weekly meetings of the church, unless sickness detained her, she also found time to engage in all its operations of benevolence, as well as in individual efforts, in those private acts of love and piety, which are recorded only in heaven.

By the concurrent testimony of all who knew her, it is not too much to say, that as a christian wife, and mistress of a family, she was, in those days, more than an example, she was a model of excellence. And as a mem-

ber of the church of God, she “adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour.” And yet that Saviour saw that something, that much more was wanting, for the complete development of her christian character, and the full measure of her usefulness. In her heart grace was “in the ear,” but under the discipline of Providence, and the dews of heaven, it rapidly ripened into “the full grown corn in the ear.” She was a fruit-bearing branch united to the true vine, but in her history she verified those words of Christ, “Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

CHAPTER VIII.

SUDDEN AFFLICTION—A DARKENED HOME,
AND DREARY WINTER—STRUGGLES WITH
DESPONDENCY—A JUDICIOUS FRIEND—
GRACE VICTORIOUS—ORIGIN OF THE FE-
MALE “EDUCATION SOCIETY.”

THE preceding chapter must be understood as referring, mainly, to that portion of Mrs. Bott's life, which was subsequent to her connection with the church, and previous to the year 1824. The latter part of this interesting period was marked by great prosperity to the church in Petersburg. Toward the close of the year 1822, seventy-nine persons, thirty-six of whom were males, were added to its communion,

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as the fruits of a precious revival. By Oct. 1823, a new and larger house of worship was completed, and the Synod of Virginia held its sessions in it.* The intense interest and gratification of Mrs. Bott, in these events, can be better imagined than described. The meetings of the Synod of Virginia are always occasions eagerly anticipated, and gratefully remembered by the communities in which they are held. Not only the members, but the people, come from distant parts of the state to attend them. And they find it both pleasant and profitable to do so, not only because Virginia hospitality on such occasions has no limits; but because the time of the Synod is not crowded into

* This building was subsequently destroyed by fire, and gave place to the large and beautiful edifice now known and used as the "Tabb Street Church."

a single day or two, filled up with a hurried transaction of business; but extending over the best part of a week, and always including the Sabbath, there is much preaching, more prayer, and many most delightful christian reunions. Nor is business neglected. More able and thorough discussions are seldom heard anywhere, than may often be listened to, on the floor of the Synod of Virginia. Grand old Synod, numbering some as noble spirits as ever devoted themselves to Christ and his cause, long mayest thou prosper, and stand as an adamant wall, against all the inroads of error, and the follies of fanaticism! The new church edifice, the recent revival, and the happy condition of the church, gave peculiar interest to this meeting of Synod, and we may readily suppose, that Mrs.

Bott entered into the spirit of the occasion with all the ardour of her mind. With all the hospitality of an open house, yet she was not the woman to be so engrossed with many cares, and "much serving," as to be absent from the feet of Jesus, where his presence was revealed. And she soon had need of all the strength to be derived from the faithful use of the means of divine grace, to prepare her for coming events.

The fruits of the revival were mainly gathered into the church; the pleasant meeting of Synod was past; matters were moving on prosperously in the church, and peace and happiness reigned in her own home of love and piety. Apart from the cares and trials, incident to every condition of humanity, there was no deep sorrow in her heart, but the ever abiding sorrow for sin;

there was no cloud in the horizon of her heavens, but the occasional obscuring of her hopes of final acceptance, ever leading to renewed diligence and more fervent prayer. Thus some few months glided rapidly away, filled up with their daily duties and devotions, when suddenly her sky was darkened by an overwhelming affliction, which seemed, for a time, to extinguish every ray of light and hope. The good woman did not know that she had an idol, until God took it away.

Dr. Bott died !

The summons came, with none of the painful precursors of protracted sickness. There was no darkened chamber, and anxious watchers, nor were heard the stealthy footsteps of woe, with its load of grief, ministering at a dying couch, with only "sick

hope's pale lamp" to cheer it; there was none of this. But without warning the fell destroyer entered, when his victim had just begun the duties of the toilet, and the devoted wife, who had left him but a few moments before, returned to find her husband grappling with the last enemy.

We would not, if we could, lift the veil from that hour of palsied grief, that first agony of woe. At such a time nature will have its way, and if the anguished cry is heard, or the fountains of tears are broken up, it is the relief which nature grants, and religion does not forbid, to keep the heart and head from bursting. But a more critical period follows, when the faculties begin to recover from the stunning effects of the blow, and the mind is sufficiently calm, to comprehend the

extent of the affliction. Then comes the struggle between hope and fear, faith and frailty. Self and sense find it hard to yield, where only sorrow and suffering are their present portion, and only faith can promise a compensating good, or give assurance that the event is wisely ordered and the evil is not remediless. Upon the issue of that struggle in submission or rebellion, depends the influence of the affliction upon the spiritual welfare of the sufferer. And only the grace of Him whose hand has dealt the blow, can silence the pleadings of sense, and hush the murmurs of the stricken heart. Happily for his people, the "great High Priest of our profession" was himself "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And no less now, than in the days of his flesh, his tender sympathies yearn

over his stricken saints. He watches the struggle, and by his grace he secures the issue in more than submission, when "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The trial may be severe and protracted, for "He sitteth as a refiner and purifier of silver." But he tempers the fires, and continues them no longer than is needful to "purge our dross and take away our tin."

Mrs. Bott's mind did not rapidly recover its tone, after the terrible shock which it had experienced. It was the great sorrow of her life, and even down to the day of her death, twenty-nine years afterwards, she never spoke of

her husband but with tremulous voice, and quivering lip, and tearful eye. The winter which succeeded the sad event was to her a winter of gloom. Though kept from murmuring, yet she could not be kept from anguish and tears. Her energies appeared, for a time, to be utterly prostrated, and her thoughts still lingered around the grave of her earthly hopes. One designed result of the affliction was already accomplished in her, and that was the entire renunciation of the world, as in any sense her portion or her home. To some extent she had attained to this before, by ceasing to regard earthly things as her highest good. But now her affections were weaned from them more completely. In her own words she "was done with the world."

But there was danger, that in ceas-

ing to seek her happiness in earthly things, and under the pressure of her grief, she might yield herself up to inaction, forgetting that the world, though not her portion, was yet her appointed pilgrimage; and though it could not satisfy her heart, yet it might exercise her graces, and occupy her hands, in the full employment of all her talents. It was a year or more before she seemed fully alive to this truth, and under its influence, was brought to renewed consecration of herself to God and his service. During this long night of grief, she was by no means remiss in her family and social duties, and when nothing else could interest her, the interests of religion could always fix her attention, and draw off her mind, for a little time, from its melancholy musings. But her energies were not yet aroused;

the hidden power, as yet, was dormant, and waiting to be called forth by some absorbing object of pursuit. The master principle was there, but it needed to have a definite direction, and a particular object, capable of engrossing the mind and heart in a conscientious devotion to it.

It ought to be mentioned here, as one of the secrets of his success in this field of his early labours, that Dr. Rice possessed the happy faculty of setting his people at work, and giving them work suited to their capacities and circumstances. Thus he secured at an early day, in his infant church, several benevolent associations, most of which still remain, or are merged into other organizations. Among these was the "Young Men's Missionary Society," which, at the time of its formation, was

composed chiefly of those, not then in the communion of the church; most of whom afterwards became members, and several of them are now, and have been for years, numbered among its most efficient officers.

The female "Education Society," was another of those early formed associations. The object of this society was to aid pious young men in their preparation for the gospel ministry, and for a time its funds were appropriated, directly, to those who had been taken under its patronage. More than one able and efficient minister of Christ was enabled to prosecute his studies, and enter upon his work, through its aid when thus applied. Subsequently, however, it was thought more advisable to contribute its funds through

the General Assembly's Board of Education, which renders it impossible to estimate its usefulness by a reference to the individuals aided.

The society was organized in 1822, and Mrs. Bott, if not its head, was one of its chief supporters from the very first. She has been heard to say, that the society began with a single little silk bag, which was sold to Miss Ruffin, afterwards the late Mrs. C——, wife of Capt. C——, of the Navy. A niece of Mrs. Bott, in a letter already quoted, says, "Uncle died in 1824, and for a year or more, her grief was so intense that she was less engaged for it, (the society,) but when interested in nothing else, she attended to it. When I used to say anything about other societies, and intimated that she gave too much attention to *one* in preference to others,

she would say, 'Educate ministers and send them out, and other societies will be raised by them.'

