**The life of William Wilberforce / by his sons, Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce ; abridged from the London edition by Caspar Morris.**


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Dec^r 25^th 1839

THE

# LIFE

OF

# WILLIAM WILBERFORCE:


BY HIS SONS,

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M. A.

VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE;

AND

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A.

RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.


ABRIDGED FROM THE LONDON EDITION

BY CASPAR MORRIS, M.D.


PHILADELPHIA:

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# PREFACE.

It has been well remarked, that there is no more powerful instrument of useful or pernicious influence on mankind than Biography. Addressing itself to that propensity to imitation which exists to a greater or less degree in every mind, it allures by the force of example, and carries feeling and judgment alike captive in its train. There are those who, during life, pursuing the noiseless tenor of their way, "have shrunk to hear the obstreperous trump of Fame," who have, however, walked so "holy, harmless and undefiled" in the circumscribed sphere in which they have moved, that it becomes a duty to give wider extent to their usefulness by diffusing the knowledge that such an one has lived and how. Others, "the observed of all observers," placed by the providence of God in exalted stations, have occupied the many talents committed to their care with equal diligence and devotion to their Master's service. The wide spread influence of such cannot be increased—eulogy is not only wasted upon them, it becomes defamation,—the duty of the biographer is to catch as it were the light from their splendid public actions, and reflect it upon the minor virtues of life, that so they may shine, not with a borrowed but a filial splendour, and attract the attention of the multitude, who, while they may not emulate the greater display, may be led to imitate the smaller but not less important actions which constitute the great sum of duty. This prominent station was occupied by William Wilberforce. Not one nation, but the whole human family participated in the benefit he conferred on his fellow-men. Had he done no more than lead on the battle which resulted in the Abolition of the Slave Trade, his would have been unrivalled honour. Other men have given freedom to their own country—he was the successful champion of humanity; and it may be questioned whether the benefit he conferred on bleeding Africa or oppressing Europe was the greatest. He stanched the wounds of the one, while he stayed the progress of the other in a career of oppression and cruelty which could not but have called down the just vengeance of a righteous God. To Africa, that God has ordained a recompense for her wrongs, in the reflection back upon her darkened shores of the benefits of Christianity which will result from the temporary sojourn of her sons in a cruel bondage on ours. While to them that did the wrong no result will follow but evil, unless the wrong be repented of and forsaken, and so far as possible reparation made.

But it was not the wrong of Africa alone which excited his sympathy, and drew forth his active exertions for its relief. Wherever a door of usefulness was opened, however wide and large or narrow and confined, he was ready to enter and labour; and whether it was for the extension of the blessings of the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus to the benighted millions of Hindoostan, or the handfuls of Cheddar, the relief of the temporal sufferings of the victims of war

on the Continent, or the poor inmates of the London jail, his alacrity and diligence in doing good were alike worthy to be commended and imitated. There was a holy energy of character and singleness of purpose about him, which will always enable its possessor to accomplish great things. Regarding habitually every faculty he possessed as a talent bestowed upon him for the proper use of which he was responsible, his labours were unceasing that he might be enabled to render an account with joy. He fulfilled closely the directions of one whose friendship was a source of delight to him, *believing* as one who knew that his salvation depended on faith, and *labouring* to adorn that faith as though it were to be found in return for the merit of his works.

To be admitted to the freedom of unreserved intercourse with such a man—to hear him pour forth from the treasure of his heart the secret thoughts which gushed from its hidden fountains—to enter with him to the inner chambers of reflection, and join with him in the consultations from which his mighty acts resulted, would have been esteemed an inestimable privilege; and to this his sons have admitted us. From the period at which he was *converted*, a change which he himself describes as being as great as that which transformed the persecutor of the primitive church into the apostle of the Gentiles, he kept regular records of the daily events of his life and the changing feelings of his heart. What proportion of these have been published by his sons none but themselves know. It has been enough, however, to place his character on the most exalted platform of human excellence. Having adopted for his standard the highest possible model, the example of the incarnate Son of God, and continually comparing himself, not with himself and other equally fallible men, but with this supreme pattern of excellence, his Diary will be found to abound with those humble confessions of unworthiness and guilt which properly result from such self-examination, whilst the testimony of those who, without witnessing, or being privy to the struggles by which the inbred corruption of the heart was kept in subjection, saw only the precious fruit which resulted from his self-denying labours, exhibits the impression made by his example on all by whom he was surrounded. It is not, however, to be supposed that his lot was exempt from those "cruel mockings," and that "shame," and that "malignant blackening calumny," the influence of which he has himself so feelingly depicted. These are declared by the unerring wisdom of Him who "needed not that any should tell him, for he knew what was in man," to be the unavoidable portion of his followers. In the memoir we find traces of them enough to indicate that he partook of a large portion of that "evil speaking which will follow good works." But for all he possessed a sovereign balm of which he continually availed himself in that spirit of prayer which formed the most marked trait of his character. Whether oppressed by the care of empires or the trifling anxieties of life, he still sought that wisdom which God hath promised to bestow liberally on all who seek it; and that he realized the fulfilment of the promise, his whole career, which was most truly like that of the "light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," affords manifest demonstration. His votes in the House of

Commons, his intercourse with society and with his family, were all sanctified by prayer; and at no stage of his career did he appear to be ashamed to confess his dependence on the grace of God thus sought. How rare an example does he exhibit when we behold him, the familiar friend not only of princes, nobles, and prime-ministers, but sought after as the companion of kings, withdrawing from the glare of earthly greatness and favour to pray with the sick servants of his acquaintance or the penitent convict in his cell! When we thus see the hidden sources of his strength and power, we cannot wonder at the success which crowned all his efforts, nor at the boldness with which he separated himself, when convinced of the necessity of doing so, from those friends with whom he commonly acted in concert of principle and feeling. Such legislators, like the righteous men sought in vain in Sodom, to adopt the idea of Mr. W.'s favourite poet, save a country. Such was the source of that courage which led him to face the threatened violence of the excited population on the one hand, and on the other to incur the hazard of sacrificing the friendship even of Pitt, when the conflict arose between duty to his friend and his God. There was, however, another feature in his character which, springing from the same source, pervaded equally all his actions. This was his entire independence. Whether in politics or religion, he examined for himself with minuteness of scrutiny and quickness of perception, and when he saw the right he pursued it steadfastly, no matter who saw differently. Yet that this resulted from no hasty determination followed up by obstinate persistance in his own opinions without regard to consequences, the memoir contains abundant proof. In religion the same character of mind which led him at the outset of his career to forfeit a positive advantage rather than subscribe to articles of faith which he did not hold, caused him in after life, when the most dispassionate examination had resulted in the full adoption of those very Articles, to adhere to them with all the fondness of the most intense devotion, and his Diary abounds with entries which indicate his attachment to the Church of England. Thus, when on one occasion, he accompanied a friend whom he dearly loved, and whose Christian character he held in the highest estimation, to a dissenting place of worship, he comments on the manner in which it was conducted on his return, specifying the absence of "Scripture reading and Common Prayer" as reasons for the thankfulness he expresses that he did not belong to their communion; and frequently he remarks in his Diary on the self-denial he exercised in abstaining from frequenting other places of worship, lest his example might weaken the attachment of any to that portion of the church of Jesus which he esteemed most nearly conformed to the model of primitive Christianity in doctrine, discipline, and form of prayer. And yet with all this attachment to her formularies, how far was he from that narrow-minded bigotry which would confine the favour of God within any limits! While he wished to see the church foremost in every good word and work, how ready was he to seek the co-operation of those who thought differently. Methodists and even Baptists were proud of his friendship, and looked to him as their advocate, and he did not hesitate to admit "Friends" to the favour

of intimacy, expressing his admiration of their devotedness to every good work: nor did he fear to stand almost alone among truly religious men, in supporting the admission of Romanists to seats in Parliament, much as he deprecated the errors into which he believed them to be fallen. The same entire independence was shown too in his views on the great question which so engrossed his thoughts during the twenty years of his prime; and if all the advocates of Negro emancipation had manifested the same temper, and prosecuted the enterprise in the same spirit of charity, neither thinking evil nor answering railing by railing, (to say nothing of those who appear to think that loud and angry denunciation is the strongest weapon in their armoury,) the true supporters of the cause would have had less reason to wish to be "delivered from their friends."

There is no intention of entering here into the merits of this questio vxeata. The abridgment and republication of this memoir was not undertaken with the view of its exercising any influence upon it. The circumstances of Great Britain and the United States are so dissimilar, that no reasoning can be brought from the one to bear upon the other. The expression of thankfulness that England could be just while she was generous, which flowed from the dying lips of the great Champion of British Emancipation, separates the actors there from the agitators here, not less widely than the ocean which rolls between the countries. Most fervently is the coming of that time to be desired, when, through the prevalence of Christian faith and practice, wrong and violence and oppression shall be banished from the earth; when the servant shall be found "doing service with good will as to the Lord and not to man," and the "master rendering to the servant that which is just and equal." But every unhallowed weapon employed in the cause recoils on the head of him that uses it, and every unbidden hand stretched forth in the service but calls destruction on its mover, while the poor objects of sympathy are made to groan in still deeper bondage, from the misdirected efforts of their ill-judging friends.

The publication of his work on "Practical Christianity" was another of those efforts which required the exercise of great firmness of principle, not only from the reproach to which it subjected him among worldly men, but still more from its own peculiar character: stigmatized by the bigoted of one side as "Calvinistic," and by those of the other as "Legal," it came forth unsupported by any party in the church, depending for its success only on its truth and conformity to the Word of God, and its adaptedness to the wants of man. Yet where is there a book which has more approved itself to the judgment and the heart? Where is there one (a few only excepted, such as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and the works of Baxter and Doddridge,) whose influence has been more extensive? Not to mention those who have owed their conversion to its instrumentality, what multitudes have found strength and confirmation in its pages. But had every copy been destroyed except that which, blown on the wings of chance, as the world would say—carried, doubtless, by the angels of God, each humble Christian will believe—found its way to the lowly parsonage of an insignificant village in

the Isle of Wight, still from so small a seed has started up so noble a growth as has caused, and will cause to the end of time "joy in the presence of the angels of God" more abundant than can now be known or conceived. What countless numbers in every quarter of the world owe their salvation to the agency of Legh Richmond's writings—and but for Wilberforce's "Practical View," Legh Richmond had passed through life unconverted himself and unblessed to others. But zealous and faithful as he was in all he undertook, there was always an unwillingness to put himself forward, and discretion in judging what might be promoted and what injured by his agency. When, for instance, the friends of Jenner sought to procure for him parliamentary compensation for the pecuniary loss to which he was subjected in the prosecution of those experiments which resulted in conferring upon mankind the highest temporal boon which ever was bestowed on our race, Wilberforce was applied to, to take upon himself the lead in the House of Commons. What were the motives by which he was induced to decline we are not informed, but that they were wholly foreign from any want of interest in the case itself, is proved by the following letter, which has recently been printed in the life of Jenner.

"Palace Yard, Feb. 24, 1802.

"My dear Sir,

I have often thought of addressing you on the subject we conversed about formerly; that, I mean, of your valuable discovery becoming the topic of parliamentary discussion, with a view to your receiving some compensation for your eminent services to the community. I hoped long ere now to see the matter brought forward, and always intended, whenever it should be so, to give you my best assistance on a principle of duty. I really thought, as I told you, there were reasons why I was by no means an eligible introducer of the subject; and I could not just now undertake it, on account of my being engaged to render a similar service (though contrary to my own judgment) to another gentleman. But are you aware that Friday next is the last day for presenting private petitions, and that a petition is the proper mode of bringing your discovery before Parliament? If I can be of any use in advising you, I shall be unaffectedly glad, and in rendering you any assistance I am able.

At all events I am persuaded you will do justice to the motive which prompts me to address you thus frankly, and believe me, with esteem and regard,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

W. Wilberforce."

There was nothing more remarkable in his whole history, than the triumph it exhibits of the Divine Grace over natural imperfection. Most truly could he say, "by the grace of God I am what I am." Naturally versatile, nay by more than one of his warmest admirers his mind is spoken of as volatile, nothing short of the powerful control of the all-absorbing feeling of love in return for the love bestowed on him, could have enabled him to persevere

as he did, abounding in the work of the Lord. Mr. Gurney, in his delightful "Familiar Sketch," which no one can read without the regret that it is so exceedingly cursory, and the greater part of which has been embodied in this work with his own consent, speaking of this trait says, "I have mentioned the quickness with which he used to turn from one object of thought and conversation to another. In fact, there was nothing more remarkable in him than his versatility. His mind was of a highly discursive character; and it was often extremely amusing to observe how, while pursuing any particular subject, he was caught by some bright idea which flashed across his path and carried him off (for a time at least) in a wholly different direction. This peculiarity belonged to his genius, and was even a means of multiplying the instruction which his conversation afforded. * * * But the volubility of his intellect was balanced by the stability and faithfulness of his moral qualities. Where the happiness of man and the glory of God were in his view, he was for ever *recurring* to his point."—That he had other failings cannot be doubted: that they "had not dominion over him," but were kept in subjection, is manifest by the following memoir which displays the secret workings of his heart, and brings the reader acquainted, not only with the results but with the struggles by which the victory was attained. This constitutes its only merit. The very nature of its composition renders it irregular, and it was at one time designed to remodel it entirely. But a more attentive examination resulted in the conviction, that whatever it might gain in regularity would be more than counterbalanced by the loss of that fresh, personal, autobiographic character which now constitutes its charm. Wilberforce is made to tell the story of his own life, in his own words, and nothing is introduced except where it was necessary by way of explanation, or to preserve the connexion. Many of the papers which afford the material of the work he had directed should be destroyed, but was induced to permit his nearest relations to make from them such selections as they should think it advisable to publish. It is intended to issue an additional volume of correspondence, for which all who admire him, and this includes all the admirers of virtue and excellence, will wait with anxious impatience.

It appears proper before closing this preface, to notice briefly the fact that an unhappy controversy has been excited in England, by the manner in which the original work treats the character and labours of Mr. Clarkson. That the most cordial and entirely mutual friendship existed between them, closed only by death, is plainly manifest to all who examine the question, and most deeply is it to be lamented, that names so long joined in holy fellowship should now be dissevered; lovely in life how sad that in death they should be divided! It has been the endeavour in preparing this abridgment to omit every thing bearing on the subject, from the thorough conviction that each did what he could, and that as fellow-members of one body each was found, working in his appointed place in harmony and with good feeling toward the other; and it is to be hoped that the temporary cloud which has cast its dark shadow upon a scene which was once illuminated by the bright glow of holy affection may soon be forgotten, and nothing be remembered but their cordial co-operation and mutual esteem.

THE

# LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.

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William Wilberforce, only son of Robert Wilberforce and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Bird, Esq. of Barton, Oxon, was born at Hull, where his father was a merchant in the Baltic trade, upon the feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24, A. D. 1759. He was the third of four children, but of his three sisters the second only arrived at maturity.

Of his early years little is recorded. His frame from infancy was feeble, his stature small, his eyes weak,—a failing which with many rich mental endowments he inherited from his mother. It was one amongst the many expressions of his gratitude in after-life "that I was not born in less civilized times, when it would have been thought impossible to rear so delicate a child." But with these bodily infirmities were united a vigorous mind, and a temper eminently affectionate. An unusual thoughtfulness for others marked his youngest childhood: "I shall never forget," says a frequent guest at his mother's, "how he would steal into my sick room, taking off his shoes lest he should disturb me, and with an anxious face looking through my curtains to learn if I was better." At seven years old he was sent to the grammar school of Hull, of which Joseph Milner was soon afterwards master. "Even then his elocution was so remarkable," says the younger Milner, at that time his brother's assistant, "that we used to set him upon a table, and make him read aloud as an example to the other boys." The death of his father in the summer of 1768 transferred him at nine years of age to the care of his uncle William Wilberforce; and after a week's residence at Nottingham, he was sent to live with him at Wimbledon and in St.

James' Place. Such was then the standard measure of private education, that the school at which he was soon afterwards placed was of the meanest character. "Mr. Chalmers the master, himself a Scotchman, had an usher of the same nation, whose red beard—for he scarcely shaved once a month—I shall never forget. They taught writing, French, arithmetic, and Latin—with Greek we did not much meddle. It was frequented chiefly by the sons of merchants, and they taught therefore every thing and nothing. Here I continued some time as a parlour boarder: I was sent at first amongst the lodgers, and I can remember even now the nauseous food with which we were supplied, and which I could not eat without sickness."

He remained two years at this school, spending his holidays at his uncle's house, with occasional visits to Nottingham and Hull. He is described at this time as "a fine sharp lad," whose activity and spirit made up in boyish sports for some deficiency of strength. One incident of these years deserves special notice from its assisting, as he thought, to form what was undoubtedly a striking feature in his later character. He received from the late John Thornton, the brother of his aunt, with whom he was travelling, a present much exceeding the usual amount of a boy's possessions, intended to enforce the precept with which it was accompanied, that some should be given to the poor.

When he quitted Hull no great pains had been taken to form his religious principles. His mother indeed was a woman of real excellence, as well as of great and highly cultivated talents, but not possessed at this time of those views of the spiritual nature of religion, which she adopted in later life: "She was what I should call an Archbishop Tillotson Christian." But in his uncle's house he was subjected to a new and powerful influence. His aunt was a great admirer of Whitefield's preaching, and kept up a friendly connexion with the early methodists. The lively affections of his heart, warmed by the kindness of his friends, readily assumed their tone. A stranger has noticed the rare and pleasing character of piety which marked his twelfth year.

He has himself recorded his deliberate judgment of this early promise. "Under these influences my mind was interested by religious subjects. How far these impressions were genuine I can hardly determine, but at least I may venture to say that I was sincere. There are letters of mine, written at that period, still in existence, which accord

much with my present sentiments." In 1831 he makes the following entry in his Diary. "A packet from Hull, enclosing letters of mine from Pocklington school rather too much in the style of the religious letters of that day, and (astonishing!) asking my leave to publish them. As I cannot doubt my having expressed the sentiments and feelings of my heart, I am sensibly impressed with a sense of the dreadful effects of the efforts afterwards used but too successfully to wean me from all religion, and to cherish the love of pleasure and the love of glory in the opening bud of youth."

The symptoms of his changing character were perceived with great alarm at Hull, and it was at once determined that his mother should repair to London, and remove him from the dangerous influence. He returned with her to Yorkshire, quitting his uncle's family with deep regret. His presence had kindled their parental feelings, and he had soon returned them the affection of a son. "I deeply felt the parting for I loved them as parents: indeed, I was almost heart-broken at the separation." "I can never forget you," he wrote to his uncle, "as long as I live."

At twelve years old he returned to his mother's house, where it became the object of his friends by the seductions of gayety and self-indulgence to charm away that serious spirit which had taken possession of his youthful bosom—

"Et sanctos restinguere fontibus ignes."

The habits of society in Hull assisted their design. In a manuscript memorandum he mentions, "It was then as gay a place as could be found out of London. The theatre, balls, great suppers, and card-parties, were the delight of the principal families in the town. The usual dinner hour was two o'clock, and at six they met at sumptuous suppers. This mode of life was at first distressing to me, but by degrees I acquired a relish for it, and became as thoughtless as the rest. As grandson to one of the principal inhabitants, I was every where invited and caressed: my voice and love of music made me still more acceptable. The religious impressions which I had gained at Wimbledon continued for a considerable time after my return to Hull, but my friends spared no pains to stifle them. I might almost say, that no pious parent ever laboured more to impress a beloved child with sentiments of piety, than they did to give me a taste for the world and its diversions." The strength of principle

they had to overcome was indeed remarkable. "When first taken to a play, it was almost," he says, "by force." At length, however, they succeeded; and the allurements of worldly pleasure led his youth away from all serious thought. At home there was nothing but gayety and amusement; at school there was little diligence or restraint. His talents for general society with his rare skill in singing rendered him every where an acceptable guest, and his time was wasted in a round of visits to the neighbouring gentry. Already, however, he gave proofs of an active mind, and one remarkable anticipation of his future course is yet remembered. "His abomination of the slave trade," writes a surviving school-fellow, "he evinced when he was not more than fourteen years of age. He boarded in the master's house, where the boys were kept within bounds. I lived in the village. One day he gave me a letter to put into the post-office, addressed to the editor of the York paper, which he told me was in condemnation of the odious traffic in human flesh." He cultivated also a taste for literature. "He greatly excelled all the other boys in his compositions, though he seldom began them till the eleventh hour." For his own amusement he committed English poetry to memory, and he went up to the University "a very fair scholar."

With the self-indulgent habits formed by such a life he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, Oct. 1776, at the age of seventeen years. And here he was at once exposed to new temptations. Left, by the death of his grandfather and uncle, the master of an independent fortune under his mother's sole guardianship, "I was introduced," says he, "on the very first night of my arrival, to as licentious a set of men as can well be conceived. They drank hard, and their conversation was even worse than their lives. I lived amongst them for some time, though I never relished their society, . . often, indeed, I was horror-struck at their conduct, . . and after the first year I shook off in great measure my connexion with them." For the last two years he spent at Cambridge he was the centre of a higher circle. Amiable, animated, and hospitable, he was a universal favourite. "There was no one," says the Rev. T. Gisborne, "at all like him for powers of entertainment. Always fond of repartee and discussion, he seemed entirely free from conceit and vanity." He had already commenced the system of frank and simple hospitality, which marked his London life. "There was always a great Yorkshire pie in his rooms, and

all were welcome to partake of it. My rooms and his were back to back, and often when I was raking out my fire at ten o'clock, I heard his melodious voice calling aloud to me to come and sit with him before I went to bed. It was a dangerous thing to do, for his amusing conversation was sure to keep me up so late, that I was behind-hand the next morning." He lived much at this time amongst the Fellows of the college. "But those," he says, "with whom I was intimate, did not act towards me the part of Christians, or even of honest men. Their object seemed to be, to make and keep me idle. If ever I appeared studious, they would say to me, 'Why in the world should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?' I was a good classic, and acquitted myself well in the college examinations; but mathematics, which my mind greatly needed, I almost entirely neglected, and was told that I was too clever to require them. Whilst my companions were reading hard and attending lectures, card parties and idle amusements consumed my time. The tutors would often say within my hearing, that '*they* were mere saps, but that I did all by talent.' This was poison to a mind constituted like mine." This life of idleness at college was only exchanged in vacation time for the ordinary gayeties of Hull, now increased by the presence of the militia, or for journeys in search of pleasure with his mother and sister. It was surely of God's especial goodness that in such a course he was preserved from profligate excess. For though he could say in after-life, that upon the habits thus formed by evil influence and unbounded license "he could not look back without unfeigned remorse," yet he had rather to deplore neglected opportunities of moral and intellectual profit, than vicious practice or abandoned principles.*

"I certainly did not then think and act as I do now," he declared long afterwards; "but I was so far from what the world calls licentious, that I was rather complimented on being better than young men in general."

Diligently did he strive in after years to supply the omissions of his youth; but to the end of life he ceased not to deplore a certain want of mental regularity, which he traced to the neglect of early discipline, and he subsequently re-

* Lord Clarendon, his friend at college and through life, thus describes his conduct. "He had never in the smallest degree a dissolute character, however short his early habits might be of that constant piety and strictness, which was soon perfected in his happy disposition."

monstrated with the tutor to whose charge he had been confided, on the guilt of suffering those, of whom he was in some sort the guardian, to inflict upon themselves so irreparable an injury. That there was even in this time of thoughtlessness a hidden vein of deeper feeling, was shown by his refusing, when unexpectedly required, to declare his assent to the Articles of the church, though the refusal cost him for a time the convenience of an academical degree. Further inquiry removed his hesitation, but he would not at mature age, when his education was completed, declare his concurrence in religious dogmas which he had not examined.

Before he quitted college, Mr. Wilberforce had resolved to enter upon public life. His ample fortune, and a taste for more liberal pursuits, led him to decline business, and as a speedy dissolution of Parliament was expected, he commenced a canvass for the representation of his native town.

After a successful canvass on the spot, he repaired to London, where about three hundred Hull freemen resided in the vicinity of the river; these he entertained at suppers in the different public houses of Wapping, and by his addresses to them, first gained confidence in public speaking. During this year he resided in lodgings in the Adelphi, and constantly frequented the gallery of the House of Commons. Here he often fell in with Mr. Pitt, then serving the same apprenticeship to public business. They had formed at Cambridge a slight acquaintance, which now ripened into intimacy. As the summer advanced, he returned to Hull, with the most flattering prospects of success at the ensuing election. His hopes were almost disappointed by a hasty dissolution of the sitting parliament, which would have fixed the day of election before the expiration of his year of nonage, that "piger annus pupillis." The session however survived his birth-day, the feast of St. Bartholomew, which was welcomed by his friends with suitable rejoicings; and the townsmen were regaled with an ox roasted whole in one of his fields. The election opportunely followed; and on the 11th of September he was engaged in all the bustle of a sharp contest. Against him were arrayed the interest of Lord Rockingham, the most powerful nobleman in the county; that of Sir George Savile, its wealthy and respected representative, himself a frequent resident at Hull; and that of government, always strong at a sea-port. To these he could oppose nothing but the personal influence and inde-

pendent character of a young man of twenty. Yet such was the command he had established over the affections of his townsmen, that, at the close of the poll, he numbered singly as many votes as his opponents had received together.

This election cost him between £8000 and £9000. By long-established custom, the single vote of a resident elector was rewarded with a donation of two guineas; four were paid for a plumper; and the expenses of a freeman's journey from London averaged £10 a piece. The letter of the law was not broken, because the money was not paid until the last day on which election petitions could be presented. But the more matured judgment of Mr. Wilberforce condemned the custom to which he now conformed; and rather than so enter parliament, with his later principles, he has declared that he would have remained always a private man. His great success threw no small lustre on his entry into public life; and he was welcomed upon his return to London into every circle. He was at once elected a member of all the leading clubs. "When I went up to Cambridge," he has said, speaking of the risks to which he was then exposed, "I was scarcely acquainted with a single person above the rank of a country gentleman; and even when I left the University, so little did I know of general society, that I came up to London stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's Poems; and now I was at once immersed in politics and fashion. The very first time I went to Boodle's I won twenty-five guineas of the Duke of Norfolk. I belonged at this time to five clubs,—Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined from mere shyness in play at the faro table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me, 'What, Wilberforce, is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and turning to him, said in his most expressive tone, 'O sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce, he could not be better employed.' Nothing could be more luxurious than the style of these clubs. Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and all your leading men, frequented them, and associated upon the easiest terms; you chatted, played at cards, or gambled as you pleased." Though he visited occasionally these various clubs, his usual resort was with a choicer and more intimate society, who assembled first in the house since

occupied by Scrope and Morland's bank, in Pall Mall, and afterwards on the premises of a man named Goostree, now the Shakspeare Gallery.

They were about twenty-five in number, and for the most part were young men who had passed together through the University, and whom the general election of 1780 had brought at the same time into public life. Pitt was an habitual frequenter of the club at Goostree's, supping there every night during the winter of 1780-81. Here their intimacy increased every day. "He was the wittiest man I ever knew, and what was quite peculiar to himself, had at all times his wit under entire control. Others appeared struck by the unwonted association of brilliant images; but every possible combination of ideas seemed always present to his mind, and he could at once produce whatever he desired. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare, at the Boar's Head, East Cheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in the required allusions. He entered with the same energy into all our different amusements; we played a good deal at Goostree's, and I well remember the intense earnestness which he displayed when joining in those games of chance. He perceived their increasing fascination, and soon after suddenly abandoned them for ever."

It was by this vice that he was himself most nearly insnared. A brief diary of this period records more than once the loss of £100 at the faro table. He was weaned from it in a most characteristic manner. "We can have no play to-night," complained some of the party at the club, "for St. Andrew is not here to keep bank." "Wilberforce," said Mr. Bankes, (who never joined himself,) "if you will keep it I will give you a guinea." The playful challenge was accepted, but as the game grew deep, he rose the winner of £600. Much of this was lost by those who were only heirs to future fortunes, and could not therefore meet such a call without inconvenience. The pain he felt at their annoyance cured him of a taste which seemed but too likely to become predominant.

In spite of his life of gayety, Mr. Wilberforce attended closely to the House of Commons. He was esteemed a more active member of parliament than any of his predecessors. From the first he was an independent man: he had entered parliament as the opponent of the war with America,

and of Lord North's administration; yet to this ministry he gave his first vote.

In January, 1781, he was joined by Mr. Pitt, who having contested Cambridge University without success at the general election, now took his seat for the borough of Appleby. Community of objects naturally increased their friendship; yet not even to friendship with Pitt would he sacrifice his independence. "I well remember," he said long afterwards, "the pain I felt in being obliged to vote against Pitt, the second time he spoke in parliament." Yet though attentive to public business, he did not take an early part in the debates. "Attend to business," he said in later life to a friend entering the House of Commons, "and do not seek occasions of display; if you have a turn for speaking, the proper time will come. Let speaking take care of itself. I never go out of the way to speak, but make myself acquainted with the business, and then if the debate passes my door I step out and join it."

His first speech was upon the 17th of May, 1781, in a debate upon the laws of revenue, when, having presented a petition from the town of Hull, he forcibly attacked them as oppressive and unjust.

His landed property in Yorkshire was much scattered, and contained no country mansion. He was therefore left at liberty, when released from parliamentary attendance, to choose his place of residence. His passion for the beauties of scenery and the retirement of the country, was unusually strong. "When," he has said, "I was much confined in later life to London, I could scarcely leave the country for a town campaign without being affected even to tears."

A visit to a college friend had made him well acquainted with Westmoreland, then little visited by strangers; and for seven years he rented a house at Rayrigg on the banks of Windermere. Hither he retired with a goodly assortment of books, "classics, statutes at large, and history," as soon as the recess commenced, both in this and the succeeding summer. His studious attentions were however frustrated by the attractions of society. "St. Andrew St. John was with me here for months together during this summer; occasionally too my mother and my sister, and different college friends, joined our party. Boating, riding, and continual parties at my own house and Sir Michael le Fleming's, fully occupied my time until I returned to London in the following autumn."

He took more part this session in general business; and by a speech on the 22d of February, 1782, against Lord North's administration, obtained the loud commendations of Thomas Townshend.

So prevalent at this time was the idea that he was to be included in the new official arrangements, and raised to the Upper House, that he received various applications for the supply of his robes upon that occasion. The death of the Lord Rockingham, in July, 1782, was followed by Mr. Pitt's accession to the Shelburne ministry; and though Mr. Wilberforce, as he at this time assured a friend by letter, would do nothing which obliged him to pledge himself to government, yet he was led to assume a more forward position amongst the general supporters of his friend. They were now united in the closest intimacy. In the course of this spring, they set off for Brighton, to spend the Easter holidays together; and being driven thence on the very night of their arrival, by the inclemency of the weather, proceeded to Bath for the rest of the vacation. The early possession of his fortune increased their intimacy, as he was the only member of their set who owned a villa within reach of London. The house of his late uncle at Wimbledon, with some trifling alteration, gave him the command of eight or nine bedrooms; and here Pitt, to whom it was a luxury even to sleep in country air, took up not unfrequently his residence: their easy familiarity permitting him to ride down late at night and occupy his rooms, even though the master of the house was kept in town. In one spring Pitt resided there four months, and repaired thither when, in April, 1783, he resigned his official residence to the Coalition ministry.

"Eliot, Arden, and I," writes Pitt one afternoon, "will be with you before curfew, and expect an early meal of peas and strawberries. Bankes, I suppose, will not sleep out of Duke Street, but he has not yet appeared in the

House of Commons,

Half-past four."

This was the most critical period of his course. He had entered in his earliest manhood upon the dissipated scenes of fashionable life, with a large fortune and most acceptable manners. His ready wit, his conversation continually sparkling with polished raillery and courteous repartee, his chastened liveliness, his generous and kindly feelings; all secured him that hazardous applause with which society re-

wards its ornaments and victims. His rare accomplishment in singing tended to increase his danger. "Wilberforce, we must have you again; the Prince says he will come at any time to hear you sing," was the flattery which he received after his first meeting with the Prince of Wales, in 1782, at the luxurious soirées of Devonshire House.

He was also an admirable mimic, and until reclaimed by the kind severity of the old Lord Camden, would often set the table in a roar by his perfect imitation of Lord North. His affection for Lord Camden was an intimation at this very time of the higher texture of his mind. Often would he steal away from the merriment and light amusements of the gayer circle, to gather wisdom from the weighty words and chosen anecdotes in which the veteran Chancellor abounded. His affection was warmly returned by Lord Camden, who loved the cheerful earnestness with which he sought for knowledge. "Lord Camden noticed me particularly," he said, "and treated me with great kindness. Amongst other things, he cured me of the dangerous art of mimicry. When invited by my friends to witness my powers of imitation, he at once refused, saying slightingly for me to hear it, 'It is but a vulgar accomplishment.' 'Yes, but it is not imitating the mere manner; Wilberforce says the very thing Lord North would say.' 'Oh,' was his reply, 'every one does that.'" This friendly intercourse was long continued. "How many subjects of politics and religion," writes the old lord, with a pressing invitation to Camden Place, in 1787, "might we not have settled by this time, in the long evenings."

But if he escaped the seductions of frivolity and fashion, he was in equal danger from the severer temptations of ambition. With talents of the highest order, and eloquence surpassed by few, he entered upon public life possessed of the best personal connexions, in his intimate friendship with Mr. Pitt. Disinterested, generous, lively, fond of society, by which he was equally beloved, and overflowing with affection towards his numerous friends, he was indeed in little danger from the low and mercenary spirit of worldly policy. But ambition has inducements for men of every temper; and how far he was then safe from its fascinations, may be learned from the conduct of his brother "Independents." They were a club of about forty members of the House of Commons, most of them opponents of the Coalition Ministry, whose principle of union was a resolution to take neither place, pension, nor peerage. Yet in a few years so far had the fierceness

of their independence yielded to various temptations, that he and Mr. Bankes alone of all the party retained their early simplicity of station. He himself was the only county member who was not raised to the peerage. He too would no doubt have been entangled in the toils of party, and have failed of those great triumphs he afterwards achieved, but for the entrance into his soul of higher principles. His later journals abound in expressions of thankfulness that he did not at this time enter on official life, and waste his days in the trappings of greatness. Though he was practically thoughtless, ambition had not hardened his heart or destroyed the simplicity of his tastes.

The following letter, written at this period to his sister, is an interesting exhibition of the state of his mind, at this period of his career.

"Wimbledon, June 5, 1783.

"My dear sister,

From my retirement at Wimbledon, I write to you in your retirement at Drinkston, and I wish you may find as much comfort in the one as I do in the other. The existence I enjoy here is of a sort quite different from what it is in London. I feel a load off my mind; nor is it in the mighty powers of Mrs. Siddons, nor in the yet superior and more exalted gratifications of the House of Commons, which you seem to think my summum bonum, to compensate to me for the loss of good air, pleasant walks, and what Milton calls "each rural sight, each rural sound." This you will say is a bigoted attachment, and so perhaps it may be; yet it is an attachment which I strive rather to strengthen than diminish, for, not to observe that it is a natural one, I am sure that I derive from it the most solid and substantial advantages. If my moral and religious principles be such as in these days are not very generally prevalent, perhaps I owe the continuance of them in a great measure to solitude in the country. This is not merely the difference between theory and practice, it is not merely (though that be something) that one finds oneself very well able to resist temptations to vice, when one is out of the way of being exposed to them; but in towns there is no leisure for thought or serious reflection, and we are apt to do that with regard to moral conduct, which we are in vain advised to do in the case of misfortunes—to look only on those who are worse than ourselves, till we flatter ourselves into a favourable opinion of our modes of life, and exalted ideas of our own virtue. But in

the country a little reading or reflection presents us with a more complete and finished model, and we become sensible of our own imperfections; need I add that trite maxim, which however I will, for it is a true one, that humility is the surest guide both to virtue and wisdom. Besides, custom and habit operate almost as powerfully on our opinions and judgments as on our carriage and deportment; and lest we become thoroughly tainted with the fashionable ways of thinking and acting, we should retire to converse and keep company a little with our faithful mentor, who will give us good advice, if we will but have the prudence and the spirit to attend to it. For my own part, I never leave this poor villa without feeling my virtuous affections confirmed and strengthened: and I am afraid it would be in some degree true if I were to add, that I never remain long in London without their being somewhat injured and diminished. After this eulogium on the country, and solitude, you will tell me it is an odd reason I am about to give for having almost laid aside my intention of going abroad, that I cannot find any friend to travel with me; but really the idea is so uncomfortable, of spending three or four weeks alone in a post-chaise, and of not being able to join in the conversation, when one does at last see the human face divine, that it staggers the resolution to which I had come of *taking a tower;* and my inclination is seconded by my reason, which suggests to me that I can pass my summer to much better advantage in England. Should the latter be my lot, and this word I take to be the properest that can be used on the occasion, for it is a good deal a matter of chance, I shall be on the ramble, and endeavour in some of my excursions to show myself not wholly without bowels, and to stumble on you. But of all this I shall be better able to speak in about three weeks, when I expect parliament will rise, and you must not then be surprised to receive a letter from me dated from any place in or out of his Majesty's dominions."

The close of the session, July 16th, set him at liberty. After visiting the St. Johns at Tunbridge Wells he spent the month of August in Yorkshire, and repaired early in September to the seat of Mr. Bankes in Dorsetshire, to meet Mr. Pitt and Mr. Eliot, with whom he had engaged to pay a visit to the continent. A few days spent at Kingston Hall in shooting, were signalized by the narrow escape of Mr. Pitt from Mr. Wilberforce's gun; "So at least," said he, "my

companions affirmed, with a roguish wish, perhaps, to make the most of my shortsightedness and inexperience in field sports."

On the 11th of September the three friends met at Canterbury, and on the following day embarking at Dover in spite of a heavy sea crossed to Calais. Thence they proceeded straight to Rheims, to gain some knowledge of the language before they went to Paris. Each had trusted to the other to obtain the needful introductions; and when at last the omission was discovered they had only time to write to Mr. Robert Smith for letters. He had no better resource than to obtain from Peter Thellusson an introduction to the correspondent of his house. With these credentials they arrived at Rheims, then under that episcopal government which had lasted from the time of Clovis, and to which may be traced, according to Guizot, the origin of European civilization. At the time of their arrival the Archbishop (Perigord) was absent, and the ordinary routine of government devolved upon Mons. De Lageard, as secretary to the conseil d'état. Their first adventures are thus related in a letter to Mr. Bankes. "From Calais we made directly for Rheims, and the day after our arrival dressed ourselves unusually well, and proceeded to the house of a Mons. Coustier to present, with not a little awe, our only letters of recommendation. It was with some surprise that we found Mons. Coustier behind a counter distributing figs and raisins. I had heard that it was very usual for gentlemen on the continent to practise some handicraft trade or other for their amusement, and therefore for my own part I concluded that his taste was in the fig way, and that he was only playing at grocer for his diversion; and viewing the matter in this light, I could not help admiring the excellence of his imitation; but we soon found that Mons. Coustier was a 'véritable epicier,' and that not a very eminent one. He was very fair and candid, however, and acknowledged to us that he was not acquainted with any of the gentry of the place, and therefore could not introduce us to them. We returned to our inn, and after spending nine or ten days without making any great progress in the French language, which could not indeed be expected from us, as we spoke to no human being but each other and our Irish courier, when we began to entertain serious thoughts of leaving the place in despair, by way of a parting effort we waited on our epicier, and prevailed on him to put on a bag and sword and carry us to the intendant of the police, whom he supplied with groceries. This scheme succeeded admi-

rably. The intendant was extremely civil to us, and introduced us to the Archbishop, who gave us two very good and pleasant dinners and would have had us stay a week with him. (N. B. Archbishops in England are not like Archevêques in France; these last are jolly fellows of about forty years of age, who play at billiards, &c. like other people.)