It was probably this manifest interest in this society, which suggested to a judicious friend, who spent much time with her during this season of gloom, a method for drawing her mind away from her sorrow, by occupying her with active employment. This friend was the late Mrs. Nichols of Lexington, a lady of great piety and great intelligence, whose christian companionship and excellent judgment were of great service to Mrs. Bott, and highly esteemed by her. Mrs. Nichols had a twofold object in view, the promotion of the kingdom of Christ in the earth, and the withdrawal of her friend's mind from herself. Hence the suggestion of an improved plan for the "Edu-

cation Society," which consisted mainly in making Mrs. Bott its responsible head; thus by devolving upon her cares, anxieties, hopes and fears for another object, drawing her out of herself, by the active exercise of her dormant powers.

The suggestion was one of those happy thoughts, which sometimes seem to come like inspirations, and in their adoption result in incalculable good. In this case it probably gave a direction to the whole of Mrs. Bott's subsequent life, and pointed her to an object, to which her best energies were ever afterwards given. Her love for the society, which was but a manifestation of her love for the cause of Christ, became the master passion, and she devoted herself to it with a willing mind. God's hand was in it all, and by his

providence and grace he had prepared her for precisely that great work, which she was enabled to accomplish with so much benefit to the cause of Christ and so much honour to herself.

CHAPTER IX.

BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA—WORK FOR THE
“ SOCIETY.”—THE COURTLY ROBE OF THE
OLDEN TIMES—THE CONCEALED MANU-
SCRIPTS—HABITS OF DEVOTION.

THE death of her husband marked the beginning of a new era in the quiet life of Mrs. Bott. The long and severe struggle with her grief resulted, through sanctifying grace, in enlarged experience, a deepened tone of piety, and more entire consecration to her Master's cause. The event referred to, while it increased her domestic cares, by throwing the whole burden of their management upon herself, at the same time limited her resources. Dr. Bott

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was never rich, yet he was always able to maintain an establishment, corresponding to his position in society. By judicious economy, Mrs. Bott was able to retain her own home for some years after his death. But her income at no time subsequent to this, was more than was actually needful for her comfortable support. We mention this, because it should be perfectly understood that it was not "of her abundance" that she cast into the treasury of the Lord. Her little income gradually diminished, until at the last she did, literally, of her poverty give all that she had. But her contributions to the cause of Christ had this peculiarity, that they included herself. And in that consecration there was no reserve. Her energies, her talents, her time, were henceforth devoted to one great

end, the doing of good, in any way and every way, in season and out of season.

The Education Society however furnished the field towards which her efforts were mainly directed, and for which her talents could always be profitably employed. She was now the responsible head of the society, and though she had, then and subsequently, many efficient helpers, yet the interest and success of the organization depended mainly upon herself.

At first she drew rather slowly upon the resources of her fancy, and perhaps was not aware herself of the extent to which her cultivated taste could be made available. But when she found that it could be made subservient to the Master's cause, she tasked it to its utmost capacity. The wild flower of the wood, the delicate exotic from the con-

servatory, and the more hardy tenants of the garden, lived again, in all their varied hues, under the magic touch of her fingers, upon the pliant wax. Her ingenuity was ever in exercise, and many and rare were her exquisite imitations. Her work in wax cost her a vast amount of patient labour, and some of her more elaborate pieces are certainly very beautiful specimens of art. She took the ordinary beeswax of commerce, and, by a process of her own, purified and bleached it to a perfect whiteness, and then she reproduced in it foliage, flowers, fruits, in all the hues of nature, and tastefully arranged in a basket of the same material. Rough pine burrs, acorns, beads and shells, passed through her hands, and reappeared in the shape of parlour ornaments, necklaces, and baskets. Scraps of morocco were

transformed into needlebooks; and strawberries that looked as if they might be eaten, proved to be emery-bags. Pin-cushions for the vest pocket, and toilet cushions for the bridal chamber, came from her laboratory, and alike displayed her taste and skill. Her productions were greatly admired, but, to deprecate praise, she would speak of her fabrics as "such a little thing;" and though she could not have been more industrious if she had been working for her bread, yet she sought to cover her self-sacrifice by ascribing it to her love of the ornamental.

While the society was yet in its early days, and at a time when the materials for work were scarce, and funds were low, Mrs. Bott surprised her friends one day, by bringing out from its long concealment, the hiding

place of half a century or more, a splendid brocade robe, an heirloom which had come down from the aristocratic and courtly days of the Spotswoods. It had been the dress of some stately ancestral dame, and doubtless had figured on great occasions in the halls of the old colonial palace at Williamsburg. A good lady who saw it describes it in an ecstasy of admiration. "The exquisite tint of its ground," suggesting "the old comparison of skies," "and large flowers of silver, elaborately worked, shining in its surface;" neither time nor neglect had defaced its beauty. An honest family pride had preserved it, as a relique of other days and ancestral honours. But now she devoted it to a better use. It was laid upon the table and its ample folds spread out, disclosing its richness and

beauty, and then it was sacrificed to the scissors! In the shape of numberless cushions, and other articles of fancy needlework, it brought quite a revenue to the society. Might it not be said of her, as was said by the Master of another, "She hath done what she could?" and as an instance of her devotion to that Master, shall not this also be told, "as a memorial of her?"

But if she was ingenious in the construction of her beautiful articles, she was no less so in her efforts to make them the vehicles of good to their purchasers. She never felt at liberty to put an extortionate price upon her work, because its avails were to be appropriated to a benevolent object. In other words, she did not consider it lawful to defraud, and exact more than a just equivalent, because the treasury

of the Lord was to be the gainer. But the purchasers of her articles often received more than they bargained for. Her niece (Mrs. B.) says, "She used (when I worked with her for the society) to put tracts, or pieces of paper with texts written on them, into the toilet cushions which she made, and one day while so doing, she said to me, 'This may be opened when I am gone, and may speak to the conscience.'"

One of these little manuscripts was brought to light after her death, and as an example of the kind of "bread" which she thus "cast upon the waters," it is here inserted. It was found in a pincushion which had been long in use, and needed to be re-covered. Carefully folded, it was addressed

"TO THE READER ;"

and on being opened it was found to

be the following affectionate and faithful exhortation.

“April 22d, 1825. It has just occurred to me that this pincushion which I am now making for my sister, (and which she will doubtless preserve for some years,) may at last fall into the hands of some other person, probably when the hands that are now tracing these lines are mouldering in the dust. Reader! I would be the instrument of doing good, though I am in the grave. If this should fall into the hands of some one who is careless of their soul’s eternal welfare, oh resolve from this good hour to seek the Lord Jesus whilst he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. O immortal soul! use every means of grace that the Lord has granted you; read your Bible diligently and with prayer, that the

Lord may remove the veil of sin that conceals the blessed Jesus from your vision. Pray to him in secret, and in the social meeting, and in public; never loose your hold, never give out, until you obtain the blessing. It is a fearful thing to die, and fall into the hands of the living God. Dear reader, I have prayed the Lord, to bless and sanctify this to the profit of your soul, this morning. I would recommend to your meditations the 25th chapter of Matthew; and I beseech you, as you value your soul's eternal welfare, to seek to keep your lamp trimmed and burning, waiting for the Lord's coming.

“But should this fall into the hands of a disciple of the Lord Jesus, I will only say, press forward, be instant in every good work and way, seek the honour and glory of your God, strive .

to advance your Redeemer's kingdom, do not hang like a clod of earth on the church to which you belong; be up and doing, and pray without ceasing.

“Should some afflicted, bereaved christian chance to see this, I would ask them to read for their consolation the 42d, 43d, 44th, and 45th chapters of Isaiah, also the 23d chapter of Job, and be humble, submissive and resigned to the will of the Lord. He can make crooked paths straight, and cause the waters not to overflow thy soul, but will make all things to work together for thy good, if thou lovest him. I would beg thy prayers for my poor, sinful soul, that it may be strengthened in the divine life, and that I may take to myself the warning I give to others. But before this reaches your hands I may be no more. Oh! how

awful is the thought! But the Lord Jesus is my hope, my strength, my deliverer. Sin sits as a heavy burden on my soul. Dear Lord, remove the weight, and enable me to look out from my sinful, vile self, and stay me on thy precious promises. Pray for grace to serve our God better every day.

“Farewell, reader! May the Lord bless, convert and sanctify our souls; and when we have done and suffered his will here upon earth, may he at last receive us, and all whom we love, as his pardoned and accepted servants, through Christ Jesus, there to live an endless eternity, in singing praises to our God and Saviour! Oh! is not this end most desirable? Strive, strive for it.

“Baxter’s Saints’ Rest is a book highly recommended for encouraging meditation and spiritual mindedness.”

Some other similar papers have since come to light, lurking in the linings of baskets, or nestled beneath the silk or satin coverings of toilet cushions. And when the ladies once got upon the track of these hidden treasures, there was some reason to apprehend an extensive destruction of the linings and covers, under which they were supposed to be concealed.

That with all her activity for others' good, she was not neglectful of her own soul, may be gathered from the tenor of the above manuscripts. But the following testimony from her niece, may give us an idea of the frequency and fervour of her devotions, about this time. She says, "Often when I have slept with her, before my marriage, I have missed her out of bed in the night, and listening would hear her at prayer.

This was particularly the case when John was at college, or if any member of the family was sick." She had also her regular hours of devotion during the day, which she would suffer nothing, not even the business of the society, to interrupt. Thus the flame of holy love was always kept brightly burning, being constantly rekindled at the throne of grace. The "branch" became the more fruitful, when the pruning had "purged it."

CHAPTER X.

CHANGES—BREAKING UP OF HER HOME—
GIVES HERSELF ENTIRELY TO THE “SO-
CIETY”—MODES OF INCREASING ITS REV-
ENUE—AGGREGATE RESULTS OF HER
LABOURS.

IN 1829, Mrs. Bott was called to the severe trial of parting with her beloved pastor. Dr. Rice might have said to most of the members of the Presbyterian church of Petersburg, in the language of Paul to the Corinthians, “Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for I have begotten you in the gospel.” During his ministry, three hundred and nineteen persons

were received into this church. He was called to the Pearl street church, of New York city, and felt it to be his duty to go. Great was the sorrow, and many the regrets, at the sundering of the peculiarly endearing ties which bound him to this people. But the great Head of the church seemed to order it so, and there was nothing to do, but to submit. His place was supplied, in 1830, by the Rev. John D. Annan, late professor in Miami University. Another sad blow now fell upon the church, in the death of this able and devoted servant of God, during the summer of the same year in which he was installed. He was succeeded, in 1831, by the Rev. W. S. Plumer, D. D., who remained in this charge four years. The Rev. E. C. Hutchinson was the next pastor, for about the same length of

time, and was followed by the Rev. John Leyburn, D. D., who was installed in 1839, and remained about nine years, when another change brought the writer of these pages into the relation of pastor to Mrs. Bott.

Under all these changes, she proved herself the same uncomplaining, sympathizing and affectionate friend to each of her successive pastors. In all her correspondence with those toward whom she used no reserve, we have not been able to find a single word or allusion to any one of them, which is not kind and complimentary.

But in the meantime other changes had occurred, personal to herself. She was under the necessity of quitting her loved and pleasant home, and with faithful "aunt Effie," the single servant, whom she retained as her maid,

she went to reside in the family of her sister, Mrs. R. Thus exempted from the care of a household, she was enabled to give herself more entirely to her Master's work. The change in her circumstances appeared to her only as a new call upon her exertions, and although her efforts were mainly expended in one direction, yet it was not to the exclusion of other walks of usefulness. As will appear in the sequel, she was accustomed to "sow beside all waters." But as the "Education Society" was her great work, we shall embrace what further we have to say of it, within this chapter.

At the first the revenue of the society was derived from the annual subscription of its members, which was one dollar for each, and the private sale of the articles manufactured. But

after a time it was thought expedient, in order to increase its income, to have an annual public sale. The plan succeeded in greatly augmenting the funds, but it had its incidental evils, and was afterwards discontinued. These public sales were occasions of great solicitude and exhausting labour to Mrs. Bott. Though aided by many helpers, yet the direction and responsibility rested upon her; and notwithstanding all the products of her art which she had industriously accumulated, yet the weeks immediately preceding the sale, were weeks of unremitting toil. But when everything was prepared and the room arranged, it was beautiful to see the tall form of the venerated first directress moving among the creations of her own ingenuity, and anticipating the proceeds which they would

yield to the treasury of the Lord. A "Lady's Fair," at which the young, the gay, and the beautiful, are assembled amid a variety of elegant articles in a decorated room, lighted with the flashing eyes and cheerful smiles of happy faces, is always an attractive sight, and rarely fails to open the hearts and the purses of the most cynical and penurious. But the most striking picture of all was the presiding genius of these occasions, now watching, with pleased yet thoughtful countenance, the progress of the sale, now whispering a direction to one or another, now receiving the congratulations of her friends, and now encouraging with a kind word, some modest maiden, who, for the first time, was trying her talents at traffic. Thus in her simple, sombre dress, she moved among the throng, her presence and her spirit pervading

and directing the whole scene. The avails of these annual sales averaged from four to five hundred dollars. Many thought this a great gain, but if all the labour of this devoted woman and her associates had been reckoned up, it would be found that, on the score of benevolence, the credit of the result belonged mainly to her and to them.

After the discontinuance of the annual sales, Mrs. Bott feared a sad decrease in her remittances. But her ingenuity found out a way to obviate that result. Her articles increased in beauty and usefulness, as practice had improved her skill, and she now began to send them abroad for sale. Kind friends, who loved the cause and herself, on going to distant places, often received a box carefully packed, to convey and dispose of. And in this way,

the receipts of the society were kept up. Thus also Mrs. Bott and her articles became widely known in Virginia. Many boxes were sent to the Springs, and the mountain resorts of summer travel. Some one charged with the commission, would open the box amid the gay circles of fashion congregated there, and disclose its tasteful treasures to admiring eyes. The sales were rapid and the purchasers were pleased, and the demand being greater than the supply, strangers passing through Petersburg have been known to stop and seek out the good lady, that they might add to their purchases. One of these boxes was carried, by a kind lady, to the south, and on the articles being exposed for sale, a naval officer being present, recognized the handiwork of his beloved aunt, thus far from his

home and her, and became a purchaser.

Having opened these new channels of sale, she worked on with patient industry, for years, maintaining the income of the society mainly by her own work. Her zeal in this cause never flagged, and her labours in its behalf only ceased, when she ceased to breathe. Work for the society fell from her dying hands, and lay upon the bed of death, after her spirit had departed.

A visit to her room, during the last years of her life, was something to be remembered. An air of quiet neatness pervaded the apartment, and in the presence of its venerated inhabitant, one felt that it was as the gate of heaven. The plain and simple furniture did not even have the elegant ornaments of her own work, which

adorned so many drawing-rooms in Virginia. The mantle was decorated with a couple of miniatures, a few shells and relics of interesting places abroad; while over it hung a painting of "the murdered princes in the Tower," the work of her early and valued friend Mrs. Stott. On either side of the mantle hung portraits, the one that of her first pastor and spiritual father, Dr. Rice, the other that of Mrs. Rice, no less dear to her than her husband was. A plain but comfortable sofa occupied one corner of the room, on which, as her debility increased, she was generally found reclining, but always with work in her hands; perhaps it was a bridal toilet cushion, and as she worked upon it some appropriate device, her lips would move in silent prayer, and as the fervour of her feelings kindled,

her eyes would be momentarily raised to heaven, and dropping the work from her trembling hands, they would be clasped upon her breast in the attitude of devotion. At other times sheer exhaustion would interrupt her labours, and she would fall back to rest for a few moments, and then without a murmur or complaint resume her task.

Her niece (Mrs. M. B. L.) says, "We once urged her, on seeing her much fatigued and very feeble, to lay by her work. With a pained and humbled look, she said, "I spent thirty odd years of my life in the service of the world, most unprofitably; I must redeem the time, I may have but a short space to work for my Master, and must try to do something while I can."

Her apartment was the place where her friends loved to congregate, and it

was seldom empty, except in those hours of hallowed privacy, which she claimed for herself. Little children loved to come and pay their tribute of respect, and listen to the kind words of "aunt Bott." And "Effie," the faithful Effie, was the back ground to the picture, moving about with noiseless steps in ministering to her mistress, whose manner she unconsciously imitated, or plying the busy needle in her allotted corner. But no company or conversation could stop *the work*. And that the work was effectually done, may be inferred, when we here record, that the aggregate income of the society during Mrs. Bott's administration, and mainly through her efforts, was within a fraction of seven thousand dollars! Seven thousand dollars through the exertions of one feeble, afflicted woman!