"We soon got acquainted with as many of the inhabitants as we could wish, especially an Abbé De Lageard, a fellow of infinite humour, and of such extraordinary humanity, that to prevent our time hanging heavy on our hands he would sometimes make us visits of five or six hours at a stretch. Our last week passed very pleasantly, and for myself I was really very sorry when the day arrived for our setting off for Paris."

The Abbé De Lageard (now Mons. de Cherval) has furnished some recollections of this visit. "One morning when the intendant of police brought me his daily report, he informed me, there are three Englishmen here of very suspicious character. They are in a wretched lodging, they have no attendance, yet their courier says, that they are 'grands seigneurs,' and that one of them is son of the great Chatham; but it is impossible, they must be 'des intrigants.' I had been in England, and knew that the younger sons of your noble families are not always wealthy, and I said to Mons. Du Chatel, who wished to visit them officially and investigate their character, 'Let us be in no hurry, it may be perhaps as they represent, I will inquire about them myself.' I went to their lodgings the same evening and got their names from the courier, and true enough they were said to be Mr. W. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Eliot, all three members of the British parliament, and one of them lately a leading member of the government. The next morning I visited them, and as I was at once satisfied by their appearance, I asked whether I could be of any use to them, and offered whatever the town of Rheims could afford for their amusement. Amongst other things Mr. Pitt complained, 'Here we are in the middle of Champagne, and we cannot get any tolerable wine.' 'Dine with me to-morrow,' I replied, 'and you shall have the best wine the country can afford.' They came and dined with me, and instead of moving directly after dinner, as we do in France, we sat talking for five or six hours."

The Abbé De Lageard, a man of family and fortune, was

one of those whom the revolution stripped of every thing but their faith and loyalty; and when residing as an emigrant in England, he received from Mr. Wilberforce a willing and ample return of his present hospitality. Nothing could exceed his kindness to them: for a fortnight he was their constant attendant; he made them acquainted with the noblesse who resided in the neighbourhood of Rheims; he gave them permission to sport over the domain of the Archbishop; and upon his return, introduced them to a familiar footing at the palace. In their many conversations with the Abbé, Mr. Pitt was the chief speaker. Although no master of the French vocabulary, his ear, quick for every sound but music, caught readily the intonations of the language; and he soon spoke it with considerable accuracy. He inquired carefully into the political institutions of the French; and the Abbé has stored up his concluding sentence—"Monsieur, vous n'avez point de liberté politique, mais pour la liberté civile, vous en avez plus que vous ne croyez."

The position Mr. Pitt had occupied at home, attracted the observation of the French. An aged Marechale at Rheims sought in him a purchaser for her most costly wines, and disclaimed earnestly his assurances of poverty. "Le ministre doit avoir, sans doute, cinque ou six mille livres sterling de rente." And at Paris, whither they removed upon the 9th of September, it was hinted to him through the intervention of Horace Walpole, that he would be an acceptable suitor for the daughter of the celebrated Neckar. Neckar is said to have offered to endow her with a fortune of £14,000 per annum: but Mr. Pitt replied, "I am already married to my country." The story of their embarrassments at Rheims preceded them to Fontainbleau, where, by special invitation, they soon joined the gala festivities of the court, and Mr. Pitt was often rallied by the Queen, who asked whether he had lately heard from his friend the epicier.

The diary of this period gives a brief notice of each day's proceedings. As for instance:—

"October 20th. Saw sights. Bought books. Dined Marquis de la Fayette's, pleasing enthusiastical man: his wife a sweet woman. Dr. Franklin, Mr. Page, Crillon's aid du camp, young Franklin, Noailles, Madame Boufflers there. Free the Spanish colonies. At home at night preparing for departure."

Mr. Wilberforce received with interest the hearty greetings which Dr. Franklin tendered to a rising member of the

English parliament, who had opposed the war with America. But it was the singular position occupied by La Fayette which most of all attracted his attention: he seemed to be the representative of the democracy in the very presence of the monarch, the tribune intruding with his veto within the chamber of the patrician order. His own establishment was formed upon the English model; and amidst the gayety and ease of Fontainbleau, he assumed an air of republican austerity. When the fine ladies of the court would attempt to drag him to the card-table, he shrugged his shoulders, with an affected contempt for the customs and amusements of the old regime. Meanwhile the deference which this champion of a new state of things received, above all from the ladies of the court, intimated clearly the disturbance of the social atmosphere, and presaged the coming tempest. A special messenger recalling Mr. Pitt to London, cut short their further observations; and after a six weeks' absence Mr. Wilberforce returned to England on the 24th October, "better pleased with his own country than before he left it."

The month of November, 1783, when Mr. Wilberforce returned to London, was a season of great political excitement. Then came that memorable season, when one man swayed the destinies of a people; when Pitt, undismayed by threats and unincensed by provocations, upheld with a strong hand and a bold heart the prerogatives of the Crown and the liberties of the subject. Throughout this period Mr. Wilberforce shared constantly in the private counsels and parliamentary labours of his friend. The part he took in these debates attracted more notice than any of his previous speeches; and the opposition papers of the day defy Mr. Pitt "in spite of the assistance he receives from the eloquence of Mr. Wilberforce."

The diary of this period is full of interesting allusions to the progress of affairs.

"I can well remember," he has said of this important crisis, "how anxiously we watched the events of each succeeding day, counting every vote, in the earnest hope that Pitt might make a successful stand against the coalition." But the time was now come, when he could render more essential service to his friend, than by beating up the quarters of doubtful members, or even by supporting him with his eloquence in the House of Commons.

The rising feeling of the country in support of Mr. Pitt, had been already shown in the many urgent addresses

presented to the king. But Yorkshire had not as yet declared itself; and the supporters of the coalition, calculating upon the influence of their vast possessions there, looked eagerly for its declaration in their favour. There was, however, a strong spirit of opposition in the county. The West Riding clothiers were all Tories, and ready to rise in support of the throne.

Mr. Wilberforce determined upon making the attempt "to get up an opposition," and though the poet Mason, then a canon residentiary at York, was well nigh his sole acquaintance beyond his own corner of the county, he hastened into Yorkshire to head the party. On the 21st of March he went as far as Cambridge, and reached York the following afternoon at four o'clock.

A meeting was held in the castle yard, which, though the weather was "cold and hail falling," continued "from ten till half-past four." "An immense body of the freeholders was present." An address to the king condemning the coalition ministry was proposed and supported by the friends of Mr. Pitt. On the other side appeared the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Carlisle, Lord Cavendish, Lord Fitzwilliam, and many other men of rank and influence. When the proposers of the address had spoken, and the Whig lords had been heard in answer, the day was far advanced, and the listeners were growing weary of the contest. At this time Mr. Wilberforce mounted the table, from which, under a great wooden canopy before the high sheriff's chair, the various speakers had addressed the meeting. The weather was so bad "that it seemed," says an eye-witness, "as if his slight frame would be unable to make head against its violence." The castle yard, too, was so crowded, that men of the greatest physical powers had been scarcely audible. Yet such was the magic of his voice and the grace of his expression, that by his very first sentence he arrested, and for above an hour he continued to enchain, the attention of the surrounding multitude. "Danby tells me," writes Pepper Arden, "that you spoke like an angel. That, indeed, I hear from many others." The disadvantage under which his figure had at first appeared, from the scale and construction of the hustings, was soon forgotten in the force and animation of his manner.—"I saw," said Boswell, describing the meeting to Dundas, "what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table; but, as I listened, he grew, and grew, until the shrimp became a whale." "It is impossible," says one

who heard him, "though at the distance of so many years, to forget his speech, or the effect which it produced. He arraigned with the utmost vigour the coalition ministry, and the India Bill which they had proposed . . a measure which he described as 'the offspring of that unnatural conjunction, marked with the features of both its parents, bearing token to the violence of the one, and the corruption of the other.'" —"His argumentative and eloquent speech," says a York paper of the day, "was listened to with the most eager attention, and received with the loudest acclamations of applause. It was a reply to all that had been urged against the address; but there was such an excellent choice of expressions, so rapidly pronounced, that we are unable to do it justice in any account we can give of it." He was distinctly heard to the utmost limits of the crowd, and interrupted only by an express from Mr. Pitt, which without disconcerting him, enabled him with the greatest possible effect to announce to the assembled county, that by dissolving parliament, the King had at that very moment appealed to the decision of the nation.

The great ability which he had thus displayed before the county, produced the most unexpected consequences. The immense expense of contesting its representation had reduced Yorkshire to the condition of a nomination borough in the hands of the Whig nobility. "To get up an opposition" at the approaching election had been one end of Mr. Wilberforce's presence. And he himself, warned doubtless by that internal consciousness of power, by which great men are prepared for high attempts, had already secretly presaged the actual issue.

"I had formed within my own heart the project of standing for the county. To any one besides myself I was aware that it must appear so mad a scheme, that I never mentioned it to Mr. Pitt, or any of my political connexions. It was undoubtedly a bold idea, but I was then very ambitious. However, entertaining it, I carefully prepared myself for the public debate, which was soon to follow in the face of the whole county; and both at the public meeting, and in the subsequent discussions, it was this idea which regulated the line, as well as animated the spirit, of my exertions. All circumstances indeed considered . . my mercantile origin, my want of connexion or acquaintance with any of the nobility or gentry of Yorkshire . . my being elected for that great county appears to me, upon the retrospect, so utterly

improbable, that I cannot but ascribe it to a providential intimation, that the idea of my obtaining that high honour suggested itself to my imagination, and in fact fixed itself within my mind."

Whilst he was yet speaking in the castle yard, the admiration of the freeholders burst forth in the shout, "We'll have this man for our county member;" and his conduct in the succeeding meetings suggested the same idea to independent men of greater influence.

"Mr. Wilberforce," wrote one of the company to Lord Hawke, "has gained the hearts and admiration of all that heard him speak; and when we broke up at the York Tavern, at twelve o'clock on Thursday night, there was a sudden and spontaneous cry of 'Wilberforce and liberty,' which was his first nomination for the county."

Strong as was now the feeling in his favour, it seemed a thing so incredible, that a young man, utterly unconnected with the aristocracy of the county, should actually displace their nominee, that it was not deemed safe for him to resign his present seat. On the evening therefore of the 26th, he "set off to secure his election at Hull, where" he "arrived at two o'clock in the morning."

Having been elected he enters in his Diary—"Snow-balls, &c. thrown at me in the chair." This slight expression of resentment was aimed at his intended resignation of his seat, if elected for the county. "But when," says an eye-witness, "the procession reached his mother's house, he sprung from the chair, and presenting himself with surprising quickness at a projecting window . . it was that of the nursery in which his childhood had been passed . . he addressed the populace with such complete effect, that he was able afterwards to decide the election of his successor."

The same evening he was on his road to York, where he met a welcome greeting, and was immediately proposed with Mr. Duncombe, in opposition to Mr. Weddell and Mr. Foljambe, both men of large fortune and great connexions, and one the former member, and heir to the influence of his uncle Sir George Savile.

The brunt of opposition was of course directed against the new candidate; whom Lord Mulgrave recommended to the freeholders as "approved already by a large part of the county, the bosom friend of the present minister, and second only to him in eloquence, unexampled at their years." To meet the anticipated charge of such a contest, a subscription was immediately commenced, to which the candidates

in vain requested leave to add £2000 a piece. Of the sum thus contributed, (£18,670,) about one-fourth proved sufficient to defray the whole expense of the election.

The result he enters thus in his Diary. "7th. Up early—breakfasted tavern—rode frisky horse to castle—elected—chaired—dined York Tavern."

Thus was accomplished this great triumph of independent principles. Its effect upon the great struggle then at issue was not less important. "Numbers of members have confessed to me," writes Mr. Duncombe, "that they owed their success in their own counties to the example set by ours." By it, and nearly two hundred other victories over the adherents of the coalition party, Mr. Pitt became as strong in the House of Commons, as he had been hitherto in the affections of the people. "He was then able," says Mr. Wilberforce, "if he had duly estimated his position, to have cast off the corrupt machinery of influence, and formed his government upon the basis of independent principle." The issue of the Yorkshire contest might have suggested the possibility of such an effort. Its result was altogether new and unexpected. The return of a candidate who came forward upon ground which none had taken heretofore, was an intimation of that power, with which intelligence and property had now armed the middle ranks of society. As the man of the middle classes, he took his place in public life; as their representative, he was opposed alike to party influence and democratic license; as their representative, he demanded and obtained the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

After a hasty tour in Devonshire, Mr. Wilberforce reached London upon the 14th of May, and took his seat in parliament, as member for the county of York. He possessed already enough to intoxicate his mind, whilst prospects of gratified ambition seemed to open without limit before him. He attended constantly through the first session of the new parliament, and swelled the triumphant majorities, which secured the supremacy of his friend. Upon the prorogation of parliament, he went down into the north, and presenting himself at York as "the joy" of the races, spent his twenty-fifth birth-day at the top wave and highest flow of those frivolous amusements, which had swallowed up so large a portion of his youth. Yet at this very time the providence of God was guiding him into that path which issued in his altered character.

Whilst at York, he proposed to his friend, W. Burgh, to

become his companion in a continental tour. To his great surprise the offer was declined; and being thrown soon afterwards at Scarborough into the company of Isaac Milner, the invitation was transferred to him. His strong sense and well furnished mind recommended him as an agreeable companion; but little could either party then imagine the gracious purpose for which this choice was ordered.

After a hasty visit to Westmoreland, and "looking again on all the old scenes with vast pleasure," he started for the continent upon the 20th of October. One carriage was occupied by Isaac Milner and himself, whilst in another followed his mother, sister, and two female relatives. Crossing France to Lyons they embarked upon the Rhone; and whilst dropping down its stream to Avignon, "a voyage of four days under a cloudless sky," he writes from "just in sight of Valence,—

"TO LORD MUNCASTER, MUNCASTER CASTLE, CUMBERLAND.

"My dear Muncaster,

With much labour and difficulty, by trying every possible half hour when my eyes would bear writing, I have at last completely got through the answers to all my letters of business, which were accumulating into an immense heap on my table in Bruton Street, whilst I was muttering my wayward fancies on the banks of Windermere; and which, to my sore annoyance and discomfort, I have brought in my chaise into the heart of France. At last they are gone, and the devil go with them. For the first time since I have been out, I now take up my pen without reluctance, to give you a little account of my proceedings since we parted at the foot of Hardknot.

"I stayed at Rayrigg a very few days, exploring every quarter, in order to select some spot for my future residence, blest with a more than common share of beauty: but though I saw several where I could be content to fix myself, if the eye alone were to be consulted in the choice, yet as long as one lives in this gross world one must have regard to matters of a more ignoble kind, and a less refined nature. Some situations were rejected because I should be too far from Kendal market, others because of their distance from the great boat; and at last, after a most accurate examination of the whole lake, I left the country without deciding any thing, but sorely sinning against that commandment

which forbids our coveting our neighbour's house; for near Brathay Bridge there is a field which is in all respects supereminent, but which, as it is very near the house of the gentleman who lately bought the Brathay estate, I have no hopes of being able to purchase, except upon one ground, that, I mean, of the owner's being insensible to its value; a conclusion to which one is naturally led, when one recollects how *pure white* he has made the bridge; and though in all cases I now agree with Lady Muncaster, that gray is better, yet I don't know if to gain Mr. Law's consent to sell me his field, I should not be induced to promise him to make my house, stables, and every foot of building about me, as white as white can be. Well, after leaving Westmoreland I repaired to London, and spent about ten days in that neighbourhood, chiefly vibrating between Wimbledon and Brighthelmstone, and preparing for my journey into foreign parts, where I have been proceeding by slow marches ever since, with my mother, a couple of sick cousins, very good girls, whose health we hope to re-establish by the change of air, and a most intelligent and excellent friend of mine, a tutor of a college in Cambridge, whose wig I see excites no small astonishment in the Gallic perruquiers: he has equipped himself, however, with one of a smaller size, which he is to put on when we fix. At present we are sitting in our carriage in a boat, and driving down the Rhone to Avignon. The scenes are more romantic and wonderful than any one can conceive, except an inhabitant of Cumberland; and in truth, they are so like your north country, that my thoughts would naturally recur to Eskdale, from the similarity of the surrounding objects, if they had nought else to lead them thither; but this, my dear Muncaster, you will do me the justice to believe, is not the case; and I assure you I have often been looking out of your window, when you have not seen me, and been endeavouring thus to live over again the pleasant days I passed with you in Cumberland. I frequently ramble in the wood, and I assure you I approve of your alteration in front, even more than I expected; for it does still better in theory than in practice. You, I suppose, are about this time encountering a more formidable antagonist, and if you are not a better sailor than myself, who was desperately sick between Dover and Calais though in the finest morning I ever beheld, you are sincerely to be pitied in your passage across the Irish Channel. When you get across, I hope your troubles will be over; and it will give me pleasure to learn this

from you on two grounds, both because I shall conclude your private concerns are brought to a desirable issue, and I shall hope that public matters are in a better train than when they were last the subject of our conversation. The cœlum non animam mutant is strictly true with respect to me; for though I am five hundred miles from the white cliffs of Albion, yet I do not feel my anxiety diminished either for 'the General'* or the other friends I have left behind me: I beg you will bear this in your mind, and satisfy me of the existence and well-being of one of them. You have no excuse, whose eyes are as stout as the rest of your carcass; and a book on one's knee is as good a writing-table as a plank put through the fore window of the post chaise. I shall direct to you at Muncaster, where if you are, I beg my best remembrances to Lady M. and my little friends, Gamel and Penny. Believe me, dear Muncaster,

Yours very sincerely,

Nov. 12, 1784. W. WILBERFORCE."

His daily journal proves him to have been an acute observer of men and manners, as well as of the various objects of interest, which presented themselves on his tour. His record of Sunday travelling, and attendance on balls, and other places of public amusement, corroborates the impression made by the casual profanity of the letter to Lord Muncaster, that, though upon the verge of the important event which gave its colour and importance to his subsequent career, he was as yet wholly free from the influence of those principles, which through a long life "he adorned in all things." The party made some stay at Nice, during which one entry in his Diary is as follows:—

"Out at assemblies and balls frequently. Gave dinners often."

In all these scenes he was constantly accompanied by Milner, whose vivacity and sense, joined with rustic and unpolished manners, continually amused his friends.—"Pretty boy, pretty boy," uttered in the broadest Yorkshire dialect, whilst he stroked familiarly his head, was the mode in which he first addressed the young Prince William of Gloucester. "Though Milner's religious principles were even now, in theory, much the same as in later life, yet they had at this time little practical effect upon his conduct. He was free from every taint of vice but not more attentive than

* Mr. Pitt.

others to religion;" (though a clergyman, he never thought of reading prayers during their whole stay at Nice;) "he appeared in all respects like an ordinary man of the world, mixing like myself in all companies, and joining as readily as others in the prevalent Sunday parties. Indeed, when I engaged him as a companion in my tour, I knew not that he had any deeper principles. The first time I discovered it, was at the public table at Scarborough. The conversation turned on Mr. Stillingfleet; and I spoke of him as a good man, but one who carried things too far.—'Not a bit too far,' said Milner; and to this opinion he adhered, when we renewed the conversation in the evening on the sands. This declaration greatly surprised me; and it was agreed that at some future time we would talk the matter over. Had I known at first what his opinions were, it would have decided me against making him the offer; so true is it that a gracious hand leads us in ways that we know not, and blesses us not only without, but even against, our plans and inclinations." The imperfect recollection which he now retained of what he had seen and felt, when beneath his uncle's roof at Wimbledon, made him the more ready to condemn, as extravagance and methodism, all serious attention to religion; and this tendency had doubtless been increased by his attendance at Mr. Lindsey's meeting, which he frequented, "not from any preference for his peculiar doctrines, for in this, except on some great festivals, his preaching differed little from that which was then common amongst the London clergy, but because he seemed more earnest and practical than others." Milner, on the contrary, though deficient in practical religion, knew enough to regard it with reverence in others, and whenever his lively companion treated it with raillery, would seriously combat his objections, adding, "I am no match for you, Wilberforce, in this running fire, but if you really wish to discuss these subjects seriously, I will gladly enter on them with you." No great impression could be expected on another from reasonings which so little influenced himself; and their discussions appear to have been merely speculative up to the period of their quitting Nice in the winter of 1784-5. Just before this journey, Mr. Wilberforce took up casually a little volume, (Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion,) which Mr. Unwin, Cowper's correspondent, had given to the mother of one amongst his fellow-travellers, and casting his eye over it hastily, asked Milner what was its character.—"It is one of the best books

ever written," was his answer; "let us take it with us and read it on our journey." He easily consented, and they read it carefully together, with thus much effect, that he determined at some future season to examine the Scriptures for himself, and see if things were stated there in the same manner. In this journey he was alone with Milner.*

Leaving his family at Nice, he returned to support the cause of parliamentary reform. The journey across France at that season of the year was not then accomplished without some risks. Leaving summer behind them at Nice, they travelled from Antibes, through eighteen days of snow. Once upon the hills of Burgundy, as they climbed a frozen road, the weight of their carriage overpowered the horses, and it was just running over a frightful precipice, when Milner, who was walking behind, perceived the danger, and by a sudden effort of his great strength of muscle arrested its descent. Feb. 22d, he reached London. "Took up my quarters at Pitt's."

During the remainder of the session he attended constantly in his place, and took part occasionally in the debates. He still lived in a constant round of company and amusement, dining twice or three times a week with Mr. Pitt—joining in the festivities in which Dundas delighted at Wimbledon and Richmond; whilst "sitting up all night singing—shirked Duchess of Gordon, at Almack's—danced till five in the morning;" are fair samples of the common descriptions of his days. Yet already, amongst these lighter memorials, there appears from time to time a new tone of deeper feeling.—"Dined Hamilton's—christening—very indecent—all laughing round. Opera—shocking dance of Festin de Pierre, and unmoved audience. S. and I talked—strange that the most generous men and religious, do not see that their duties increase with their fortune, and that they will be punished for spending it in eating, &c. Sir G. Beaumont and Lady, Phipps, &c. to dine with me at Wimbledon—Phipps's chat from Locke to New Testament." But these thoughts were as yet entirely speculative; exercising no apparent influence upon his conduct. The session which had been expected to terminate in May, was not concluded at the end of June, and before he could leave town on his return to Provence the increasing heat of summer had emptied Nice. Genoa was fixed on for their rendezvous; and thither

* See Appendix.

the ladies were adventurous enough to sail in a felucca under the sole escort of their courier. Here they were joined by Mr. Wilberforce and I. Milner, upon the 7th of July, and on the 11th set out together on their road to Switzerland. They travelled as in their former journey, and the conversation between Mr. Wilberforce and Milner became more important than before. They began, as Milner had proposed, to read the Greek Testament, and to examine carefully the doctrines which it taught. From Genoa they went by Turin to Geneva, and fell in there with several of their English friends. From Geneva the party passed on to Berne, whence he wrote playfully to his friend in Cumberland.

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Berne, 14th Aug. 1785.

"Dear Muncaster,

That a man who has been for the last week environed by eternal snows, and hemmed in by the Shreckhorn, and the Wetterhorn, and the Jungfrau, should stoop to take notice of a grovelling being, who crawls along the level surface of the county of Cumberland, is an instance of genuine steadiness and equal serenity of temper, which will not pass unobserved and unadmired before so accurate an observer as yourself. Yet I dare say you think yourself most magnificent, with your Hardknot and Wrynose, and discover in your Lilliput, risings and fallings invisible to the grosser organs of the inhabitant of Brobdignag.—If you read on thus far, I am sure your patience will hold out no longer, and my letter goes into the fire, which in your cold part of the world you will certainly be sitting over when my packet arrives, about the end of the month. You then go to Lady Muncaster, and with a glance on your sevenfold shield, on which the setting sun is gleaming with a brilliancy which would throw a stoic into raptures, you lament over me as a poor, infatuated, perverted renegade, 'false to my gods, my country, and my father.' The greatest punishment your old regard will suffer you to inflict on me, will be a perpetual condemnation to breathe the air of the House of Commons, and to have no other ideas of a country prospect, or a country life, than can be collected from a stare from Richmond hill, or a dinner at the Star and Garter. No, Muncaster, I am no renegade. True to my first love, a long and intimate acquaintance has made me find out so many excellences and perfections that my affec-

tions are not to be changed, though in the course of my travels I see a fairer face, or a more exquisite symmetry,

'Tis the dear, the blest effect of Celia altogether.'

If therefore you should hear of my taking a country house in one of the Swiss cantons, don't take it for granted that I have forgot the land of promise. Allow now and then a transient infidelity; my constancy shall be unshaken to my true Dulcinea. 'These are my visits, but she is my home.'

But to drop all metaphor, I have never been in any other part of the world, for which I could quit a residence in England with so little regret: God grant that the public and private state of our own country may never reduce it to such a situation as to give this the preference in my esteem. At present I have the same unalterable affection for Old England, founded as I think in reason, or as foreigners would tell me, in prejudice; but I feel sometimes infected with a little of your own anxiety; I fancy I see storms arising, which already 'no bigger than a man's hand,' will by and by overspread and blacken the whole face of heaven. It is not the confusion of parties, and their quarrelling and battling in the House of Commons, which makes me despair of the republic, (if I knew a word half way between 'apprehend for' and 'despair,' that would best express my meaning,) but it is the universal corruption and profligacy of the times, which taking its rise amongst the rich and luxurious has now extended its baneful influence and spread its destructive poison through the whole body of the people. When the mass of blood is corrupt, there is no remedy but amputation.

I beg my best remembrances to Lady Muncaster, and my little friends, Penny and Gam. Tell the latter if he will meet me at Spa, I will turn him into a pancake as often as he will.

Believe me to be
ever yours most affectionately,
W. WILBERFORCE."

His discussions with Isaac Milner were continued throughout this journey, until "by degrees I imbibed his sentiments, though I must confess with shame, that they long remained merely as opinions assented to by my understanding, but not influencing my heart. My interest in them certainly in-

creased, and at length I began to be impressed with a sense of their importance. Milner, though full of levity on all other subjects, never spoke on this but with the utmost seriousness, and all he said, tended to increase my attention to religion." So interesting were these conversations now become to him, that his fellow-travellers complained of the infrequency of his visits to their carriage. In this state of feeling he arrived at Spa, and spent almost six weeks in that "curious assemblage from all parts of Europe." Amongst the rest were many of his English friends; and though on some few points he now controverted their opinions, yet in general he joined freely in their ordinary pleasures. "Mrs. Crewe," he says, "cannot believe that I can think it wrong to go to the play.—Surprised at hearing that halting on the Sunday was my wish, and not my mother's." Yet though his outward appearance gave little evidence of their existence, deeper feelings were at work beneath. "Often while in the full enjoyment of all that this world could bestow, my conscience told me that in the true sense of the word, I was not a Christian. I laughed, I sang, I was apparently gay and happy, but the thought would steal across me, 'What madness is all this; to continue easy in a state in which a sudden call out of the world would consign me to everlasting misery, and that, when eternal happiness is within my grasp!' For I had received into my understanding the great truths of the gospel, and believed that its offers were free and universal; and that God had promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that asked for it. At length such thoughts as these completely occupied my mind, and I began to pray earnestly." "Began three or four days ago," he says, Oct. 25th, "to get up very early. In the solitude and self-conversation of the morning had thoughts, which I trust will come to something."—"As soon as I reflected seriously upon these subjects, the deep guilt and black ingratitude of my past life forced itself upon me in the strongest colours, and I condemned myself for having wasted my precious time, and opportunities, and talents." Thus he returned home; another man in his inner being, yet manifesting outwardly so little of the hidden struggle, "that it was not," says one of his companions, "until many months after our return, that I learned what had been passing in his mind."

Upon the 10th of November he reached Wimbledon, and as parliament did not meet until the following February, he was much alone and had leisure to commune with himself.

The more he reflected, the deeper became his new impressions. "It was not so much," he has said, "the fear of punishment by which I was affected, as a sense of my great sinfulness in having so long neglected the unspeakable mercies of my God and Saviour; and such was the effect which this thought produced, that for months I was in a state of the deepest depression, from strong convictions of my guilt. Indeed nothing which I have ever read in the accounts of others, exceeded what I then felt." These were now his habitual feelings; carefully concealed from others, and in some measure no doubt dispelled by company, but reviving in their full force as soon as he retired into himself.

Whilst this struggle was at its height, he commenced a private Journal, with the view of making himself "humble and watchful." The entries of this private record mark the difficulties and variations of his mind, while they show strikingly the spirit of practical improvement by which he was directed.

"Nov. 24th. Heard the Bible read two hours—Pascal one hour and a quarter—meditation one hour and a quarter—business the same. If ever I take myself from the immediate consideration of serious things, I entirely lose sight of them; this must be a lesson to me to keep them constantly in view. Pitt called, and commended Butler's Analogy—resolved to write to him, and discover to him what I am occupied about: this will save me much embarrassment, and I hope give me more command both of my time and conduct.

"25th. Up at six—private devotions half an hour—Pascal three quarters—to town on business. I feel quite giddy and distracted by the tumult, except when in situations of which I am rather ashamed, as in the stage-coach: the shame, pride; but a useful lesson.—St. Antholyn's—Mr. Forster's—felt much devotion, and wondered at a man who fell asleep during the Psalms: during the sermon I fell asleep myself.—Walked, and stage-coach, to save the expense of a chaise.

"26th. Went out early—wrote to S. and got his answer, very affectionate and kind, God bless him—refused to go to Camden Place, and to Pitt's; but all religious thoughts go off in London—I hope by explaining my situation and feelings, to relieve myself from my embarrassment.

"Sunday, 27th. Up at six—devotions half an hour—Pascal three quarters—Butler three quarters—church—read the Bible, too ramblingly, for an hour—heard Butler, but not

attentively, two hours—meditated twenty minutes—hope I was more attentive at church than usual, but serious thoughts vanished the moment I went out of it, and very insensible and cold in the evening service—some very strong feelings when I went to bed; God turn them to account, and in any way bring me to himself. I have been thinking I have been doing well by living alone, and reading generally on religious subjects; I must awake to my dangerous state, and never be at rest till I have made my peace with God. My heart is so hard, my blindness so great, that I cannot get a due hatred of sin, though I see I am all corrupt, and blinded to the perception of spiritual things.

"28th. I hope as long as I live to be the better for the meditation of this evening; it was on the sinfulness of my own heart, and its blindness and weakness. True, Lord, I am wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. What infinite love, that Christ should die to save such a sinner, and how necessary is it He should save us altogether, that we may appear before God with nothing of our own! God grant I may not deceive myself, in thinking I feel the beginnings of gospel comfort. Began this night constant family prayer, and resolved to have it every morning and evening, and to read a chapter when time.

"Tuesday, 29th. I bless God I enjoyed comfort in prayer this evening. I must keep my own unworthiness ever in view. Pride is my greatest stumbling-block; and there is danger in it in two ways—lest it should make me desist from a Christian life, through fear of the world, my friends, &c.; or if I persevere, lest it should make me vain of so doing. In all disputes on religion, I must be particularly on my guard to distinguish it from a zeal for God and his cause. I must consider and set down the marks whereby they may be known from each other. I will form a plan of my particular duty, praying God to enable me to do it properly, and set it before me as a chart of the country, and map of the road I must travel. Every morning some subject of thought for the hours of walking, lounging, &c. if alone.

"Nov. 30th. Was very fervent in prayer this morning, and thought these warm impressions would never go off. Yet in vain endeavoured in the evening to rouse myself. God grant it may not all prove vain; oh if it does, how will my punishment be deservedly increased! The only way I find of moving myself, is by thinking of my great transgressions, weakness, blindness, and of God's having promised to

supply these defects. But though I firmly believe them, yet I read of future judgment, and think of God's wrath against sinners, with no great emotions. What can so strongly show the stony heart? O God, give me a heart of flesh! Nothing so convinces me of the dreadful state of my own mind, as the possibility, which, if I did not know it from experience, I should believe impossible, of my being ashamed of Christ. Ashamed of the Creator of all things! One who has received infinite pardon and mercy, ashamed of the Dispenser of it, and that in a country where his name is professed! Oh, what should I have done in persecuting times? (Forgot to set down that when my servants came in the first time to family prayer, I felt ashamed.")

"I thought seriously this evening of going to converse with Mr. Newton—waked in the night—obliged to compel myself to think of God."

"Dec. 2d. Resolved again about Mr. Newton. It may do good; he will pray for me; his experience may enable him to direct me to new grounds of humiliation, and it is that only which I can perceive God's Spirit employ to any effect. It can do no harm, for that is a scandalous objection which keeps occurring to me, that if ever my sentiments change, I shall be ashamed of having done it: it can only humble me, and, whatever is the right way, if truth be right I ought to be humbled—but, sentiments change! Kept debating in that unsettled way to which I have used myself, whether to go to London or not, and then how—wishing to save expense, I hope with a good motive, went at last in the stage to town—inquired for old Newton; but found he lived too far off for me to see him—lingered till time to go to Mr. Forster's—much struck with the text, 2 Chron. xv. 2—afterwards walked home."

He now began to open to his friends the change which had passed upon him. His own way he hoped would be clearer when his principles were understood; and the frank avowal of his altered views was due to those with whom he had lived hitherto in levity and thoughtlessness. Some treated this announcement as the effect of a temporary depression, which social intercourse would soon relieve; one threw angrily his letter in the fire; others knowing that his past life had not been vicious, imagined that he could but turn ascetic, and regretted their expected loss of his social accomplishments and political assistance. He wrote to Mr. Pitt amongst the rest; opening fully the grounds on which

he acted, and the bearing of his new principles upon his public conduct—"I told him that though I should ever feel a strong affection for him, and had every reason to believe that I should be in general able to support him, yet that I could no more be so much a party man as I had been before." On the 2d of December "I got," he says, "Pitt's answer—much affected by it—to see him in the morning." "It was full of kindness—nothing I had told him, he said, could affect our friendship; that he wished me always to act as I thought right. I had said that I thought when we met we had better not discuss the topics of my letter. 'Why not discuss them?' was his answer; 'let me come to Wimbledon to-morrow, to talk them over with you.' He thought that I was out of spirits, and that company and conversation would be the best way of dissipating my impressions." Mr. Pitt came the next morning as he had proposed, and found Mr. Wilberforce not unprepared for the discussion. "I had prayed," he says, "to God, I hope with some sincerity, not to lead me into disputing for my own exaltation, but for his glory. Conversed with Pitt near two hours, and opened myself completely to him. I admitted that as far as I could conform to the world, with a perfect regard to my duty to God, myself and my fellow-creatures, I was bound to do it; that no inward feelings ought to be taken as demonstrations of the Spirit being in any man, (was not this too general? 'witnesseth with one Spirit,' &c.) but only the change of disposition and conduct." "He tried to reason me out of my convictions, but soon found himself unable to combat their correctness, if Christianity were true. The fact is, he was so absorbed in politics, that he had never given himself time for due reflection on religion. But amongst other things he declared to me, that Bishop Butler's work raised in his mind more doubts than it had answered."

Though he now felt more than ever the need of some like-minded associates in the narrow path which lay before him, he could scarcely bring himself to form these new connexions. "Had a good deal of debate with myself," he says, Dec. 3d, "about seeing Newton; but the rather right if I talk upon the subject with those who differ from me, as I am so new to it myself." This self-debate issued in his writing to Mr. Newton.

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

"Dec. 2d, 1785.

"Sir,

There is no need of apology for intruding on you, when the errand is religion. I wish to have some serious conversation with you, and will take the liberty of calling on you for that purpose, in half an hour; when, if you cannot receive me, you will have the goodness to let me have a letter put into my hands at the door, naming a time and place for our meeting, the earlier the more agreeable to me. I have had ten thousand doubts within myself, whether or not I should discover myself to you; but every argument against doing it has its foundation in pride. I am sure you will hold yourself bound to let no one living know of this application, or of my visit, till I release you from the obligation." (What follows, as well as the signature, is torn off.)

"P. S. Remember that I must be secret, and that the gallery of the House is now so universally attended, that the face of a member of parliament is pretty well known."

This letter he took with him, upon Sunday, Dec. 4th, into the city, and "delivered it" himself "to old Newton at his church." The following Wednesday was named for an interview; and then, says he, "after walking about the Square once or twice before I could persuade myself, I called upon old Newton—was much affected in conversing with him—something very pleasing and unaffected in him. He told me he always had entertained hopes and confidence that God would some time bring me to Him—that he had heard from J. Thornton we had declined Sunday visits abroad—on the whole he encouraged me—though got nothing new from him, as how could I, except a good hint, that he never found it answer to dispute, and that it was as well not to make visits that one disliked over agreeable. When I came away I found my mind in a calm, tranquil state, more humbled, and looking more devoutly up to God." It was part of Mr. Newton's counsel, that he should not hastily form new connexions, nor widely separate from his former friends. This very day, accordingly, he says, "as I promised, I went to Pitt's—sad work—I went there in fear, and for some time kept an awe on my mind—my feelings lessened in the evening, and I could scarce lift up myself in prayer to God at night."

"7th. At Holwood—up early and prayed, but not with much warmth—then to the St. John's at Beckenham. In

chaise opened myself to ——, who had felt much four years ago when very ill. He says that H. took off his then religious feelings—but query, what did he give him in the room of them? Rather tried to show off at the St. John's, and completely forgot God—came away in a sad state to town, and was reduced almost to wish myself like others when I saw the carriages and people going to court, &c. With what different sensations of confidence and comfort did I come away from Newton and Beckenham! the one was confidence in myself; the other in God. Got out of town; but instead of mending when alone, as I dismissed all caution, I grew worse, and my mind in a sad state this evening, —could scarcely pray, but will hope and wait on God.—Thursday, 8th. Very cold all day, and dead to religious things, could not warm myself in prayer or meditation; even doubted if I was in the right way: and all generals: no particular objection. O God, deliver me from myself! when I trust to myself I am darkness and weakness."

He had not yet attained that self-command, which afterwards enabled him to mingle in these gay scenes with an untainted spirit. Yet even now he saw through the gaudy show. "At the levee," he says some weeks before this time, "and then dined at Pitt's—sort of cabinet dinner—was often thinking that pompous Thurlow, and elegant Carmarthen, would soon appear in the same row with the poor fellow who waited behind their chairs." Solitude and self-reflection restored him to himself. "Dec. 9th. God I hope has had mercy on me, and given me again some spark of grace.—Dined at Mrs. Wilberforce's (his aunt)—Mr. Thornton there. How unaffectedly happy he is—oh that I were like him. I grow hardened and more callous than ever—a little moved in prayer, but when I leave my study I cannot keep religious thoughts and impressions on my mind.

"Dec. 11th, Sunday.—Heard Newton on the '*addiction*' of the soul to God. 'They that observe lying vanities shall forsake their own mercy.'—Excellent. He shows his whole heart is engaged. I felt sometimes moved at church, but am still callous.

"12th. More fervent, I hope, in prayer—resolved more in God's strength; therefore, I hope, likely to keep my resolutions—rather shocked at Lady L.'s: these people have no thought of their souls.

"13th. I hope I feel more than I did of divine assistance. May I be enabled to submit to it in distrust of myself. I do not know what to make of myself; but I resolve, under

God, to go on. Much struck in Mr. Newton's Narrative, where he says he once persevered two years, and went back again. Oh may I be preserved from relapse! and yet if I cannot stand now, how shall I be able to do it when the struggle comes on in earnest?—I am too intent upon shining in company, and must curb myself here."