CHAPTER XI.

“SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS.”—TRACT
DISTRIBUTION—WORDS FITLY SPOKEN—
PEACE MAKER.

IT would be doing great injustice to the character of Mrs. Bott, if we should leave the impression on the mind of any reader, that her devotion to the Education Society was so absorbing as to exclude her from other walks of usefulness. Though this was her great work, and the love of it, for the Master's sake, her ruling passion, yet the love of that Master had also “established her in every good word and work.” She was literally “instant in season and out of season,” and suffered no opportunity

for doing good to pass unimproved. Affliction always constituted a claim upon her attentions and sympathies, while she was no less ready to rejoice with those who did rejoice. No one ever felt more strongly the claims of relative and family ties, or the attractions of personal friendship. But she never could shut herself up to these, as the limit of her kindly interest and efforts. The suffering and often neglected poor were the objects of her special attention and solicitude. Even in the feebleness of her old age, she would wend her way with slow and tremulous steps to the suburbs of the city, to minister to some destitute or afflicted family, and few things would offend her sooner, than the remonstrances of her friends against her over-exertion and self-exposure. When her

own scanty means were not adèquate to provide the necessary comforts for the needy sick, she knew how to enlist the sympathies of others in their behalf, and seldom failed in her object. To the knowledge of the writer she has entered the door of many a wretched hovel, like an angel of mercy, as she was; and in her presence, vice has hid its face for shame, and squalid misery has put on the air of order and decency. In efforts of this kind, she did not act from a transient impulse, but went to work with a deliberate purpose and a thoughtful forecast. Nothing escaped her notice, and she sought to provide for every emergency. She called, one day, upon the writer then her pastor, in the carriage of a friend which she had appropriated for the purpose, to go and visit a poor, dying

negro woman in the outskirts of the city. The carriage contained a well-stored basket, which, after conversation and prayer with the woman, was produced and found to contain everything that might be necessary in a case of death, down to a couple of candles, if the event should happen in the night, and the use of each article was carefully explained to the attendant, and specific directions given, as to what was to be done, and how it must be done. Then turning to the sick woman, she stood over her couch, and in a short but plain and earnest exhortation directed her to Christ as her only hope; and then bidding her farewell, she lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and uttered a simple and touching prayer, which seemed to go right up from her heart to the eternal throne.

And in all this scene there was no symptom of that sighing sympathy which expends itself in pitying words ; but whilst her kind heart spoke in every word and act, yet there was an earnestness, a solemnity, a dignity of manner, which made one fancy a superior being, who, touched with human woe, had come down to mitigate its anguish.

At an earlier day in her religious history, when her strength would yet permit it, she was greatly engaged in Tract distribution, and in this, as in everything else, she was very thorough in her work. She was not content with an indiscriminate dropping of printed pages, over a given district, monthly, and leaving to its fate the scattered seed, but she sought by personal conversation to prepare the way for the silent messengers, and then to adapt the tracts to the family or person.

As an instance of her success in this direction, we may mention a single case, which, if all could be told, would speak her worth more than a volume of eulogium. In the older and more densely populated parts of Petersburg, an isolated family of three maiden sisters occupied apartments in a rear building, communicating with the street by a narrow alley-way. Mrs. Bott found them out in their seclusion, and at once comprehended their wants, spiritual and temporal. One of the sisters was a victim to wasting consumption, and only lived a year or so to experience the kindness of their untiring benefactress. She engaged her friends in their behalf, and secured for them the frequent visits of her pastor, and ultimately the efforts of many of the ladies, who contributed largely to the comforts of

their home, which soon began to wear an aspect of neatness and order which won the admiration of every visitor. The youngest sister died, feeling deeply her need of the Saviour, and not without hope of acceptance through him. The other two became shortly after members of the Presbyterian church. One still remains a model of patient industry, and uncomplaining submission to the will of God. The other died rejoicing in hope, after the most protracted and painful sufferings, which she endured with the most christian spirit of meek, uncomplaining resignation. Such results could hardly have been expected, but for the thorough and persevering manner in which Mrs. Bott went about her work.

With a singular refinement of manner, and delicacy of feeling, she

yet did not shrink from that measure of contact with the vile, which was necessary to do them good. She went forward with a determined courage in every path where duty seemed to point. Thus she found herself on one occasion in a shop full of young mechanics, who listened respectfully to her words of kindness, and received her little tracts, and were heard to say after she left the house, "What a good woman Mrs. Bott must be!"

A colporteur of the Board of Publication, visiting with his knapsack of books a national vessel at Norfolk, was recognized by a young sailor on board as being from Petersburg, and was asked if he knew Mrs. Bott, and on his replying that he did, the young man said, "Well, I lived in Petersburg once, and I have in my chest a bundle of

tracts, given me by Mrs. Bott, and she has often talked to me, as I shall never forget." This was after her death, and who knows how productive that seed cast upon the waters may yet become?

Many pages might be filled with examples of words fitly spoken in her casual intercourse with strangers and others. She seemed to act upon the impression that each passing opportunity might be the last, and so improved it accordingly. The servants that came on errands to her room seldom left it without some good advice kindly given and likely to be remembered. Her niece (Mrs. L.) says, "One little instance of her polite consideration of the feelings, and desire for the good of all with whom she came in contact, I must relate. I have a little coloured boy who has become lame from disease.

I sometimes sent him down with notes and messages to my aunt. One day he staid longer than usual, and came back with a face beaming with pleasure, and head erect, as if he had suddenly been raised in the scale of being. I said to him, 'What kept you so long?' 'Why,' said he, 'Miss Bott made me rest long time, she made me set down in *her* rocking chair; and, missus! she called me *James*, (he was usually called Jim,) and she talked a heap to me.' All the servants, wherever she went, loved her, for her polite and kind manner and often substantial thoughtfulness."

Another niece (Mrs. B.) says, "Not long ago, just before my last visit to Petersburg, a girl, who sews for me, brought home some work. I told her I was going to P—. She said, 'Is that

old lady who came to see you a long time ago, alive?" I said, "Yes, why do you ask? Do you know her?" "Oh," she replied, "I never saw her more than once or twice, but I walked from here down to the corner with her, when I had been here with my work, and she talked to me so about growing in grace and being contented, that I shall never forget her." And so with our servants; not one of them but remembers some word of exhortation from her."

These are only specimens of what was, with her, a constant habit, and of its results. Eternity alone can disclose the good accomplished by her timely words, kindly and "fitly spoken."

To this kind lady few things were more distressing than any alienation of feeling or strife among brethren, the members of the same church. And

though not given to "meddling with strife," yet she sought, in her quiet way, to remove the difference, and often earned the title and the blessings of a peace-maker.

Those unhappy alienations incident to our present imperfect state, often arise from a mutual misunderstanding, and each party, feeling aggrieved by the other, is slow to make advances or concessions. The feelings of both being irritated, it requires the utmost prudence in whosoever attempts to touch the case, to avoid the risk of becoming a party, or of widening the breach. Mrs. Bott was admirably fitted for this delicate work, both by her deep piety and sterling sense. She was above suspicion of any other motive than a desire to do good, and she had too much sagacity to make a

blunder, and aggravate the sore she sought to heal. Many instances might be mentioned of her success in this good work, did propriety permit us to make them public. One has been freely spoken of by an excellent lady, who was herself one of the parties. Mrs. — had a difference with one of the elders of the church, when Mrs. Bott came to her one day, and faithfully pointed out to her wherein she thought her wrong, and affectionately exhorted her to give up her feelings, and become reconciled. “The wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy.” “Let the righteous smite me, it shall be as an excellent oil.” She concluded that if Mrs. Bott thought her wrong, it must be so, and to this day she is eloquent in the praises of her judicious interference.

CHAPTER XII.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IF the foregoing pages have awakened any interest in the subject of this memoir, we may now perhaps presume upon the reader's willingness to see something more from Mrs. Bott's own pen. We must premise, however, that much of her correspondence, and probably some of her best letters, are gone past recovery. The extracts which are here given are chiefly from letters to those of her own family circle, and if written with less premeditation and more freedom, they are on that account only the better evidence of the spontaneous workings of her mind. In a

considerable collection which we have been able to obtain, and which relate mainly to personal and family matters, and extend over a period of some twenty years preceding her death, we have not found one, not even the smallest note, which has not some pious remark, or religious counsel or admonition in it. If "she opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness," her pen also distilled the savour of her godliness, and was never used without leaving some "right words," upon the page.

The selections are given as illustrations of her character, and not for any merit they may possess, as specimens of epistolary style. Her nephew, after his licensure, was settled in Sussex Co., and her niece, Mrs. B——, after her marriage, in Chesterfield Co.; so that

these two of her children, as she called them, were for a time actively engaged, the one as a pastor, and the other as a pastor's wife, in her immediate vicinity. The one subsequently removed to New Castle, Del., and the other to Hillsboro, N. C. To these two, most of the letters in our possession were written. The first extract is from a letter to her niece before her marriage, and at the time on a visit to Richmond.

“August 24th, 1831.

“* * * I got a letter from dear John yesterday. He writes very affectionately. I felt gratified to receive in one day letters from both my children, and both of them, I trust, are the children of the covenant. Oh! I do pray that neither of you may be turned aside from the path of duty, by the poor things of this world. May God for Christ's sake save our souls, and grant that we may meet in heaven and dwell

there for ever more in the presence of our God and Saviour. * * I hope that the cause of the Redeemer is advancing in this place. The Monday night meetings, I have heard, are well attended, and they are a sort of test of the good that is effected by the instrumentality of preaching. But Mr. Plumer is not any more communicative about these things than when you were here. The services on the Sabbath and prayer meetings are as well attended as ever. So that we have much cause to call upon our hearts and souls to praise and love our God, for so much goodness and care. We do not in the smallest degree deserve such mercies. I hope my dear Anna will pray for a watchful spirit, lest the enemy of souls take advantage of her being abroad to mislead her. Do not be too communicative about worldly matters, or talk too much; the less we say about such things the better. Pray every day that you may be enabled to carry the fear and love of God with you in all that you may be engaged in, then I am sure that you will not en-

gage in anything upon which you cannot ask his blessing."

The correspondence with this niece, with the exception of some short notes, written during her residence in Chesterfield, and filled up with valuable hints to the young wife, now passes over to the time of her removal to Hillsboro, N. C. We give brief and broken paragraphs.

PETERSBURG, *Dec. 16th*, 1835.

"I received my beloved Anna's letter three days ago, and it was truly a welcome one, not only to me, but I believe to many other of your friends. I thank my heavenly Father that no accident occurred on the way, and that you were in such comfortable circumstances when you wrote, and with such kind people. May the Lord still preserve you and bless you all, is my prayer. I do miss you much, my dear Anna. I feel as if another tie was

broken ; may the Lord sanctify it to me in weaning me more and more from this world. It was a great gratification to have you living so near to me, to visit you and to love your dear little children. But our heavenly Father has seen fit to separate us, and all that he does is right. That ought to be our sweetest consolation—just to give ourselves, and all that is dear and valuable to us, up to his disposal. I would not choose my own changes if I could ; I would rather that infinite wisdom should do it. Let us, my beloved child, pray that, however separated in this world, we may at last meet in heaven. Pray for your aunt that she may be prepared for the awful change, prepared to meet her God and Saviour in peace, through faith in a blessed Redeemer.

“I think of you, my dear Anna, in your new sphere of action, with maternal solicitude. It is true, you are now in a situation different from any that you have ever been placed in before, and I pray that my dear child may be guided by the Spirit of God in

all that she does, and may she constantly enquire of the Lord, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' I am aware that a pastor's wife will be much observed, and I do hope that you will afford a bright example. In your little working society, do not have the least appearance of dictating; follow on faithfully in your work, those who lead in it. In your intercourse with society, be 'swift to hear and slow to speak.' I do not want any person to have it to say, that you talk too much; you must remember how young you are, and that humility is a sweet and becoming grace to a young woman. Endeavour always to act in such a manner as to have the divine blessing, praying the Lord to use you for his honour and glory. It is my prayer that Mr. B—— will be most faithful in his Master's service; then everything that we could wish for his church will follow. I often pray with an '*especially*' for him and John, that they may be faithful."

(Without date.)

“* * * Indeed, my dear Anna, I think that you have a great deal to make you happy and contented; you have everything but wealth, which, if you had, might lead you into many temptations and snares. If riches had been for your good, your heavenly Father would have given them to you. Why is it that the ministry are generally poor? Because the Lord knew that riches were not good for them, and that they might be more humble, and depend upon him daily. Do not think that I am insensible to the many trials that you have had, or the continual exertion that you are obliged to make to help support a family. Now if you had to labour with an unkind or dissipated husband, if your children were unpromising or unhealthy, these are things that must mar our peace. My dear Anna, be cheerful, and aid your husband in bringing up children for the Lord, that with his blessing may be useful to the church of Christ. But I have said more than I need on this

subject, as you know your duty; but I believe a person may stay at home, and brood over family cares, until they forget that there are any whose troubles are greater than their own.

“My eyes are nearly the same as ever, but I am afraid to use them much by lamplight. I read a little at night, and I can see in the day as well as ever. I always have work to do for the Education Society. I fear that if I did not exert myself, others would not, and the society would go out. As I believe it is for good, and I can do so little to promote the cause of religion, I must still strive to do what I can in this way. I pray the Lord to accept this small service, and that his name may be, in some measure, glorified through my poor instrumentality.”

Dec. 29th, 1835.

“_____I have been so much hindered by circumstances in my work for the society, that I fear I shall not be able to do all that I wished and all that I planned for our annual meeting. I

pray the Lord that we may be diligent and do better than the last year. I do hope, my dear Anna, that you may experience the grace of the Almighty to make you most fruitful in good works, giving him all the praise. I know there is danger of indulging complacent feelings of ourselves, in our works and duties, when the praise and glory ought to be given to the Lord, who gives us grace for these things, and we ought to be most grateful when he uses us for his honour and glory. Let us pray for each other that we may be most faithful to our Lord. I need your prayers. I feel very much cast down, and mourn at my low condition as regards religion. It is not for the want of religious privileges, for we have faithful and pungent preaching. I want more enlarged views of Christ, and of the whole way of salvation. I want faith, hope, love and gratitude in lively, daily, hourly exercise. Ask Mr. B. to remember me before a throne of grace, that I may be prepared for my dying hour."

“*Jan. 29th, 1836.*

“ — I was both pleased and pained with your letter: pleased that you and Mr. B. experienced so much attention and kindness and liberality from the people of your church, but pained that my dear child is so low spirited amidst so many mercies. Though it is very painful to be separated from beloved relatives and friends; still as you are pursuing the path of duty, you ought to find much comfort in giving up those who are dear to you, for the sake of the cause that your husband is engaged in. Strive, my dear Anna, to do it cheerfully, and take up this cross, and pray that it may be sanctified to you and to me, and that we may daily be striving to get to heaven where there is no parting. Look to the bright side of the picture, and anticipate that your sons and daughters, with the blessing of God upon their parents' care and instruction, will turn out a blessing to the church and to society; and as to providing for them, never fear for that. If you love and serve, and put your trust in the Lord, he will provide.”

“ June 13th, 1837.

“ ——— In regard to the letter in which you think you displeased me, I hardly know what to say. If you were here or I with you, I could, I am sure, give you such a statement as would, and ought to, satisfy you that I am not so devoted to the Education Society as you think. I know that I have much undeserved reputation about it, which is calculated to humble me, when I recollect how very far short I am of all that has been attributed to me, for the good of that society. I only wish that it was all done with more singleness of heart, to the glory of God, and for the advancement of the cause of Christ, than it is. I pray that I may be humbled to think that I have been doing nothing in this cause through a long life, and that I now do so little, and so much imperfection with it. When I returned home I found that but little had been done for the society. There were but few hands, and they were engaged about their own work. Soon after I commenced I was taken

sick, and so enfeebled by it, that the recovery of my strength was slow; and, of course, I, as the responsible person of the society, could not help feeling anxious about the work, which must be done by March. I do think that I did exert myself too much for the weak state of my health, but the occasion was pressing, as I was about a piece of work which promised to bring in a handsome sum, and which I could not expect to be assisted in. My impression of your letter is, that I suffer this society to engross me, to the exclusion of other duties. Well, I must watch and pray against it. I hope that my fondness for it may never interfere with more important duties, or my relative ones. I have tried to fulfil them, according to my weakness of body and of mind, and, of course, they are defective. But enough of this, and I hope, my dear Anna, that you will make yourself easy about my doing so much, as I have the hope, if I should live another year, of having more assistance from some new hands, who show much kind disposition to aid me."