"Behold me," he writes to his sister, "by my own fireside, in all the state of an arm-chair, and the peaceable possession of my own time, which I am endeavouring to improve to some more rational purposes than those to which I have in general made it subservient. My studies chiefly point one way, but then it is that way in which it is of infinite importance that our views should be clear and settled. I hope my dear sister will in some degree be the better for them; at least, if nothing else, she will have a proof of my affection, when, as I design, I send her from time to time a sheet full of my lucubrations. Letter-writing like conversation should be a transcript of the thoughts for the hour in which one has the pen in hand; and as my thoughts run generally in one current, it would be a violence to attempt to turn the stream into another channel: not that I mean to give up the propriety of 'from grave to gay,' but the one should be the business, the other the relaxation of life; and there is no such firm ground on which to fix the foundation of a perpetual gayety, (though gayety but ill expresses my idea,) as to have been grave to good purpose. I will give it a more worthy epithet than gay. Let me call it serenity, tranquillity, composure which is not to be destroyed; though, in the limited degree in which we yet possess it, it may, alas! be ruffled by all the tumult and noise, and even all the accidents and misfortunes, of the world. May you, my dear sister, be possessed of that temper which we can only get one way, but in that may be sure of it."

To this serenity of mind he had not yet attained. "I go off sadly," he says now of himself on different days,"—"I am colder and more insensible than I was—I ramble—O God, protect me from myself—I never yet think of religion but by constraint—I am in a most doubtful state. To Newton's, but when he prayed I was cold and dead; and the moment we were out of his house, seriousness decayed." "Very wretched—all sense gone." "Colder than ever—very unhappy—called at Newton's, and bitterly moved; he comforted me." Yet some gleams of the coming sunshine even now gladdened him at favoured intervals.

"Tuesday, Dec. 20th. More enlarged and sincere in

prayer—went to hear Romaine—dined at the Adelphi: both before and afterwards much affected by seriousness. Went to hear Forster, who very good: enabled to join in the prayers with my whole heart, and never so happy in my life, as this whole evening—enlarged in private prayer, and have a good hope towards God." "Got up Wednesday morning in the same frame of mind, and filled with peace, and hope, and humility; yet some doubts if all this real, or will be lasting—Newton's church—he has my leave to mention my case to my aunt and Mr. Thornton—not quite so warm, but still a good hope—I trust God is with me: but he must ever keep beside me; for I fall the moment I am left to myself. I stayed in town to attend the ordinances, and have been gloriously blest in them.

"23d. I do not find the use of keeping a diary in this way; I will therefore try how I go on without. I think it rather makes me satisfied with myself, by leading me to compare the number of hours I spend seriously with those others do; when all depends on doing it to good purpose. Was strengthened in prayer, and trust I shall be able to live more to God, which determined to do—much affected by Doddridge's directions for spending time, and hope to conform to them in some degree: it must be by force at first, for I find I perpetually wander from serious thoughts when I am off my guard.

"24th. Up very early, and passed some hours tolerably, according to my resolutions; but indolence comes upon me. Resolved to practise Doddridge's rules, and prayed to God to enable me. I wish to take the sacrament to-morrow, that it may fix this variable, and affect this senseless heart, which of itself is dead alike to all emotions of terror and gratitude in spiritual things."

He did not venture to communicate according to his wish: he had learned to view the eucharist rather as an act of self-dedication than as a means of grace; or the spirit which induced him to record, "there is nothing so blessed to me as the gospel ordinances," would have led him at this season to the table of the Lord. His diligence in using all the means of grace was a striking feature of his new character. "What my heart most impels me now to say to you," he writes to his sister, "is 'Search the Scriptures,' and with all that earnestness and constancy which that book claims in which 'are the words of eternal life.' Never read it without praying to God that he will open your eyes to un-

derstand it; for the power of comprehending it comes from him, and him only. 'Seek and ye shall find,' says our Saviour; 'Take heed how ye hear;' which implies, that unless we seek, and diligently too, we shall not find; and, unless we take heed we shall be deceived in hearing. There is no opinion so fatal as that which is commonly received in *these liberal* days, that a person is in a safe state with respect to a future world, if he acts tolerably up to his knowledge and convictions, though he may not have taken much pains about acquiring this knowledge or fixing these convictions." What he pressed on her, he diligently practised. He now spent several hours daily in earnest study of the Scripture; he took lodgings in the Adelphi, that he might be within reach of pastoral instructions which simply inculcated its truths; and he began to seek the friendship of those who feared God. He withdrew his name from all the clubs of which he was a member—a precaution, which he thought essential to his safety in the critical circumstances in which he was placed. "Living in town," he says, "disagrees with me, I must endeavour to find Christian converse in the country." To this he was seasonably invited two days afterward, by his near connexion Mr. Thornton.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

"Clapham, Dec. 24.

"My dear Sir,

You may easier conceive than I can express the satisfaction I had from a few minutes' converse with Mr. Newton yesterday afternoon. As in nature, so in grace, what comes very quickly forward, rarely abides long: I am aware of your difficulties, which call for great prudence and caution. Those that believe, must not make haste, but be content to go God's pace, and watch the leadings of his providence, as of the pillar and the cloud formerly. There is a danger in running from church to church to hear: more profit is obtained under one or two ministers. You cannot be too wary in forming connexions. The fewer new friends, perhaps, the better. I shall at any time be glad to see you here, and can quarter you, and let you be as retired as possible, and hope we shall never be on a footing of ceremony.

I am, my dear Sir,

your most devoted kinsman,

JOHN THORNTON."

Jan. 11th. To town and Woolnooth—after church, brought Mr. Newton down in chaise—dined and slept at Wimbledon —composure and happiness of a true Christian: he read the account of his poor niece's death, and shed tears of joy. 12th. Newton stayed—Thornton Astell surprised us together on the common in the evening. Expect to hear myself now universally given out to be a methodist: may God grant it may be said with truth."

To his mother, who had been alarmed by some such rumour, he explained soon afterwards his real sentiments. "It is not, believe me, to my own imagination, or to any system formed in my closet, that I look for my principles; it is to the very source to which you refer me, the Scriptures. . . . . All that I contend for is, that we should really make this book the criterion of our opinions and actions, and not read it and then think that we do so of course; but if we do this, we must reckon on not finding ourselves able to comply with all those customs of the world, in which many who call themselves Christians are too apt to indulge without reflection: . . . . we must of course [therefore] be subject to the charge of excess and singularity. But in what will this singularity consist? Not merely in indifferent things; no, in these our Saviour always conformed, and took occasion to check an unnecessary strictness into which he saw men were led by overstraining a good principle. In what then will these peculiarities appear? Take our great Master's own words; 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.' It would be easy to dilate on this text; and I am afraid that we should find at the close of the discourse that the picture was very unlike the men of this world. 'But who is my neighbour?' Here, too, our Saviour has instructed us by the parable which follows. It is evident we are to consider our peculiar situations, and in these to do all the good we can. Some men are thrown into public, some have their lot in private life. These different states have their corresponding duties; and he whose destination is of the former sort, will do as ill to immure himself in solitude, as he who is only a village Hampden would, were he to head an army or address a senate. What I have said will, I hope, be sufficient to remove any apprehensions that I mean to shut myself up either in my closet in town, or in my hermitage in the country. No, my dear mother, in my circumstances this would merit no better name than desertion; and

if I were thus to fly from the post where Providence has placed me, I know not how I could look for the blessing of God upon my retirement: and without this heavenly assistance, either in the world or in solitude our own endeavours will be equally ineffectual. When I consider the particulars of my duty, I blush at the review; but my shame is not occasioned by my thinking that I am too studiously diligent in the business of life; on the contrary, I then feel that I am serving God best when from proper motives I am most actively engaged in it. What humbles me is, the sense that I forego so many opportunities of doing good; and it is my constant prayer, that God will enable me to serve him more steadily, and my fellow-creatures more assiduously: and I trust that my prayers will be granted through the intercession of that Saviour 'by whom' only 'we have access with confidence into this grace wherein we stand;' and who has promised that he will lead on his people from strength to strength, and gradually form them to a more complete resemblance of their divine original."

"Watch and pray," he wrote earnestly to his sister; "read the word of God, imploring that true wisdom which may enable you to comprehend and fix it in your heart, that it may gradually produce its effect under the operation of the Holy Spirit, in renewing the mind and purifying the conduct. This it will do more and more the longer we live under its influence; and it is to the honour of religion, that those who when they first began to run the Christian course, were in extremes . . enthusiastical, perhaps, or rigidly severe . . will often by degrees lose their several imperfections, which though by the world laid unfairly to the account of their religion, were yet undoubtedly so many disparagements to it: . . . like some of our Westmoreland evenings, when though in the course of the day the skies have been obscured by clouds and vapours, yet towards its close the sun beams forth with unsullied lustre, and descends below the horizon in the full display of all his glories: shall I pursue the metaphor, just to suggest, that this is the earnest of a joyful rising, which will not be disappointed? The great thing we have to do, is to be perpetually reminding ourselves that we are but strangers and pilgrims, having no abiding city, but looking for a city which hath foundations; and by the power of habit which God has been graciously pleased to bestow upon us, our work will every day become easier, if we accustom ourselves to cast our care on him, and

labour in a persuasion of his co-operation. The true Christian will desire to have constant communion with his Saviour. The eastern nations had their talismans, which were to advertise them of every danger, and guard them from every mischief. Be the love of Christ our talisman."

Upon Good Friday, April 14th, he communicated; and upon the following Easter Sunday enters in his Journal: "At Stock with the Unwins—day delightful, out almost all of it—communicated—very happy."

TO MISS WILBERFORCE.

"Stock, April 16, 1786.

"About five o'clock yesterday I put myself into a post-chaise, and in four hours found myself safely lodged with the vicar of Stock. It is more than a month since I slept out of town, and I feel all that Milton attributes to the man who has been

'long in populous cities pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air.'

I scarce recollect to have spent so pleasant a day as that which is now nearly over. My heart opens involuntarily to Unwin and his wife; I fancy I have been with them every day since we first became acquainted at Nottingham, and expand to them with all the confidence of a twelve years' intimacy. Can my dear sister wonder that I call on her to participate in the pleasure I am tasting. I know how you sympathize in the happiness of those you love, and I could not therefore forgive myself if I were to keep my raptures to myself, and not invite you to partake of my enjoyment. The day has been delightful. I was out before six, and made the fields my oratory, the sun shining as bright and as warm as at midsummer. I think my own devotions become more fervent when offered in this way amidst the general chorus, with which all nature seems on such a morning to be swelling the song of praise and thanksgiving; and except the time that has been spent at church and at dinner, ... and neither in the sanctuary nor at table I trust, had I a heart unwarmed with gratitude to the Giver of all good things ... I have been all day basking in the sun. On any other day I should not have been so happy: a sense that I was neglecting the duties of my situation might have interrupted the course of my enjoyments, and have taken from their *totality;*

for in such a situation as mine every moment may be made useful to the happiness of my fellow-creatures. But the sabbath is a season of rest, in which we may be allowed to unbend the mind, and give a complete loose to those emotions of gratitude and admiration, which a contemplation of the works, and a consideration of the goodness, of God cannot fail to excite in a mind of the smallest sensibility. And surely this sabbath, of all others, is that which calls forth these feelings in a supreme degree; a frame of united love and triumph well becomes it, and holy confidence and unrestrained affection. May every sabbath be to me, and to those I love, a renewal of these feelings, of which the small tastes we have in this life should make us look forward to that eternal rest, which awaits the people of God; when the whole will be a never-ending enjoyment of those feelings of love and joy and admiration and gratitude, which are, even in the limited degree we here experience them, the truest sources of comfort; when these, I say, will dictate perpetual songs of thanksgiving without fear and without satiety. My eyes are bad, but I could not resist the impulse I felt to call on you and tell you how happy I have been."

In the spring of 1786, Mr. Wilberforce returned an altered man to his business in the House of Commons. There were indeed no external symptoms to announce the change which had passed over him. "Though I had told Pitt," he says, "that I could not promise him unqualified support, I was surprised to find how generally we agreed." Yet many silent intimations now bespoke the presence of higher motives than a mere desire of personal distinction.

In the latter part of the session Mr. Wilberforce, who delighted in escaping for a single night from London, "began to sleep constantly at Wimbledon;" yet thinking it an unfavourable "situation for his servants," a needless increase of his personal expenses, and a cause of some loss of time, he determined to forego in future the luxury of such a villa. The influence of his new principles was rapidly pervading all his conduct. After a public breakfast given at this time he subjected himself to the severest scrutiny. "In how sad a state," he says, "is my soul to-day! Yesterday, when I had company at Wimbledon, I gave the reins to [myself]; sometimes forgetting, at others acting in defiance of God. If Christ's promise, that he will hear those who call upon him, were less direct and general, I durst not plead for mercy, but should fall into

despair; and from what I perceive of the actual workings of my soul, the next step would be an abandoning of myself to all impiety. But Christ has graciously promised that he will be made unto us not redemption only but sanctification. O! give me a new heart, and put a right spirit within me, that I may keep thy statutes and do them. This week has been sadly spent; I will keep a more strict watch over myself by God's grace."

With the close of the session "I got off at last from town," says the Diary. "July 6th. Slept at Pepper's, Highgate; and Friday at Grantham; thence through Hull to Scarborough." Here he joined his mother and sister, and with them the following week arrived at Wilford, the seat of his cousin Mr. Samuel Smith. His first care was to recommend his new opinions by greater kindness in domestic life. Strange rumours of his altered habits had preceded his arrival, and his mother was prepared to mourn over eccentric manners and enthusiastic principles. All that she observed was greater kindness and evenness of temper. "It may tend," he had written down before he joined her as a rule for his observance, "to remove prejudices of . . . . if I am more kind and affectionate than ever,—consult her more,—show respect for her judgment, and manifest rather humility in myself than dissatisfaction concerning others." His habitual cheerfulness, and the patient forbearance of a temper naturally quick, could not escape her notice; and her friend Mrs. Sykes, who had shared in her suspicions, remarked shrewdly, when they parted company at Scarborough, "If this is madness, I hope that he will bite us all."

A sense of his deficiency in the power of steady application, led him to set about educating himself. Various and accurate were now his studies, but the book which he studied most carefully, and by which perhaps above all others, his mental faculties were perfected, was the Holy Scripture. This he read and weighed and pondered over, studying its connexion and details, and mastering especially, in their own tongue, the apostolical epistles. This was his chief occupation at Wilford. It was now his daily care to instruct his understanding and discipline his heart. Nor was it an easy path upon which he had set out. Though its later stages were gladdened by a settled peace, at this period almost every entry of his Journal records a struggle and a conflict. "At church, I wander more than ever," he says, July 30th, "and can scarce keep awake—my thoughts are always

straying. Do thou, O God, set my affections on purer pleasures. Christ should be a Christian's delight and glory. I will endeavour by God's help to excite in myself an anxiety and longing for the joys of heaven, and for deliverance from this scene of ingratitude and sin; yet, mistake not impatience under the fatigues of the combat for a lawful and indeed an enjoined earnestness for, and anticipation of the crown of victory. I say solemnly in the presence of God this day, that were I to die, I know not what would be my eternal portion. If I live in some degree under the habitual impression of God's presence, yet I cannot, or rather I will not, keep true to him; and every night I have to look back on a day misemployed, or not improved with fervency and diligence. O God! do thou enable me to live more to thee, to look to Jesus with a single eye, and by degrees to have the renewed nature implanted in me, and the heart of stone removed." And again, a fortnight later, he says, "I see plainly the sad way in which I am going on. Of myself I have not power to change it. Do thou, O thou Saviour of sinners, have mercy on me, and let me not be an instance of one who having month after month despised thy goodness and long-suffering, has treasured up to himself wrath against the day of wrath. The sense of God's presence seldom stays on my mind when I am in company; and at times I even have doubts and difficulties about the truth of the great doctrines of Christianity." Yet in spite of difficulties, he was resolved to persevere.—"With God," he reasons with himself, "nothing is impossible. Work out then thy own salvation. Purify thy heart, thou double-minded—labour to enter into that rest. The way is narrow; the enemies are many, to thee particularly; . . rich, great, &c. . . but then we have God and Christ on our side: we have heavenly armour; the crown is everlasting life, and the struggle how short, compared with the eternity which follows it! Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." While he thus encouraged himself, hoping against hope, there were at times already on his path gleams of brighter light. "On this day," he says, August 24th, "I complete my twenty-seventh year. What reason have I for humiliation and gratitude! May God, for Christ's sake, increase my desire to acquire the Christian temper and live the Christian life, and enable me to carry this desire into execution." A few days later he adds, "I am just returned from receiving the sacrament. I was ena-

bled to be earnest in prayer, and to be contrite and humble under a sense of my unworthiness, and of the infinite mercy of God in Christ. I hope that I desire from my heart to lead henceforth a life more worthy of the Christian profession. May it be my meat and drink to do the will of God, my Father. May he daily renew me by his Holy Spirit, and may I walk before him in a frame made up of fear, and gratitude, and humble trust, and assurance of his fatherly kindness and constant concern for me."

This progress was the fruit of unremitting toil and watchfulness. "My chief temptations," he says, "against which to guard this week particularly, are, first,—My thoughts wandering when reading or doing any thing. Secondly,—Losing sight of God in company and at meals. This often begins by an affected vivacity. Thirdly,—I am apt to favour my wandering temper by too short and broken periods of study. To form my plan as carefully as I can to prevent these. Think how to serve those you are in the house with —in the village—your constituents. Look to God through Christ . . . How does my experience convince me that true religion is to maintain communion with God, and that it all goes together.—Let this be a warning . . . Contempt of this world in itself, and views constantly set upon the next. Frequent aspirations. To call in at some houses in the village. To endeavour to keep my mind in a calm, humble frame —not too much vivacity. To put my prayers into words to prevent wandering. Consider always before you take up any book what is your peculiar object in reading it, and keep that in view. Recollect all you read is then only useful when applied to purify the heart and life, or to fit you for the better discharge of its duties. To recapitulate verbally, discutiendi causâ. Let me try by prayer and contemplation to excite strong desires for future heavenly joys—to trust less to my own resolutions and more to Christ."

These extended extracts from his Diary exhibit a constant growth, not only in the knowledge of his own sinfulness and weakness, but a more continual looking to Christ and trusting in Him, both as the ground of his hope towards God, and the source of his supplies of strength to resist temptation. On his return toward London he wrote to Lord Muncaster, concluding as follows:—

"O my dear Muncaster, how can we go on as if present things were to last for ever, when so often reminded 'that the fashion of this world passes away!' Every

day I live I see greater reason in considering this life but as a passage to another. And when summoned to the tribunal of God, to give an account of all things we have done in the body, how shall we be confounded by the recollection of those many instances, in which we have relinquished a certain eternal for an uncertain transitory good! You are not insensible to these things, but you think of them rather like a follower of Socrates than a disciple of Jesus. You see how frankly I deal with you, in truth I can no otherwise so well show the interest I take in your happiness: these thoughts are uppermost in my heart, and they will come forth when I do not repress my natural emotions. Oh that they had a more prevailing influence over my disposition and conduct; then might I hope to afford men occasion 'to glorify our Father which is in heaven;' and I should manifest the superiority of the principle which actuated me, by the more than ordinary spirit and activity by which my parliamentary, my domestic, and all my other duties were marked and characterized."

He was soon after fixed at Bath, by the advice of Mr. Hey; schooling his own heart as carefully amongst its crowded scenes, as he had done in the domestic privacy of Wilford. "I am too apt," he says, Nov. 18th, "to be considering how far I may advance towards sin, in animal indulgences particularly; not remembering that a Christian's life is hid with Christ in God, that he ought to have more satisfaction in offering the little sacrifices God requires, as the willing tribute of a grateful heart, than in gratifying fleshly appetites; and that he should look for his happiness in fellowship with God, and view with jealousy whatever tends to break in on this communion. I am apt to be thinking it enough to spend so many hours in reading, religious service, study, &c. What a sad sign is this! how different from that delight in the law and service of God in the inner man, which St. Paul speaks of, and which was so eminent in David! O my God, for the sake of thy beloved Son, our propitiation, through whom we may have access to the throne of grace, give me a new heart—give me a real desire and earnest longing for one. I have got a trick of congratulating myself when I look at my watch, or the clock strikes, 'Well, one hour more of this day is gone.' What ingratitude is this to God, who spares this cumberer of the ground from day to day, to give him time for repentance!" "Walk charitably," he writes down as his law; "wherever

you are be on your guard, remembering that your conduct and conversation may have some effect on the minds of those with whom you are, in rendering them more or less inclined to the reception of Christian principles, and the practice of a Christian life. Be ready with subjects for conversation,—for private thought, as Watts and Doddridge recommend.—This week to find opportunities for opening to M. B. and to endeavour to impress her deeply with a sense of the importance of the one thing needful, and to convince her that the loose religion and practice of common professors is not the religion and practice of the Bible."

Early in the following year he was again in London, attending in his place in parliament. But his thoughts were principally occupied through this spring in concerting measures for a public effort at reforming manners. He had been roused out of a deadly lethargy, and when he looked around him on the aspect of society, he saw how universal was the evil from which he had himself escaped. He could not wonder that the gay and busy world were almost ignorant of Christianity, amidst the lukewarmness and apathy which possessed the very watchmen of the faith. To this high and self-denying office God put it into the heart of his servant to aspire. "God," he says, "has set before me as my object the reformation of [my country's] manners." Having once accepted this commission, he devoted all his powers to its fulfilment, and for years kept it steadily in view in all his undertakings. His first great effort was suggested by Dr. Woodward's "History of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in the year 1692." He proposed to form a similar association, to resist the spread of open immorality. This had been the second object of the earlier society, its first aim being the edification of its members. "I am conscious," he tells Mr. Hey, "that ours is an infinitely inferior aim, yet surely it is of the utmost consequence, and worthy of the labours of a whole life." In this zealous spirit he undertook the work. He endeavoured to infuse amongst his numerous friends a determination to resist the growing vices of the times. "The barbarous custom of hanging," he tells one of them, "has been tried too long, and with the success which might have been expected from it. The most effectual way to prevent the greater crimes is by punishing the smaller, and by endeavouring to repress that general spirit of licentiousness, which is the parent of every species of vice. I know that by regulating the external conduct we do not at

first change the hearts of men, but even they are ultimately to be wrought upon by these means, and we should at least so far remove the obtrusiveness of the temptation, that it may not provoke the appetite, which might otherwise be dormant and inactive."

The plan which he adopted for this purpose was to obtain a Royal Proclamation against vice and immorality, and then suggest the formation of an association for carrying it into effect.

His first object was to prevail upon the bishops to become members of the new association; and to effect this, he resolved upon applying personally to as many as he could, when they had retired to their respective sees. He wished to communicate with them individually, lest the scruples of a few might prevent the acquiescence of the rest; and he could not issue circulars without putting himself forward as the avowed author of the plan. "In your several disclosures," he tells his friend Lord Muncaster, "the less you introduce my name the better. When the several parties come to compare notes hereafter, it may appear as if I had been unseasonably, I had almost said, impertinently active, and I should grievously regret any personal jealousy which might operate to the prejudice of the great object which we have in view."

He determined therefore to travel round the country to the residence of those whose countenance he hoped to gain; and upon the 21st of June, in spite of the fatigue of the last session, and a strong desire "to put off this whole business for a time, and allow myself a course of the Bath waters ... since it might be dangerous to suffer the impression which the Proclamation may have produced to wear away, before I am so firm as not to fear my gentlemen drawing back," he set off from London without communicating to any one the purpose of his journey. He spared no labour to attain his object, visiting in succession the episcopal residences of the prelates of Worcester, Hereford, Norwich, Lincoln, York, and Lichfield, and gaining many of the bishops as the first promoters of his scheme. He called too upon many influential laymen.

In his various applications he was no stranger to refusals of co-operation.—"So you wish, young man," said a nobleman whose house he visited, "you wish to be a reformer of men's morals. Look then, and see there what is the end of such reformers," pointing as he spoke to a picture of the

crucifixion—no likely argument to disarm a Christian warrior. Yet though sometimes opposed, upon the whole his plans succeeded.

The society was soon in active and useful operation. The Duke of Montagu opened his house for its reception, and presided over its meetings,—a post which was filled after his death by the late Lord (Chancellor) Bathurst, who was followed by Bishop Porteus: and before its dissolution it had obtained many valuable acts of parliament, and greatly checked the spread of blasphemous and indecent publications. It afforded also a centre from which many other useful schemes proceeded, and was the first example of those various associations, which soon succeeded to the apathy of former years.

By the autumn of this year it was so well established as no longer to require the personal attention of its founder. He therefore left London, and after a short tour in Devonshire fixed himself at Bath. "I find here," writes Hannah More, "a great many friends; but those with whom I have chiefly passed my time are Mr. Wilberforce's family. That young gentleman's character is one of the most extraordinary I ever knew for talents, virtue, and piety. It is difficult not to grow wiser and better every time one converses with him."

At Bath Mr. Wilberforce was for a while removed from the full press of business; and had leisure for more serious contemplation, than was possible in the seasons of active exertion.—"By God's help," he writes, "I will set vigorously about reform. I believe one cause of my having so fallen short is my having aimed no higher. Lord Bacon says, great changes are easier than small ones. Remember, thy situation abounding in comforts requires thee to be peculiarly on thy guard, lest when thou hast eaten and art full thou forget God."

Though little satisfied with his parliamentary exertions, this year had been in one respect the very crisis of his usefulness. In it he had been led publicly to devote himself to his great work, the Abolition of the Slave Trade. This was the fruit of his religious change; and it is the more necessary distinctly to establish this, because there has gone forth an opinion most injurious to the real spring of all his labours, that he was led by accident to undertake this cause. Thus the late venerable C. Ignatius Latrobe attributed to Lady Middleton the honourable work of having called the appointed

champion to the lists: and others, besides Mr. Latrobe, have imagined that the like merit was claimed by Mr. Clarkson, in his "History of Abolition."

Some extracts from a letter which Mr. L. wrote in 1815 to his daughter, will furnish an interesting statement of his view of this matter.

"As I happen to know more about that business than many others, I have sometimes been called upon to give my opinion, and, on a certain occasion, did it with such effect, that I was desired to commit it to writing for the information of the public.—What I have heard and seen of those movements which ended in the abolition of the slave trade, if admitted to be correct, will be my warrant for asserting, that this great and momentous event was brought about by the instrumentality of a *woman*.

"When Sir Charles Middleton (afterwards Lord Barham) commanded a man-of-war, he had a surgeon on board whose name was Ramsay. Sir Charles went to the West Indies, where Mr. Ramsay married a lady of St. Kitt's. It was thought most convenient that Mr. Ramsay should settle in that island, and as he had an inclination to enter into the church, and a living offered, he came home, took orders, and became a clergyman. In St. Kitt's he saw a great deal of the manner of treating the negroes, and felt the greatest pity for them. But having become acquainted with the horrors of the trade, by which they were obtained, he was still more shocked with the indignities and cruelties suffered by those poor creatures on their passage from Africa to the islands, and with the brutal manner of their being bought and sold like cattle. How long he stayed in St. Kitt's I have not here the means of ascertaining; but after some years he received a vocation to the living of Teston, near Maidstone in Kent. Here his diligence, usefulness, and urbanity of manners soon brought him into great favour with the family, especially as his mild and charitable disposition well accorded with that of his patroness Mrs. Bouverie and her friend Lady Middleton.—In the course of his frequent conversations, the state of the slaves in the West Indies, and the abominable traffic in human flesh and blood, came into discussion. The ladies were shocked with the details given them by Mr. Ramsay. Lady Middleton's active mind and indefatigable ardour would not suffer the matter to rest, and she was continually urging Mr. Ramsay to call the attention of the whole nation to such crying sins. To this purpose she wrote him an en-

ergetic letter, which you will find in his 'Essay on the Treatment of, and Traffic in, Slaves.' This book caused a great sensation, and raised against Mr. Ramsay a host of enemies. Yet all this which was said and written on the subject might have passed away, and produced as little effect as the declamations and writings of many good men in England and America, and the mental torments experienced and recorded by Mr. Clarkson, but that God put it into the heart of Lady Middleton to venture one step further, and to urge the necessity of bringing the proposed Abolition of the Slave Trade before parliament, as a measure in which the whole nation was concerned.

"This was done in the most natural and simple manner possible, at the conclusion of some very animated expressions of her feelings on considering the national guilt attached to the continuation of such a traffic. Sorry I am, that I did not mark the day when I was witness to that remarkable conversation, which took place at breakfast, Mr. Ramsay, if I mistake not, being present. Lady Middleton, addressing her husband, who was member for Rochester, said, 'Indeed, Sir Charles, I think you ought to bring the subject before the House, and demand parliamentary inquiry into the nature of a traffic so disgraceful to the British character.' Sir Charles granted the propriety of such an inquiry; but observed, that the cause would be in bad hands if it was committed to him, who had never yet made one speech in the House; but he added, that he should strenuously support any able member who would undertake it.

"This led to an interchange of opinions, respecting the willingness and fitness of several members who were named to brave the storm, and defend the cause of humanity; when some one mentioned Mr. Wilberforce, who had lately come out, and not only displayed very superior talents and great eloquence, but was a decided and powerful advocate of the cause of truth and virtue, and a friend of the minister. He was then at Hull, and Lady Middleton prevailed on Sir Charles immediately to write to him, and propose the subject. He did so, and communicated the letter he had written to the family, as well as Mr. Wilberforce's answer which he received a few days after, both of which I heard with these mine ears. Mr. Wilberforce wrote to the following effect; 'That he felt the great importance of the subject, and thought himself unequal to the task allotted to him, but yet would not positively decline it; adding, that on his return to town

he would pay a visit to the family at Teston, and consult with Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, &c. on the subject.'

"After Mr. Wilberforce's return from Yorkshire he visited the family at Teston, as proposed; and as he endeavoured to make himself master of the subject, and from every accessible quarter to obtain information, Sir Charles sent him to me, to learn what had been effected by our missionaries among the slaves, in the different West India islands; and I furnished him with every species of intelligence in my power.

"My purpose was to show that the abolition of the slave trade was, under God, and when the time was come, the work of a *woman*, even Lady Middleton, who was the honoured instrument of bringing the monster within the range of the artillery of the executive justice of the kingdom, and selecting and rousing that noble champion, who so firmly stood his ground, and persevering from year to year, at last saw his labours crowned with success. Many preparatory steps had been taken by that excellent man, Granville Sharpe, and others; and I believe Mr. Clarkson, when he says that there arose in many places a spirit of general inquiry, without any previous communications, as to the nature of that horrible traffic."

Of Lady Middleton's application Mr. Wilberforce has said, "It was just one of those many impulses which were all giving to my mind the same direction." Nor was it an unnatural mistake by which those who had not known his previous training attributed his after-conduct, according to their own bias, either to Lady Middleton in 1786, or to Mr. Clarkson in 1787. But the real cause of his engaging in the work lay far deeper than any such suggestions. It was the immediate consequence of his altered character. The miseries of Africa had long ago attracted his attention. Even in his boyhood he had written on the subject for the daily journals—"It is," he has said in conversation, "somewhat worthy of attention as indicative of the providential impulses by which we are led into particular lines of conduct, that as early as the year 1780 I had been strongly interested for the West Indian slaves, and in a letter asking my friend Gordon, then going to Antigua, to collect information for me, I expressed my determination, or at least my hope, that some time or other I should redress the wrongs of those wretched and degraded beings."

Nor was Mr. Wilberforce at this time wanting in many

high qualifications for the conduct of the cause. His glowing and persuasive eloquence, his high political influence rarely combined with independence, marked him out as fitted to achieve that deliverance for the oppressed for which his generous mind would naturally long. Yet at this time he wanted that one requisite without which all the rest would have proved insufficient. The statue, indeed, was framed with exquisite symmetry, but the ethereal fire was wanting. Personal ambition and generous impulses would have shrunk from the greatness of the undertaking, or grown wearied in the protracted struggle, and these hitherto had been the main springs of his conduct. "The first years that I was in parliament," he has said, "I did nothing—nothing I mean to any good purpose; my own distinction was my darling object." But now he acted upon a new set of principles; his powers of mind, his eloquence in speech, his influence with Mr. Pitt, his general popularity, were now all as talents lent to him by God, and for their due improvement he must render an account. Now, therefore, all his previous interest in the condition of the West Indian slaves led to practical exertion. "God," he says, in undertaking what became at once a sacred charge—"God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners." In this spirit he approached the strife, and let it never be forgotten, that it was the fear of God which armed him as the champion of the liberty of man. That it was by this general acquaintance with West Indian matters, and not from any accidental summons, that he was led to turn his attention to the slave trade, he has himself recorded. "It was the condition of the West Indian slaves which first drew my attention, and it was in the course of my inquiry that I was led to Africa and the abolition." These inquiries he was busily pursuing amongst the African merchants throughout the year 1786. "I found them," he says, "at this time ready to give me information freely, the trade not having yet become the subject of alarming discussion, but their accounts were full of prejudice and error. I got also together at my house from time to time persons who knew any thing about the matter."

Yet it was not with inconsiderate haste that he undertook the cause. "When I had acquired," he says, "so much information, I began to talk the matter over with Pitt and Grenville. Pitt recommended me to undertake its conduct, as a subject suited to my character and talents. At length, I well remem-

ber, after a conversation in the open air at the root of an old tree at Holwood just above the steep descent into the vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice on a fit occasion in the House of Commons of my intention to bring the subject forward." In the spring of 1787, Mr. Clarkson, who had published a Prize Essay upon the subject in the preceding year, was in London, and was introduced to Mr. Wilberforce; but though they frequently conversed upon the subject, Mr. Wilberforce never divulged his own determination, until at Mr. Bennet Langton's table in answer to a question from his host he avowed it publicly.

Several humane men had been for months communicating privately upon the subject, and they now at once determined upon immediate action, and formed themselves into a committee to raise the funds and collect the information necessary for procuring the abolition of the trade. Their first meeting was held upon the 22d of May, 1787, when Granville Sharpe was elected chairman of the twelve who met together, most of whom were London merchants, and all but two Quakers. This body soon increased and grew into a valuable ally of Mr. Wilberforce. By their means many useful publications were circulated, and a general knowledge of the horrors of the trade extensively diffused; as their agent, Mr. Clarkson sought patiently for evidence in Liverpool and Bristol; they raised contributions to defray the general expenses of the cause, and became a central body, from which emanated many similar societies in the chief provincial towns. "At this place," writes a correspondent from Manchester, "large subscriptions have been raised for the slave business, and 'te duce Teucro' we are warm and strenuous." Their great work, and that in which this year they actively engaged, was to rouse the slumbering indignation of the country against the cruelty and bloodshed of the traffic. And here was seen at once the exceeding importance of their leader's character. In the year 1780, the slave trade had attracted Mr. Burke's attention, and he had even proceeded to sketch out a code of regulations which provided for its immediate mitigation and ultimate suppression. But after mature consideration he had abandoned the attempt, from the conviction that the strength of the West Indian body would defeat the utmost efforts of his powerful party, and cover them with ruinous unpopularity. Nor could any mere political alliance have been ever more likely to succeed. The great interests with

which the battle must be fought could be resisted only by the general moral feeling of the nation. There was then no example upon record of any such achievement, and in entering upon the struggle it was of the utmost moment that its leader should be one who could combine, and so render irresistible, the scattered sympathies of the religious classes. Granville Sharpe, the chairman of the London committee, did not fail to point out this advantage. "Mr. W." he writes, "is to introduce the business to the House. The respectability of his position as member for the largest county, the great influence of his personal connexions, added to an amiable and unblemished character, secure every advantage to the cause." Its first supporters accordingly were not found amongst the partisans of political commotion, but amongst the educated and religious. "Many of the clergy," writes Granville Sharpe, "are firm and cordial friends to the undertaking:" and soon after he rejoices "in their continual support." If any thing were wanted to complete this proof, it would be found in the grievous injury the cause sustained in later years from the character of its chief political supporters.

The day of the promised motion was now approaching; but though his zealous partisans throughout the country, who had formed themselves into local associations in almost all the great provincial towns, and had sent already above thirty petitions to the House of Commons, were anxious for immediate action, it became evident to the leader in the contest, that he could succeed only by more cautious tactics.

Symptoms of determined opposition were beginning to appear. The trade had struck its roots too deeply amongst the commercial interests of the country to fall before a single blow. In spite too of Mr. Pitt's support, the administration, as a body, were not in favour of the cause.

To meet such an opposition as was now threatened, it was absolutely necessary to possess a great body of distinct facts, upon which to ground the first attack upon the trade. To procure this evidence Mr. Pitt consented to issue a summons to the Privy Council, to examine as a board of trade the state of our commercial intercourse with Africa. "I have been blamed," says Mr. Wilberforce, "for this decision; as if I had suffered the first favourable feelings to our cause, which existed in the country, to die away, and given time for self-interest to exert its powers. But it must be borne in mind, that though I might have carried a general

resolution which *condemned* the slave trade, abolition could be obtained only by an act of parliament. Now the slow and cautious policy of our legislative system gives the opponent of every measure nine or ten, and, in the case of a warm and dexterous partisan, many more stations for drawing up his troops and resisting its advance. Of these opportunities our opponents would have availed themselves; and the inquiry into this complicated subject would have been just as long, however we had met the petitions of the West India body."

The first witnesses who were heard by the Privy Council were those whom the African merchants had deputed. They undertook to establish not only the necessity, but the absolute humanity of the trade. Meanwhile, at Mr. Wilberforce's suggestion, the friends of Abolition prepared their evidence and marshalled their witnesses. In producing these, it had been previously determined that the London committee should alone appear, whilst the leaders of the cause should direct their movements for awhile unseen.

At this important moment, it seemed but too probable that Mr. Wilberforce would be withdrawn for ever from the conduct of the cause. It was in spite of the hinderances of a delicate constitution that all his labours were performed; but in the course of this spring his health appeared entirely to fail, from an absolute decay of the digestive organs. On the last day of January he says in his Diary, after many previous records of indifferent health,—"Very unwell, so did not dine at Pitt's, but met Ramsay there in the evening and discussed—did not go to House. Feb. 1st. Still indifferent—did not go to the House." This attack passed off after a few days, and he renewed his attendance in the House, and discharged his ordinary amount of labour. But within three weeks his illness returned.

His disorder had now assumed the character of an entire decay of all the vital functions. "There is Wilberforce," said one college friend directing the attention of another to his wasted frame, "he cannot last for three weeks." A consultation of the chief physicians of the day, ended in the declaration to his family, "That he had not stamina to last a fortnight." Judging the case to be beyond the skill of the masters of human art, they decently dismissed their patient on a journey to the Bath waters. He complied with their desire, but soberly forecasting the doubtful issue of his sickness, he first summoned Mr. Pitt, and obtained from

him a promise that he would charge himself with the interests of the Abolition cause. Satisfied with this pledge he set out for Bath, which he reached upon the 5th of April in a state of extreme weakness and exhaustion. "Behold me," he wrote from Bath to Mr. Wyvill, "a banished man from London and business. It is no more than I can expect if my constituents vote my seat abdicated, and proceed to the election of another representative: however I trust I shall yet be enabled by God's blessing to do the public and them some service. As to the slave question, I do not like to touch on it, it is so big a one it frightens me in my present weak state. Suffice it to say, and I know the pleasure it will afford you to hear it, that I trust matters are in a very good train. *To you in strict confidence* I will intrust, that Pitt, with a warmth of principle and friendship that have made me love him better than I ever did before, has taken on himself the management of the business, and promises to do *all* for me if I desire it, that, if I were an efficient man, it would be proper for me to do myself. This is all I can now say; I might add more were we side by side on my sofa."