(To Mrs. B——, on the death of a servant.)

“*Feb. 14th, 1851.*

“I was truly sorry to hear of aunt Judy’s death, but why should we sorrow when she has made such a blessed exchange? it ought to be as a warning voiceto us to prepare for our dying hour. Oh, that we may be enabled to say as she did, that we trust in Christ! I fully agree with you that a sick bed is no place to begin a preparation for death; that it ought to be our every day work, for we are continually verging towards the grave. What manner of persons ought we to be *now*, if we hope to get to heaven! how circumspect in our thoughts, words, tempers and actions! Pray that we may have a realizing sense of the divine presence of a blessed triune God. Continually I *do* pray for it, but oh, how often do I forget what I prayed for! This is calculated to humble us. I pray that it may make me more watchful; may the solemn scenes of that death-bed be sanctified to you, my dear Anna. It is

pleasant to me to think of Judy. I think I hardly ever met with so amiable a coloured person, she was so humble and gentle, and always in her place, doing her duties so silently. I believe every one here thought highly of her."

"Mr. Burwell and yourself have a most important field of labour among those young females. I hope that you both may be instruments of sowing much good seed in their young hearts. May the Lord water them with the dews of his grace, that they may produce fruit for eternal life.

"Tenderly and affectionately yours.

"S. C. BOTT."

The following is to the little daughter of Mrs. B——.

" July 31st.

"I thank you, my dear Mary, for your first letter, and your first work, both of which gave me much pleasure. The pin-cushion is very useful to me. I use it night and morning. I have at last got your little bureau fixed and

varnished, and feel pleased when I think how you will be gratified in receiving it. I hope it will sometimes remind you of your grandma Bott, who tenderly loves you, and wishes you to be a good child, to love and serve your heavenly Father, to be dutiful and obedient to your parents, and very affectionate to your little brothers and sisters. You must remember to set them a good example, as they will be apt to do as you do, whether good or bad, as you are the oldest. I have sent you a Tract; perhaps you have not seen it before; it tells you a great deal about a very good little girl, and how happy she died. If you have seen it before, you can give this to some little girl who has never seen it. I hope my dear Mary will have grace given her to be as happy as little Ann Eliza was, by becoming as pious. There is a Juvenile Missionary Society here, where a number of little girls from fourteen to seven or eight years old, meet for work, or to contribute donations. They manufacture pin-cushions, needle-books, box-

es, bags, and a variety of things, which are useful to instruct them in needle-work. This early teaches them to make some sacrifices for the promotion of religion among the heathen. They had their sale, which amounted to one hundred and two dollars, which was sent to the Foreign Missionary Society. Now do you not think about these poor heathen children, how glad they will be when the Missionary tells them that a parcel of little girls in America sent them that money, that they might be instructed in the christian religion? Do you not think that you would be willing to work too in such a cause as this? Well then, you must make haste, and learn to work, and beg of your young playmates to do the same; and when the ladies have their fair, then beg of them to let you have a corner, and put all your things upon a table, and perhaps some of the ladies will make you all some cake; and I think the Lord will bless the effort, (if you do it wishing to do something to glorify him, and for the benefit of your fellow beings,) and you may receive many dollars."

(Extract from a letter to Miss Mary B. written after Mrs. Stott's death.)

“Your mother will see in the *Presbyterian* that one among the sincerest friends I had in this world has departed this life—Mrs. Elizabeth Stott of Philadelphia. I have read her will, or only that part which relates to her charitable donations, which amount I believe to about \$41,000. The last letter from her dear hands I received in December by Dr. Shippen. She informs in that of her having lost the use of her ankles and knees, and could not walk, but she writes cheerfully, telling me that she sometimes amused herself with painting, drawing, and wax-work; and whenever she engaged in the latter it reminded her of me, to whom she owed her instruction. She said that she was eighty-three years of age, and was *waiting* for her summons. Dr. Rice, when he was here, told me, he called to see her; she was then confined to her bed, but sent for him to come to her chamber. In her conversation with him, she expressed

her fears that she might become too impatient to be gone. Oh, what a blessed state, for one of our fallen race to be enabled to look death in the face without fear, just '*waiting* for the last summons!' She was a lady of large fortune, and I have reason to believe did much good with it to the Redeemer's cause while she lived; and her will shows that she loved his cause so as to make provision for its extension after her decease. Her memory will ever, while I live, be dear to me; and I think myself highly honoured in her friendship. So many of my friends and former associates are gone, and I am still here, through divine and long-suffering and undeserved mercy, at the advanced age of seventy-two and upwards. I pray that I too may be prepared for my Saviour's summons, whenever I should be called away. But, my dear Mary, the young die too; the old know that they *must* soon, and the young *may* also. Have you ever thought of that good part, which one who bore your name had chosen, who sat at Jesus's

feet? Do not be so taken up with this world as not to take time to reflect; seek your soul's eternal welfare through Christ. Have you not (even at your early age) found out, that the pleasures of this world perish in the using? Oh, when I think of my past life and the days of my youth, that so much precious time was lost in the frivolities of this world, how I do regret it! The children of my father's house had not your opportunities for religious instruction, no Sabbath schools, no good little books to instruct children in the rudiments of religion; no church to go to, except one that was eight miles off, to which we had to go over rough roads and ford a river. Of course we seldom went; and I never profited by what I heard. You will see how great are your privileges compared with ours. Even with all these disadvantages, if our hearts had not been so depraved, we might have found that Saviour who has said, "Seek and ye shall find." When I began, I did not intend to say so much on this subject. You have pa-

rents so capable of giving you the best instruction. You have a preached gospel, and your Bible. Dear Mary, seek the Lord, while he may be found."

Similar extracts from her correspondence might be greatly multiplied, but this chapter is already extended, and we conclude it, with the few following selections from letters to different persons.

(To her nephew, Rev. Dr. Spotswood.)

"July 5th, 1843.

"I am fully aware, my dear John, that you have wondered at my long silence, as I have not answered the letters I have received since your location at New Castle. I must confess that I have suffered a procrastinating spirit to gain too much dominion over me, which is certainly wrong. I love to get letters from my friends, but am too tardy in replying to them. However, I have good reasons for not replying

to your last, for at the time I received it, I was very much occupied in preparing for the sale of our Education Society, which was to take place the ninth of May. I thought I would answer it afterwards, but I was taken sick the second night of the sale, and kept my bed for several days. Dr. Robinson attended me. I was, and still am much reduced, and have not yet regained my strength. Old people do not recover as fast as young ones after an illness. I went out to Olive Hill, [the residence of her sister Mrs. Whitlock,] the week before last, and spent about ten days. There I had the advantages of quiet and riding out, which was of great service to me. My appetite has not been good, of course I have not regained flesh or strength very fast. But I hope that I do feel grateful to my heavenly Father for the measure of health he has restored me to, and for sparing my life. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' I pray that the past may be sanctified to the good of my soul. I am old, and

cannot expect to be very long in this world; pray for me, that I may be prepared to meet the awful summons. I have had many solemn warnings, in the deaths of my old friends and acquaintances. I have been too feeble to attend preaching since early in May. I have only heard three sermons, two of them last Sabbath. I hope I shall now be able to attend oftener. Next Sabbath is our communion; pray for me that I may be prepared for this solemn occasion, that I may have a strong and abiding faith in the Lord Jesus, and that it may be a precious season to my soul."

(To the same.)

"*May 13th, 1852.*

"I fear, my dear John, that you and Sarah will think me very ungrateful and remiss in not sooner acknowledging your two acceptable and welcome letters. I have always thought I would answer them, but would still put off writing to a more convenient season. My dislike to writing, and ill perform-

ance of the act, with sometimes a shaking hand, and full employment of work, and interruptions incident to a town life, these are the causes of my not being a better correspondent. I did not dislike writing formerly. You remember how many letters I used to write to you when you were at college, and afterwards. So you must pardon this neglect of your aunt in her old age. Since I got your letters I have been very sick, more seriously ill, I have since learned, than I thought I was; I was taken with an ague, and fever followed. The physician sounded my lungs, and said that the lobe of the right lung was inflamed; the expectoration showed it, in having a dark appearance, from blood I suppose. For two days he visited me three times in the day, then the symptoms became more favourable. I had the first blister I ever had in my life, and the first physician in five years. I have not been to church at night since my illness, but make out to get there in the day by walking slowly. I often get a seat in my sister's carriage,

or Mrs. Atkinson's. I have enjoyed through a long life extraordinary health; it was an undeserved mercy. I pray the Lord to make me more grateful.

“I thank you, my dear John, for your present of fifty dollars, which was duly received. It was most acceptable, as my expenses are now greater than when I saw you. * * * Your fifty dollars has made all *easy*, and I get along finely as regards expense. My wants are few, I love to work and read—my feebleness, and indeed my inclination make me keep to my chamber very much, and I have many kind, attentive friends who visit me. I think my cup runs over with temporal mercies, great and undeserved as they are. But I cannot be satisfied with *them*. I want more spiritual mercies, a strong and abiding faith in Jesus and his atonement, holiness and purity of heart and soul, pardon and salvation through him, and spiritual mindedness. Pray for me that I may have these, and a preparation for death.”

The following letter was written to an orphan girl, who had been left by her dying mother with seven other children, with the request that Mrs. Bott, (who had kindly attended and assisted her, in poverty and sickness,) would see to, and care for them. Mrs. Bott could not refuse the request of a dying mother, but promised to *do what she could*, and she did. Mary, to whom this letter was written, at a suitable age, was placed in a family in Baltimore, of kind christian people. Mrs. Bott wrote to her often. This letter never reached its destination, and was returned through the dead-letter office. On one corner of the sheet there is a quaint little device of blotting-paper pasted on, for securing the gold dollar, which it contained. It was written a few months before her death.

“Sept. 2d, 1852.

“Dear Mary,—Your letter, post-marked the 18th of August, I have received, and was pleased to find that you are still alive and in the enjoyment of good health. It had been so long since I heard from you that I did not know what might have occurred to prevent my hearing from you. I had written to you twice without receiving any answer to my letters, and therefore thought it useless to write again until I heard from you. You tell me, Mary, that you feel a great repugnance to letter writing; you certainly ought to strive to overcome it, as it interferes with the duty and politeness that you owe to your friends. I can assure you that I dislike writing *very* much, as I am old, being now more than seventy-six years of age, of course feeble. But whenever it is my duty to write, I do not always consult my inclination, and always feel the reproaches of conscience, when I put off doing my duty. Dear Mary, I hope that in all that you do, you will study *duty* rather than *in-*

clination, for we are all so depraved by nature that we are too apt to follow the inclinations of our corrupt hearts if left to ourselves. We ought then to pray fervently to Almighty God, to grant us the gift of his blessed Spirit, to guide and direct us in our thoughts, words and actions, and to convert our hearts to a crucified Saviour, who ever liveth to make intercession for sinners who repent and believe on him. Pray to him, Mary, to give you *self-knowledge*, to show you your sins, to set them in order before your mind—all the sins of your past life, and to give you the grace of a gospel repentance for them, and a strong and abiding faith in Christ, and in the merits of his atonement made for sinners.

“ I fear that I tire you, but it will evidence that I care for your soul's eternal welfare. Read your Bible, and pray the Lord to bless the word to your soul's everlasting good, and enable you to be a sincere Bible christian. Remember, Mary, that his all-seeing eye is continually upon us in all that

we think, say, or do. Then what manner of persons ought we to be! for God will not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. We must look to Jesus as our only hope of pardon and salvation, and to be freed from the power and dominion of sin. I am pleased at your saying, that you are trying to put away evil. Persevere in watching against it; pray to the Lord to help you by his grace to overcome sin. Mary, you said that you had been very sick; suppose you had died at that time, where would your precious soul have gone? This shows how we ought to be prepared for death and judgment. Did you thank the Lord for your recovery? and have you prayed that you might love and serve him better than you have done? I am pleased to find that you have got nearer to Dr. Plumer's church. I hope you go to hear him. I think Mrs. R—— would be pleased at hearing him preach, he is one among our great preachers, that is, he preaches faithfully; he was our minister for several years, and boarded

in my family until I gave up house-keeping. * * * *

“P. S. I have enclosed to you a gold dollar: if you have not that good book, “Doddridge’s Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,” take thirty-seven and a half cents of this dollar and purchase one. You will appreciate this letter when I tell you that I have felt very unwell this morning, but now feel better, and only tired from writing. Farewell, dear Mary. May the Almighty bestow the riches of his grace upon you, and grant you spiritual mercies and every needed temporal blessing, is the desire of your sincere friend,

“S. C. BORT.”

We close this chapter with a few sentences from her last letter, written but a short time before death, and addressed to Dr. Spotswood. It covers four pages, and has a note on the margin of affectionate remembrance to the

family. It relates mainly to the deep affliction of her niece, Mrs. M. B. L., in the loss of her beloved daughter residing in St. Louis. We would not reopen the wounds of the bereaved living, by transcribing what she says on that subject.

“ PETERSBURG, *Feb. 10th, 1853.*

“I received your welcome letter, my dear John, this morning, which has relieved my mind of much solicitude about dear Sarah's health. I rejoice with you all in her being restored to such a degree, as to enable her to leave her room, and preside again at her table with her husband and children, cheered by the happy, smiling faces of her family. I sincerely hope that her recovery may be permanent, and that her heavenly Father may bless and sanctify her late sickness for her everlasting benefit; and if consistent with his will, spare her life to aid you in bringing up your dear children 'in the

nurture and admonition of the Lord.' It has been on my mind to write to her, but I have been so feeble since my illness, especially during the late warm spell of weather, that I sat up very little. I felt reluctant to write even a note, and that with a pencil, still I could not be satisfied not to write to dear Sarah and to the dear bereaved ones in St. Louis. I said to Effie this morning that I had *letters* to write to-day, but I expect if I finish this it will be as much as I can do. * * * My lungs were a good deal affected by my first attack in the spring. The doctor sounded them and found one of them inflamed. This last attack about two months ago, I had a troublesome cough, and a good deal of expectoration."

CHAPTER XIII.

CLOSING SCENES—STILL AT WORK—PEACEFUL DEATH—FUNERAL SERVICES—ESTIMATE OF HER CHARACTER—CONCLUSION.

THE last severe attacks, referred to in the correspondence, had entirely destroyed the little remaining strength of Mrs. Bott, and established a disease of the lungs, which terminated her useful life, in March, 1853.

The event had been anticipated for some time by her friends, though, until a few days before her departure, it did not seem to herself to be so near at hand.

During the few preceding weeks, she might generally be found reclining upon the sofa, in her favourite corner,

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where the light from the window would fall upon her work, without paining her eyes. There as she reclined, supported with pillows, her attenuated and trembling hands were still busied at their wonted work, in fashioning from patches and fragments of silk and morocco, some little fabrics of beauty, for "the society." Overcome by sheer exhaustion, the work would often fall from her hands, and then with closed eyes, and upturned countenance, clasping her hands upon her breast, her lips would move in silent prayer; when after a few moments, as if awaking from a trance, her work would be quietly resumed. Her strength gradually failing, she was at last compelled to keep her bed; but even then, bolstered up in it, she would have her work, and when the summons came which called

her to "come up higher," she laid down her work and her life together.

Of her exercises during these closing scenes we cannot say that they were joyous, or that there was anything, to mortal view, indicative of triumph in her death. We have seen those, concerning whose prospects for the future world we had far less confidence, manifesting far more assurance than she did. And we have often thought, that it was more than doubtful, whether the strongest expressions of hope were always to be taken as indications of the surest foundation of confidence. The dying experiences of God's own people are very different, and the difference is not always easy to be accounted for. We think they should be interpreted with great caution, and though the living may draw from them

what consolation they can, as it regards the dead, yet as it regards themselves, they should always be taught, that a life of faith and godliness is an unspeakably better evidence of acceptance in Christ, than any words of hope or confidence in a final hour. If one may be mistaken as to the ground of acceptance, and the evidence of a personal interest in Christ, when the mind is calm and the thoughts collected, certainly we should say there was the possibility of delusion also, amid the agitations of weeping friends, and the excitements of an often enfeebled mind, in the immediate prospect of death. We suppose it is true of the most eminent christians, that God more frequently sends them resignation than rapture, and, so far as the evidence of a gracious state is concerned, patience

and peace in a dying hour are quite as satisfactory as triumphs and transports.