Upon this promise Mr. Pitt, at once acted so far as to superintend, with the help of Bishop Porteus, the Privy Council inquiries which were now in progress. Meanwhile the session of parliament was advancing, and the country adherents of the Abolition, who had sent no less than one hundred petitions to the House of Commons, began to grow impatient of delay. Some of them even wrote to suggest the propriety of immediate action under another leader. The London committee endeavoured to restrain their eagerness by suggesting to them the loss which the cause must sustain from any alteration in its conduct; and distinctly declared that "if Mr. Wilberforce was at last unable to resume his post they should leave to him the selection of his substitute." At the same time (April 11th) they wrote to Mr. Wilberforce for his directions as to their conduct "in this emergency." This communication followed him to Bath, and reached him when reduced to such a state that he could not read any letter upon business. His friends therefore judging for him that the proper time was come, wrote in his name to Mr. Pitt, and committed the cause into his hands. Upon this summons Mr. Pitt immediately acted. Upon the 22d of April, Mr. Granville Sharpe reported to the committee that he had been sent for by the minister, and officially informed of the pledge which he had given to his friend.

Upon the 9th of May accordingly Mr. Pitt moved a resolution binding the House to consider the circumstances of the slave trade early in the following session. In spite of his endeavours to prevent an unseasonable discussion, Mr. Pitt's resolution gave rise to a very warm debate; and the expressed opinion of the House seemed strongly in support of Abolition. Mr. Burke was its declared advocate; Mr. Fox had "almost made up his mind to immediate abolition." Twelve members avowed themselves its earnest supporters; and the representatives of slave-trading Liverpool were alone found bold enough to intimate dissent; yet even then were heard whispers of that commercial ruin which was soon afterwards predicted in so confident a tone. The danger of such discussions was prophetically announced, and "Mr. Wilberforce for negro" affirmed to be already in the island of Grenada the secret watch-word of servile insurrection. All the friends of Abolition were warm in their expressions of sympathy in Mr. Wilberforce's illness, and in lamentation for his absence. "It is better," said Mr. Fox, "that the cause should be in his hands than in mine; from him I honestly believe that it will come with more weight, more authority, and more probability of success." But though the general question was postponed, yet an important measure of practical relief was carried during this session. "Some of our principal supporters," says Mr. Wilberforce, "one of whom was the venerable Sir W. Dolben, were led by curiosity to inspect with their own eyes the actual state of a slave ship then fitting out in the river Thames. This was when the spring was so far advanced that the inquiry and discussion had been put off by mutual consent until the following year. But Sir W. Dolben and his friends came back to the House of Commons with a description which produced one universal feeling of pity, shame, and indignation. In particular, they found, in spite of the confidence with which it had been maintained, that self-interest alone would suffice for securing kind treatment to these wretched victims of avarice, that they were crowded into a space so miserably small, as exceedingly to aggravate their sufferings, and cause, from the spread of infectious sickness, a prodigious mortality. At once it was resolved, that such enormities should not exist unchecked even for another session, and a bill, limiting the number of slaves and providing some precautions against their sufferings, was proposed and carried by a large majority."

Sir William Dolben's Bill was introduced upon the 1st of May. The slave merchants opposed it fiercely. The delegates of Liverpool were heard against its regulations by counsel at the bar of the House. Though within a few years they were compelled to grant that this sacrifice to humanity had actually increased their profits, they now produced witnesses to prove that the limitations of the Bill (one slave to each ton of the vessel's burden) would totally suppress the trade. After practising every manœuvre known in House of Commons tactics, and endeavouring vainly for their present purpose to raise the cry of vested interests and commercial injury, they were defeated by a large majority, and on the 10th of June the Bill was carried to the House of Lords. There it met with more threatening opposition. The Lord Chancellor Thurlow exhausted in assailing it all that fertility in objections which marked his rugged character, and the honoured name of Rodney may be found amongst its most vehement opposers. It passed the Upper House by a decided though reduced majority, and received the royal assent upon the 11th of July.

The whole course of this contest Mr. Wilberforce watched patiently at a distance. Beyond all calculation he was visibly gaining strength at Bath. His returning health was in great measure the effect of a proper use of opium, a remedy to which even Dr. Pitcairne's judgment could scarcely make him have recourse; yet it was to this medicine that he now owed his life, as well as the comparative vigour of his later years. So sparing was he always in its use, that as a stimulant he never knew its power, and as a remedy for his specific weakness he had not to increase its quantity during the last twenty years he lived. "If I take," he would often say, "but a single glass of wine, I can feel its effect, but I never know when I have taken my dose of opium by my feelings." Its intermission was too soon perceived by the recurrence of disorder.

On the 5th of May he left Bath upon his road to Cambridge, performing the journey leisurely, sometimes upon horseback and sometimes in his carriage with his own horses.

Upon the 8th of May he reached Cambridge, and after dining with Isaac Milner proceeded to St. John's Coll., where he was hospitably received by Dr. Chevalier at the Lodge.

Though during this return to academic life, he experienced much gratification from the company of Milner, and

some few others amongst his ordinary companions, yet his judgment of the general tone of the society he met with in his college, marks the improved standard of intellect and morals which was now before his mind. "They were not what I had expected, they had neither the solidity of judgment possessed by ordinary men of business, nor the refined feelings and elevated principles which become a studious and sequestered life." Of himself he complains, "I am too easily contented with a general impression of religion, and do not labour to perfect faith by habituating myself to act upon a principle of love. I scarcely dare resolve, after so many defeats; but I trust I shall do better, relying entirely for success upon the assistance of that Holy Spirit which we are promised."

Leaving Cambridge he set out for Westmoreland, calling upon the road for his mother and sister.

One of his objects in this visit to the lakes, was to make Mr. Pitt acquainted with his favourite scenes. "Pitt," he says, "promises to steal down to me for a few days."

But though disappointed of this visit, his house was thronged, the whole summer through, with a succession of guests.

This constant stream of company continued until his leaving Westmoreland, about the middle of September. Though diverted by its interruptions from severer studies, he turned the intercourse of social life into occasions of intellectual profit. Yet upon the whole, his plans of study and retirement were materially disturbed.

"The life I am now leading," he enters in his private Journal at the end of July, "is unfavourable in all respects, both to mind and body, as little suitable to me considered as an invalid, under all the peculiar circumstances of my situation, as it is becoming my character and profession as a Christian. Indolence and intemperance are its capital features. It is true, the incessant intrusion of fresh visiters, and the constant temptations to which I am liable, from being always in company, render it extremely difficult to adhere to any plan of study, or any resolutions of abstemiousness, which last two it is the harder for me to observe, because my health requires throughout an indulgent regimen. Nothing however can excuse or palliate such conduct, and with the sincerest conviction of its guilt, I pray to that gracious God whose ways are not as our ways, to have mercy upon me, to turn the current of my affections, to impress my

mind with an awful and abiding sense of that eternity which awaits me, and finally to guide my feet into the way of peace. And though I have so often resolved and broken my resolutions, that I am almost ready to acquiesce in the headlong course which I am following; yet as thus to acquiesce would be to consign myself to irreversible misery, I must still strive to loose myself from this bondage of sin and Satan, calling on the name of the Lord, who alone can make my endeavours effectual.

"I am this week entering on a scene of great temptations —a perpetual round of dissipation and my house overflowing with guests; it is the more necessary for me to live by the faith of the Son of God. Do thou then, thou blessed Saviour and Friend of sinners, hear and have mercy on me. Let thy strength be magnified in my weakness. But whatever be the issue of this residence at Rayrigg, may it be a useful lesson to teach me to form my plans hereafter with greater caution and circumspection, and not to run myself into temptations, from the evil of which he who voluntarily exposes himself to them cannot reasonably expect to be delivered.

"I will now form and note in my pocket-book such resolutions for this week's regulation, as are best adapted to my present circumstances; and do thou, O God, enable me to keep them. My general object, during my stay at this place, should be to guard against habits of idleness, luxury, selfishness, and forgetfulness of God, by interlacing as much as I can of reading, and meditation, and religious retirement, and self-examination. Let me constantly view myself in all my various relations

as one who professes to be a Christian,
as a member of parliament,
as gifted by nature and fortune, as a son, brother, paterfamilias, friend, with influence and powerful connexions.

"1. To be for the ensuing week moderate at table.

"2. Hours as early as can contrive. Redeeming the time."

As he was not now contented with empty resolutions of amendment, he determined upon having more command over the disposal of his time, by giving up this favourite residence. "Milner and I had much talk about this being a most improper place for me, and resolved upon not continuing the house."

"This place," he wrote to Mr. Newton, just before he

quitted Westmoreland, "wherein I looked this summer for much solitude and quiet, has proved very different from retirement. The tour to the lakes has become so fashionable, that the banks of the Thames are scarcely more public than those of Windermere. You little knew what you were doing when you wished yourself with me in Westmoreland. My experience will not, I hope, be wasted on me, and I shall lay my plans in future with more foresight and circumspection. At this moment my cottage overflows with guests." He gave up the house, when his lease determined, in the following spring.

After paying Hull a short visit, and spending a day at Buckden, he set off for Bath. "Arrived late at Burford, where I spent the Sunday, Oct. 5; sermon on the nature of angels, a most unprofitable discourse. A Sunday spent in solitude spreads and extends its fragrance; may I long find the good effects of this." There had been a time when to be thrown thus upon his own resources had been a severe trial to his spirits. "I scarce ever felt," he has said, "such wretchedness as during four days which I spent by myself before my reader joined me at Rayrigg, in 1784. My eyes were so bad that I could not read; the rain would not let me leave the house, and I had not a creature with whom to converse; I stood resting my forehead on the chimney-piece in a state of weariness not to be described." But now he had learned to "commune with his own heart and to be still;" he had drunk into that "free spirit" by which alone such self-converse can be happily maintained.

He was not able to continue long at Bath. "I have for some time deferred," writes Mr. Wyvill, "mentioning to you the intended jubilee at York upon the 5th of November. But it is now so near, that I can no longer delay to communicate my opinion that your appearance at so great a meeting of your friends as will then be held at York is absolutely necessary, so that nothing short of inability to move without endangering your health ought to prevent it.

"Your absence from this meeting would be peculiarly prejudicial, because many would be apt to consider it a proof of excessive scrupulosity. On this topic your antagonists have not been wanting in their endeavours to hurt you; but if you embrace this opportunity of meeting your constituents, and show them you are exactly the same person whose cause they lately espoused with so much zeal, these

hostile attempts will be unsuccessful. It is surely possible to mix in such assemblies with innocence and decency."

"Were I to attempt," he answers, "to show my constituents this, it would be an attempt to impose upon them, which nothing should induce me to practise, and which I am sure you would be the last man in the world to recommend. Except in the personal regard and gratitude to my friends, which were then so strong that I dare not say they are increased, I cannot, (I speak to you what addressed to another would be arrogant, but what in speaking to you it would be worse than affectation to withhold,) I cannot say that I am by any means the same person. I can assert with truth that I have a higher sense of the duties of my station, and a firmer resolution to discharge them with fidelity and zeal; but it is also true that I am under many restraints as to my conduct to which I was not then subject, and that my religious opinions are very different. Not that I would shut myself up from mankind and immure myself in a cloister. My walk I am sensible is a public one; my business is in the world; and I must mix in assemblies of men, or quit the post which Providence seems to have assigned me. I entirely agree with you, 'one may mix in these assemblies with decency and innocence.' But the point is, whether by confining myself within these limits I should be likely to advance my interests with my constituents. They certainly, I trust, will not believe that I am so over-rigid as to condemn the cheerfulness of the social board, when kept within the bounds of sobriety and decency, however diligently my enemies may circulate reports to my disadvantage; but this would not be enough to remove the impression in question, if it were acting honestly to endeavour to remove it. No! for this purpose would it not be requisite for me to drink, and sing, &c. as I used to do? You being a clergyman cannot draw any inferences from your own case to mine; nothing of the sort I object to is expected from you."

He deemed it however right to obey the summons. "27th of October. Left Bath for London on my way to York to attend the jubilee—Whilst at Bath grew much better."

To one whose past habits and present occupation were of a desultory character, few things would be more useful, or more difficult, than to note down accurately the mode in which his time was spent. Such an account he now commenced, and continued resolutely until his studious habits were ma-

tured; and if in after life he perceived any relaxation in his diligence he immediately resumed the practice.

To "live by rule," was his object; nor was it only over the employment of his time that he diligently watched. To those who knew the clear serenity of his later life, it may be matter of surprise to hear that his sky was ever overcast by storms. It is a most encouraging reflection that this peace was the result of previous contests. For though at this time most strictly temperate, and inclined in the judgment of his fellows to abstemiousness rather than excess, he was himself sensible of many struggles before his body was brought under that "sober government" which renders it the meetest instrument of the renewed spirit. He was not labouring to reduce intemperate habits within the limits of that self-indulgent propriety which contents the generality of men. From this point he started, but aiming at a higher standard, he sought to live a life of mortification in the midst of luxury. It was his object to gain such control over his lower nature, that it should never impede his usefulness in social intercourse, or clog the freedom of his communings with God. His Diary affords many instances of these contentions with himself, upon which he entered not without some indignation at discovering their necessity.—"Surely these are not little things, health depends upon them, and duty on health."—"They are not little things if my health and power of serving God be a great one." Perceiving that his difficulties arose from carelessness as much as self-indulgence, he sought to counteract it by laying down a set of rules too minutely practical to bear insertion here, while not content with recording against himself every infraction of these severe regulations, he had recourse to another expedient to keep his vigilance awake.—"M. and I made an agreement to pay a guinea forfeit when we broke our rules, and not to tell particulars to each other. I hope this will be an instrument under divine grace to keep me from excess. When once a settled habit is formed less rigid rules will be necessary."—"Exceeded, and determined to pay forfeit.—Went on rather better, yet by no means up to the strictness of my plan."—"Nothing is to be resisted more than the disposition which we feel when we have been long striving unsuccessfully for any particular grace or against any habitual infirmity, to acquiesce in our low measure of that grace, or in the presence of that infirmity, so as not to feel shame, humiliation, and compunction. We are not to cast off the

hope of getting better of the one and attaining to the other. This is the very state in which we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The promise is sure in the end. Therefore though it tarry wait for it; it will surely come, it will not tarry." With these resolutions and in this frame of mind he entered upon the year 1789.

Many entries are scattered through a long series of years, indicating his love for the Sabbath.

"25th, Sunday. Heard Mr. Wood—with Eliot. Blessed be God, who hath appointed these solemn returns of the day of rest to remind us of those most important realities, of which we grow forgetful amidst the hurry of business and the vanities of the world."

And on another occasion he enters on his Diary, "Refused to go to Holwood (the residence of Pitt) that I might have Sunday quiet." "Often in my visits to Holwood, (he has said in conversation,) when I heard one or another speak of this man's place, or that man's peerage, I felt a rising inclination to pursue the same objects: but a Sunday in solitude never failed to restore me to myself."

Mr. Wilberforce's time was now continually occupied. "Feb. 3d, Tuesday. Morning Dr. Glasse and sub-committee (of Reformation of Manners Society) to breakfast—then all went to Montagu house, where a full meeting—did business—calls. Wednesday. Indifferent. Ramsay came to breakfast, and with me all morning. Dined Bishop of Lincoln's. Pitt's business. Thursday. Wood breakfasted with me—on business. Then Magdalen admission day. Dined at Mrs. Montagu's. How humiliating it is to attend the Magdalen! Sunday. Eliot and Henry Thornton. Lock—Scott excellent on St. James v. 7, 8. Much affected with the discourse. Oh, blessed be God who hath appointed the Sabbath, and interposes these seasons of serious recollection. May they be effectual to their purpose; may my errors be corrected, my desires sanctified, and my whole soul quickened and animated in the Christian course. The last week has been spent little, if at all, better than the preceding; but I trust God will enable me to turn to Him in righteousness. Write, I beseech thee, thy law in my heart, that I may not sin against thee. I often waste my precious hours for want of having settled beforehand to what studies to betake myself, what books to read. Let me attend to this for the time to come, and may my slave business, and my society business, be duly attended to."

"March 1st. Sunday. Eliot breakfasted and Lock—Scott. Called Lord Chatham's about politics (a work of real necessity). Strongly and deeply affected by an examination of myself, I would hope to good purpose, and resolved to change my habits of life. This perpetual hurry of business and company ruins me in soul if not in body. I must make a thorough reform. More solitude and earlier hours—diligence—proper distribution and husbandry of time—associating with religious friends; this will strengthen my weakness by the blessing of God." "On an impartial examination of my state, I see that the world is my snare; business and company distract my mind, and dissipate those serious reflections which alone can preserve us from infection in such a situation of life as mine, where these antidotes are ever wanted to prevent our falling victims to this moral contagion. My error hitherto has been, I think, endeavouring to amend this and the other failing, instead of striking at the root of the evil. Let me therefore make a spirited effort, not trusting in myself, but in the strength of the Lord God. Let me labour to live a life of faith, and prayer, and humility, and self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness, and sobriety, and diligence. Let me labour this week in particular, and lay down for myself a course of conduct. Yet let not this be mainly on my mind, but the fear and love of my Maker and Redeemer. Oh that the blessed day may come, when in the words of St. Paul, I may assert of myself that my conversation is in heaven; that the life I now lead in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me!" "I trust I can say in the presence of God that I do right in going into company, keeping up my connexions, &c. Yet as it is clear from a thorough examination of myself that I require more solitude than I have had of late, let me henceforth enter upon a new system throughout. Rules—As much solitude and sequestration as are compatible with duty. Early hours night and morning. Abstinence as far as health will permit. Regulation of employments for particular times. Prayer three times a day at least, and begin with serious reading or contemplation. Self-denial in little things. Slave trade my main business now."

Preparation for the approaching debate upon the slave trade now occupied his thoughts. And he not only retired for this season to seek in the country the leisure which he could not find in town, but introduced also into the details of social life a system of rigorous self-government, that no

temptations to indulgence might relax his diligence or tarnish the brightness of his spirit. "For the next fortnight," he enters on the 6th of April, "to prepare for Slave discussion. Moderation in all things."

At length on the 12th of May the question came before the House. "Monday, May 11th," says his Diary, "went to Montagu's with Burgh; where also Ramsay and John Clarkson. Tuesday very indifferent. Came to town, sadly unfit for work, but by Divine grace was enabled to make my motion so as to give satisfaction—three hours and a half—I had not prepared my language, or even gone over all my matter, but being well acquainted with the whole subject I got on. My breast sore, but de ceteris pretty well. How ought I to labour, if it pleases God to make me able to impress people with a persuasion that I am serious, and to incline them to agree with me!"

The speech with which he opened the debate argued forcibly the whole question. After attempting to disarm the peculiar hostility of West Indian opposition by describing the trade as a *national* iniquity, he surveyed the various evidence of conflicting testimony, and traced the destructive effects of the trade on Africa, its victims, and the colonies. These arguments were invested throughout with the glow of genuine humanity, and enforced by the power of a singular eloquence. Although the principal record of its excellence must be found in its effect upon that audience of orators to whom it was addressed; yet there are portions which even in the barrenness of extracts from "a most inaccurate Report" retain much of their original beauty. Knowing "that mankind are governed by their sympathies," he addressed himself to the feelings as well as the reason of the House; and we can even yet perceive the vigour of description which records the sufferings of the middle passage, "so much misery crowded into so little room, where the aggregate of suffering must be multiplied by every individual tale of wo;" and the force of that appeal which, after disproving the alleged comforts of the miserable victims, summoned Death as his "last witness, whose infallible testimony to their unutterable wrongs can neither be purchased nor repelled."

The effect of this speech both upon his friends and their opponents, also warrants the declaration of Mr. Burke, when warmed by its present influence, "that the House, the nation, and Europe, were under great and serious obligations

to the honourable gentleman for having brought forward the subject in a manner the most masterly, impressive, and eloquent. "The principles," he said, "were so well laid down, and supported with so much force and order, that it equalled any thing he had heard in modern times, and was not perhaps to be surpassed in the remains of Grecian eloquence."

Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were no less loud in their eulogies; and the following character of the speech from a witness of a different order, is an interesting testimony to its effect. Bishop Porteus writes on the 13th of May to the Rev. W. Mason,—"It is with heartfelt satisfaction I acquaint you that Mr. Wilberforce yesterday opened the important subject of the Slave Trade in the House of Commons, in one of the ablest and most eloquent speeches that was ever heard in that or any other place. It continued upwards of three hours, and made a sensible and powerful impression upon the House. He was supported in the noblest manner by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, who all agreed in declaring that the Slave Trade was the disgrace and opprobrium of this country, and that nothing but entire abolition could cure so monstrous an evil. It was a glorious night for this country. I was in the House from five to eleven."

During a recess of parliament he made a visit to Bath, for the benefit of the waters, and while there he had much intercourse with Mrs. Hannah More. This was a friendship which his increasing desire of intercourse with those who feared God led him especially at this time to cultivate. There was no part of Mrs. H. More's character which he regarded with greater admiration than her active usefulness in the retirement of the country. "I was once," he said, "applied to by a Yorkshire clergyman, who desired me to assist him in obtaining a dispensation for non-residence upon his cure. He had been used, he said, to live in London with the first literary circles, and now he was banished into the country, far from all intellectual society. I told him that I really could not in conscience use any influence I possessed to help him; and then I mentioned to him the case of Mrs. H. More, who in like manner had lived with Johnson, Garrick, Burke, Sir J. Reynolds, &c. and was so courted by them all, and who had a great taste for such society; and yet had broken away from its attractions, and shut up herself in the country, to devote her talents to the instruction of a set of wretched people sunk in heathen darkness, amongst whom she was spending her time and fortune in schools and insti-

tutions for their benefit, going in all weathers a considerable distance to watch over them, until at last she had many villages and some thousands of children under her care. This is truly magnificent, the really sublime in character. I delight to think of it, and of the estimation in which the sacrifice she made will be held in another world." "There is no class of persons," he would add, "whose condition has been more improved within my recollection than that of unmarried women. Formerly there seemed to be nothing useful in which they could be naturally busy, but now they may always find an object in attending to the poor."

"Thursday, Aug. 20th. At Cowslip Green all day. 21st. After breakfast to see Cheddar. Intended to read, dine, &c. amongst the rocks, but could not get rid of the people; so determined to go back again. The rocks very fine. Had some talk with the people, and gave them something—grateful beyond measure—wretchedly poor and deficient in spiritual help.—I hope to amend their state." It was this visit to Cheddar, thus simply related in Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, which gave rise to Mrs. More's great exertions for her neglected neighbours. The vicar of Cheddar at that time was non-resident, and his curate, who lived nine miles off at Wells, visited the parish on Sundays only. The spiritual destitution of such a parish, seen with his own eyes, greatly affected Mr. Wilberforce. The effects which followed from his visit are thus recorded in an unpublished Journal of Mrs. Martha More.

"In the month of Aug. 1789, Providence directed Mr. Wilberforce and his sister to spend a few days at Cowslip Green. The cliffs of Cheddar are esteemed the greatest curiosity in those parts. We recommended Mr. W. not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. We easily prevailed upon him, and the day was fixed; but after a little reflection he changed his mind, appeared deeply engaged in some particular study, fancied time would scarcely permit, and the whole was given up. The subject of the cliffs was renewed at breakfast; we again extolled their beauties, and urged the pleasure he would receive by going. He was prevailed on and went. I was in the parlour when he returned; and with the eagerness of vanity (having recommended the pleasure) I inquired, how he liked the cliffs? He replied, they were very fine, but the poverty and distress of the people were dreadful. This was all that passed. He retired to his

apartment and dismissed even his reader. I said to his sister and mine, I feared Mr. W. was not well. The cold chicken and wine put into the carriage for his dinner were returned untouched. Mr. W. appeared at supper, seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant at his desire was dismissed, when immediately he began, 'Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Cheddar.' He then proceeded to a particular account of his day, of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor; there was no resident minister, no manufactory, nor did there appear any dawn of comfort, either temporal or spiritual. The method or possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour; it was at length decided in a few words, by Mr. W.'s exclaiming, 'If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.' Something, commonly called an impulse, crossed my heart, that told me it was God's work, and it would do; and though I never have, nor probably shall recover the same emotion, yet it is my business to water it with watchfulness, and to act up to its then dictates. Mr. Wilberforce and his sister left us in a day or two afterwards. We turned many schemes in our head, every possible way; at length those measures were adopted which led to the foundation of the different schools."

"Resolved," he says, upon the 23d of August, "to think seriously to-day for to-morrow, my birth-day, on which I shall be much more disturbed." His more private Journal thus records the thoughts to which he turned his mind. "Cowslip Green, birth-day eve. To-morrow I complete my thirtieth year. What shame ought to cover me when I review my past life in all its circumstances! With full knowledge of my Master's will, how little have I practised it! How little have I executed the purposes I formed last summer at Rayrigg! Wherein am I improved even in my intellectual powers? My business I pursue but as an amusement, and poor Ramsay (now no more) shames me in the comparison. Yet is there hope in God's mercy through Christ. May He give constancy and vigour to my resolutions. May I look ever forward to that day of account to which I am hastening; may I act as in His sight, and preserving the deepest self-abasement, may my light so shine before men, that they may see my good works, and glorify my Father which is in heaven." Though his own estimate of his exertions was thus humble, it was the surprise of others that he did so much. All his labours were performed in spite of the

enfeebling presence of bodily debility. In the course of this month he wrote to Mr. Hey a full account of his present state of health. "Though by dint of medicine I have kept the enemy under, he still remains on the watch, ready to come forward in force on any favourable juncture. I am still so weak that the least irregularity disorders me; and I cannot, I dare say, possess you with an adequate sense of the lassitude and internal bearing down which then oppresses me. I have still the same inability to walk any distance, much more to ride, without suffering from the exertion. During the winter I used but little exercise, positively so called, though a London day always bringing its toils along with it is never a season of idleness and sloth; I went out chiefly in my carriage, and kept tolerable hours."

Mr. Hey, in replying to this letter, pressed upon him strongly the advantage he might probably derive from a course of Buxton water; and after a short time he most reluctantly followed his advice. "What have you to say," he writes in answer, "why judgment should not be pronounced against you? Thus are criminals addressed before they are consigned to their fate; and as I deem a sentence to Buxton to be in a high degree penal, the same allowance to speak in my own defence ought to be granted me in this instance. If on reconsideration the court adheres to its original opinion, I shall acquiesce, and suffer myself to be peaceably conveyed to the place of execution. Seriously speaking, after being in town for near eight months, I pant for retirement and the country, and feel most unwilling to plunge into the hurry of a very crowded watering-place. Yet if you believe there is a reasonable probability of my receiving benefit, I shall not hesitate to comply. I feel it to be an indispensable duty to do all I can for the perfect restoration of my health, leaving the matter with cheerful resignation in His hands, who best knows what is good for us. If I do recover strength, may He enable me to use it for his glory."

From Buxton he wrote to Mrs. Hannah More—

TO MRS. H. MORE.

"My dear Madam,

A letter from Cowslip Green brings with it in some sort the portraiture of its own scenery, and greatly mends the prospect to one shut up amidst bleak, rugged hills, and bar-

ren, unprotected valleys. But it is not on this account only that yours is acceptable, but as it excites various other pleasing and refreshing images, which having once found a place in my mind, will continue there, I trust, during the remainder of my life. May they be of still longer duration, and the benefits and the comforts of our friendship be experienced by both of us when time shall be no more. For my dear sister I must claim the same privilege, and, from what I have seen of yours, (though as this is not a case wherein one ought either to pronounce hastily, or to pay compliments, I would not absolutely decide,) I wish her also to be admitted into the confederacy. Thus much for discussion; now to business.

Your plan is a very good one, and I think you will find no difficulty so great as that of discovering a proper couple to carry it into execution. If you can meet with any such, by all means secure them. I will desire a friend of mine to make inquiry after a double-headed shot fitted for doing execution in the same way, and, if successful, I shall be at no loss for an object elsewhere, against which to direct my battery. As for the expense, the best proof you can give me that you believe me hearty in the cause, or sincere in the wishes expressed in the former part of this letter, is to call on me for money without reserve. Every one should contribute out of his own proper fund. I have more money than time, and if you, or rather your sister, on whom I foresee must be devolved the superintendance of our infant establishment, will condescend to be my almoner, you will enable me to employ some of the superfluity it has pleased God to give me to good purpose. Sure I am, that they who subscribe attention and industry, &c. furnish articles of more sterling and intrinsic value. Besides, I have a rich banker in London, Mr. H. Thornton, whom I cannot oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these. I shall take the liberty of enclosing a draft for £40; but this is only meant for beginning with.

Now for the mission . . . indeed, I fear with you nothing can be done in the regular way. But these poor people must not, therefore, be suffered to continue in their present lamentable state of darkness. You know you told me they never saw the sun but one day in the year, and even the moon appeared but once a week for an hour or two. The gravitation to Wells was too strong to be resisted. My advice then is, send for a comet—Whiston had them at command,

and John Wesley is not unprovided. Take care, however, that eccentricity is not his only recommendation, and, if possible, see and converse with the man before he is determined on. Very much yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

With the Wesley family Mr. Wilberforce had formed a personal acquaintance through Mrs. More at Richard Henderson's.—"I went I think in 1786 to see her, and when I came into the room Charles Wesley rose from the table, around which a numerous party sat at tea, and coming forwards to me, gave me solemnly his blessing. I was scarcely ever more affected. Such was the effect of his manner and appearance, that it altogether overset me, and I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself."* In recommending one of "Wesley's comets," Mr. Wilberforce had no thoughts of encouraging dissent; for John Wesley was no dissenter from the church of England, nor were any of his preachers suffered during his lifetime to attempt to administer the sacraments of the church. Had he not considered them as churchmen Mr. Wilberforce would not have suggested their employment, for in the same year he dissuaded a relation, who complained that in her place of residence she could find no religious instruction in the church, from attending at the meeting-house. "Its individual benefits," he wrote in answer to her letter of inquiry, "are no compensation for the general evils of dissent. The increase of dissenters, which always follows from the institution of unsteepled places of worship, is highly injurious to the interests of religion in the long run."

The moral desolation which he found in Cheddar was a striking illustration of his common maxim, that "the dissenters could do nothing if it were not for the established church;" for the absence of a resident clergyman had brought the village into a state of universal ignorance. "I have taken measures," he wrote again to Mrs. More upon the 2d of October, "to send a complete supply of the books which you desired. Your labours can only be equalled by Spencer's lady knights, and they seem to be much of the same kind too, I mean you have all sorts of monsters to cope withal." The monsters were, however, all subdued by this intrepid lady knight,

* His respect for Charles Wesley was shown in a yearly pension which he allowed to his widow until her death in 1822.

supported by her generous champion, (the "Red Cross knight" was his familiar name with Mrs. Montagu,) without the eccentric succour of a "comet." "Your accounts," he writes somewhat later, "have afforded me the utmost pleasure, and I would persuade myself that they will be as comfortable next year. I trust you will speak freely when the money is exhausted . . indeed I conceive it must be all spent already . . not to do so would be to give way either to pride, or to false delicacy."

Upon the 26th of October he left Buxton, and "set off for Yorkshire. Got to Sheffield where found River Dee Company going to dinner, so dined with them."

"27th. Off after breakfast for R. where a large party at dinner—B. the philosopher, &c. Played at cards evening and supped. S. how little of St. Paul. F. an old man. Alas! sat up too late, and strong compunctions." After retiring to his room he wrote upon a sheet of paper, "I have been acting a part this whole evening; and whilst I have appeared easy and cheerful, my heart has been deeply troubled. That, if it should please God to call me away before to-morrow morning's light, I may not have contributed to encourage this fatal carelessness concerning the interests of futurity in never-dying souls, let me here record my sense of it, and warn all who shall read these lines, to remember that awful declaration, 'For all these things God shall call thee into judgment.'"

"Sunday, Dec. 6th. Had some very serious thoughts and strong compunctions, from which I hope good will result. Remember, O my soul, that if thou availest not thyself of these warnings, the greater will be thy condemnation. May I be enabled to place my happiness in communion with God, and may I be found in the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, covering my iniquities from the pure eyes of a holy God. When B. dined here I was too vain and talkative (humility should be joined to cheerfulness). At night a long and earnest conversation with my host upon religion. May God bless it to both of us."

Though his character had evidently risen in the last twelve months, yet the new year opened with strong expressions of dissatisfaction with himself—a sure consequence of aiming at an elevated standard.

"Jan. 1st. Lock—Scott—with Henry Thornton—'These forty years in the wilderness'—received the sacrament. Most deeply impressed with serious things, shame from past life, and desire of future amendment." "I have been receiving

the sacrament after an excellent sermon of Scott's, and with the deepest humiliation I look up for mercy, through Christ, to that God whose past mercies I have so often abused. I resolve by God's help to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts, so far as my very infirm health will permit me, and to labour more and more to live the life I now live in the flesh, in the faith of the Son of God. How should I be humbled by seeing the little progress I have made since 1786!"

His intercourse with general society, "from which I dare not more withdraw," and into which he endeavoured to carry his high principles of action, occupied much time. His great cause alone furnished matter for unremitting toil. But besides this, he applied himself with diligence to all the important questions which were brought forward in parliament; and was most assiduous in his attention to the private business of the great county which he represented. "When you appear on this stage," writes Mr. James Grenville, "you must always expect to be scrambled for. The land-owner, the manufacturer, the canal man, the turnpike man, and the iron man will each have a pull in his turn."

His house was continually open to an influx of men of all conditions. Pitt and his other parliamentary friends might be found there at "dinner before the House." So constant was their resort, that it was asserted, not a little to his disadvantage in Yorkshire, that he received a pension for entertaining the partisans of the minister. Once every week the "Slave Committee" dined with him. Messrs. Clarkson, Dickson, &c. jocosely named by Mr. Pitt, his "white negroes," were his constant inmates; and were employed in classing, revising, and abridging evidence under his own eye. "I cannot invite you here," he writes to a friend who was about to visit London for advice, "for, during the sitting of parliament, my house is a mere hotel." His breakfast-table was thronged by those who came to him on business; or with whom, for any of his many plans of usefulness, he wished to become personally acquainted. He took a lively interest in the Elland Society; and besides subscribing to its funds £100 per annum, (under four anonymous entries, to avoid notice,) he invited to his house the young men under education, that he might be able to distribute them in proper situations. No one ever entered more readily into sterling merit, though concealed under a rough exterior. "We have different forms," he has said, "assigned to us in the school of

life—different gifts imparted. All is not attractive that is good. Iron is useful, though it does not sparkle like the diamond. Gold has not the fragrance of a flower. So different persons have various modes of excellence, and we must have an eye to all." Yet no one had a keener or more humorous perception of the shades of character. "Mention, when you write next," says the postscript of a letter to Mr. Hey, on the announcement of a new candidate for education, "the length of his mane and tail;" and he would repeat, with a full appreciation of its humour, the answer of his Lincolnshire footman, to an inquiry as to the appearance of a recruit who presented himself in Palace Yard,—"What sort of a person is he?" "Oh, sir, he is a rough one." The circumstances of his life brought him into contact with the greatest varieties of character. His ante-room was thronged from an early hour; its first occupants being generally invited to his breakfast-table; and its later tenants only quitting it when he himself went out on business. Like every other room in his house it was well stored with books; and the experience of its necessity had led to the exchange of the smaller volumes, with which it was originally furnished, for cumbrous folios, "which could not be carried off by accident in the pocket of a coat." Its group was often most amusing; and provoked the wit of Mrs. H. More to liken it to "Noah's ark, full of beasts clean and unclean." On one chair sat a Yorkshire constituent, manufacturing or agricultural; on another a petitioner for charity, or a House of Commons client; on another a Wesleyan preacher: while side by side with an African, a foreign missionary, or a Haytian professor, sat perhaps some man of rank who sought a private interview, and whose name had accidentally escaped announcement. To these mornings succeeded commonly an afternoon of business, and an evening in the House of Commons. Yet in this constant bustle he endeavoured still to live by rule. "Alas," he writes upon the 31st of January, "with how little profit has my time passed away since I came to town! I have been almost always in company, and they think me like them rather than become like me. I have lived too little like one of God's peculiar people." "Hence come waste of time, forgetfulness of God, neglect of opportunities of usefulness, mistaken impressions of my character. Oh may I be more restrained by my rules for the future; and in the trying week upon which I am now entering, when I shall be

so much in company, and give so many entertainments, may I labour doubly by a greater cultivation of a religious frame, by prayer, and by all due temperance, to get it well over."

He was much occupied in the early part of this session by the fresh application made by the dissenters for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Though he disliked the peculiar form of a sacramental test, yet he thought some such restriction so needful that he had voted against his friend Mr. Beaufoy when in 1787 the repeal of these enactments was demanded. In the spring of 1789, he would not leave Holwood to vote upon the question, his "mind not being made up." Since that time he had maturely weighed the subject, and to secure its full consideration he had engaged three of his friends, who took different sides upon the question, (Mr. Gisborne being for and Mr. Hey and Mr. Mason adverse to the repeal,) to state to him in writing the grounds of their opinions. By them the case was well argued; Mr. Hey showing most forcibly the necessity of an established church for the welfare of the nation, and the need of such enactments for the safety of the church, while Mr. Gisborne's letter embodied all that could be said upon the opposite side. "He suffers, I suspect," says Mr. Mason, "his liberality of spirit to carry him beyond what prudence would suggest at the present time, when Socinianism is so very prevalent. I should say, smilingly, that after having argued so well against expediency, he thinks himself now bound to set his face against every thing that may seem to be expedient." "Were you a man possessed merely of an every-day kind of conscience," writes Dr. Burgh, "I should answer your letter on the Paleian principle, and advise you by all means to vote with the dissenters, for it is surely very expedient that this county should be saved from all the evils of a contest at the next election; especially as it does not signify a rush on which side you vote as an individual; for let the question be determined in your House for the repeal of the Test Act, which I think highly improbable, the Bill will undoubtedly be flung out by the House of Lords." The debate upon the question came on in the House of Commons upon the 3d of March, when the repeal of the restrictive acts was moved by Mr. Fox in a speech in which he directly alluded to the opposition of the member for Yorkshire. In a correspondence with an active committee of dissenters amongst his constituents in the town of Leeds, "some garbled quotations from which," says Dr. Milner, "they have

shamefully published," Mr. Wilberforce had declared that his great reluctance "to oppose the repeal of these laws had been overcome by his conviction of their present necessity." To this conviction he was brought by the persuasion, that to give such an increase of influence to the dissenting party would endanger the Liturgy and Articles of the church. The prevalence of those loose principles of faith amongst the body of the clergy, which had spread under the ascendency of a latitudinarian party, had been alarmingly displayed in the petitions from the Feathers' Tavern; and the time was inauspicious for concessions which might promote the activity of dissent, or relax the strictness of orthodoxy.

"Not a day has passed," wrote Mr. Wilberforce upon the 13th of March to Mr. Hey, "since the night of our memorable majority, (294 to 105,) wherein I have not had it in contemplation to call upon you to rejoice with me on the result of the dissenters' application. Yet the satisfaction I receive from this decision is by no means unalloyed; but I will not enter into particulars, the field would be too large at present. I was rising to speak immediately after Mr. Fox, and designed to discuss the whole subject, but Mr. Pitt desired me to give way for him; and I was myself, as well as the House, too much tired at one o'clock in the morning (I had been in it ever since eleven o'clock on the preceding day) to do more than deliver a public notification of my opinions."

But the main business of this spring was the conduct of the Abolition cause. He had opened the campaign by a motion made upon the 14th, and carried, after much opposition, upon the 27th of January, for referring to a special committee the further examination of witnesses. This became now his daily work, and with the help of the late William Smith he conducted personally all the examinations. Here he reaped the fruit of his deep acquaintance with the whole subject, as well as of those habits of self-government which he had been at such pains to form. Nothing but his accurate knowledge of details could have prevented his being duped by the misrepresentation of too many of the witnesses; whilst the angry discussions in which he was continually involved rendered a practised temper no less needful than a sagacious judgment.

This was a period of no ordinary labour to the leader in the struggle. In a letter written forty-two years later, he reminds Mr. Smith of these early labours: "You cannot, any more than myself, have forgotten the weeks after weeks,

or rather months after months, in which our chief, though not most cherished companions, were that keen, sour S——, that ponderous, coarse, Jack Fuller-like F——; a very graphical epithet if you remember the man." His house too throughout this time was continually full. The evening hours were devoted to consultations on the common cause; and to keep so many different agents in harmonious exertion required no little management. A few extracts from his Diary will illustrate these employments.

"March 18th. Dined at home—William Smith tete-a-tete (partly religious); then Clarkson came, and Muncaster, and looked over evidence. 20th. Clarkson and Eliot dined, (Slave business,) then Hunter and Sansom came from the city; a different set of ideas in their minds, and in those in our friends. 22d. Dined at home—Smith, Clarkson, and Dickson—Slave business till 11 at night. 25th. Committee as usual. 27th. Town from Clapham to committee as usual. Dined Bishop of Salisbury's—Miss More, Sir J. Bankes, Mrs. Garrick, &c. We talked of Captain Bligh's affair, and Sir Joshua (like myself) was not surprised at it—Otaheite Calypso's island. 29th. Committee—House—Captain Williams's business till 12¼ at night. Not attentive enough—admired Fox and Pitt, and the lawyers. Habit will do much, I will practise. 31st. Slave committee—wrangling—got hold of Norris—then House till ½ past 10. April 1st. Committee—some wrangling—final Report. 2d. My plan of time this winter has been that of dining late, and I have seldom done any business after dinner. I doubt about this going into company so much, yet I dare not decide against it, I am too complicated in my plans. 3d. Looked over the witnesses, &c. Clarkson and Dickson dined with me. 4th. Easter Sunday. Sent to Christian to go to Lock, hoping in his present state of mind, having lately heard of his brother's conduct, an impression might, by God's blessing, be made upon him. 5th. Up to 6¾—bed 12. Hard at work on Slave Trade evidence all day with 'white negroes,' two Clarksons and Dickson. 6th. Hard at work again with Clarksons and Dickson on evidence. C. dined with us; he seems to have got over his grief too much."

On the afternoon of this day he set off, after "much doubting," to spend a single day at Holwood. "7th. Walked about after breakfast with Pitt and Grenville—wood with bills." "We sallied forth armed with bill-hooks, cutting new walks from one large tree to another, through the

thickets of the Holwood copses." Yet even in these seasons of recreation, he kept a watch over himself, and rigidly noted down every instance in which he had at all neglected his task of social reformation. "Forgot my resolutions, and too little attended to opportunities of impressing seriously. Surely Pitt must deem of me as of any other man." "15th. Dined at home—Clarkson and Dickson—evidence—Beaufoy and a shoal of people came in. 16th. Breakfasted Pitt's—Sunday Bill, &c. 17th. Met Samuel Hoare at the Shakspeare Gallery—picture of Dying Cardinal, and poor Tom Grosvenor's remark—Hoare, Sansom, Wedgwood, Granville Sharpe, Clarkson, Henry Thornton, and Whitbread dined with me. These city people better than at our end of the town. 19th. Evidence, &c.—Saw multitudes of people on business."

These employments were soon afterwards exchanged for a hasty three weeks' canvass, preparatory to the general election of June, 1790. In his private Diary, he reviews the time which had been spent in this canvass, and records his narrow escape from a serious accident, when his carriage was overturned in the village of Bessingby, near Bridlington. "The confusion of a canvass, and the change of place, have led me lately to neglect my resolution. But self-indulgence is the root of the evil: with idleness it is my besetting sin. I pray God to enable me to resist both of them, and serve him in newness of life. How little have I thought of my deliverance the other day, when the carriage was dashed to pieces! How many have been killed by such accidents, and I unhurt! Oh let me endeavour to turn to thee." He adds, a few days later, "I have been thinking too much of one particular failing, that of self-indulgence, whilst I have too little aimed at general reformation. It is when we desire to love God with all our hearts, and in all things to devote ourselves to his service, that we find our continual need of his help, and such incessant proofs of our own weakness, that we are kept watchful and sober, and may hope by degrees to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Oh may I be thus changed from darkness to light! Whatever reason there may be for my keeping open house in Palace Yard, certain it is, that solitude and quiet are favourable to reflection and to sober-mindedness; let me therefore endeavour to secure to myself frequent seasons of uninterrupted converse with God."

The summer of 1790 was spent in excursions to Buxton

and visits to his friends, during all which time, however, the letters of his friends, as well as his diary, give evidence of the constancy of his devotion to the great subject which occupied his attention.

He spent some time at Yoxall Lodge, the seat of the Rev. T. Gisborne. Their college acquaintance had been interrupted when they left the University; but was afterwards renewed by a letter of inquiry from Mr. Gisborne, when he first saw the name of Wilberforce connected with the cause of Abolition. At Mr. Gisborne's house he had become well acquainted with his near connexion Mr. Babington. Intercourse between them soon grew into friendship; and for many years he made Yoxall Lodge, or Rothley Temple, his ordinary summer residence. Here he enjoyed uninterrupted privacy, combined with the domestic comforts of his friend's family. In these visits he fulfilled those intentions which constant company had defeated in his own residence at Rayrigg; and devoted ten or twelve hours every day to study. "I could bear testimony," writes Mr. Gisborne, "were such attestation needful, to his laborious, unabated diligence, day after day, in pursuing his investigations on the Slave Trade, and in composing his invaluable work upon Practical Christianity." "Never," he has said, "was I in better spirits than when I thus passed my time in quiet study." He sallied forth always for a walk a short time before dinner, amongst the holly groves of the then unenclosed Needwood forest, where—

> "His grateful voice
> Sang its own joy, and made the woods rejoice."

"Often have I heard its melodious tones," says his host, "at such times, amongst the trees from the distance of full half a mile."

His object in his present visit to Yoxall Lodge, was to make himself completely master of the vast mass of evidence which had now been collected upon the subject of the Slave Trade. Throughout the summer his attention had never been withdrawn from this subject. "I shall make no apology," he wrote to Mr. Wyvill from Buxton, upon the 13th of August, "for putting into your hands the enclosed letter which I received this morning and beg you will return, and for desiring you to obtain and send me such information as you are able respecting the writer of it, to whom I am an

utter stranger. It is necessary to be thus circumspect with regard to witnesses to be brought before our committee, because it would be injurious to our cause to bring forward men of bad characters; at the same time we should always recollect that, from the nature of the case, it is not to be expected that many persons, who have been or who are in the higher walks of life, will be either well affected to us, or at least will venture to step forth to assist us with their testimony; and therefore we must content ourselves with persons, whose general conduct and estimation give us a right to contend for the veracity of their accounts."

It was absolutely necessary for the effectual conduct of the cause that he should be well acquainted with all the allegations of its advocates. To this work therefore he now applied himself. "Monday, 4th October. Off early from Llangollen—dined at Shrewsbury—began to work at slave evidence with Babington." And on the following day, after entering his return with his accustomed "thank God, safely," he adds, "Nov. 5th. Babington and I determined to work hard at slave evidence. 6th. Hard at work—breakfast alone, and need not come down to supper. No kind of restraint. I must for a time defer my tract, because it is advantageous to read the evidence rapidly to detect inconsistencies." A letter of the 3d to Mr. Hey of Leeds explains the reference in the preceding entry. "I have not advanced a single step since we parted at Buxton, in composing the little tract of which I then spoke to you. This is not owing however either to indolence, procrastination, or any alteration in my opinion of the utility of the work; but after mature consideration, I thought it right to make the slave business my first object, and ever since I have been at all stationary I have been labouring at it with great assiduity. Nor are my labours nearly finished; at which you will not wonder when I tell you, that besides a great folio volume from the Privy Council, I have also to scrutinize with much care near 1400 folio pages of Evidence delivered before the House of Commons. My eyes are very indifferent, otherwise pretty well —I working like a negro."

"Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Babington," writes a friend from Yoxall Lodge, "have never appeared down-stairs since we came, except to take a hasty dinner, and for half an hour after we have supped; the Slave Trade now occupies them nine hours daily. Mr. Babington told me last night, that he had 1400 folio pages to read, to detect the contradictions,

and to collect the answers which corroborate Mr. W.'s assertions in his speeches: these, with more than 2000 papers to be abridged, must be done within a fortnight. They talk of sitting up one night in each week to accomplish it. The two friends begin to look very ill, but they are in excellent spirits, and at this moment I hear them laughing at some absurd questions in the examination, proposed by a friend of Mr. Wilberforce's. You would think Mr. W. much altered since we were at Rayrigg. He is now never riotous or noisy, but very cheerful, sometimes lively, but talks a good deal more on serious subjects than he used to do. Food, beyond what is absolutely necessary for his existence, seems quite given up. He has a very slight breakfast, a plain and sparing dinner, and no more that day except some bread about ten o'clock. I have given you this history, as you say every thing about him must be interesting to you, and this is all I at present see of him."

Such were his occupations until his return to London in November. Throughout this time, with the exception of two days, each of which yielded him eight hours of labour, he devoted daily nine hours and a half to his main employment. This was not the easy service of popular declamation on premises supplied by others, but the real conduct of affairs with all the toil and drudgery of careful preparation.

Upon the 9th he enters in his Journal, "Heard this evening that on Sunday morning, at Bath, died what was mortal of John Thornton." "He was allied to me by relationship and family connexion. His character is so well known that it is scarcely necessary to attempt its delineation. It may be useful however to state, that it was by living with great simplicity of intention and conduct in the practice of a Christian life, more than by any superiority of understanding or of knowledge, that he rendered his name illustrious in the view of all the more respectable part of his contemporaries. He had a counting-house in London, and a handsome villa at Clapham. He anticipated the disposition and pursuits of the succeeding generation. He devoted large sums annually to charitable purposes, especially to the promotion of the cause of religion both in his own and other countries. He assisted many clergymen, enabling them to live in comfort, and to practise a useful hospitality. His personal habits were remarkably simple. His dinner hour was two o'clock. He generally attended public worship at some church or episcopalian chapel several evenings in the week,

and would often sit up to a late hour, in his own study at the top of the house, engaged in religious exercises." "He died without a groan or a struggle, and in the full view of glory. Oh may my last end be like his!"

On Thursday, the 18th of November, he left Yoxall Lodge, his two friends Mr. Gisborne and Mr. Babington bearing him company as far as Tamworth. The next day he reached London, and "plunging" (he writes) "at once into a dinner circle of cabinet ministers, how did I regret the innocent and edifying hilarity of the Lodge!"

Ever since his return to London, he had been employed in examining and arranging the evidence on behalf of abolition. In the preceding summer he had compiled a table of questions with which Mr. Clarkson had set forth to collect all the evidence which could be procured in the northern counties. Several witnesses had been discovered in this journey. Mr. Wilberforce had himself obtained some others. One part of his present task was to select from them such as could give the most important information. To this was soon added a daily attendance upon the examinations till their close, and then a careful study and abridgment of the whole mass of evidence.

To Clapham he retired upon the 23d March, and "going to town as seldom as possible, and only upon very particular business to the house or elsewhere," he set hard to work writing and digesting the evidence. So incessant was this occupation, that on the eve of the ensuing debate, as upon one previous occasion, he judged it right to devote to his work of mercy that holy day upon which it is the ordinary privilege of the busiest Christian to rest from worldly cares. "Spent" (are his entries upon these occasions) "Sunday as a working day—did not go to church—Slave trade. Gave up Sunday to slave business—did business and so ended this sabbath. I hope it was a grief to me the whole time to turn it from its true purposes."

And now that the day approached, upon the event of which was suspended the welfare of his many unknown clients on the shores of Africa, and the success of his own toil and privations for four years of incessant labour, the prospect before him was by no means encouraging. In the year 1787, when he had undertaken the cause, its advocates looked confidently forward to the speedy suppression of the trade. Wherever the facts connected with its existence had been made known, a voice of indignation was raised

against its guilt. In the beginning of 1788, "more difficulties" met the instructed eyes of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce, yet still they deemed the cause prospering. "When these articles are properly authenticated before the House," writes Sir C. Middleton, (no sanguine calculator of national virtue,) in Jan. 1788, "I have little doubt of carrying absolute Abolition in the House of Commons, and such restrictions in the House of Lords as will amount to the same thing. Lord H. himself under such evidence will be ashamed to countenance the trade." Even when first assailed in the House of Commons, its only public advocates were the two members who directly represented the African merchants. In the course however of that very session a more wide opposition made itself apparent. Its increasing strength was seen in the successive debates in both Houses of Parliament on the bill for regulating the middle passage; and when, in the spring of 1789, Mr. Wilberforce had given notice of his first motion for the entire suppression of the trade, it burst at once into a flame. It arose amongst the Guinea merchants; reinforced however before long by the great body of West Indian planters. Some few amongst them were from the first favourable to the suppression of the Slave Trade; but the great majority, though they declared it to be an English and not a West Indian trade, asserted that it was absolutely essential to the existence of their property. It is the nature of such a defence of established enormities to yield at first to the generous assault, until gathering strength from the slow but certain succour of selfish apprehension, it retracts all its concessions and gains its former ground. The first burst of generous indignation promised nothing less than the instant abolition of the trade: but mercantile jealousy had taken the alarm, and the defenders of the West Indian system soon found themselves strengthened by the independent alliance of commercial men.

The debate of the 12th of May gave, indeed, a short-lived promise of more successful progress. But delay was the secret of West Indian policy. They trusted to the strength with which caution, selfishness, and misrepresentation would recruit their ranks; and they were not deceived. The evil was distant and disputed; the sacrifice immediate and apparent. Self-interest was ever watchful, whilst the advocates of humanity sometimes slumbered on their post. "The affair goes on slowly in parliament, and with a more pertinacious and assiduous attendance of our adversaries in the committee than of our friends, except indeed Mr. Wilber-

force, Mr. Smith, Sir W. Dolben, and a few others; so that we cannot yet guess at the result."* The long protracted examinations of 1788, 1789, 1790, and 1791, though essential to final success, multiplied for a while the cold and cautious defenders of the trade. The temper, moreover, of events was most favourable to their endeavours. In the repose of peaceful times it is difficult to estimate aright the extreme agitation produced in our own political atmosphere by that hurricane of terror which desolated France. Revolution, which had made that people the fair promise of reasonable liberty, had before this time thrown off the comely mask which concealed her hated features, and openly revelled in infidelity and blood. A small, though soon afterwards a noisy, party watched eagerly the convulsions of the neighbouring kingdom, and dreamed of renovating by French principles the English constitution; but the great bulk of the nation, exhausted by the war with America, and wearied by the strife of parties, viewed with horror the excesses of France, and recoiled with disgust from the abused names of humanity and freedom. Even the ordinary excitement of a general election could not rouse the nation from the political repose of 1790. Nor was it merely this general tendency to quiet which repressed the efforts of the Abolition party. The seed of French principles, which had been widely scattered throughout her foreign settlements, was already ripening into a harvest of colonial insurrection. The strife of Paris, renewed amongst the free inhabitants of St. Domingo, was soon transmitted thence to Dominica; and to the efforts of the true friends of peace were instantly attributed the intestine discords of an English colony.

Amidst various elements of opposition Mr. Wilberforce approached the contest of April, 1791. Though none could be sanguine of immediate success, yet he was not without many cheering assurances of sympathy. "You, sir," writes Dr. Peckard, "will stand in the British parliament as did Episcopius in the infamous synod of Dort, with the whole force of truth, with every rational argument, and with all the powers of moving eloquence upon your side, and all to no purpose." Still nearer to the actual conflict, he received an animating charge traced upon the bed of death by the faltering hand of the venerable Wesley.†

* Letter from Granville Sharpe, 17th March, 1790.

† It seems probable that this was amongst the very last efforts of his pen. On the 25th of February he sank into that lethargy in which he lay until his death, upon the 2d of March. It is docketted by Mr. Wilberforce "Wesley's last words."

"Feb. 24, 1791.

"My dear Sir,

Unless the Divine power has raised you up to be as Athanasius contra mundum, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you who can be against you. Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh be not weary of well doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That he who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY."

Such sympathy no doubt often cheered his spirit in the weary hours of thoughtful preparation. But it was by a greater might that he was strengthened. He approached the combat strong in "truth" itself, and in "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." "May God," he writes in his private memoranda a few days before the contest, "enable me henceforth to live more to his glory, and bless me in this great work I have now in hand. May I look to him for wisdom and strength and the power of persuasion, and may I surrender myself to him as to the event with perfect submission, and ascribe to him all the praise if I succeed, and if I fail say from the heart thy will be done." "Motion put off," he adds a few days later, "from Tuesday, April 12th, to Monday, 18th, when most sadly unprepared, yet after trials to put it off came to House quite unmade up as to speech. By God's blessing got through pretty well to others' satisfaction, but very little to my own—I knowing how much omitted. Tuesday, 19th. Resumed debate and sadly beat."

In the course of the debate he was earnestly supported by Mr. Smith and Mr. Fox; and Mr. Pitt, in establishing the needless injustice of the traffic, equalled any of those great efforts by which he confounded opposition. Two members had the courage to avow openly their altered or established sentiments. The opposition, headed by Lord John Russel

and Colonel Tarleton, and well described in a speech of one of their own body as the war of the pigmies against the giants of the House, consisted of little else than trite imputations of misrepresentation or unsupported assertions of injury. Their cause was more effectually maintained by a multitude of silent votes, and the character, talents and humanity of the House were left in a minority of 88 to 163.

The conclusion of the session now released him from a further stay in London. "I am afraid," he wrote to Mr. Babington, "that even the mildness of your nature has been sharpened to exacerbation (as Dr. Johnson would term it) by my obstinate silence. But if so, it is rather a proof of your unreasonableness than of my criminality. . . This is the true mode of defence, to shift the war, like Tippoo, into the quarters of the enemy. . . However—behold me now upon my road to Bath, with Henry Thornton for my agreeable companion. We are snug and comfortable, but we would willingly increase our duet to a trio to admit your Honour. Now do not suppose that after being half choked, and smoked, and roasted in town, I am about to finish the work in Bath. To have grass up to my door after so long a parching of my heels on the pavement of London is not a luxury, but necessary for me. I have therefore leased a country house within reach of the Pump-room, and so shall enjoy the comforts of a beautiful country residence, whilst, with the salubrious waters of King Bladud, I am washing away the 'sordes' contracted in the course of a long session." It was not merely from his delight in country scenes that he avoided Bath. The leisure hours which he thus secured, were devoted to reading and reflection.

Here he spent about a month, and refusing all invitations to dine out, enjoyed at home the society of a few chosen friends, the chief amongst whom were Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Eliot. To the house of Mr. Eliot at Burton Pynsent, he made an excursion upon the 30th of June. "Set off early for Eliot's. Dined with G. his friend. I must beware of this sort of old bachelor's life. G. sadly taking God's name in vain." To any of his friends who had contracted this irreverent habit, he made a practice of addressing by letter his most serious admonitions; and he has often said that by this custom he never lost, and but once endangered the continuance of a friendship. "I wrote to the late Sir ——, and mentioned to him this bad habit. He sent me in reply an angry letter, returning a book that I had

given him; and asking for one he had given me. Instead of it I sent him a second letter of friendly expostulation, which so won him over, that he wrote to me in the kindest tone, and begged me to send him back again the book he had so hastily returned."

He was now arranging his movements for the summer. It has been stated that he had no residence on his landed property, and therefore was not summoned into Yorkshire by the ordinary duties of a country gentleman; and though upon all great occasions, when he thought his presence might be useful, he repaired to York, he never visited the county to maintain an interest. "I must mention," he has said, "the uncommon kindness and liberality which I experienced from my constituents. In former times the county members displayed their equipages annually at the races, and constituted a part of the grand jury at the summer assizes; the latter, indeed, I should have been glad to attend, but for the unseemly festivities which commonly take place at that period. I was not, however, wanted; the number of gentlemen of larger fortune in the county were far more than sufficient to constitute a most respectable grand jury, both at the spring and summer assizes. I could not consistently with my principles frequent the theatre and ball-room, and I knew that I should give offence by staying away were I actually at York; but no discontent was ever expressed at my not presenting myself to the county on these occasions. My friends appeared tacitly to admit my claim to the command of my own time during the recess." The requirements of his singular position demanded this immunity from ordinary cares. And he considered himself as best fulfilling his duty towards his constituents, when he was most diligently qualifying himself to watch over their interests with effect. To give himself more entirely to these great objects, he devolved upon one or other of his friends the management of his property, which was kindly undertaken at different times by Mr. R. Smith and Mr. Henry Duncombe.

The whole of this autumn, which was spent in visiting different friends, he devoted to diligent study. "Aug. 24th. I mean to apply to public speaking preparation. Busy in reading English history with Babington." So earnest was he now in application, that in their daily walks the two friends continued their study, one of them reading aloud whilst his steps were guided by the other. "Delightful weather," he says at this time,—"reading Rapin out of

doors." The nature of his occupations may be gathered from his list of subjects on his first establishment at Rothley Temple. "Bible, English History, Fenelon's Characters: Horace, by heart." . . The notes and references in his own hand, with which the copy he now used abound, especially throughout the Satires and Epistles, testify the care and diligence with which he studied. . . "Cicero de Oratore, Addison's Cato, Hume, Hudibras, Pilgrim's Progress, Doddridge's Sermons, Jonathan Edwards, Owen, *Letters*." This last head occupied a large portion of his time. "My letters," was in later life his declaration, "are as much *my* bane as conversation was that of Mackintosh; yet how can I prevent it?" Without giving up a peculiar mode of usefulness he could not, for he had become early a marked man, whose advice and assistance, both in charity and business, were eagerly sought for by the doubting and the distressed. Add to this, that it was essential to his usefulness that he should keep up intimate communications with those who in various districts could influence society, or report to him the facts which marked its temper; so that though his large correspondence diminished the apparent fruit of his exertions, it was itself one of his most effective modes of usefulness.

His resolutions, as entered from time to time in his Diary, are of the most strictly practical complexion, and are evidently the results of habitual watchfulness. "May God, for Christ's sake, enable me to serve Him from a genuine principle of evangelical obedience. I will labour after a sense of God's presence, and a remembrance that I have been redeemed, and so am not my own. More fixedness in devotion, reading Scripture, and self-examination—greater self-restraint in lawful things, both in thought and act. Little secret self-denials, without much thought. More real gratitude to God at meals, and when enjoying other comforts—kind friends, and all external conveniences. In company—rational conversation and innocent mirth. Topics prepared—what good can I do or get—draw out others when I can without feeding their vanity—above all aim at their spiritual good—think for each of them. Truth to be observed strictly. General kindness and mildness, especially towards inferiors—beware of vanity and evil speaking. Frequent aspirations in solitary relaxation—recapitulate or revolve topics, or at least avoid rambling, wandering thoughts. In every thing, according to its measure, you may please or displease God. Nov. 14th. Resumed my labours according to the same plan

—thinking and dictating on topics—getting by heart—history—letters—serious, Bible. 20th. I have been reading Sir M. Hale's life. What a man was he! and why may not I love God as well, and render to Christ as gratefully? Monday, 21st. Resumed work; but a bad day with me, and heavy in spirit; though a little roused by Witherspoon. 27th. Sunday. Cold at first rising, afterwards earnest—serious thoughts and fervent prayer; and now I most seriously resolve to turn to God with my whole heart. I have been reading Doddridge's life. What a wonderful man! Yet I may apply to the same Saviour. I propose henceforth to try at eleven hours of all sorts of business one day with another whilst in the country; nine hours of which to be exclusive of 'serious.' 28th. Got up after too short a night, and stupid in consequence through the day. I was too forgetful to-day of my regulations, yet rather warm in devotions at night. 29th. Not so inattentive as I often am; yet, alas, how little what I ought to be!"

Mr. Wilberforce's quiet stay at Yoxall Lodge was suddenly disturbed by a summons from his friend Henry Thornton, on the evening of the 16th Dec.

The hurry and interruptions of his London life were now begun. "Jan. 7th. Out in the morning—employed all day. W. Smith called in the afternoon. I talked to him on religion, but too much as a matter of criticism. 10th. City—Sierra Leone; and afternoon slave business. Then Henry Thornton's, where discussed, and home late; Grant our associate. I find that I can hardly keep an account of time. 18th. Queen's birth-day—at St. James's. Dined at Pitt's—sadly idle. What stuff such a day as this is! 21st. Went tete-a-tete with Pitt to Wimbledon—finance lecture on the way. A long discussion with Dundas after dinner—a most excellent man of business. Oh what a pity that he is not alive to what is best! his diligence shames me."

In entering upon this distracting scene he did not forget the resolutions of greater watchfulness with which he had closed his last London season. "I will watch and pray," he says, "or God may punish my carelessness by suffering me to fall a prey to sin. Christ says, through his apostle, 'Be not conformed to this world.' Do thou teach me, Lord, the true limits of conformity. I have been hearing a most excellent sermon from Mr. Scott, on procrastination. I was very cold and sluggish in spiritual affections both yesterday and this morning, but I hope this discourse has

roused me; may I be enabled to put in practice these most important admonitions. I have much cause for humiliation in the past week; yet I think I go on better in my own house than in Henry Thornton's, from having more quiet; and I humbly resolve to press forward, and apply diligently to the throne of grace, that Christ may be made to me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." To Mr. Mason, whom Dr. Burgh describes "as entertaining paternal feelings towards you, which have received an accession from your late kind attention to him," he writes soon after his return to London—"To you, who know Yoxall Lodge, and can by the utmost stretch of your imagination form to yourself some idea of *my* London, I need hardly say how I feel the change; yet I trust I am on my post, and in that persuasion I determine not to abandon it. I endeavour as much as I can to preserve my Needwood Forest mind in my Palace Yard habitation, and whilst I am in the busy and the social circle, (and I will confess to you the latter is to me the more laborious and dangerous service of the two,) I labour, looking to a better strength than my own, to discharge the duties of this life, from a regard to the happiness of the other, and from a sentiment of gratitude towards Him to whose undeserved mercy alone I can look for its attainment. I will not be so affected as to offer any apology for exhibiting this picture of my mind; on the contrary, I am persuaded you will rather thank me for it, accepting it as a proof of the cordiality and affection with which I am,

Very sincerely yours,

W. Wilberforce."

But although he watched over himself thus diligently, and withdrew from all superfluous intercourse with society, "dining from home less than in former years, and giving fewer dinners, either ordinary or formal, upon Milner's persuasion;" yet his wakeful eye detected some injury to his spirit from his continual engagements. "Both my body and mind suffer from over-occupation. My heart is now in a cold and senseless state, and I have reason to adore the goodness of God in not hardening me. I have been short and cold, and wandering in private devotions. Habit and the grace of God preventing me have kept me in a decent observance of external duties, but all within is overgrown with weeds, and every truly Christian grace well nigh choked. Yet, O thou all-merciful Father, and thou Sa-

viour of sinners, receive me yet again, and supply me with strength. Oh let me now quicken the things that are ready to die! My worldly connexions certainly draw me into temptations great and innumerable, yet I dare not withdraw from a station in which God has placed me. Still let me deal honestly with myself in this matter, and if, on further trial, I find reason to believe I ought to lead a more sequestered life, may I not dread the imputation of singularity. If from my extreme weakness this public company-keeping life cannot be made consistent with a heavenly frame of mind, I think I ought to retire more. Herein and in all things may God direct me; but let me strive more against my corruptions, and particularly not straiten prayer. I find myself confiding in my resolutions; let me universally distrust myself, but let me throw myself at the feet of Christ as an undone creature, distrusting, yea despairing of myself, but firmly relying upon Him. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' "

These serious thoughts with which he mingled in the unthinking crowd of ordinary companions, were quickened by the affecting accounts which he received of the last hours of a near relation. "22d January. Saw the astonishing letter from Miss More, containing an account, written inter moriendum, of Harriet Bird's death at six o'clock on Wednesday morning. Oh may my latter end be like hers! Strongly affected; may it be deeply." "I have been extremely affected by Miss More's account of Harriet's death-bed scene. —How can I but be so—particularly her illumination, and the following agony just before she was taken to glory. I have felt these things, I humbly hope, not in vain. She prayed for me on her death-bed. How does her progress shame me! I am behind, far behind all of them. But my eyes will not allow me to write; many tears to-day from mental struggles have injured them. May God, for Christ's sake, cause them not to flow in vain. I fly to Him for pardon, pleading the blood of Jesus. Though I almost despair, yet Christ is mighty to save. I have been looking over letters written to me by Milner, Pitt, &c., when I first entered upon a religious profession. How little have I corresponded to the outset! Yet it is not too late. But I am apt to take comfort after writing thus, as though the business was done. Let me dismiss all vain confidence, and build upon the sure foundation."

A letter detailing the events which had occurred at Bath, called forth the following reply:

TO WILLIAM MANNING, ESQ.

"Palace Yard, 20th January, 1792.

"My dear Manning,

My eyes are but indifferent to-day, and I have much work for them; yet I cannot forbear taking up my pen for a few moments, not from form you will believe, but feeling, on the perusal of your kind letter. Such a crowd of ideas rush into my mind, that I scarce know how to discriminate or select them. I cannot help almost envying you the scene you have been witnessing. O my dear friend, never forget it; let it still be present to your mind, and let it force all those concerns which are so apt to engross our imaginations, and interest our hearts, to retire to their proper distance, or rather to shrink to their true point of insignificance. Never let me forget it. When I seem to you at any time to be intoxicated as it were by the hurry, the business, or the dissipation of life, spare not the best offices of friendship; recall me to that sobriety and seriousness of mind, which become those who know not when they may be called away: place before me the solemn triumphs of which you have been a spectator, and animate me to press forward in emulation of so glorious an example. To die the death, we must indeed live the life, of Christians. We must fix our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. We must endeavour habitually to preserve that frame of mind, and that course of conduct, with which we may be justly said to be waiting for the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know not any description of a Christian which impresses itself so forcibly as this on my mind. Alas! when with this which I ought to be I compare myself as I am, I am lost in unutterable shame and self-abasement. But I throw myself on the mercies of God in Christ; I resolve to venture all on this foundation; and relying on that help which is promised to them that ask it, I determine to struggle with all my corruptions, and to employ what is left to me of life, and talents, and influence, in the way which shall appear to me most pleasing to my heavenly Father. Oh with what humiliation have I to look back on the years wherein all these were so grossly wasted; and what reason have I to rejoice that I was not then snatched away!

"I will not apologize for giving you this picture of my mind; you will accept it, I trust, (such indeed it is,) as a proof of affection and confidence. In truth, I often regret that we are so separated, as not to afford us the opportunity of exhibiting proofs of this last to each other more frequently in personal communications. May the time at length come, when, through the goodness of God, we may indulge (with those friends we have before lost for this life) uninterrupted and ever-growing effusions of affection. I must lay aside my pen. Adieu. Remember me most kindly to Mary. I rejoice to hear she is so supported. Assure her of my constant prayers. Remember me also kindly to the Mores and to Dr. Fraser, whose tender assiduities I have heard of with sincere pleasure, and reflect on with real gratitude. Believe me, my dear Manning, in great haste,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

To his other occupations, was soon added constant attendance on the parliamentary business of an important session.

But though the many questions which then came before parliament received a full share of his attention, the Abolition struggle mainly occupied his thoughts. About a month before he came to London he opened to Lord Muncaster the plan of action upon which he had at first decided. "I mean," he says, "to bring on the slave business within a month after parliament meets, that we may then, being defeated, sound the alarm throughout the land, (provoco ad populum,) get petitions, &c. and carry something important before the session is over. I mention this, lest Clarkson, to whom I threw it out, should have failed to tell you, and because you will regulate your motions accordingly." But before the session commenced there was so fair a promise of reviving interest in the cause, that he deemed it wiser to postpone his motion until he could propose it with the expected sanction of a great body of petitions. "I have considered, and talked over with several friends, our future plan of operations, and we are all at length pretty well agreed, that the best course will be to endeavour to excite the flame as much as possible in a secret way, but not to allow it more than to smother until after I shall have given notice of my intention of bringing the subject forward. This must be the signal for the fire's bursting forth. We hope ere that time to have laid

all our trains, and that by proper efforts the blaze will then be universal."

The conduct of this "appeal to the people" now occupied his time, and he was daily rousing and directing the efforts of his adherents throughout the country. This was no appeal to the political impulses of the multitude. Rendered necessary "by that vote of the House of Commons on the Slave Trade question, which proved above all things the extremely low ebb of real principle there," it was addressed to the moral sympathies of the educated and religious classes. "I wish you and all other country labourers," he writes to Mr. Hey, "to consider yourselves not as having concluded, but as only beginning your work: it is on the general impression and feeling of the nation we must rely, rather than on the political conscience of the House of Commons. So let the flame be fanned continually, and may it please God, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, to bless our endeavours." County meetings to petition parliament were what he chiefly wished to obtain. He could not but hope that the cause was gaining ground fast in the country, as it became better acquainted with the real nature of this horrid traffic.

To such a pitch was the zeal of the friends of Abolition at this time raised, that many had determined to abstain from the consumption of West Indian produce, until the measure should be carried. "We use East Indian sugar entirely," writes Mr. Babington," and so do full two-thirds of the friends of Abolition in Leicester." "Please to take notice," says Mr. W. Smith, "that I have left off sugar completely and entirely for some time past, and shall certainly persevere in my resolution, though I am not yet at all reconciled to the deprivation of the most favourite gratification of my palate." Upon this point the opinion of Mr. Wilberforce was called for in many quarters, both for the direction of individual conduct, and to determine the line which should be held at county meetings. "When you have leisure to favour me with a line," wrote the venerable Newton, "I shall be glad of your judgment respecting the associations now rapidly forming to stop the consumption of West Indian produce. If you were to recommend such a measure I should readily adopt it; at present I think it premature." "What," asks Mr. Gisborne, "are we to say at our meeting as to the use of West Indian sugar?" Mr. Wilberforce was at first disposed to recommend this measure, but upon a mature considera-

tion of all its probable consequences he decided "that it should be suspended until, if necessary, it might be adopted with effect by general concurrence."

Whilst he was thus rallying his country forces, accounts arrived of the recent outrages in St. Domingo. They afforded the enemies of Abolition a pretext for warmer opposition, and shook the faith of some of its adherents. Many too of those who continued zealous supporters of the cause, were for deferring a fresh appeal to parliament till a more convenient season.

Nor was it only the natural timidity of irresolute minds which suggested this temporizing policy; pressing arguments to the same effect from a very different quarter tried but could not shake his resolution. "Called away after dinner to Slave Committee. Pitt threw out against Slave motion on St. Domingo account. I must repose myself on God. The insincerity of my heart has been shamefully evinced to me to-day, when I could hardly bring myself to resolve to do my duty and please God at the expense (as I suspect it will turn out) of my cordiality with Pitt, or rather his with me." "Do not be afraid," he tells Mr. Babington, "lest I should give ground: I hope, through God's blessing, to be enabled to press forward, and never to abandon my pursuit or relax in it till . . . a supposition hardly conceivable . . . it shall become right so to do. This is a matter wherein all personal, much more all ministerial, attachments must be as dust in the balance. Meanwhile exert yourselves in the country with renewed vigour. I should be glad to have some petitions, if possible, even before my notice, that it may be evident the country is alarmed, and that no receding of mine could prevent the measure coming forward.—Poor fellow! I can feel for you: we people that live in this bustling place, are called off to other things from what would otherwise haunt and harass us."

Nor was this the only difficulty peculiar to that troubled season. It was at this time that the fraternizing spirit of revolutionary France established affiliated societies in foreign nations, and threatened our own population with the infection of her leprous touch. From the contagion of her principles the sounder part of the nation shrunk back with horror, and viewed with the utmost suspicion whatever bore the least resemblance to them. The supporters of the Slave Trade were not slow in turning to their own advantage this excited state of public feeling. The name of Jacobin, and

the charge of holding revolutionary tenets, might be easily affixed to any advocate of liberty; whilst, however wantonly imputed, they could not in those times of wakeful suspicion be readily removed. It was moreover inevitable, that amongst the friends of Abolition should be ranged some actual abettors of these extreme opinions. "It is certainly true, and perfectly natural, that these Jacobins are all friendly to the Abolition; and it is no less true and natural that this operates to the injury of our cause. However, I am not discouraged. You seem yourself to be deep in Abolition lore; I am glad of it, as I am sure you will be proportionably earnest. It is a superficial view alone, which makes a man of sense honestly against us."* This evil had been for some time spreading amongst a certain class of his supporters; and had scarcely been suppressed by his skill and patience. "You will see Clarkson," writes Mr. Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster; "caution him against talking of the French Revolution; it will be ruin to our cause." "Clarkson," writes Dr. Milner, "would tell you that he had a long conversation with me. I wish him better health, and better notions in politics; no government can stand on such principles as he appeals to, and maintains. I am very sorry for it, because I see plainly advantage is taken of such cases as his, in order to represent the friends of Abolition as levellers. This is not the only instance where the converse of a proposition does not hold: levellers certainly are friends of Abolition." Great mischief had already risen to the cause. "What business had your friend Clarkson," asked Dundas, "to attend the Crown and Anchor last Thursday? He could not have done a more mischievous thing to the cause you have taken in hand." "On Wednesday last," says Mr. Wilberforce's Diary shortly after he received this letter, "to Pitt's at Holwood. Stayed till Saturday—with Pitt to town in his phaeton, and interesting talk about Abolition. Some vote against it not to encourage Paine's disciples."

This impression affected his success elsewhere; it had reached the highest quarter with peculiar force; and created henceforth an inseparable obstacle to the exercise of any ministerial influence in behalf of Abolition. There had been a time, when George III. had whispered at the levee, "How go on your black clients, Mr. Wilberforce?" but henceforth he was a determined opposer of the cause. Yet in spite of these unfavourable circumstances, it was evidently right to

* To W. Hey, Esq.

bring the question forward. The sympathy of the country was too much aroused to be patient of delay. Public meetings, and petitions numerously signed, multiplied both in England and in Scotland.

Even from Liverpool, where the corporation had spent, first and last, upwards of £10,000 in their parliamentary opposition to his motions, he hears from Dr. Currie—"You will, perhaps, be surprised that Liverpool does not petition for the trade. Liverpool will never again, I think, petition on this subject; conviction of the truth has spread amongst us widely. Tarleton is doing himself an injury he little suspects."

Upon the 2d of April Mr. Wilberforce proposed his motion in a debate, which he describes the following morning to Mr. Hey. "I know how much you are interested in what regards our poor African fellow-creatures, and therefore I take up my pen for a single moment to inform you that, after a very long debate, (we did not separate till near seven this morning,) my motion for immediate Abolition was put by; though supported strenuously by Mr. Fox, and by Mr. Pitt with more energy and ability than were almost ever exerted in the House of Commons." "Windham, who has no love for Pitt, tells me, that Fox and Grey, with whom he walked home after the debate, agreed with him in thinking Pitt's speech one of the most extraordinary displays of eloquence they had ever heard. For the last twenty minutes he really seemed to be inspired." "He was dilating upon the future prospects of civilizing Africa, a topic which I had suggested to him in the morning." "We carried a motion however afterwards for gradual Abolition, against the united forces of Africans and West Indians, by a majority of 238 to 85. I am congratulated on all hands, yet I cannot but feel hurt and humiliated. We must endeavour to force the gradual Abolitionists in *their* Bill (for I will never myself bring forward a parliamentary license to rob and murder) to allow as short a term as possible, and under as many limitations." "I am glad to hear you say," replies Mr. Hey, "that you will not bring in a Bill to license robbery and murder. I think this resolution becoming your conduct on the ground you have taken. But if no scruple of this kind weighed with you, you will undoubtedly have the advantage in being the corrector, rather than the proposer, of the Bill. What you propose would probably be curtailed in some degree. Whatever others propose you will probably be able to modify."