Mrs. Bott's extreme conscientiousness made her a severe judge upon herself, and induced a deep sense of personal unworthiness. As her letters have shown, she had an appalling sense of death, as the great crisis of being, and her conceptions of eternal realities were too strong and vivid, for her to be otherwise than deeply solicitous about the issue to herself. In her last conversation with the writer, she said that she had never enjoyed that degree of assured hope which she had heard others express. And yet when asked if she had any fears, or falterings of faith, in the promises, and the sufficiency of Christ as her Saviour, she promptly replied, "Oh! no, no! I rely on him." "But pray for me," she

said, on parting, "that I may have dying grace." And if "dying grace" consists, in being enabled to lay off this mortal body, in a calm and peaceful trust in the Redeemer, with a full sense of what is implied in that tremendous event, the soul's entrance into the eternal state, she had it.

We have said there were no visible triumphs in her death. But if no shout of victory was heard by those who looked upon the contest with "the last enemy," it was because the contest carried the victor beyond their hearing. The triumphs of the redeemed when they awake in the likeness of Christ, come not back to our ears across the dark river, but rise to swell the chorus of the "new song" around the throne of God and the Lamb. The utmost we ought to expect, as we see them launch

away into the unseen world, is the confidence of a good hope, "which is as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, whither also the Forerunner hath for us entered."

The news of Mrs. Bott's death soon spread over Petersburg, and it was regarded as a public bereavement. Her praises were on every tongue, and the expressions of confidence in her piety, and its eternal recompence of reward, were sometimes striking. Even those who manifested no concern as to their own prospects for eternity, yet seemed deeply impressed with the thought, that it was, undoubtedly, well with her. We heard one irreligious man, of middle life, say, "I would rather be Mrs. Bott in her coffin to-day, with her hereafter, than be the richest man in Petersburg, and take my chance."

The Session of the church officiated as pall-bearers at her funeral. The services were held in the Tabb street Presbyterian church, and that spacious edifice was crowded to its utmost capacity. Rich and poor, old and young, the pious and the worldly, and some who seldom entered a church came then to pay their tribute of respect to eminent, unostentatious worth. The servants' gallery was filled, for there was not one of them, who did not know and revere Mrs. Bott.

After reading the wise man's description of the virtuous woman, in the last chapter of Proverbs, which seemed as if written for the occasion, the sermon was preached from those words of Christ's intercessory prayer, (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be

with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

At the close of the services, most of the large concourse of people followed the remains to "Blandford churchyard," where they were deposited in the family enclosure beside those of her excellent husband. Not long after Mrs. Bott's decease, the ladies of the congregation assembled at the annual meeting of the "Education Society," and they expressed their high estimate of her character and usefulness, first, by changing the name of the society to "The Mrs. Bott's Education Society of the Presbyterian Church," thus perpetuating her memory in the institution of which she had been the principal support.

Secondly, they resolved unanimously to erect a suitable monument over her grave, and the visitor to the "old church-yard" may now see rising above the ivy-covered walls of the little family enclosure, a chaste and beautiful obelisk of Italian marble, bearing on three sides the following inscriptions.

(FIRST SIDE.)

MRS. SUSAN C. BOTT

DEPARTED THIS LIFE,

MARCH 4th, 1853,

AGED 77 YEARS.

AS A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION, AND A MEMORIAL OF HER EMINENT PIETY, THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE LADIES OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
PETERSBURG.

(SECOND SIDE.)

“MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE VIRTU-
OUSLY, BUT THOU EXCELLEST THEM
ALL.” — PROV. XXXI. 27.

(THIRD SIDE.)

THE FRIEND OF THE POOR.
THE ADMIRATION OF THE GOOD.
AN EXAMPLE TO ALL.

Such a tribute, so well deserved, is worth more than the proudest mausoleum, or the most costly monument in Westminster Abbey.

It only remains for us, in the conclusion of this little memoir, to indicate some prominent points in the attractive character, which we have imperfectly delineated.

1. This is not the less difficult from the completeness and symmetry of her character. As a building, all whose

parts are in perfect harmony of proportion and design, while it produces a more pleasing effect, is yet less easily described than one marked by some architectural anomaly or extravagance; so is it with certain characters which charm us, without our being well able to indicate their most striking traits. Mrs. Bott's character was, if we may so express it, well balanced, and her tendencies were held in equipoise, to an extent which prevented any observable singularities.

2. In saying this however, we except of course her singular devotedness to her Master's work. This is the point which it has been our aim mainly to exhibit, as an example worthy of all imitation. No one could be for any time in her presence without being strongly impressed by it. Though it

was far from ostentatious, yet its manifestation was irrepressible. To do good was the great end and effort of her life. Her whole heart was in it, and "the abundance of the heart" stood revealed in every word and act, in spite of herself. She was "a living epistle, known and read of all men," in her "work of faith, and labours of love."

3. The prevailing tone of her piety was deep and solemn. Spiritual and unseen realities had to her an actual, present existence. The momentous interests of the soul, the thoughts of eternity, impressed her mind with habitual seriousness, and sometimes with awful solemnity. She had a profound veneration for the name of God, and a deep reverence for whatever pertains to his worship. The Sabbath

was to her a sacred day, to be wholly given to religion; the sanctuary was the house of God, which she entered with a devout sense of his presence.

A casual observer might have thought that her religion was gloomy. But with all the solemn earnestness with which she entered upon its duties, few persons maintained a temper and habit so uniformly pleasant and cheerful. She was often serious, but never moody. The gravity of her expression was softened by an easy smile, and her conversation, though never frivolous, was often enlivened by a vein of genial, quiet humour.

4. It is no contradiction to say, that she was very courageous, and very timid. Few delicate ladies would have ventured alone into those by-ways and alleys where she was often found, on

her errands of mercy. She was not the woman to shriek and faint at the sight of human suffering and wretchedness. Her sensibility took a different form of manifestation, and hastened to its relief. The prospect of doing good emboldened her to come in contact with degradation and misery, and in the panoply of unquestioned and unquestionable goodness, her delicacy never suffered by the contact.

And yet she was very timid: not in the sense of lacking personal courage, but in her fear of not doing exactly right. Her conscience was so sensitive as almost to amount to scrupulosity. Though very decided where her own mind was perfectly clear, yet her timidity made her often defer to the judgment of others. In regard to her own spiritual condition and prospects,

she was most of all fearful. Very great, and very humbling, was the sense of her own unworthiness, and whatever others might think of her, she thought herself "the least of all saints." There was no affectation about this; no pride of humility, no self-depreciation to extort the praise of contradiction. She felt so, and her sense of the evil of sin, and her estimate of the holiness becoming to a child of God, an heir of heaven, made her feel it.

5. Very decided in her denominational preferences, and a Presbyterian from conviction, she was also very liberal in her feelings toward all evangelical christians. She studied the doctrines of the Bible, in the Bible itself, and in the expositions of standard authors. Among her papers are

many slips, containing selected passages, from Baxter, Doddridge, Owen, Scott, and Henry; and many of these are upon the great points of doctrine. She loved the Presbyterian church, not merely because it was her own, but because she believed in its standards. But whilst she prayed for its prosperity, and laboured for its interests, she had a warm heart for piety, by whatever name it was called, or in whatever communion it was found.

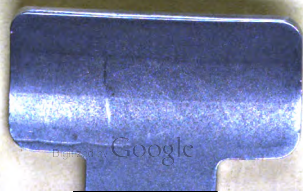
6. That she was eminently a prayerful christian, the reader knows already. Without being this, she could not have been eminent in anything else. "This kind goeth not forth except by fasting and prayer." Her sense of insufficiency and weakness kept her near the throne of grace, and her communion with God at the mercy-seat gave

peace to her mind, wisdom to her tongue, and cunning to her hands. Prayer, constant, fervent, humble, believing prayer, was the secret of her eminent piety, and her eminent usefulness. Without being remarkable in this, she would have been remarkable in no christian attainment.

7. Taken as a whole, her character exhibited a marked illustration of the power of divine grace. We have not designed to represent her as having attained to perfection, or as by any means faultless. But without seeking to heighten the colouring of our sketch by the least exaggeration, we have aimed to convey the impression of a character, which will long be cherished by all who knew her, as that of a beautiful example of female piety and usefulness.

And now that we have finished our task, very imperfectly indeed, we leave it to the judgment of the reader, and to the benediction of heaven, in the hope that our little book may not be unwelcome to the many "daughters of Zion," and by divine grace, may be useful in leading some to emulate the zeal and devotion of the "ELECT LADY."

THE END.



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