Congratulations upon this limited success poured in from all quarters.

In this hurry of business he enters, "Perhaps I have been a little more attentive to my devotions in this last week; yet too little thinking of God's presence and favour. But though with a cold heart, I will proceed, praying for more grace; and though this next fortnight will be a sadly hurrying time, I will hope, by God's help, to amend at least in some things. Look to Jesus: all other modes are vain."

On the 23d Mr. Dundas brought forward his Resolutions for a gradual Abolition. "After a hard struggle," writes Mr. Wilberforce, "we were last night defeated in our attempt to fix the period of the Abolition for the 1st of January, 1795; the numbers being 161 to 121. But we carried the 1st of January, 1796, (Mr. Dundas had proposed 1800,) by a majority of 151 against 132. On the whole this is more than I expected two months ago, and I have much cause for thankfulness. We are to contend for the number of slaves to be imported; and *then for the House of Lords.*"

Upon the 1st of May, when the question came again before the House, Mr. Dundas declared himself unable to propose his Resolutions as amended by the late division. They were therefore moved by Mr. Pitt, and upon the following day communicated to the Lords in a free conference. Here the opponents of the measure rallied their broken forces; and in spite of Lord Grenville's able arguments, prevailed upon the House to proceed by calling evidence to their own bar; a resolution in itself equivalent to a direct vote, which followed on the 5th of June, when the business was formally postponed to the ensuing session.

The bustle of this busy session had not dispelled those serious purposes with which he had commenced its labours. "The beginning of a long recess draws near, and I will endeavour to consecrate it to God by a day of solemn prayer and fasting. I will labour to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset me, and to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour; to follow peace with all men, and above all to love the Lord my God with all my heart. O strengthen me, Lord, by thy grace, for I am very weakness; cleanse me, for I am all corruption; and since ease begets carelessness, may I be clothed with humility, and may I fear alway."

The contest in behalf of Abolition was throughout conducted by Mr. Wilberforce in a spirit of conciliation towards the supporters of the trade. Some amongst the West

Indian body were his personal friends, and of all "we should not forget," he writes to Dr. Currie, "that Christian candour is due to the characters of those who carry it on. There may be, I doubt not, amongst them many men of enlarged and humane minds. I trust that you have done me the justice to acquit me of having adopted any such indiscriminate and false judgment as that you oppose." But it was not to be expected, that in a strife which called into violent action the whole energies of many lower natures, he should always meet with opponents of a spirit like his own. He had throughout the struggle to bear the imputation of unworthy motives, and the various assaults of personal slander. No one could unite with him in this cause, without in some measure sharing in this treatment.

To engage in correspondence with Wilberforce, was esteemed sufficient ground for such annoyance. In the island of Tortola, the papers of an English gentleman known to be guilty of this crime were seized by order of the president of the council, on the charge of their containing proofs of a treasonable correspondence with the French. This jealousy extended even to Great Britain. "The box in which our petition is enclosed," says a Glasgow correspondent, "has been directed to another, that its contents may be unsuspected." And other residents in Liverpool of the same rank of life asked with the late Dr. Currie, "If you write, be pleased to direct without your franking it." Their correspondence was conducted in unsigned letters, sent under the covers of unsuspected persons. In a letter which does not allude to West Indian matters, and was therefore openly transmitted, Dr. Currie adds this postscript, "Trusting this letter to our post-office with your address, I shall be anxious to hear of its safe arrival." The attacks which were aimed against himself, were not always of this comparatively harmless character. At an early period of the contest he had been in danger of personal violence, from "one, who from my having been compelled in quality of examiner in the committee to bring forward his inconsistencies, conceived so violent a hatred of me, as even to threaten my life." The summer of 1792 had exposed him to two more such assailants. He had just returned to London upon Mr. Henry Thornton's summons, when the challenge of a West Indian captain, which had been delivered at his Bath lodgings, followed him by post to town. He marks in his Journal his sense of God's goodness in so ordering this business, that he

was thus allowed leisure to reflect upon the line of conduct which it became him to adopt. "Talked," says his Diary at this time, "with S. about duelling. He says he should fight, though disapproving. I deprecated. My plans uncertain. I rather think of returning to Bath, perhaps partly from a desire of not appearing to be deterred thence; and partly from thinking, that a proper and easy explanation of my determination and views in respect to duelling, might be in all respects eligible. At all events, I will enter now upon a more diligent course, which may suit any plan. I often waste my time in waiting for suitable seasons; whereas I ought, as a single man, to be at home every where; or at least, to be always at work." This affair was carried no further; but he was, at the very same time, brought into collision with another assailant, to whose threatened violence he was exposed for more than two years. Kimber, another West Indian captain, was thus described by Sir James Stonehouse, to whom Mr. Wilberforce had applied for the particulars of his character. "He is a very bad man, a great spendthrift; one who would swear to any falsehood, and who is linked with a set of rascals like himself." This man had been charged by Mr. Wilberforce, in the debate of April, 1792, with great cruelty in his conduct of the trade. Several trials in the courts of law followed; in one of which the captain was himself capitally indicted for the murder of a negro girl. Of this charge he was not found guilty; escaping, in the judgment of Mr. Wilberforce, "through the shameful remissness of the Crown lawyers, and the indecent behaviour of a high personage who from the bench identified himself with the prisoner's cause." These reasons were aided by the apparent contradictions of a principal witness, in his evidence upon a collateral point, for which he was tried and convicted in the penalties of perjury; a sentence afterwards commuted by the Crown.

As soon as he was discharged from prison he applied to Mr. Wilberforce for what he termed remuneration for his wrongs. "July 11th. Morning received Kimber's letter. Friday, by Pitt's advice, wrote answer to Kimber." The satisfaction he demanded was "A public apology, £5000 in money, and such a place under government as would make me comfortable." Upon receiving a brief refusal of his propositions, Kimber had recourse to violence. "Kimber lying in wait for me—first civil, then abusive." "Kimber called between seven and eight, and again about ten." "'Very

savage-looking,' Amos said, 'he went away muttering and shaking his head.'" The interference of Lord Sheffield (an honourable opponent) at last terminated this annoyance, but not before one of his friends (the late Lord Rokeby) had thought it needful to become his armed companion in a journey into Yorkshire, to defend him from anticipated violence. "I know," wrote Mr. Wilberforce at this time to Lord Muncaster in Cumberland, "how little the proverb, 'Out of sight out of mind,' holds good in the case of any of your friendships, and therefore I was not surprised at the warmth with which you expressed yourself on the subject of Kimber. How came you to hear any thing of the matter? Was it from me? I am sure I intended not to mention it lest I should awaken your kind solicitude, which at three hundred miles from its object is not the most comfortable companion. Perhaps at some unguarded moment the matter slipped from my pen. I don't yet know whether he has any further measures in store: meanwhile be assured I will do all for my own security, which you would think proper if you were my adviser. I can't say I apprehend much, and I really believe, that if he were to commit any act of violence it would be beneficial rather than injurious to *the cause*."

Being still detained in the neighbourhood of London by Sierra Leone business, he applied himself at once to his intended course of study. "Taken in," he says, "to dine at W. Smith's with a vast company—Dr. Aikin, Gillies, Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld, Helen Maria Williams, Mackintosh, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Sabbatiere, Mr. and Mrs. Towgood. I was not sufficiently guarded in talking about religion after dinner. Mackintosh talked away—he spoke most highly of Pitt's Slave Trade speech. Came home as if hunted to Thornton's quiet family party, and much struck with the difference. I threw out some things which may perhaps be of use. 25th. Had a long conversation with Pearson,* on the proper measure of a Christian's living in society, whether religious or worldly. He was very strong for solitude, and speaks of the benefit he personally has received from it. I talked with him very openly, and was much struck with what he said. Sunday, 29th. I have to-day been for several hours engaged in religious reading, but too languidly. I have had this week some very serious talk with Mr. Pearson. He strongly pressed solitude, from reason, Scripture, and his own per-

* The distinguished surgeon.

sonal experience. I believe he is right, and mean to seek more quiet and solitude than I have done; to consider the point, and draw up my thoughts upon it. 30th. Read Howe 'On Delighting in God,' and much affected by it. Heard from Osborne that there would be no county meeting, and therefore set free; and on thinking the matter over, resolved for Bath. Wrote to Mr. Cecil to ask him to be my companion. Amongst my reasons for Bath one, though not the leading one, is the desire of solitude; may God render it useful to me."

"My dear Muncaster," he writes, in answer to a friendly remonstrance upon the postponement of a long-promised visit, "notwithstanding your admonition behold me entering upon a course of Bath waters, prudently however and moderately like Muncaster the citizen; not rashly and violently like Pennington the soldier. My dear fellow, I the more readily yield myself to the impulse of duty which brings me hither, because it is altogether contrary to my inclination, and I am therefore sure I am not under any unfair bias. It would be a high gratification to me to be cooling my feet upon the mossy brow of Muncaster Park, instead of burning and parching them on the rest-refusing pavement of Bath. But do not think I am dissatisfied, and not rather grateful to God for His overflowing mercies to me of every kind; indeed I know no man who has so many. I have often thought, that the loss of nineteen-twentieths of my fortune would scarcely be a loss to me, since I have so many friends whose attachment I know so well that I should not fear to visit them though reduced to poverty; and you know human nature well enough to acknowledge that this implies confidence. I assure you that in such a case I should not be slow to direct my steps to Muncaster. You will, I know, be shocked to hear that poor Philips has been suddenly carried out of this world. O my dear friend, may events like this impress on us the survivors by how frail a tenure we hold our present life, and excite us to strive for that state wherein we may be always ready to attend the awful call. In a moment like that, how contemptible will appear all those objects of pleasure or ambition which have at times engaged our warmest affections! 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' What emphatic words!

I am always affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was soon joined by such a companion as he had desired, in the person of Mr. Grant, who with his wife and eldest daughter arrived at Bath upon the 10th of August. "Since the Grants are with me," he says, "I study less. I have been reading Sir B. Boothby's pamphlets, Mackintosh's, G. Rose's; Goldsmith's Animated Nature, Lowth's Isaiah, Owen, Thomson's Seasons, and Horace by heart."

"17th. This is the day on which Pitt, Dundas, P. Arden, and Steele are at Hamels. I am disposed to wish myself with them. I find that even here in religious society I can have an earthly mind; yet to depart (when not necessary to be with them) from those who fear not God, and to associate with those who do, is one part of waiting on God to which the promise is made. 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'"

Though he at this time diminished in some measure his intercourse with those of whom he could not hope that they were living with a constant reference to unseen things, yet he did not retire rudely from their friendship. Not that his intimacies had ever been among the enemies of religion; he had never been so blind as to expect a national reformation from men of abandoned character; and neither Mr. Pitt nor his other friends had ever been tainted with unbelief, or allied to that infidel party which has at all times found its rallying point in opposition to God and His church. Hence his constant care to employ his private influence for the advancement of religion was not impeded by their opposition of principles: the maxims for which he contended might not be duly appreciated, but they formed part of their admitted creed.

"The convention" had bestowed upon Mr. Wilberforce in the course of this summer the doubtful honour of French citizenship. "I was provoked lately," writes Mr. Mason, "to see your name registered among the list of citizens by the French savages. And for what? Merely for taking up the cause of humanity previous to their taking up the love of freedom; the love of which, even during their first and best exertions, was not strong enough to induce them to follow your humane steps." "I am considering," he himself writes to Mr. Babington, "how to prevent the ill effect which this vote might have upon our Abolition cause." Such an opportunity was afforded him by a public meeting held in London at this time to raise subscriptions for the emigrant clergy.

"Friday, 20th. To town to the French clergy public meeting, and consented to be on the committee at Burke's request, partly to do away French citizenship."

"4th. At night alone with Pitt, but talked politics only—did not find myself equal to better talk. I came here hoping that I might really find an opportunity of talking seriously with Pitt. What am I, to do so with any one? O Christ, help me. 5th. Morning had some serious talk with Pitt—interrupted or should have had more. Walked with him. I see much reason to admire his integrity, public spirit, and magnanimity in despising unpopularity."

In the autumn he went to Yoxall Lodge, where, with the exception of a short visit to Rothley Temple, he remained until he was called to London by the business of the session. Here he resumed the diligent employments of the preceding summer, giving however more time than formerly to studies of a directly religious character. "I have been employing," he says, "most of this morning in reading St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians." It was by this careful study, which no press of business ever interrupted, and which continued daily through his life, that he obtained an acquaintance with holy Scripture unusual even in professed theologians. A marked advance in his character during the course of this year may be traced in the altered tone of his most private entries. Still indeed they abounded in that deep humiliation with which they who have looked closely into the perfect law of liberty must ever contemplate their own fulfilment of its demands; yet they bear already more of that calm and peaceful character which cast so warm a light upon his later days. "Though utterly *unworthy*," he says, "I thank God for having enabled me to pray with earnestness. Oh that this may not be as the morning cloud and as the early dew! By his grace I will persevere with more earnestness than ever, labouring to work out my own salvation in an entire and habitual dependence upon Him." "If you have truly learned to feel the insufficiency of your own powers," says the Dean of Carlisle, to whom he had poured forth his earnest desires after a more rapid growth in holiness, "you have made more progress than you think of; and if you can support that feeling and act upon it for any time together, your advance is very considerable." He judged himself indeed to be "in a more pleasing state." "I have been praying," he says, "earnestly to God for his Spirit through Christ to renew my corrupt nature and make

me spiritually-minded; what folly is all else! Let me take courage, relying on the sure promises of God in Christ and the powerful operations of the Spirit of grace. Though I am weak He is strong.' I must more cherish this heavenly inhabitant."

This tranquil state of feeling was henceforth fostered by a system of greater domestic intercourse with the friends whose principles he valued, and by mingling consequently less frequently than of old in the turbulent currents of life. Some such alteration in his plan was rendered necessary by the loss of the opportunity of retirement which had been afforded him, since he ceased to own a house at Wimbledon, by the enlightened hospitality of his relative John Thornton. "Young men and old have different habits," said his kinsman when he offered him a room in his house and the command of his spacious garden, "and I shall leave you therefore to keep your own hours, and take care that you are not interrupted."

Of this offer he availed himself until the death of Mr. Thornton in 1790, and in the course of 1792 he agreed to share a house on Clapham Common with Mr. Henry Thornton, the youngest son of his deceased relative. Whilst his general influence was silently extending, there grew up around him here a chosen circle of peculiar friends. Amongst these must especially be noticed the Hon. E. J. Eliot, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Henry Thornton. Mr. Eliot, his early friend and fellow-traveller, was now settled, for the sake of his society, in the immediate neighbourhood of Battersea Rise. The loss of a wife to whom he was ardently attached, (the favourite sister of Mr. Pitt,) had given a tone of earnest piety to the whole character of Mr. Eliot, and taught him to co-operate in every useful scheme suggested by his friend; whilst at the same time there had been inflicted on his spirit a wound from which he never rallied. His death, in 1797, was attributed by those who knew his inmost feelings, to the lingering sorrow of a broken heart. Of Mr. Grant and Mr. Henry Thornton it is needless here to speak. "Few men," says the latter, referring to this period, "have been blest with worthier or better friends than have fallen to my lot. Mr. Wilberforce stands at the head of these, for he was the friend of my youth. I owed much to him in every sense soon after I came out in life; for his enlarged mind, his affectionate and condescending manners, and his very superior piety, were exactly calculated to supply what was

wanting to my improvement and my establishment in a right course. It is chiefly through him that I have been introduced to a variety of other most valuable associates." "When I entered life, I saw a great deal of dishonourable conduct among people who made great profession of religion. In my father's house I met with persons of this sort. This so disgusted me that, had it not been for the admirable pattern of consistency and disinterestedness which I saw in Mr. Wilberforce, I should have been in danger of a sort of infidelity."

Such was at this time his position; high in public estimation, and rich in private friends; engaged in the conduct of a most important cause; with his mind now disciplined by culture, and enriched by study; whilst the unseen life of his spirit, escaping from its early struggles, was strengthening into tranquil vigour, as religion took a firmer hold upon his character, and leavened more thoroughly the whole man. By this early self-discipline he had purchased the calm and peaceful obedience of the remainder of his course. He was now about to be tried in his political life with far more searching difficulties than any which he had yet encountered. Like that holy man of old to whom a severe observer has beautifully compared him, he was prepared by humility and self-denial for the arduous trials of a public life; and like him he supported them with uncorrupted faith. "From a careful scrutiny," says Mr. Matthias,* "into the public and private life of Mr. Wilberforce, I am inclined to think that his enemies would be forced into an acknowledgment that they can find no occasion against this man, except they find it against him concerning the law of his God."

The autumn of 1792 set in with heavy clouds darkening the political horizon. "Heard of the militia being called out, and parliament summoned—talked politics, and of the state of the country, which seems very critical." Upon the 5th Dec. "left Rothley Temple, and after talking with Mr. Robinson (of Leicester) upon the state of the times, I travelled on to Newport Pagnell. Thursday, 6th. Arrived in town and alighted at Pitt's."

None but those who were altogether blinded by the violence of party spirit could contemplate without alarm the troubled aspect of the times. The democratical excitement which the revolutionary fever of our continental neighbours

* Pursuits of Literature.

had imparted to a portion of our own population, had been eagerly fostered by artful and disaffected men, and was ready in many places to break out into absolute rebellion.

"I cannot omit," writes Mr. Wyvill, "to communicate to you by the earliest opportunity what I have heard since I came here concerning the disposition of the lower people in the county of Durham. Considerable numbers in Bernard Castle have manifested disaffection to the constitution, and the words, 'No King,' 'Liberty,' and 'Equality,' have been written there upon the Market Cross. During the late disturbances amongst the keelmen at Shields and Sunderland, General Lambton was thus addressed: 'Have you read this little work of Tom Paine's.' 'No.' 'Then read it—we like it much. You have a great estate, General; we shall soon divide it amongst us.' 'You will presently spend it in liquor, and what will you do then?' 'Why then, General, we will divide again.'" "At Carlisle," writes Dr. Milner, "we had many reports concerning tumults and sedition, and the affair seemed to be of considerable magnitude. Some few gentlemen I understand are disposed to favour French principles, and I am exceedingly sorry to find that Mr. Paley is as loose in his politics as he is in his religion. He has considerable influence in promoting this sort of work by his conversation, which has a strong tendency to destroy all subordination, and bring rulers of every description into contempt."

The same apprehensions were excited amongst sober-minded men in all parts of the country. "Immense pains," he heard from Leeds, "are now taken to make the lower class of people discontented, and to excite rebellion. Paine's mischievous work on 'the Rights of Man,' is compressed into a sixpenny pamphlet, and is sold and given away in profusion. One merchant in this town ordered two hundred of them to be given at his expense: you may see them in the houses of our journeymen cloth-dressers. The soldiers are every where tampered with; no pains are spared to render this island a scene of confusion."

All this was sufficiently alarming; while the danger was increased by the probability of a French war, which must necessarily add to the burdens of the people, and so further the designs of the revolutionary faction. With his eyes fully open to these evils, he took a calm and sober view of the amount of danger.

"To you," he tells Mr. Hey, "I will frankly own, that I entertain rather gloomy apprehensions concerning the state of this country. Not that I fear any speedy commotion; of this I own I see no danger. Almost every man of property in the kingdom is of course the friend of civil order, and if a few mad-headed professors of liberty and equality were to attempt to bring their theories into practice, they would be crushed in an instant. But yet I do foresee a gathering storm, and I cannot help fearing that a country which, like this, has so long been blessed beyond all example with every spiritual and temporal good, will incur those judgments of an incensed God, which in the prophets are so often denounced against those who forget the Author of all their mercies." "Your letter," he writes again in answer to a detail of facts, "and accounts I have received of the state of other places, have convinced me that there is more cause for alarm than I had apprehended. From my situation I feel loaded with responsibility. I am considering, and shall consider diligently, what is best to be done; and I pray God to give me wisdom to discern, and courage and perseverance to walk in the path of duty. I own to you that what throws the deepest gloom over my prospects is the prevailing profligacy of the times, and above all, that self-sufficiency, and proud and ungrateful forgetfulness of God, which is so general in the higher ranks of life. I think of proposing to the Archbishop of Canterbury to suggest the appointment of a day of fasting and humiliation."

The same sober estimate of present appearances, led him to check the exultation with which Mr. Hey regarded a temporary burst of loyalty in the town of Leeds. "'God save the King' was sung, with a chorus of three cheers after each verse, by the whole meeting, the most numerous I ever saw upon any such public occasion; about 3000 in number. The populace paraded the streets until night came on, carrying an image of Tom Paine upon a pole, with a rope round his neck which was held by a man behind, who continually lashed the effigy with a carter's whip. The effigy was at last burned in the market-place, the market-bell tolling slowly. I never saw so quiet a mob; a smile sat on every face; the people went peaceably home; no outrage, no opprobrious language, but 'God save the King' resounded in the streets. A happy change in this town." "I rejoice to hear that so much unanimity prevailed at Leeds," was Mr.

Wilberforce's answer, "but I do not build much on such hasty effusions: this one word in reply to yours."

Parliament met upon the 13th of December, when the Address upon the King's speech, which Mr. Fox opposed and Mr. Windham defended, expressed a strong desire of maintaining peace. "I had thought much upon it, yet found myself indisposed for speaking." On the debate upon Mr. Fox's amendment to the Address, he declared his opinions. "War," he said, "he considered at all times the greatest of human evils, and never more pregnant with injury than at the present moment; but he supported the Address, as the most likely means of preserving peace."

This was now his great object. He was himself convinced that Mr. Pitt was honestly pursuing the same policy.

Throughout the warm debates with which this session commenced, he was constantly at his post; watching every opportunity to promote its continuance. Yet though thus anxious to prevent a war, no one could hold in more deliberate abhorrence the principles of the Revolution party. "Dec. 26th. A letter came from Mr. Clarke, announcing the intended East Riding meeting for the counteraction of French opinions. Took it into consideration and determined to set off immediately in order to attend it. Occupied all the way in preparing to make a long speech, which proved all labour thrown away. Saturday. The meeting went off quietly. Gentlemen numerous—they and the people pleased with my appearing. I spoke for about five minutes; and hardly could more without appearing to *show off*, at least I thought so then, though now I believe I had better have held forth for half an hour."

But his hostility to French principles did not lead him to abandon the opinions he had always held upon the necessity of reform in parliament. After this very meeting, he joined Mr. Wyvill, the professed champion of parliamentary reform, at the house of his colleague Henry Duncombe.

The war which broke out almost immediately, led to the first decided political separation between himself and Mr. Pitt. It was not without great reluctance that he brought himself to oppose a minister, of whose integrity and talents he had so high a value, and with whom he had so long lived upon terms of the most intimate private friendship. The difference between them arose gradually, and did not ripen into open separation until the end of the following year; yet even from the beginning of the war he was not fully

satisfied with the conduct of administration. Though Mr. Pitt's was not a "war system," yet he was in Mr. Wilberforce's judgment too much guided in its commencement by his own sanguine disposition, hitherto untempered by any disappointment. "It will be a very short war," said Mr. Pitt and his friends, "and certainly ended in one or two campaigns." "No, sir," said Mr. Burke when this language was addressed to him, "it will be a long war, and a dangerous war, but it must be undertaken." Mr. Wilberforce was alive to its perils, but not convinced of its necessity. "Not that," he thought, "peace could be a state of as much security as the term 'peace' had commonly implied, but as far the less of two evils. Though at the commencement of the war I could deliberately declare that we were not the assailants, and therefore that it was just and necessary; yet I had but too much reason to know that the ministry had not taken due pains to prevent its breaking out." In the debate therefore upon the King's message, which intimated the necessity of some military preparations in consequence of the murder of the King of France, he had resolved to declare his persuasion that it was the true policy of this country to continue strictly upon the defensive; that the delirium which now distracted France would probably pass over by degrees, and that she would then see the folly of provoking a war with Great Britain, in addition to the continental storm which was already gathered round her. "I was actually upon my legs to open my mind fully upon the subject, when Pitt sent Bankes to me, earnestly desiring me not to do so that day, assuring me that my speaking then might do irreparable mischief, and pledging himself that I should have another opportunity before war should be declared."

The week passed away, and in spite of Mr. Pitt's assurance there had been no opportunity upon which he could state his sentiments. By an incident to which his whole parliamentary experience could furnish no parallel, the House was compelled to adjourn every successive day without entering upon other business, because there were not a sufficient number of members present to make a ballot for an election committee. Meanwhile war was declared by the French against England and the United Provinces, and when hostilities had actually begun, "I deemed it," he says, "the part of a good subject not to use language which might tend to prevent the unanimity which was so desirable at the outset of such a war." Yet even now he was not satisfied

with the tone held by the administration. "Feb. 12th. Message on the war—vexed at Pitt and Dundas for not being explicit enough." "Our government," he wrote long after to Mr. Hey, "had been for some months before the breaking out of the war negotiating with the principal European powers, for the purpose of obtaining a joint representation to France, assuring her that if she would formally engage to keep within her limits, and not molest her neighbours, she should be suffered to settle her own internal government and constitution without interference. I never was so earnest with Mr. Pitt on any other occasion, as I was in my entreaties before the war broke out, that he would declare openly in the House of Commons, that he had been, and then was, negotiating this treaty. I urged on him that the declaration might possibly produce an immediate effect in France, where it was manifest there prevailed an opinion that we were meditating some interference with their internal affairs, and the restoration of Louis to his throne. At all events, I hoped that in the first lucid interval France would see how little reason there was for continuing the war with Great Britain; and, at least, the declaration must silence all but the most determined oppositionists in this country. How far this expectation would have been realized you may estimate by Mr. Fox's language, when Mr. Pitt, at my instance, did make the declaration last winter (1799). 'If,' he said, 'the right hon. gentleman had made the declaration now delivered, to France, as well as to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, I should have nothing more to say or to desire.' "

Yet while he condemned impartially the errors of the minister, he was ready to defend him from all unmerited censure.

Now that the war had actually commenced, and circumstances had thus prevented his openly opposing Mr. Pitt, according to his general rule he supported the King's government whenever he was able. His mode of life was much what has been described in the preceding year. Retiring often to Clapham for solitude; "the very prospect of which," he says, "even for a single afternoon, evidently mends me, fixing and solemnizing my mind;" and cultivating more and more the company of those who lived habitually in the fear of God, he maintained his usual intercourse with general society. "Venn preached an excellent introductory sermon—I received the sacrament and had much

serious reflection. Oh may it be for good! I renewed all my solemn resolves, and purpose to lay afresh my foundations." "Mr. Cecil came to dinner, and tête-à-tête with him; having sent away Burgh for that purpose, according to our social contract. Much pleased with Cecil—he is living like a Christian. Oh that I were like him!" "I have much the same confessions to make as heretofore, yet I hope, on the whole, I have of late read the Scriptures with more attention, and preserved on my mind rather a more constant sense of God's presence. My chief faults to-day, amongst innumerable others, have been, a want of self-denial, too little real respect for the excellent of the earth, too few aspirations, impatience under provocation, and not sufficient kindness to my servants." "Expecting Muncaster, meaning serious discussion; when sent for by Henry Thornton to town, on the state of public credit, &c.—then to Pitt's with and for him. A sadly interrupted day." "To Battersea with the two Venns—they with me all day—profitable conversation—Venn talked of M. the backslider. Oh may I beware!"

Early in this year he was again occupied with the conduct of the Negro cause. The session of 1792 had closed the period which he has described as the first assault upon the Slave Trade. The effects of the new tactics so skilfully introduced by Mr. Dundas, were not slow in making themselves felt. No practical mitigation of the evil had been yet obtained, but in his Resolutions the indignation of the country had found a vent and was rapidly subsiding into comparative indifference.

The decent delay afforded by the forms of the House of Lords was fatal to the progress of the question. The enthusiastic march of its ordinary supporters grew slow and heavy; the interest of the country manifestly flagged; the excitement of the revolutionary war distracted the attention of the volatile; the progress of French principles terrified the timid; the seed which had been so freely scattered by the revolutionary politics of some leading Abolitionists had sprung up into a plentiful harvest of suspicion. "I do not imagine," writes Mr. Clarke during this period, "that we could meet with twenty persons in Hull at present who would sign a petition, that are not republicans. People connect democratical principles with the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and will not hear it mentioned."

Yet during this darkest period his courage never yielded,

nor was his patient diligence relaxed. He was early at his post in the first session of 1793; and in order to hasten the proceedings of the Lords by a new vote of the lower House, moved, upon the 26th of February, the further consideration of the Abolition of the Trade. The principal opponent of the measure was Sir W. Young, whose appeal to recent observation was not lost upon the House; since in defiance of the claims of consistency and justice enforced by the eloquence of the mover, seconded by the seldom united arguments of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, it refused by a majority of eight votes to renew its own decision of the preceding year.

This defeat in the Commons was succeeded by a postponement of the business in the Lords; where the advocates for the trade in slaves were reinforced by the zealous and avowed support of a member of the royal family.

It had always been one part of the tactics of his opponents to assert that Mr. Wilberforce grew weary of the cause. As early as 1790, he wrote to Dr. Currie in answer to this charge: "I cannot help expressing my surprise at its having been reported I had given up the business. I attended for the greater part of the last session the whole of every morning in the Committee of the House of Commons, receiving evidence; and we have printed, I believe, at least 1100 folio pages. In truth, the principles upon which I act in this business being those of religion, not of sensibility and personal feeling, can know no remission, and yield to no delay. I am confident of success, though I dare not say any thing positive as to the period of it."

"Though I cannot," he replies to Dr. Currie, "enter upon the topics contained in your letter, I must notice one of them; that, I mean, of my being supposed to be, as you delicately express it, fainting in my course. Nothing, I assure you, is further from the truth: it is one of those calumnies, for such I account it, to which every public man is exposed, and of which, though I have had a tolerable proportion, I cannot complain of having had more than my share. In the case of every question of political expediency, there appears to me room for the consideration of times and seasons. At one period, under one set of circumstances, it may be proper to push, at another, and in other circumstances, to withhold our efforts; but in the present instance, where the actual commission of guilt is in question, a man who *fears God* is not at liberty. Be persuaded then that I shall never make this grand cause the sport of caprice, or

sacrifice it to motives of political convenience or personal feeling."

Upon the 14th of May he moved unsuccessfully for leave to bring in a bill which for a certain time should limit and regulate the importations into our own colonies. On the same evening he proposed the prohibition of the trade in slaves through which foreign colonies were supplied by British merchants. This motion he carried by a feeble majority of 41 to 34, but the bill which he brought in and long maintained against the vexatious opposition of incessant postponements, was lost at last upon its third reading.

These measures were planned and carried on in the midst of many interruptions. "Alas," he says, "what a hurrying life I lead, with little time for serious reflection!" "Some serious thought this morning, and found the benefit of early rising, but it sadly wears my frame." The canal and other local business of his great county consumed much time. Sierra Leone was a constant source of trouble; the causes of unnumbered private clients pressed upon his scanty leisure, while the general business of the House called his attention to the conduct of the war, the trial of Warren Hastings, and the question of reform in parliament.

He was engaged at this time in another most important effort. The renewal of the East India Company's charter afforded him an opening for attempting to improve the moral state of our Asiatic fellow-subjects. Since the reign of Anne a deep indifference to such attempts had settled upon the mind of the nation: he now attempted to arouse it from this long lethargy. After having "studied the subject with strenuous and persevering diligence," and consulted long and earnestly with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Speaker, and his friend Charles Grant, he brought the question forward in the House of Commons upon the 14th of May, in the form of certain Resolutions, which were agreed to in committee, and entered on the Journals. These Resolutions pledged the House in general terms, to the "peculiar and bounden duty of promoting by all just and prudent means, the religious improvement" of the native Indians. Two days afterwards he proposed specific resolutions for sending schoolmasters and chaplains throughout India. To these Mr. Dundas had promised his support. "May 15th. East Indian Resolutions in hand, and Slave business, Lord Carhampton abusing me as a madman. 17th. Through God's help got the East Indian Resolutions in quietly. Sunday, 19th. Scott morning.

Cecil afternoon. Called at Grant's—Miss More there. The hand of Providence was never more visible than in this East Indian affair. What cause have I for gratitude, and trust, and humiliation!" "My time is contracted and my eyes bad, yet I must record the grace and goodness of God in enabling me to be the instrument of carrying through the East Indian clauses. Never was His overruling providence more conspicuous than in the whole of this business. Oh let me remember that Judas was used as an instrument with the rest of the twelve disciples, and that many will say, 'Have we not prophesied in thy name,' to whom He will answer, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' This affair gives me fresh occasion to discover the pride of my own heart. How properly is Grant affected! yet let me take courage. It is of God's unmerited goodness that I am selected as the agent of usefulness. I see His overruling power. I go to adore His wisdom and goodness, to humble myself before Him, and to implore His forgiveness for Christ's sake. Amen."

In this, as in his efforts for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, his Diary proves him to have been influenced by the conviction of having been placed by God in the station he occupied for the purpose of promoting His glory on earth.

The Directors of the East India Company opposed his efforts, and in consequence he lost the promised support of Mr. Dundas. The following extracts from his Diary will show the feelings with which he prosecuted the work:—

Upon "the 24th, House on the East India Bill: I argued as strongly as I could, but too much in my own strength." "It is not meant," he said, "to break up by violence existing institutions, and force our faith upon the natives of India; but gravely, silently, and systematically to prepare the way for the gradual diffusion of religious truth. Fraud and violence are directly repugnant to the genius and spirit of our holy faith, and would frustrate all attempts for its diffusion. . . To reject this measure would be to declare to the world that we are friends to Christianity, not because it is a revelation from heaven, nor even because it is conducive to the happiness of man, but only because it is the established religion of this country. In India we take equal care of Hindooism; our enlarged minds disdain the narrow prejudices of the contracted vulgar; like the ancient philosophers, we are led by considerations of expediency to profess the popular faith, but we are happy in an opportunity of showing that we disbelieve it in our hearts and despise it

in our judgments. Beware how this opinion goes abroad. Think not that the people of this land will long maintain a great church establishment from motives of mere political expediency. For myself, I value our established church as the means of preserving for us and for our children the blessings of the true religion; and I well know that to spread such a notion would be to inflict on it a fatal stroke."

In spite of this appeal he lost all the practical part of the Resolutions he proposed. "My clauses thrown out—Dundas most false and double; but, poor fellow! much to be pitied." "The East India directors and proprietors," he tells Mr. Gisborne, "have triumphed—all my clauses were last night struck out on the third reading of the Bill, (with Dundas's consent!! this is *honour*,) and our territories in Hindostan, twenty millions of people included, are left in the undisturbed and peaceable possession, and committed to the providential protection of—Brama." "How mysterious, how humbling, are the dispensations of God's providence!" was his own private meditation. "I see that I closed with speaking of the East India clauses being carried, of which I have now to record the defeat; thrown out on the third reading by a little tumult in the court of proprietors. Oh may not this have been because one so unworthy as I undertook this hallowed cause, (Uzzah and the ark,) and carried it on with so little true humility, faith, self-abasement, and confidence in God through Christ? Yet where can I go but to the blessed Jesus? Thou hast the words of eternal life—I am no more worthy to be called thy son; yet receive me, and deliver me from all my hinderances, and by the power of thy renewing grace, render me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Yet in all his continual employment he maintained a careful watch over his mind and spirit. "I have this day," is one of his Sunday's entries, "been commemorating the redeeming love of Christ. May this be to me the beginning of a new era."—"How hard do I find it to trust Christ for all! Yet this is that simple faith, that humble, child-like principle, which produces love, and peace, and joy. Oh let me seek it diligently whilst it is called to-day!"—"How much do I yet want of the enlarged philanthropy and purified affection (this consists in the love of holiness as such, and the hatred of sin as such, in ourselves and others) of the real Christian! I have been mixing a little with worldly people: and their pursuits and cares and joys

do indeed seem most contemptible; but it is not enough to see this, I should be filled also with the love of God and Christ, and of all mankind for his sake, with a fixed desire to please him and do all for his glory."

At length upon the 9th of July he got free from London engagements, and set off for Bath.

Soon after he was established at Perry Mead, in the immediate neighbourhood, where he and the Rev. Mr. Venn remained for about three weeks. Such society, and comparative retirement, he valued highly, and sought diligently to employ to his own improvement. "I have had," says his Diary, "Venn with me near a fortnight; he is heavenly-minded, and bent on his Master's work, affectionate to all around him, and above all to Christ's people, as such. How low are my attainments! Oh let me labour with redoubled diligence, to enter in at the strait gate. An indolent, soothing religion will never support the soul in the hour of death; then nothing will buoy us up but the testimony of our conscience that we have fought the good fight. Help me, O Jesus, and by thy Spirit cleanse me from my pollutions; give me a deeper abhorrence of sin; let me press forward. A thousand gracious assurances stand forth in Christ's gospel. I humbly pray to be enabled to attend more to my secret devotions; to pray over Scripture, to interlace thoughts of God and Christ, to be less volatile, more humble, and more bold for Christ.

During this stay at Bath, he began the execution of his long-cherished plan of addressing his countrymen on their estimate and practice of religious duty. "Saturday, Aug. 3rd," he says, "I laid the first timbers of my tract." The Diary of this autumn contains frequent notices of its continuance; and though it was almost four years more before its publication, it was from this beginning that his "Practical Christianity" arose.

His rare conversational talents, once so great a snare, were now regarded as a means of fulfilling those high functions for which Providence had marked him out. With this view he entered into society, and in it he possessed a talisman, which even when he failed in his purpose of doing good to others, kept his own spirit from the benumbing influence of the enchanted scenes which he visited. "I fear I made no hand of it at R." he tells Mrs. H. More; "nor do I think (to speak unaffectedly) that this was altogether my own fault, although I am fully sensible that I might have managed better. But though with Lord Y. I had some little

serious conversation, (God grant that the seed may remain and spring up hereafter,) I had no opportunity of any such intercourse with the others; and I fear I seemed to them a gay, thoughtless being. My judgment prescribed cheerfulness, but perhaps my temper seduced me into volatility. How difficult it is to be merry and wise! yet I would hope that even by this gayety, though somewhat excessive, a favourable entrance may have been provided for religious conversation, if any future opportunities of explanation should occur, as I think they will. You see how honestly I open myself to you. But this is the result neither of vanity nor emptiness, but because I really wish you would perform that best office of friendship, advising me upon the subject in question, and telling me whether I ought or ought not to endeavour to adopt a more staid and serious demeanour. It is very useful for the regulation of our practice, to know how our conduct has been understood; and if it should come in your way to learn the impression produced by mine in the present instance, I should be glad to be made acquainted with it. I was at R. but two days, yet I declare to you I found the luxurious, dissipated way of going on so relaxing to my mind, that I felt it would have been dangerous to stay longer without a special call."

"Doubtful," he says at this time, "whether or not I ought to go to Windsor to-morrow to take the chance of getting into conversation with some of the royal family. Lady E. may afford me the opportunity. Also I may do good to N. and H. Yet I distrust myself; I fear my eye is not simple, nor supremely set on God's glory in this scheme. Perhaps I should do better to attend to my proper business, and this is Satan's artifice to draw me off. Yet on the other hand, if any good is done it is great. I will pray to God to direct me.—Thought over the Windsor scheme and resolved against it."

"How little, alas! in the six weeks that have elapsed since I left this place," says his Journal on his return to Battersea, "have I preserved a cordial love of heavenly things, a true relish of their enjoyment, or a practical sense of their value. This last week I hope upon the whole has gone on rather better; that I have been more conversant with spiritual subjects and more earnest in prayer. Yet what proofs do I receive of my readiness to enter into the pleasures of dissipation when at such a house as Lord T.'s, where it does not shock me by the broad stamp of vice!

Oh may I by God's grace learn to be spiritually-minded, relishing the things of the Spirit, living a diligent and self-denying life so far as regard to my weakly frame and social duties will allow."

Blaming himself for having been of late less diligent, he resumed his plan of noting down the exact expenditure of his time during the two months which he now spent at Battersea Rise. Here he describes himself as "reading Butler, Barrow, Soame Jenyns, and the Scriptures, and going on with tract, which I discussed with Cecil, who is now staying with me; he strongly recommends it. Let me not lose these opportunities of converse with such men as Venn and Cecil." "How many, how great, how almost unequalled," he says, on the recurrence of his birth-day, "have been my mercies! how many and how great my sins! The good things I enjoy, of God's providing; the evils I labour under, of my own. Let me press forward with all diligence, and may God for Christ's sake quicken me by His Spirit. I hope I have been more under the habitual fear of God, and yet how little do I live worthy of my high calling! My time has been wasted; let me labour to improve the talents God has given me, and to use them for his glory."

Abolition business now occupied much of his attention.

Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt had "confidently anticipated" that the House of Lords would enter diligently upon the examination of the evidence which they had demanded on the Slave Trade. For this examination it was of the greatest moment that the friends of Abolition should be well provided, and whilst there remained any prospect of it, he was diligent in making preparations.

The conduct of the Abolition question involved him at this time in an unpleasant correspondence. It was no unusual thing for those who had rendered assistance to the cause he had so much at heart, to claim in return his good offices with the King's government. These he was always ready to exert when he could do so with propriety. But there were times when he was compelled by what was due to his own character to disappoint their expectations; and in these cases the conclusion of the matter sometimes wore no very amicable complexion. A single instance which occurred this year illustrates his command of temper in such circumstances. Mr. ——, whose devotion to the great cause of Abolition had been indefatigable, was desirous of procuring the promotion of his brother to the rank of captain in the

navy through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce. That influence had been exerted as far as it could be used by an independent man but had been ineffectual. Under these circumstances Mr. —— addressed to him a letter of complaint, from which the following sentences are extracts:—

"My opinion is that my Lord Chatham has behaved to my brother in a very scandalous manner, and that your own timidity has been the occasion of his miscarrying in his promotion."

"I think Lord C. may be said to have acted scandalously, &c. . . Yet, after all, my opinion is that my brother's miscarriage is to be attributed to your own want of firmness. I can have no doubt but you have frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject, but you have not, I apprehend, waited on him often, or insisted on his promotion in strong language. He has told you of difficulties, and you have been satisfied; though other persons with infinitely less interest than yourself have got promotions the next day. Will you tell me that if you went to my Lord Chatham and insisted upon it, it would not be done? Will you say that if Lord C. said to the Lords of the Admiralty, 'There are many members of parliament who have this young man's promotion at heart,' that he could have been resisted? And yet you cannot command your point. I never will believe, but that your own want of firmness is the true reason why my brother has not succeeded before. You will observe that I give you credit for having a great desire of serving him, and perhaps for having expressed yourself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than for any other man; but letters will not do, and unless personal applications be made you will not serve him."

To these solicitations Mr. Wilberforce replied.

TO ———.

"Dear Sir,

Your letter reached me when in the very act of leaving Bath; where, after paying a visit to a friend by the way, I arrived on Saturday evening. I find as usual an accumulation of packets, but yours claims the precedence; and I sit down to reply to it without delay. To say I have read it without emotion would be to go beyond the truth; but certain it is, that the perusal of it has moved me less than might

perhaps have been expected. The fact is, I am used to such remonstrances. It is the mode wherein I am accustomed to be addressed by people who, having for themselves or their friends expected the favours of government in consequence of my solicitations, have had their too sanguine hopes disappointed or deferred: they always, like you, seem rather to approve of one's delicacy in the general, but claim a dispensation from it in their own particular instance. This is language against which a man must arm himself who is resolved to maintain his independence. I am always prepared to expect it, and though habit has not rendered me insensible to its selfishness, it makes me hear it without surprise; and yet, to speak more correctly, I had thought you in a good degree exempt from this common infirmity, and from the esteem and affection I feel for you, it is not without regret that I discover my error. I am willing however to persuade myself that your tender solicitude for a beloved brother has beguiled you into the adoption of sentiments which in your cooler judgment you would be the first to condemn. I cannot argue the point with you at length, I have not leisure for this, and still less have I eyesight, for I need not say this is a letter wherein I cannot employ my amanuensis: but I will suggest those principles on which I rest the propriety of my conduct; principles which seem for once to have escaped your recollection.

You acknowledge, 'you have no doubt of my having frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject.' Again, you 'give me credit for having a great desire for serving your brother, and perhaps for having even expressed myself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than I have done for any other man:' but, 'I have not, you apprehend, waited upon him often on the subject, or insisted on his promotion in strong language.' 'It is my want of firmness which is the true reason why your brother has not succeeded before;' and, 'Will I tell you that if I had gone to Lord Chatham and insisted on it, it would not be done,' &c.

Now need I enter into a regular argument to prove the vicious nature of the principles on which all this proceeds? Principles which, however too much acted upon and even sometimes avowed in the world, I must fairly tell you I abhor, have ever disclaimed, and will resolutely and systematically oppose and discountenance. I think it really will be enough for you to read such sentences in the hand-writ-

ing of another person to become conscious of their real nature and character. If indeed you saw me proceeding in this way in other instances, if you saw me making favourite exceptions to my stricter rule, you might have reason to complain; but you must, or at least you may, know that the reverse is the fact, and that I have adhered, as I will continue to adhere, to my own system in the case of those with whom I am the most nearly connected, or who most warmly support me in my election struggles; . . a species of obligation this, which according to the plan of making one's political situation subservient to one's personal convenience, is held to convey a claim to a particular return. To your own mind let me appeal; I am warranted in so doing, not only by what I know of your general sentiments, but by what you say in this very letter, of your having been and your still being prevented from asking any favour of this sort, lest it should seem, if granted, to have the appearance of a reward for your own labours. Why are things thus to change their natures and their names accordingly as you or I are in question? Why is that, which is in you proper delicacy, timidity and want of firmness in me? Why are you to have the monopoly of independence? Is it less valuable to me than you, and less deserving of regard, less suitable to my circumstances, less ornamental to my character, less essential to my usefulness? Considering all the peculiarities of my condition and fortunes, is not this general duty of a public man more urgent in mine than almost in any possible instance? And how criminal should I be, if I were to truck and barter away any personal influence I may possess with some of the members of administration, which ought to be preserved entire for opportunities of public service!

"But I will enlarge no further on this topic. Let me assure you, however, that strongly as I have condemned some parts of your letter, I am obliged to you for the freedom with which you have spoken of my own conduct; and though you say, 'I shall not consider it as at all serving my brother's promotion,' I believe you do me the justice to think that it will not obstruct it; in truth I may make myself easy on this head, because had you not thought thus you would not have sent it, for it was not certainly to injure your brother's cause with me that you took up the pen, nor yet solely for the purpose of sowing dissensions between friends, or of wounding my feelings by a useless attack on the conduct of those with whom I was living in habits of intimacy.

Be this as it may, my line is clear; I have, as you confess, your brother's promotion sincerely at heart, and I will exert myself for him as much as I think I ought, but I must neither be seduced nor piqued into doing more. I will say no more. I hope I have not said too much: perhaps indeed I should have been less warm, if the attack had not been made on me in a quarter, where expecting only what was kind and affectionate, I had been the less armed against any thing of a hostile nature: but I was prompted to write thus freely not only because I thought it due to my own character, but because I wished rather to discharge what was in my mind than to let it smother in silence, as being less likely to interrupt the cordiality of our connexion; for unfeignedly do I return your assurance of sincere esteem and regard. We have long acted together in the greatest cause which ever engaged the efforts of public men, and so I trust we shall continue to act with one heart and one hand, relieving our labours as hitherto with the comforts of social intercourse. And notwithstanding what you say of your irreconcileable hostility to the present administration, and of my bigoted attachment to them, I trust if our lives are spared, that after the favourite wish of our hearts has been gratified by the Abolition of the Slave Trade, there may still be many occasions on which we may co-operate for the glory of our Maker, and the improvement and happiness of our fellow-creatures.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Battersea Rise, Aug. 19, 1793."

His neighbourhood to London during this period of the recess, enabled him to see more of Mr. Pitt than had been lately possible; and earnest were their discussions upon public business, now that the spirit of that great man had risen to the exigencies of those difficult times.

Even in his own severe judgment of himself, he deemed the greater opportunities of reflection now afforded him not wholly lost. "I hope I have gone on rather better, that my humiliation is now deeper, my seriousness more abiding, and that through God's grace my purposes of amendment will be more permanent. May God strengthen me for Christ's sake. Oh that by any means I might learn to maintain a humble, watchful, self-denying, loving frame of mind;

living above this world, looking forward to a better, and having here fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

Upon the 22d of October he left Battersea Rise to pay his annual visits at Yoxall Lodge and Rothley Temple; and during the two months which he spent between them, was principally occupied in preparing the materials for his work on "Practical Christianity." Fuller entries in his Journal mark this season of comparative leisure, and their altered tone shows in striking colours the increasing power of religion over his character.

"I feel," he says, "a deep conviction (mixed sometimes with vague doubts of Christianity altogether, not solidly formed objections! and I fly from them) that one thing is needful, and I humbly resolve to aim high. His strength is perfected in weakness. Oh tarry thou the Lord's leisure, &c. Labour and strive earnestly. How unreasonable would it be for me to expect, after having lived so long a lukewarm life, to experience at once the power and energy of religion! This scarcely ever happens. But God's promises in Christ are yea and amen. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." "I have been praying with seriousness, and considering that the promises of grace, and repentance, and a new heart, and strength, and peace, and joy in believing, are made to all that wait on God through Christ, and will be performed in spite of Satan's hinderances. Oh may I be the temple of the Holy Ghost. With what shame do I discover my worldly heart desirous of gaining credit by my tract! I have been more diligent and self-denying lately: I have found this morning the advantages of a little religious solitude; (I have prayed three quarters of an hour, for myself, my country, and friends, &c.;) let me seize proper occasions for it, and not make my Sundays days of hurry: solitude seems to give me over as it were from worldly to spiritual things."

By the end of December he was again established in the neighbourhood of town, and was soon obliged to lay aside his tract for the ordinary business of his London seasons. Finding many hinderances to that "perfection," after which he longed, from the "troublous stage upon which I am now entering, I proceed," he says, "to frame a kind of plan for a journal of my interior and exterior conduct, on which I propose almost daily to examine myself with a view to progress in holiness, tenderness of conscience, and that watchfulness which my situation in life, so abundant in snares, particu-

larly requires. This scheme is to be drawn up with a view to my most besetting sins and temptations." The results of these times of self-examination are regularly recorded in a plan which extends through this and the five succeeding years; with such persevering diligence did he watch over his heart, and so strictly pains-taking and practical was his personal religion.

He was soon engaged in parliamentary attendance; and keeping aloof from party strife, regrets often "the violent work," and "acrimony of debate," which characterized that stormy period. Though he still supported administration, he was watching eagerly every opening for peace; and "witnessing with deep solicitude, and not without some gloomy anticipations, the progress of the war." He was ever ready in his place to maintain the cause of morality and religion; and took commonly a leading part in all discussions bearing upon these points. In this year, he supported a bill brought in by Mr. Mainwaring for promoting a stricter observance of the Lord's day; and his Diary notices, upon this occasion, "Much sparring with Courtenay."

Early too in the session he was engaged in the Abolition contest; moving upon the 7th of February for leave to bring in a bill to suppress the Foreign Trade. Although this measure left unrestricted the supply of our own islands, and could not therefore impede their cultivation; yet against it was arrayed almost the whole force of the West Indian interest.

With great personal labour Mr. Wilberforce succeeded in carrying the Bill through the House of Commons, after four divisions upon its three readings and recommitment. In the House of Lords on the second reading it was abandoned by the ordinary friends of Abolition (Lord Stanhope alone remaining firm) to the assaults of Lord Abingdon and the Duke of Clarence, and the second reading was postponed till that day three months. Lord Grenville consented to defer this first instalment to humanity until the general measure should be adjusted. "As for my Foreign Slave Bill," writes Mr. Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster, "I have, I confess, no hopes of its getting through the Lords, yet I do not relish its being suffered to lie upon the shelf, and therefore I am half vexed at Grenville. However, in all the disappointments of life of every kind, we must learn to say 'Thy will be done.' Every day's experience serves more fully to con-

vince me how little we can foresee what is best for the success, even of our own measures."

The session meanwhile advanced, and he was in "the midst of hurry and turmoil;" "never recollecting to have had so much business on his hands. Thank God I keep pretty well, though pulled down by my labours, and the unavoidable irregularity of my hours."* The effect of this necessary irregularity, in the interruption of his times of devotion, is frequently lamented in his Diary.

"What a world," he writes to Mr. Hey, "is this; and how different is the Christian life, how justly a hidden one! Pray for me, my dear sir, that amidst all my bustle, my heart may be filled with the love of Christ, and a desire to live to the glory of God." Yet though thus jealous of himself, he could not but perceive that his habits of self-government were strengthened, and that his prayers were more lively; whilst in every interval of pressing engagement his Journal records, "seasons of fasting;" "days of peculiar devotion, and receiving the sacrament:" and "hours of prayer at large; for God's mercy through Christ; for all Christian graces; for all my schemes; for the poor slaves; Sierra Leone; Indian missions; home reform; intercession for friends; for help to be useful to them; for my country at this critical time; and for grace to discharge all my duties aright."

His intercourse too with general society was marked by more constant watchfulness to do good to others, by his "preserving in it a more lively sense of God's presence, and labouring to conciliate to religion, not to relinquish it, and assume a worldly character." "Spent the evening at Mrs. A.'s—declined playing at cards, (I had played there before,) but not austerely." "On Wednesday with S. tried at a little talk. Oh that my desires were really more active!" "I have stayed here to try to do good to I.; but how little am I fit to preach to others!" "Dined at Mrs. N.'s, to try to do her good, but I fear it did not answer. Better to call." "Dined with Cecil—he is a true Christian, the nearer he is approached the better he appears." "Dined at T.'s with Robinson of Leicester, Venn, and others; yet nothing truly serious: a crowd is a crowd be it of whatever sort." "Dined at Hampstead to meet Jay, (the American envoy,) his son, &c.—quite Americans—sensible. I fear there is

* Letter to W. Hey, Esq.

little spirit of religion in America; something of French, tinctured with more than English simplicity of manners; very pleasing, well-informed men."

Parliament having been prorogued, he spent the recess in his usual visits to Yoxall Lodge, Rothley Temple and the residences of other friends in the country, devoting his time during this interval of leisure to the prosecution of his work on practical Christianity, respecting which his Diary records many conferences with such friends as would be likely to aid him by suggestions. But as the period for reassembling Parliament approached he laid it aside, giving his whole attention to the state of public affairs, and the continuance of the French war. Most soberly and gravely did he enter upon this important question, seeking first earnestly for direction from on high, and then endeavouring to form his own opinions upon the fullest information and most careful reflection. "I mean to set aside a day this week for fasting and religious exercises; for seeking God and praying for political direction, for a blessing on my parliamentary labours, on my country, and on those who have specially desired my prayers. May God for Christ's sake enable me to seek in all things to please Him, and submit to His will—to repress vanity, cultivate humility, constant self-examination—think of death—of saints in past times." "I find that I must as little as is really right ask people to Battersea Rise to stay all night, as it robs and impoverishes the next morning. I had meant this for a fast day, but it has been broken in upon in this way. I refused to go to the Wilderness, where Pitt and the rest are, to keep quiet; yet in this way I lose my time, and find indeed that less is done at Battersea Rise than elsewhere, though more rational conversation on matters of business actually depending." "To town, and dined at Palace Yard tete-a-tete with Jay—heard openly his opinion in politics—a friend to peace—many American war anecdotes. Then at nine, Pitt's for political discussion till near one, and not bed till near two. Head and mind full, and could sleep but very disturbedly." "I am making up my mind cautiously and maturely,* and therefore slowly, as to the best conduct to be observed by Great Britain in the present critical emergency. Oh that there were in our rulers more of a disposition to recognize the hand of Him who inflicts these chastisements! 'This people turneth not to

* Letter to W. Hey, Esq.

Him that smiteth them, neither do they fear Me, saith the Lord,' is but too applicable, I fear, to the bulk; yet, I trust and believe, that we shall not be given over into the hands of our enemies. I beg your earnest prayers, my dear sir, for my direction and support."

The more settled aspect of affairs in France since the fall of Robespierre gave him some hopes of the possibility of an accommodation, and peace he deemed so inestimable a blessing that no possible opening for restoring it should be neglected. "Dec. 29th. To town. Dined Palace Yard—Duncombe, Muncaster, Henry Thornton, Bankes, Montague; talked politics—agreed that I would amend."

It was not merely his unwillingness to join in an open opposition to his early friend, which made him slow and cautious in arriving at this conclusion. There were other considerations which weighed even more strongly with him than the personal suffering with which his course must be attended. He could not take this ground without giving some countenance to a violent and unprincipled opposition, who had throughout condemned the war with all the asperity of party feeling. He feared too that he might increase the popular ferment which, wherever revolutionary principles had been actually disseminated, was ready to burst forth into open violence. He knew, moreover, that he could not hope to carry with him the mass of sober and well-affected people. They still thought the war necessary, and regarded all opposition to it as the effects of some Jacobinical tendency, or party motive. All these objections to his course he had well considered; but having made up his mind to the line of duty, he had courage to face them boldly. "Parliament," he says, "meets on Tuesday. I am going to London to-morrow, and I am too little fortified for that scene of distraction and dissipation, into which I am about to enter; perhaps my differing from Pitt, by lessening my popularity and showing me my comparative insignificance, may not be bad for me in spiritual things. I would now humbly resolve to begin a stricter course, as becomes me on entering a scene of increased temptations—self-denial, attention, love to all, and good for evil; in particular to bear with kindness the slights and sarcasms I must expect from political causes. Oh may God enable me to walk more by faith, and less by sight; to see the things that are unseen. Oh may He fill my heart with true contrition, abiding humility, firm resolution in holiness, and love to Him and to my fellow-creatures.

I go to pray to Him, as I have often done, to direct me right in politics, and above all to renew my heart. It is a proof to me of my secret ambition, that though I foresee how much I shall suffer in my feelings throughout from differing from Pitt, and how indifferent a figure I shall most likely make; yet that motives of ambition will insinuate themselves. Give me, O Lord, a true sense of the comparative value of earthly and of heavenly things; this will render me sober-minded, and fix my affections on things above.

"Tuesday the 30th of December. A disturbed night—full of ambition. How small things confound human pride! why not such small things God's agents as much as locusts?—worse this morning. Prepared Amendment at Bankes's. Moved it in a very incoherent speech; good arguments, but all in heaps for want of preparation; had no plan whatever when I rose." The Amendment was seconded by his colleague Mr. Duncombe, who was followed by Mr. Bankes; and though supported by many who had hitherto voted with the minister, it was negatived by a large majority. He moved it indeed under peculiar disadvantages; fearful on the one hand of exciting popular discontent, he was guarded and measured in his own statements; whilst on the other, he was "forced to adopt an Amendment stronger than he himself liked, by the violent language of the government."

The painful consequences which he had foreseen, had attended his conscientious determination. It was with no ordinary feelings of annoyance that the minister had seen him propose an Amendment to the Address. There were indeed but two events in the public life of Mr. Pitt, which were able to disturb his sleep—the mutiny at the Nore, and the first open opposition of Mr. Wilberforce; and he himself shared largely in these painful feelings. He had lived hitherto in habits of such unrestrained intimacy with that great man, he entertained towards him so hearty an affection, and the spring of his life had been so cheered by his friendship, that it was with bitter regret he saw the clouds begin to gather which were to cast a comparative gloom and chillness over their future intercourse. "No one," he wrote many years afterwards,* with a warmth derived from his keen remembrance of his feelings at this time, "no one who has not seen a good deal of public life, and felt how difficult and painful it is to differ widely from those with whom you

* To Archdeacon Wrangham, December 20, 1820.

wish to agree, can judge at what an expense of feeling such duties are performed."

"Wednesday, Feb. 4th. Dined," he says, "at Lord Camden's—Pepper and Lady Arden, Steele, &c. I felt queer, and all day out of spirits—wrong, but hurt by the idea of Pitt's alienation. 12th. Party of *the old firm* at the Speaker's; I not there."

Nor was this the only painful circumstance attendant on his present course. He promoted overtures for peace, amongst other reasons, because he foresaw that the war must ultimately become unpopular, and then that Mr. Pitt's administration "would be succeeded by a faction, who knew that they had forced themselves into the cabinet; and feeling that they had no footing at St. James's, would seek it in St. Giles's." It was not therefore without pain that he found himself repeatedly dividing with this very party, and heard Mr. Fox, in a friendly visit which he paid him at this time, express a confident expectation of his speedy enrolment in their ranks—"You will soon see that you must join us altogether." For though he loved the frank and kindly temper of this great man, and though he duly honoured his steady support of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, he regarded his public principles with a settled disapprobation, which was never stronger than at this very moment. The same reasons also which led the opposition party to claim him as their own, rendered him suspected by the bulk of sober-minded men. "Your friend Mr. Wilberforce," said Mr. Windham to Lady Spencer, "will be very happy any morning to hand your ladyship to the guillotine." And others less violent than Mr. Windham partook in a great measure of the same suspicions. "When I first went to the levee after moving my Amendment, the King cut me."

Though their strong personal regard for him kept his constituents silent, he well knew that they disliked the course his conscience led him to pursue.

In this respect indeed he was exposed to difficulties which no party man can properly appreciate; for a party man is always immediately surrounded by those who agree with him, and in their good opinion he can intrench himself. But the politician who truly thinks for himself, and takes his own stand, must be assailed with unwelcome judgments on every side. Thus whilst at this very time he generally offended the partisans of administration by his Amendment upon the King's Speech; by supporting the supply of due resources

to carry on the war vigorously, if it must continue, and by defending the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, he equally irritated opposition.

These trials were increased in his case by the expressed disagreement of almost all those personal friends with whom he most freely communicated upon political questions, and by the concurrent accounts they forwarded him from different parts of the country of the disapprobation of his conduct generally felt by sober-minded men.

Yet none of these things moved him. The trial was indeed severe, but it did not shake his constancy; he calmly and steadily adhered to what he saw to be the line of duty, neither deterred by opposition, nor piqued by unmerited reproach into irritation or excess. Upon the 6th of February, whilst he declared his disapprobation of its more violent expressions, he again supported so much of Mr. Grey's motion as tended to promote immediate pacification; and throughout the session he favoured every similar attempt. During this anxious time he frequently laments the injurious effects upon his spirit, of a life of such constant occupation, and shows the watchful care with which he strove to mitigate the evils he detected.

"Though I have been interrupted," he writes at Battersea Rise, "by Eliot's coming, having designed to devote this evening chiefly to religious exercises, (my own fault still that I have not,) yet this is solitude compared with London; and how serious a thing it is to look into one's own heart, to think of heaven and hell and eternity! How cold am I, to be able to think of these subjects with little emotion! Excite in me, O God, more lively sensations, and enable me to awake to righteousness. The seriousness of spirit I now feel seems favoured by this solitude, and I will try the effect of often retiring from the world to commune here with my own heart." "I have since" (a few days later) "lived in a crowd, and too much as usual. This last has been a very hurrying week, seeing many people at home, &c. This morning I have been much affected—I fasted, and received the sacrament. Oh may I be renewed in the spirit of my mind. May this little recess from the hurry of life enable me seriously to look into my heart, plan of life, and general conduct, and to turn unto the Lord with my whole soul—what can be too much for Him, who bought us so dearly? I go to prayer."

"Easter Sunday. What a blessing it is to be permitted

to retire from the bustle of the world, and to be furnished with so many helps for realizing unseen things! I seem to myself to-day to be in some degree under the power of real Christianity; conscious, deeply conscious of corruption and unprofitableness; yet to such a one, repenting and confessing his sins, and looking to the cross of Christ, pardon and reconciliation are held forth, and the promise of the Holy Spirit, to renew the mind, and enable him to conquer his spiritual enemies, and get the better of his corruption. Be not then cast down, O my soul, but ask for grace from the fulness which is in Jesus. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; He was the friend of sinners. Look therefore unto Him, and plead His promises, and firmly resolve through the strength derived from Him, to struggle with thy sins; with all of them, allowing none of them in any degree; and to endeavour to devote all thy faculties to His glory. My frame of mind at this time seems to me compounded of humiliation and hope; a kind of sober determination to throw myself upon the promises of the gospel, as my only confidence, and a composure of mind, resulting from a reliance on the mercy and truth of God. I have also this comfort, that I feel love towards my fellow-creatures. Still I perceive vanity and other evils working; but Christ is made unto us sanctification, and our heavenly Father will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Wait therefore on the Lord. Wait, watch and pray, and wait."

His own immediate cause was not neglected in the important general questions with which this session commenced. It had formed one subject of discussion between himself and Mr. Pitt, upon his arrival in the neighbourhood of London at the close of 1794.

He writes at about the same date, to one of the most zealous and consistent friends of Abolition, the venerable Archdeacon Corbett:—"I cannot conclude without a word or two on our great cause. Suffice it then to say, that I am in no degree discouraged. Great efforts will probably be necessary, and at the proper time they will be made. It is my intention to move, next year, for Abolition in January, 1796; and though I dare not hope to carry a bill for that purpose through both Houses, yet, if I do not deceive myself, this infamous and wicked traffic will not last out this century. Let us all be active, persevering, unwearied, and trust to the good providence of God, disposed at the same time to acquiesce in His dispensations whatever they may be."

Conformably with these resolutions, he gave notice of a motion early in the session for the Abolition of the Trade. On the 18th of March, 1795, he says, "There being no business in the House, and Slave business approximating, I resolved to go down to Clapham to apply to it." The motion was deferred until the 26th, and its result is thus recorded: "Feb. 26th. To town—Sierra Leone general meeting and afterwards Slave business in the House. Said to have spoken well, though less prepared than at any other time. Beat, 78 to 61. Shameful!" In opening the debate he briefly referred to the arguments against the Trade with which the House was now familiar. He called upon parliament "to suppress the greatest, the most complicated, the most extensive evil by which the human race had ever been afflicted. It had been proved to be the occasion of frequent and bloody wars; as well as of innumerable acts of individual outrage. It dissolved all social intercourse; it armed every man against his fellow, and rendered the whole coast of that vast continent a scene of insecurity, of rapine, and of terror." These charges against the Trade he established afresh by the evidence of the governor and council of the new colony of Sierra Leone, and ended by a reference to the fast of the preceding day, which a national support of cruelty and injustice would stamp "as a piece of empty pageantry, and a mere mockery of God."

Mr. Pitt, in rescuing the cause from the imputation of French principles, showed that it was in direct opposition to those abstract propositions by which "the rights of man" were maintained, and declared "that he knew not where to find a more determined enemy of such delusions, than his hon. friend the proposer of the motion."

It was highly to the honour of Mr. Pitt, that his zeal in this cause had suffered no abatement from the political difference which had sprung up between himself and Mr. Wilberforce. All personal estrangement indeed was soon at an end. "Dined March 21st," says the Diary, at "R. Smith's —[met] Pitt for the first time since our political difference —I think both meaning to be kind to each other—both a little embarrassed. 25th. To Battersea Rise—called Eliot's knowing that Pitt was there, and that Eliot knew I knew it, and thinking therefore that it would seem unkind not to do it. 26th, Sunday. Venn, morning, I had meant to be quiet to-day, and had hoped to be able to employ myself in devotional exercises, when after church Pitt came with Eliot;

and considering he did it out of kindness, I could not but walk back with him. He talked openly." "To Royal Academy dinner—sat near Lord Spencer, Windham, &c. —too worldly-minded—catches and glees—they importunate for Rule Britannia—I doubt if I had much business at such a place. What a painted shadow! It is not right for me entirely to abstract myself from the world; yet what a gay dream was this! O God, do Thou for Christ's sake fill my soul with the love of Thee, and all other things will grow insipid."

The tone which he preserved throughout this period when forced into opposition upon the war question, was calculated to soothe the irritation which such a difference must naturally excite.

So mild indeed was the spirit in which he acted, whilst his conduct was most decided, that there were not wanting some who asserted, that "there was a complete understanding between himself and Mr. Pitt, and that his opposition was only a pretext." "The Duchess of Gordon told me yesterday," he says on the 13th of May, "that the Duke of Leeds, Duke of Bedford, and Lord Thurlow dining there the other day, the latter said he would bet (or did bet) five guineas that Pitt and I should vote together on my motion on Thursday for peace. This shows he thinks there is a secret understanding between Pitt and me all this time."

But though thus temperate in the manner of his resistance, he was not beguiled by rekindling friendship into any unsuitable compliance with the wishes of administration. Truth he knew was to be valued above peace, and integrity of conduct above the harmony obtained by compromise. Upon the 21st of April, he gave notice of a specific motion upon the continuance of the war; and even before this debate came on, he was compelled, upon another subject, to oppose the wishes of the minister. Mr. Pitt at this time proposed to raise the income of the Prince of Wales greatly above all former precedent. Upon the 14th of May he opposed this grant in the House of Commons, in a speech which was warmly commended, and which bears, in the imperfect record of the parliamentary debates, the impress of that high moral tone and that graceful eloquence which rendered it so effective. He dwelt strongly upon the actual distresses and discontented tempers of the times; and showed that though in a rude and barbarous age the Crown must be supported by the magnificence of its connexions; in a

time of universal luxury "it might win to itself a higher measure of respect and veneration by a certain chaste and dignified simplicity, than by vying with its wealthiest subjects in the number of its retainers and the magnificence of its entertainments." "It is more pleasing to me, sir," he continued, "to express gratitude than censure, and I rejoice thus publicly to declare the deep obligations under which we lie to their Majesties upon the throne for their admirable conduct, by which they have arrested the progress of licentiousness in the higher classes of society, and sustained by their example the fainting morals of the age."

This renewed opposition produced no unkindly feelings.

Though he persevered in pressing a peaceful policy upon the House, he was well aware that the country was not with him. He bore patiently the present odium which attended on his measures; and within about six months, had the satisfaction of hearing from Mr. Pitt himself that he too was now convinced of the necessity of peace.

After the close of the session he established himself at Battersea Rise, where, from its vicinity to London, he could transact county business, and maintain a useful intercourse with many friends whom he had scarcely leisure to see during the sitting of parliament. "Old Newton breakfasted with me. He talked in the highest terms of Whitefield, as by far the greatest preacher he had ever known."

He was anxious to make use of his present leisure for cultivating habits of devotion. "July 15th. Spent the day in more than ordinary devotional exercises and fasting, and found comfort, and hope some benefit." "It seems something providential that, wanting to devote the day mainly to secret religious exercises, fasting, self-examination, humiliation, and supplication for myself and others, I should be left unexpectedly alone. The result of examination shows me that though my deliberate plans are formed in the fear of God, and with reference to his will, yet that when I go into company (on which I resolve as pleasing to God) I am apt to forget him; my seriousness flies away; the temptations of the moment to vanity and volatility get the better of me. If I have any misgivings at the time, they are a sullen, low grumbling of conscience, which is disregarded. Although, therefore, I am not defective in external duties to God, or grossly towards my fellow-creatures, but rather the contrary, (though here no man but myself knows how much blame I deserve,) yet I seem to want a larger measure, 1st,

of that true faith which realizes unseen things, and produces seriousness; and, 2d, of that vigour of the religious affections, which by making communion with God and Christ through the Spirit more fervent and habitual, might render me apt and alert to spiritual things. My finding no more distinct pleasure in religious offices (vide David's Psalms every where) argues a want of the Holy Spirit. This might not be inferred so positively in every case, because different mental constitutions are differently affected. Mine I take to be such as are capable of a high relish of religion. I ought to be thankful for this; I am responsible for it; it will be a blessing and help well used, and if neglected it will increase my condemnation. Therefore let me cultivate my religious affections. I think it was better with me in this respect formerly; at least I felt then more religious sensibility. This was in part natural. Yet let me quicken those things which are ready to die."

Yet though he was thus disposed to condemn himself, his private Journal bears the clearest marks of an unusual warmth of spiritual affections. "My eyes," says an entry of this time, "are very indifferent—tears always make them so, and this obliges me to check myself in my religious offices."

But while he watched carefully over the affections of his heart, no man's religion could be more free from that dreaming unreality, which substitutes a set of internal sensations for the practice of holy obedience. "This morning, (Sunday,)" he writes, "I felt the comfort of sober, religious self-conversation. Yet true Christianity lies not in frames and feelings, but in diligently doing the work of God. I am now about to enter upon a trying scene. Oh that God may give me grace, that I may not dishonour but adorn His cause; that I may watch and pray more earnestly and seriously."

The scene of difficulty to which he looked forward, was a series of visits which he was about to pay in Yorkshire. Complaints of the infrequency of his personal intercourse with his constituents had been forwarded to him by Mr. Broadley. "No man who has had occasion for your parliamentary assistance in his private business, or who considers the part which you take in public affairs, can possibly accuse you of neglecting, for a moment, the interests of your constituents. But all of them are not capable of appreciating the real value of their representative, and some of them miss the attentions which were formerly paid to them by Sir

George Savile, who attended at the races and such other occasions. I think it would be well, if you would seize any proper occasion which may arise, for your seeing as many of your constituents as you can."

Upon the 23d of July, he says, "Grant and Henry Thornton at breakfast, and we discussed what I ought to do. Yorkshire, in August or October? Decided upon August.

For Yorkshire he accordingly set out, and joined his mother and sister at Scarborough upon the 28th of July.

Upon the 4th of August he began a set of visits, which carried him through a great part of the county. His private entries abound in striking remarks upon character and manners, and show in the strongest light the care with which he now watched over himself, and sought for opportunities to do good to others.

There were few who could resist his powers of conversation. It possessed indeed a charm which description can but faintly recal to those who have listened to it. As full of natural gayety as the mirth of childhood, it abounded in the anecdotes, reflections, and allusions of a thoughtful mind and well-furnished memory: whilst it was continually pointed by humour of a most sparkling quality. In this particular, the kindly, though somewhat grotesque, representation of an author once before referred to unquestionably fails. Though any one admitted to the society of Mr. Wilberforce would have found him "full of kindness towards all," and would have witnessed certainly the workings of a spirit which abounded in benevolence; yet the most transient observer could not have failed to remark also the continual flashes of wit, which lighted up his most ordinary conversation; harmless certainly, yet playing lightly over all he touched upon—the sports of a fervent imagination sweetened by a temper naturally kind, and chastened by the continual self-restraint of a conscience which would not bear the offence of giving pain to any. This was a natural endowment, and had been one great charm of his early years; but it was now carefully cultivated as a talent for his Master's use. It was this high sense of its importance, which led him so often to condemn himself. He was not contented to wait for the chance entrance of profitable subjects of conversation, he was diligent to make it useful.

"I have been dining out," says his Diary, a few weeks after this time, "and was then at an assembly at the Chief Baron's. Alas! how little like a company of Christians!—

a sort of hollow cheerfulness on every countenance. I grew out of spirits. I had not been at pains before I went to fit myself for company, by a store of conversation topics, *launchers*, &c." These were certain topics carefully arranged before he entered into company, which might insensibly lead the conversation to useful subjects. His first great object was to make it a direct instrument of good; and in this he was much assisted by his natural powers, which enabled him to introduce serious subjects with a cheerful gravity, and to pass from them by a natural transition before attention flagged. He was also watchful to draw forth from all he met their own especial information, and for some time kept a book in which was recorded what he had thus acquired. This watchful desire to make society useful saved him from the danger to which his peculiar powers exposed him; and he never engrossed the conversation. No one ever shone more brightly, or was more unconscious of his own brilliancy.

How carefully he watched over himself during these Yorkshire visits, is seen by numerous entries in his Diary.—"Aug. 9th. This rambling life amongst various people abounds with temptations to vanity, forgetfulness of divine things, and want of boldness in Christ's cause; and I too readily yield to them. My health is not equal to this vagrarious kind of life, and at the same time preserving and redeeming time for serious things. Oh how much ought I to quicken the things which are ready to die! This plan was undertaken from a conviction of its being right, but it sadly disorders and distracts me mentally." His blaming himself for want of boldness in the cause of Christ, is another instance of the high standard by which he tried himself. For not only did he at the moment steadily discountenance all unbecoming conversation, but he took private opportunities of reasoning afterwards with those who so transgressed his principles. In this very visit he addressed at length by letter, with plain and honest boldness, one gentleman of great influence, who (a clergyman) had in his presence taken the name of God in vain.

"Aug. 13th. This hurrying company life does not agree with my soul. How little courage have I in professing the gospel of Christ! How little do I embrace opportunities of serving the spiritual interests of my friends! How much insincerity am I led into! how much acquiescence in unchristian sentiments! I wish I had written my tract, that my

mind might be clear; yet as all this more plainly discovers me to myself, it may be of service. If my heart were in a more universally holy frame, I should not be liable to these temptations. Remember they show your weakness, which when they are away, you are apt to mistake for strength. Entire occasional solitude seems eminently useful to me. Finding myself without support, I become more sensible of my own wretchedness, and of the necessity of flying to God in Christ, for wisdom and righteousness, and all I want here and hereafter." "A quiet Sunday is a blessed thing; how much better than when passed in a large circle! My life is not spent with sufficient diligence, yet I hope I do some good by my conversation; and I thank God I this day enjoy a more heavenly-minded frame than common. Alas! how ignorant are people of Christianity!"

From York he passed on into the West Riding, visiting Leeds, Halifax, and Huddersfield, receiving every where a cordial welcome, and winning back by personal intercourse those whom political difference had in any degree estranged.

He spent three weeks at Mr. Gisborne's, but the London season was approaching. "Oh, this vile meeting of parliament!" he writes to the Speaker, "when we shall have to discuss again about governments capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. Poor fellow—Pitt I mean—I can feel for him from my heart, particularly on a Sunday."

On Friday, Oct. 23rd, he set out early for town, and when he reached Palace Yard, "found a letter from Pitt wishing me to come up, hoping we should agree."

On public grounds he rejoiced sincerely in the altered sentiments which led the minister to seek for peace, and to his personal feelings the gratification was complete. In proportion to the pain with which he had entered at the call of duty on a course of opposition, was the satisfaction of returning to a renewed career of cordial co-operation. All misunderstanding was now gone, and both Mr. Pitt and his adherents recognised the purity of principle from which his former conduct had arisen.

With the autumn of this year began the darkest period of the revolutionary war. Though the arms of France were every where triumphant, yet it was not from them that our greatest danger arose. An evil spirit was spreading through Europe, and the enemies of order were but too successful in their attempt to introduce French principles amongst ourselves.

At such a time it was most important that good men should combine for the preservation of the country; and on public grounds therefore, as well as private, Mr. Wilberforce rejoiced unfeignedly in that change of Mr. Pitt's views concerning peace, which promised to enable them to act cordially together. Parliament met upon the 29th of October, and Mr. Pitt at once avowed his pacific inclination.

The evil humours which abounded in the state were already drawing to a head. The King was violently mobbed on his way to open parliament; tumultuary meetings were held in the metropolis; whilst the most inflammatory publications were actively disseminated.—"Papers are dispersed against property. Prints of guillotining the King and others." In this crisis he deemed it needful to arm the executive government with extraordinary powers; and when upon the 10th of November, Mr. Pitt proposed to bring in a bill for preventing seditious assemblies, he at once expressed his approbation of the step. Being convinced of the necessity of the measures proposed by Government, he laboured to perfect their details. On the 11th, he "went to Pitt's, to look over the Sedition Bill—altered it much for the better by enlarging." Upon the 12th he again maintained in the House of Commons, in opposition to his colleague Mr. Duncombe, that the Bills did in truth "raise new bastions to defend the bulwarks of British liberty." He was still engaged with the details of the measures. "A meeting at Pitt's about the Sedition Bill, after which supped with him and Mornington—my advice—Pitt's language, 'My head would be off in six months, were I to resign.' I see that he expects a civil broil. Never was a time when so loudly called on to prepare for the worst." "How vain now appears all successful ambition! Poor Pitt! I too am much an object of popular odium. Riot is expected from the Westminster meeting. The people I hear are much exasperated against me. The printers are all angry at the Sedition Bills. How fleeting is public favour! I greatly fear some civil war or embroilment; and with my weak health and bodily infirmities, my heart shrinks from its difficulties and dangers."

Yet thoughts like these could not move him from the path of duty, upon which he had entered in the fear of God. "Let me look before me," he had said, at the commencement of the session, "and solemnly implore the aid of God, to guide, quicken, and preserve me. Let me endeavour to soar above the turmoil of this tempestuous world, and to experience joy

and peace in believing. Let me consider what in former years have proved my chief occasions of falling, and provide against them. Let me remember the peculiar character of a Christian; gravity in the House, cheerfulness, kindness, and placability, with a secret guard and hidden seriousness. Let me preserve a sense of the vanity of earthly greatness and honour." This was the secret of his strength, and when the prospect before him was gloomy, "Put," he continues, "thy trust in God, O my soul. If thou prayest earnestly to Him, confessing thy sins, imploring pardon, and labouring for amendment, thou wilt be accepted, and then all things shall work together for thy good. God protected me from Norris, Kimber, and innumerable other dangers. He is still able to protect me, and will, if it be for my good." Popular odium could not shake this confidence, and to the two Bills he gave, in spite of all its threats, his undisguised support, until they were carried; displaying at the same time the independence of his conduct, by objecting to what he deemed an unnecessary infliction of capital punishment, and speaking strongly, on the 26th, in condemnation of a pamphlet on his own side, which he thought a libel on the House.

The sentiments of Yorkshire were supposed to be hostile to these Bills. Already were its freeholders multiplied beyond all precedent by the increased numbers of the domestic clothiers: upon their support the opposition calculated largely; whilst the friends of peace looked with some alarm to the discontent which a partial scarcity could not but excite amongst them. "The Bills," wrote Dr. Burgh, "are obnoxious in this part of the world to an extreme degree." "The partisans of opposition," he adds, "have called upon the high sheriff to convene a public meeting. These things prognosticate a breach of that tranquil acquiescence, which for some time has subsisted in Yorkshire; and if in Yorkshire, so hard to be set in motion, the public mind be once expressed, we well know the sequel through all the rest of the kingdom." "The dissenters," adds another correspondent announcing the intended meeting,* "have never forgotten you for opposing the repeal of the Test Act, and I am informed that they are expected to be there in support of opposition." In these expectations the high sheriff,† so far coincided that he deemed it inexpedient to convene the

* Letter from John Naylor, Nov. 12th.
† Mr. (afterwards Sir) Mark Sykes.

meeting. "The assemblage of so large and unwieldy a body," he replied to the requisition, "would only tend to raise riot and discontent." This decision Mr. Wilberforce regretted greatly: and when it was quoted with some triumph in the House of Commons as "a strong argument against the Bills," he declared at once that "he lamented the high sheriff's conduct, because it had prevented a full, fair, and free discussion of the subject."* In spite of the triumphant hopes of his opponents, and the gloomy apprehensions of his friends, he trusted in the good sense of the Yorkshire freeholders.

Upon the refusal of the high sheriff to convene the county, the opponents of ministry had privately resolved to call a meeting, which they hoped to find wholly subservient to their views.

Together with the announcement of the meeting was circulated amongst the lower class of freeholders, a stirring appeal bearing Mr. Wyvill's signature: "Come forth then from your looms," was his summons, "ye honest and industrious clothiers; quit the labours of your fields for one day, ye stout and independent yeomen: come forth in the spirit of your ancestors, and show you deserve to be free."

The attempt would doubtless have succeeded, if the friends of order had not roused themselves with a promptitude which those who have reason on their side are not always willing to exert. An intimation of what had passed at York was received at Leeds in the course of Friday evening; and a few active men instantly met together, and resolved that the intelligence should be dispersed throughout the West Riding. On the Saturday accordingly the freeholders of various districts were assembled; and it was at once agreed to postpone all other business, and to respond to Mr. Wyvill's call, though not in the spirit which he had contemplated.

In London of course the state of things was utterly unknown. "When undressing at twelve o'clock on Saturday," says Mr. Wilberforce, "I received a note from Sir William Milner, saying that the York meeting was to be held upon Tuesday next; but I had given up all idea of going." He thought it quite impossible that a general meeting could be gathered on so short a summons; and to attend a party council of his enemies would have been manifestly foolish. Yet his suspicions were perhaps aroused by the communi-

* Debate of November 27.

cation of a friend, who came to tell him that "something extraordinary is certainly designed in Yorkshire, since —— was seen to set out on the north road this morning in a chaise and four." Enough, however, was not known to show that his presence would be useful, still less that it was so far necessary as to justify his travelling upon the day which it was his chiefest privilege to give up to religious employments, until he was in his carriage on his way to church on Sunday morning. Just as he had got into it, an express arrived from Mr. Hey and Mr. Cookson, informing him of all that had been done, and urging him at all costs to be present at the meeting. "I sent immediately to Eliot, and then went there. He and I, on consideration, determined that it would be right for me to go; the country's peace might be much benefited by it."

Sending back therefore his carriage to be fitted for the journey, he went himself to the neighbouring church of St. Margaret's . . . and then called on Mr. Pitt. Whilst they were still together, his servant brought word that his carriage could not be got ready so soon as was required. "Mine," said Mr. Pitt, "is ready, set off in that." "If they find out whose carriage you have got," said one amongst the group, "you will run the risk of being murdered." So fierce had been the spirit of the populace in London, that the fear was not entirely groundless; and an appearance of the same spirit in the great cities of the north had led some amongst his friends to write to him, that "if he ventured down it would be at the hazard of his life." But it was not such apprehensions which had "disquieted" his thoughts; and when once satisfied that duty called him, he cheerfully began the journey. "By half-past two," he says, "I was off in Pitt's carriage, and travelled to Alconbury Hill, four horses all the way," two outriders preceding him; a provision then essential to a speedy journey, even on the great north road. After a few hours' rest, "I was off early on the Monday morning, and got at night to Ferrybridge. Employed myself all the way in preparing for the meeting." He had been supplied by Mr. Pitt with samples of the various works by which the fomenters of sedition were poisoning the public mind; and of such importance was his mission deemed, that an express was sent after him to Ferrybridge with further specimens. "Almost the whole of Monday," says his secretary, "was spent in dictating; and between his own manuscripts and the pamphlets which had followed him, we

were almost up to the knees in papers." He reached Doncaster by night, and thence sent an express across to Leeds, to announce his arrival to his friend William Hey.

"Doncaster, Monday night, near 9,
Nov. 30, 1795.

"My dear Sir,

You and Mr. Cookson together, loosened my holdings yesterday morning, and forced me out of London in the afternoon. I have made a forced march, which after a hard week is an effort, and, I thank God, have arrived thus far tolerably well. I am going forward, and my present intention is to be at York about an hour before the meeting, unless my motions should be accelerated in consequence of intelligence I may receive as I advance. I trust you will come over, and if you do early in the morning, we may meet at Tadcaster. I am deeply impressed with a sense of the necessity of bold and decided conduct, but wish I had had more time to prepare for so trying a day as to-morrow. *Pray that I may be supported.* I hope and believe I am engaged in a cause pleasing to God. But I must stop. If any of my friends now absenting themselves would go to York, knowing of my intention to be there, send to them betimes.

I will make no apology for desiring you may be knocked up. You who submit to it so often for personal interests, will not, I am sure, complain of it in a single instance pro bono publico. Kind remembrances.

Yours, affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"On Monday," says a private letter of the day, "there went through Halton turnpike above three thousand horsemen." Many came from Saddleworth, a distance of near sixty miles, spending a great part of the night upon their journey; and stormy as was the next morning, (Dec. 1st,) they still crowded the road from Tadcaster to York. "It was an alarming moment," says an eye-witness, "when these immense numbers began to pour in, while as yet we knew not what part they would take." But by Monday evening the supporters of the government began to feel their strength.

The want of any leader of acknowledged power was deeply felt amongst the supporters of the constitution. The plans of the opposite party had been long matured, and their

bands were marshalled under their appointed chiefs; but the friends of order had come suddenly together, and there was none to take the lead in their movements, or engage their general love of order in support of these necessary though obnoxious Bills. Just when this want was most acutely felt, Mr. Wilberforce's carriage turned the corner into Coney Street. His approach was not generally known. "You may conceive our sensations," says a Leeds gentleman, "when he dashed by our party in his chariot and four a little before we reached York." He was received with the same exultation by the assembled concourse. "He arrived," says Mr. Atkinson, "at about a quarter to eleven, amidst the acclamations of thousands. The city resounded with shouts, and hats filled the air." "What a row," he said to his son, when quietly entering the city thirty-two years later by the same road, "what a row did I make when I turned this corner in 1795; it seemed as if the whole place must come down together."

Leaving his carriage he pushed through the tumult of the Guildhall, and soon appeared upon the hustings. Here he vainly attempted to prevail on Mr. Wyvill and his friends to concur in an adjournment to the Castle Yard. "He hoped," he said, "to have met his opponents that day face to face, and convinced them of the groundlessness of their prejudices, if they were not prepared to shut up all the avenues to the understanding, and all the passages to the heart." But fair discussions was not their desire, and they refused to quit the Hall. He proceeded therefore without them to the Castle Yard. "It was perhaps the largest assemblage of gentlemen and freeholders which ever met in Yorkshire." "Here," writes Mr. Atkinson, "we had three good speeches from Colonel Creyke, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, and Mr. Wilberforce. The last, I think, and so I believe think all that heard him, was never exceeded. A most incomparable speech indeed."

"Up betimes," is his own brief entry of this busy day, "and off to Tadcaster. There found all the West Riding was in motion. Got to York at eleven. Kindly received. Guildhall—Castle Yard—spoke—interview with Wyvill—his sad paper. Thornton giving away his regimentals to the mob. In speech, foolishly did not go more into length." Yet his speech, though shorter than he had designed, proved signally effective. Mr. Wyvill did not hesitate to attribute

the decision of the county to his personal efforts and influence.

The issue of this effort is well worthy of remark. His success had been complete; and it was the manifest reward of an unflinching obedience to the dictates of his conscience. When he left London, he was entirely ignorant of the temper of the great towns in the West Riding: his friends had warned him to expect their opposition; and this would certainly have cost him his seat at the approaching election. But he was determined to discharge his duty; and he returned beyond all expectation at the very highest wave of popular applause, and safe from all possibility of rivalry. "I never saw you but once," wrote a constituent long afterwards, "and that day you won my heart, and every honest heart in the county. It was at the York meeting. I never felt the power of eloquence until that day. You made my blood tingle with delight. The contrast of your address, and the mellow tone of your voice, of which not one single word was lost to the hearers, with the bellowing, screaming attempts at speaking in some others, was most wonderful. You breathed energy and vigour into desponding souls of timid loyalists, and sent us home with joy and delight." Not less worthy of remark is the quiet thankfulness which threw a grace over his triumph. "With him," he told Mr. Hey, "it was matter of thankfulness to God that the enemies of peace and public order had been so discomfited. For myself, I should be thankful to have been so far honoured as to have been made in any measure the instrument of the goodness of Heaven."

The successful issue of the meeting he had communicated to Mr. Pitt the same evening by express; and on the following morning he set off himself for London.

His use of this success is a good illustration of that singleness of aim which enabled him to effect so much. Instead of seeking to reap from it any personal advantage, he employed it in the cause of his African clients. Recent events in the West Indies had revived the old charge that the friends of the negro race were Jacobins at heart. The government of France, finding it impossible to resist the naval force of England, attempted in despair to raise against it the whole black population. For this purpose she enfranchised her own negroes; and sent the ferocious Victor Hugues to proclaim freedom and enforce rebellion amongst the English colonies. The flame was soon kindled in Grenada, Dominica

and St. Vincent's ; to them the opponents of the Abolition pointed with no little triumph ; and quoted, as the fulfilment of their worst prophecies, the outrages which here walked hand in hand with negro liberation. It was undoubtedly a fearful sight which was presented by these miserable islands ; and there were not wanting those amongst the honest friends of Abolition who thought that the question should be let to rest till some more peaceful season. Nothing short of his indisputable attachment to the constitution could at this moment have enabled Mr. Wilberforce to persevere. And there never was a happier moment for renewing his exertions, than in his present hour of civic triumph.

Upon the 15th of December, he gave notice that early in the following session he would propose his motion, reminding the House at the same time that the first day of the approaching year had been the period named in 1792, for the termination of the Trade. "And now," he added, "when we are checking the progress of licentiousness, now is the very time to show our true principles, by stopping a practice which violates all the real rights of human nature."

Meanwhile the Christmas recess brought him a short season of repose. "The last fortnight or three weeks," he says on the day of the adjournment, "have been severe trials to a man weakly like me ; and I have lost ground in health which I must recover. I have kept rather bad hours. In my religious frame, I hope, better than sometimes ; more reading the Scripture. Much occupied in writing—oppressed with letters about the petitions."

Battersea Rise was his head-quarters during this recess ; and the entries in his Diary prove the entire occupation of his time and talents for the good of his fellow-men, and the promotion of the glory of God.

Friday after Christmas, he resolved "to set apart chiefly for religious exercises ; fasting in my way, i. e. being very moderate in food, which only does with me. I cannot employ it so entirely, because I have some business about the poor which will not bear any delay. My chief reasons for a day of secret prayer are, 1st, That the state of public affairs is very critical, and calls for earnest deprecation of the Divine displeasure. 2dly, My station in life is a very difficult one, wherein I am at a loss to know how to act. Direction therefore should be especially sought from time to time. 3dly, I have been graciously supported in difficult situations of a public nature. I have gone out and returned home

in safety: my health has not suffered from fatigue: and favour and a kind reception have attended me. I would humbly hope, too, that what I am now doing is a proof that God has not withdrawn His Holy Spirit from me. I am covered with mercies. Return then unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. 16th, Morning felt the fragrant impression of yesterday."

Towards the conclusion of the recess he spent "a day at Holwood. Morning walked with Pitt. He very kind, open and fair about peace, and I think wise too."

Parliament met upon the 2d of February, and on the 18th he moved for leave to bring in a Bill to abolish the Slave Trade in a time to be limited, fixed afterwards to March 1st, 1797. He "opened the business," he says, "coldly and indifferently," but was roused by the debate which was unusually animated, and in his reply spoke "warmly and well."

Nothing, he urged, would so much check Victor Hugues, and retard the progress of French principles, as to suspend the importation of fresh slaves, and thereby withhold the raw material of sedition. Yet with indefatigable perseverance Mr. Jenkinson declared, "I anxiously wish that the question were postponed at least till the return of peace." "There is something," he replied, "not a little provoking in the dry, calm way in which gentlemen are apt to speak of the sufferings of others. The question suspended! Is the desolation of wretched Africa suspended? Are all the complicated miseries of this atrocious Trade—is the work of death suspended? No, sir, I will not delay this motion, and I call upon the House not to insult the forbearance of Heaven by delaying this tardy act of justice."

"On Monday, Feb. 22d," says the Diary, "crossed from dinner, and finding the House in a good state brought in Slave Bill without opposition, and recrossed." He did not long continue unopposed. The 3d of March was fixed for the second reading, and after a morning spent upon the Bill at Mr. Pitt's, he was dining in Palace Yard with a party of his House of Commons friends, when early in the evening a supporter of the Slave Trade moved the second reading of his Bill, hoping by this manœuvre to prevent its further progress. His watchfulness defeated the attempt. "Hurried from dinner at home over to House, to the second reading of the Slave Bill. Spoke against time till many came. Carried it 63 to 31."

On the 7th the Bill was committed. But at the third

reading these fresh hopes were again disappointed. "Dined before House. Slave Bill thrown out by 74 to 70, ten or twelve of those who had supported me absent in the country, or on pleasure. Enough at the Opera to have carried it. Very much vexed and incensed at our opponents."

His own heart was sickened at seeing this great cause thus sacrificed to the carelessness of lukewarm friends, and the intrigues of interested enemies. "I am permanently hurt," he says, "about the Slave Trade." His own attention to the cause was of another character. "The Slave Trade is coming on," he wrote at this time to a friend whom he had engaged to visit, "and every thing must give place to the House of Commons."

Before the close of the session he was confined entirely to the house by a very serious illness. "I have been indisposed," he says, "for ten days, and have had my head a good deal weakened. My mind has, I thank God, been in an easy, tranquil state, reposing on the promises with a consciousness of deep demerit, yet trusting in God's mercy through Christ. I trust He will not spurn such a one from Him. I have lately felt and now feel a sort of terror on re-entering the world."

His friends looked forward with great apprehension to the fatigue of the approaching election; and he had already written word to Yorkshire that "his state of health must be his apology for not canvassing." Yet though "unable to stay through the night," and suffering from even occasional attendance, he could not be persuaded to give up his labours in the House of Commons. "13th. In bed, under Pitcairne's advice. 15th. Getting better, but still not capable of applying—so do not attempt it. 16th. Got out for the first time in the middle of the day. 18th. Saw Adair about Quakers' business. He (at length) to move and I to second. 25th. Lay down in the morning—very faint and weak. Pitt and Dundas called, but could not see them. Got Adair to put off his motion. 26th. House—Adair's Bill about Quakers." To this subject his attention had been called by one of his constituents—"When you have abolished the Slave Trade, pray think of the poor Friends in York Castle for the non-payment of their tithes." The relief given by the present Bill consisted of two parts; first providing for the summary recovery of tithes without the vexation of the present law; and secondly allowing their simple affirmation to be received

as evidence in criminal as well as civil causes. It passed the House of Commons upon the 10th of May.

But his main business in the House until the close of the session was the Slave-carrying Bill; into which he endeavoured to insert such additional restrictions as should raise the price, and so promote the better treatment, of the trader's miserable cargo.

The success of our West Indian expeditions had disposed Mr. Pitt to adopt Dundas's system of colonial acquisition. This fatal policy Mr. Wilberforce laboured to oppose; and he gladly therefore seized an opportunity of confidential intercourse afforded by the termination of the session. On the day after the prorogation they went together "tête-à-tête to Cambridge. Dined at Chesterford—much talk—Pitt's conversation determined me to go off to attend to Beverley and Hull."

At Brigg he complains that there was "no service on the Sunday morning, and the people sadly lounging about. Stanhope filling my head with election matters." "I was in hopes of a day of religious retirement before my bustle, but God has ordered it otherwise. I fear I have been too ready to enter into election matters; yet I feel the emptiness of worldly things, and am, I trust, this day in some degree thirsting after the water of life." "Alas, what earnestness do I see around me to secure a transitory interest! what carelessness when eternity is in question!" "Let me pray earnestly for grace to stand firm within, amidst all the turmoil into which I am about to enter. How much vanity have I felt in myself from the situation in which I stand in the county! It is all the unmerited mercy of God—can I be vain? I go to earnest prayer, and would endeavour after dedication of myself to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit."

Early on Monday morning he arrived at Hull. "To the Bench with Samuel Thornton. He sure, and all sure for him."

It was now time that he should attend to his own election, and he set "off" accordingly "for York through Beverley—saw Bernard, found all friendly, and he told me that he had not seen one single freeholder who was against me. Got into Philip Langdale's chaise to Weighton—dined in the carriage, and on to York." His colleague had for some months determined to retire. Three candidates came forward to contest the seat which he had vacated, all men of wealth and

influence; and though none of them opposed Mr. Wilberforce, yet their struggle would of course involve him in the trouble and expense of a contested election. He was received at York with the most hearty greeting; and assurances of universal support poured in from every quarter. A friend writes, "'are you for Wilberforce?' is the first question generally asked at Leeds; and he would have a sorry life of it hereabouts, who would undertake to canvass without making you a sine quâ non."

On Sunday, May the 29th, after having attended public worship in the Minster, he withdrew his thoughts from the bustling scene around him, to commune with himself. "This last has been a very hurrying week, little time for devotion and Scripture neglected, for which I ought to have found time. But I thank God that I hope I have desired and wished for a quiet opportunity of communing with Him and my own heart, and to-day I adore with some degree of gratitude that gracious Providence which has led me all my days in ways that I knew not, and has given me so much favour with men. It is His work. His be the glory. I hope I really feel how entirely it is His doing; that I have nothing of which I can boast or be proud; that it is what I could never have effected by my own counsels or might. Oh may I be enabled to be grateful, (duly I cannot be,) and to devote myself first to God's glory, and then diligently to the service of those constituents who are so kind to me."

The election was to follow in a week, and he gladly withdrew himself from York to the quiet of the country. "Travelled to Creyke's, who had been very kind, and pressed me. Felt excessively comfortable, from calm after fortnight's turbulence and bustle. Much pleased with Creyke's family peace and rationality." "I have had hurried devotions lately, and scarce any scripture reading, yet in general my mind in better frame than sometimes. Much fatigue—little or no anxiety about these things—grateful, I trust, to God."

Upon the 7th of June he was "earlyish at York Castle, about half-past ten. I spoke about twenty minutes very well, and people pleased."

This speech was in a very different tone from the ordinary eloquence of a county hustings. "I should," he told them, "but feebly execute my task if I were to attempt to give expression to the various emotions of my heart. I trust that I may say they are virtuous emotions; they are grateful; they are humble. I feel deeply impressed with your

kindness; but above all, I recognize with thankfulness the hand of that gracious Providence which has caused my cup to overflow with blessings; which first raised me to an elevation I could never hope to have attained, has enabled me in some tolerable measure to discharge the duties of that important station, and disposed your minds to reward my services with so disproportionate a share of favour. You will not wonder at my being serious; even gratitude like mine is necessarily serious."

His speech was followed by the chairing, always a tumultuous scene at York. "People whilst half down Coney Street tore off the ribands from my chair, and almost threw me down—safely out. Dined tavern—about sixty-five or seventy. Mr. G.'s coarse, indecent toast—I would not give it. Sheriff well behaved." The secret of his hidden strength is simply recorded in the following line:—"Home about seven and prayed. Much affected, and shed many tears."

After some doubts "where to fix" himself "for the interval until the meeting of parliament, in which time" he "hoped to resume" his "book," he determined upon Buxton, where he resolved "when pretty well, to apply vigorously to business." Before fixing here, he made a hasty progress through various parts of Yorkshire. His first visit was to his mother's house at Hull. "She seems to olden even now, but better than when at Scarborough last summer. At night my mother affected at parting, and whispered 'Remember me in your prayers.'"

From Buxton he writes to Zachary Macaulay, Esq.

"Buxton, July 3d, 1796.

"My dear Sir,

Whilst I was taking a contemplative walk this morning, I rambled in thought to Sierra Leone, and my mind was naturally led to consider the providential dispensations of that Almighty Being, whose infinitely complicated plan embraces all his creatures, and who especially leads, and directs, and supports all those who in their different walks through this multifarious maze of life, are pursuing in His faith and fear the objects which he has respectively assigned them. Here they often know little of each other, but they are all members of the same community, and at length they shall be all collected into one family; and peace, and love, and joy, and perfect unalloyed friendship, shall reign without intermission or abatement. Perhaps you will then intro-

duce me to some of your sable subjects, whom I never shall see in this world; and I may bring you personally acquainted with others, to whom I have talked of your labours and sufferings in our common cause. 'The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.' It always presents to my mind a most august idea—the praises of God arising from every nation, and kindred, and people, where His name is known, and blending, as they rise, into one note and body of harmony. How much ought this to stimulate us to enlarge the bounds of our Redeemer's kingdom!"

His life at Buxton was, as far as possible, that of a student. "Wednesday. Delightful weather. Thorntons went to Bagshawe's. I declined—causâ waste of time. Resumed tract." And again, "On my tract in the morning with some spirit." "Talking over my tract with some friends, but do not find much help from them." "I have this week read Scripture (the Acts) constantly and seriously, and have had much new light thrown on them. I have felt at times, when walking, &c. a sense of the presence of God; but in company have been vain and gay, and I fear not duly attentive to the edification of friends. Oh how different am I from what I advise others to be, and how much like the lukewarm Christians I am condemning!" "I have great reason," he wrote at this time to Hannah More, "to be thankful for getting through all the bustle of my election so well. It wore, so far as trouble and expense went, a much more unpromising aspect at one period. As it was, I do not suppose it will turn out to have cost me so much as £100; so you may draw on me the more freely."

"For the last month I have been drinking the waters of this place, and have received benefit. I have here resumed my pen, which had laid quiet near two years, and hope, if it please God to spare my health, that I shall finish my work (I hate the term, but don't know what to style it) this recess. Seriously and honestly, you expect too much from it. I do not like it so well as I did. However, if God pleases, he can give the increase. I rejoice to hear of your going on prosperously in your reforming operations. You have indeed cause for thankfulness at being so much blessed in your endeavours. What a delightful idea is that, which I trust will be realized, of your meeting from time to time in a better world, those whom you have been the means of enlightening with the knowledge of a Saviour, and the de-

scendants, from generation to generation, of those whose hereditary piety originated under your *ministry!* 'Ride on prosperously.' It is the contemplation of a scene like this which refreshes the mind, when wearied by Archduke Charles and General Moreau. Alas! no signs of humiliation. God scourges, but we feel it not."

The advice of Mr. Hey had now fixed him for some weeks at Buxton, amidst a crowd of other visiters.

Greater retirement would have been his choice. He wanted leisure to complete his long-projected work. "Sorry," he says when called to Hull by the indisposition of his mother, "to quit my tract, which I wished to finish this recess." The sight of the open infidelity of France, and dissatisfaction with the state of things at home, made him more earnest to deliver speedily his solemn protest against the prevailing standard of religious principle and practice.

His Sundays were spent in comparative retirement; and before he quitted Buxton, more than one was specially devoted to a thoughtful review of "the notables in my life, for which I should return thanks, or be otherwise suitably affected." "The singular accident, as it seemed to me, of my asking Milner to go abroad with me in 1784. How much it depended on contingencies!—his coming to Hull with his brother; being known to my grandfather; distinguishing himself, &c. If he had been as ill as he was afterwards, or if I had known his character, we should not have gone together. Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress' having fallen in my way so providentially whilst abroad, given by Unwin to Mrs. Smith, thence coming to Bessy, and by her taken abroad. My being raised to my present situation just before I became acquainted with the truth, and one year and a half before I in any degree experienced its power. This, humanly speaking, would not have taken place afterwards. What a mercy to have been born an Englishman, in the eighteenth century, of decently religious parents, with a fortune, talents, &c.! Even Gibbon felt thankful for this; and shalt not thou praise the Lord, O my soul? My being providentially engaged in the Slave Trade business. I remember well how it was—what an honourable service! How often protected from evil and danger! kept from Norris's hand, and Kimber's . . furious West Indians . . two whole seasons together. Rolleston—and my coming away from Bath so providentially—the challenge never cleared up. My illness in the spring, which might have been fatal, well

recovered from. My going into Yorkshire in the winter. My election over with little trouble and expense."

This enumeration is succeeded by a catalogue of various causes for humiliation, collected by a careful scrutiny of his past life. "And now," he ends, "I can only throw myself upon the infinite compassion of Christ, and rely on His effectual grace. I am in myself most weak and vile. But do not I owe all to the goodness of God? It is thou, O Lord, that hast given the very small increase there has been, and that must give all if there be more."

The war was now becoming universally unpopular. "Letter from Pitt about a direct treaty with Paris, Spanish war, &c." cut short his stay at Buxton. "Off early (Sept. 15th) for London, though grieved to pass Yoxall Lodge without a call. Prompted by the possible hope of doing good in pressing Pitt to peace—not to stipulate for islands—perhaps include Slave Trade in treaty."

Though he was full of business all this autumn, yet he mixed as much as usual in society; and his private memoranda of this date record some heads of interesting conversations. "Friday. Lord St. Helen's dined with me tête-à-tête—pleasant day—free conversation—much politics and information."

"Franklin signed the Peace of Paris in his old spotted velvet coat (it being the time of a court mourning, which rendered it more particular). What, said Lord St. Helen's, is the meaning of that harlequin coat? It is that in which he was abused by Wedderburne." "He showed much rancour and personal enmity to this country—would not grant the common passports for trade, which however easily got from Jay or Adams."

Being engaged to dine with the Solicitor-General, "I felt," says the Diary, "but moderate, and from regard to to-morrow, when I wished to be in a good state for God's service, I sent an excuse." On Sunday, "I was asked to dine at Lord Hood's; how much more pleasant is a day of Christian solitude!"

"Johnson, Langton told us, did not get up till some one called to rouse him, whether it was ten, eleven, twelve or one o'clock. Johnson said, 'I am a very well-bred, well-mannered man.'"

Parliament met on the 6th of October, and was soon the scene of acrimonious controversy. The new overtures for peace met of course with Mr. Fox's approbation, but the

Bills for putting the country into a proper state for resisting an expected French invasion were contested hotly. Against one of their proposed provisions Mr. Wilberforce protested in his private intercourse with Mr. Pitt. "It is intended I observe," he heard from Mr. Stillingfleet, "that the supplemental corps of militia should be trained on Sunday afternoon; this comes rather to remind than to solicit you to use all your influence to prevent the intended evil. When a like proposal was made by Lord Shelburne many years ago, I wrote to the present Bishop of London to beg him to interfere with the other bishops to prevent it, and received a most proper answer, that the obnoxious clause would be omitted." The Bills themselves he supported strongly, and was more than once called up by the factious temper of the opposition. "I will not charge them," he said, Nov. 2d, "with desiring an invasion, but I cannot help thinking that they would rejoice to see just so much mischief befall their country, as would bring themselves into office." The words were resented fiercely; and he "feared that" he "had gone too far against opposition, but Fox very good-natured." "What you said," writes Dr. Cookson, "is what every body thinks, but what no one else had the courage to speak out." In the midst of these harsh contentions, he writes to Mrs. Hannah More.

"House of Commons, Nov. 9, 1796.

"My dear Madam,

I have heard of the severe illness, with which it has pleased God to visit you, and I have received pleasure from hearing of your recovery. I trust you will still be spared to us, though I scarce know how to wish it, so far as you are yourself concerned, being persuaded that whenever you are called hence, it will be to the enjoyment of those pleasures, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. My dear madam, I think of you, and feel for you, with lively interest. How I respect your exertions, I would say to any one rather than to you; but to your feeling heart it will afford a cordial, to be assured that a friend looks through the bustling crowd with which he is hemmed in, and fixes his eye on you with complacency and approbation.—God knows that I wish to imitate your example, and to learn from you to seize the short intervals of tolerable ease and possible action, for acting for the suppression of vice and the alleviation of misery. May we each tread in our separate paths, and at length,

having been graciously guided to our home through the mercy of our great Shepherd, may we meet in a better world, free from pain, and sickness, and sorrow, and live for ever in the exercise of all those kindly affections, which are now the balm of life, though so often alloyed by the irritations to which we are here subject. I scribble amidst much interruption, but my heart is full of kindness to you, and I would not restrain my feelings.

"May God bless, and support, and strengthen you, is the hearty prayer of Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

It was by "seizing short intervals of possible action," that with an infirm body he himself accomplished so much. During the hurry of his present London life, he had not wholly laid aside the preparation of his work on Christianity. "I wish it was done. My time has been exceedingly frittered away in general talk, which yet was right. My bad health really renders it requisite for me to have much sleep; but with God's help I will lessen the time spent in discussion, and thus redeem what I can for solid work. Meant to go out of town for a few days that my tract may go on; but from the time of getting up till near four o'ciock never quiet or free from people on business."

Upon the 17th he set out for Buckden, and spent a week there, engaged chiefly upon his tract, "hospitably received, and spending a rational life." But business soon brought him back to London and its multiplied engagements. "26th. Busy morning about finance, and tract. I hope to finish it for the press by the end of the Christmas recess; and mean as much as possible to redeem time for it in London: help me, O God!" "16th. Morning—committees—House on La Fayette. I doubtful, amended the motion—strengthened by Henry Thornton's advice and concurrence—not quite clear either." He charged it upon the House as "the duty of a great assembly such as this, to look abroad into the world, and attend to the claims of misery wherever it be found." He thought the case one of peculiar hardship, and was the more ready to interfere from La Fayette's past exertions on the Slave Trade question. But he took this part unwillingly. "Never did I rise to speak with more reluctance, I expected all the ridicule which followed; and when Dundas with a happy peculiarity of expression talked of my Amendment as designed to catch the '*straagling* humanity' of the

House, there was a perfect roar of laughter. However, I felt sure that we were bound to use our influence with our Allies to mitigate as far as it was possible the miseries of war." It was some reward for this determined disregard of ridicule to receive long afterwards a special assurance of La Fayette's gratitude. "Tell him," was the message, "that in my life I never can forget the feeling with which I read that speech in the dreary dungeon of Olmutz."

The following was found among his papers, dated

March, 1827.

Among the various reasons for which our Saviour thought fit to forbid our judging each other, it was probably one, that we are most imperfect judges of the merit or demerit of the actions of others; still less can we estimate degrees of virtue or of vice, of the strength or weakness of the moral principle. Much depends on the force of the temptation to which we are subjected; and this force must obviously vary according to the different temperaments, characters, and principles of different individuals. That may be to one man a severe trial of the strength of the moral principle which to another would be none at all. One of the severest trials of the minor order, which I myself ever experienced, was on the occasion of General Fitzpatrick's motion for an address to the Crown, in behalf of M. de La Fayette.

As the incident may have faded away from the memory of the present generation, or be lost in the multitude of the interesting occurrences of the last twenty years, it may be necessary to relate the circumstances which gave occasion for the motion in question. There is no man whose character has been painted in more different colours than that of M. de La Fayette; but it can scarcely be denied, that while many of the aspersions on his reputation owe their origin to rumour, and perhaps to party prejudice, his life exhibits many traits of a generous and patriotic spirit; not merely of an ardent love of glory, but of a mind zealous for liberty. And when we consider his youth, his rank, his connexions, and the universal dissoluteness of morals and manners which then too commonly prevailed among the French nobility, it gave indication of a truly noble spirit, to quit the luxury and frivolity of a Court, and to plunge into the hardships, privations, and dangers of war in the cause, as he conceived, of an injured and oppressed people. Again, whatever may be reported of his behaviour to the royal family of France, whenever that is considered it should be remembered that he well knew

they reposed no confidence in him, but that they suspected and hated him; while he knew but too surely that had they escaped out of France, which was their settled and but too natural purpose, it would have been declared by the demagogues to have been effected by his connivance. It is notorious, that when the wretches who excited and directed the popular fury at Paris, manifested unequivocally their purpose of destroying the King and Queen, he exposed himself to great personal obloquy and danger in their defence. Once he quitted the army and came to the bar of the Convention, endeavouring in vain to stem the torrent of popular fury; and he was endeavouring to prevail on his soldiers to march to Paris, to rescue the royal family from the extremity of danger and degradation, when the Convention, well knowing his purpose, sent commissioners to treat with the army, and to prevail on them to arrest their commander. In vain did M. de Lafayette endeavour to call forth a better feeling. He was but just able to effect his own escape, accompanied by a few of his officers, and protected by a small party of cavalry; intending to find a refuge in some neutral territory. Passing through the Prussian territory, he with his companions, was arrested, and shortly afterwards lodged in the dungeons of the fortress of Olmutz. Madame de La Fayette, a member of one of the most ancient and noble families in France, petitioning to be permitted to cheer the desolateness of his imprisonment, her request was granted only on the condition that she herself should become equally a prisoner; a stipulation which, though she willingly submitted to it, does not on that account reflect less dishonour on the government which required such an engagement.

His harsh and cruel imprisonment had now lasted for four years, when, this country being then in close alliance with Austria, it was hoped that the influence of the court of St. James's might be exerted for the humane purpose of prevailing on our confederate to release M. de Lafayette from his prison. Indeed the bitterness with which some of our leading politicians then publicly spoke of the leaders of the Revolutionary party, might not unnaturally cause it to be supposed that our court was implicated in the cruelty and disgrace of his unjust detention. All therefore who were anxious to exonerate their country from the imputation of participating in such unworthy counsels highly approved of General Fitzpatrick's Address; but it was supported by others on deeper and more general principles (broader grounds.) Considering

the mitigated spirit and practice of modern warfare as one of the most marked and truly admirable improvements effected by Christianity, even among those over whose personal character and conduct its principles have little or no influence, and knowing but too well how easily the spirit of hostility, and the pretence of retaliation might lead to the universal prevalence of the ferocious principles (maxims) and practice of ancient warfare, they dreaded the first deviation of a professedly Christian court from the milder regimen of modern times. Many therefore who commonly took no part in politics, nay many who had been among the foremost in condemning the wickedness and cruelty of the Revolutionary party, took a lively concern in M. de Lafayette's fate, and were warmly interested in the success of General Fitzpatrick's motion: but it was opposed with extreme bitterness by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, who charged on M. de Lafayette the abundant harvest of crimes and miseries, of which they alleged he had sown the seeds. They argued therefore that his sufferings, however severe, were no more than the just retribution for his early offences. Others again who in no degree shared in these vindictive feelings, and who it is no more than common charity to suppose would have been glad to accede to the motion, were probably afraid of disgusting an ally, and thereby weakening a confederacy, which was not united by any very strong principles of cohesion. Not liking to take Mr. Bankes's ground, they therefore, and more especially Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, adopted a tone of ridicule; for even then, though much less I think than now, we had begun to be a very merry set of legislators.

In proportion therefore to the degree in which little was to be said against the motion, it would be cried down by party violence. It was late in the day before I had an opportunity of delivering my sentiments, and when at last an opening did present itself, it was towards the close of the debate, when the patience of the House was exhausted, and when it was obvious that any one who should get up to defend the motion, especially any one not having the cry of a party to support him and the plea of sticking to a party to justify the part he should take, would experience a very sorry reception. It may be perhaps a confession, but I must frankly acknowledge, that the performance of an act of duty has seldom been set about at a greater cost of present feeling than by myself, when under these circumstances I rose, conscious that I should immediately draw on me the loud derision of a

vast majority of a very full House of Commons. I was not deceived in my expectation; and a rather felicitous expression of Dundas's, that the motion was chiefly to owe its support to straggling humanity, (the effect of the words enforced by his peculiar tone and pronunciation,) produced a roar that has seldom been equalled. I am thankful that I was not weak enough to be deterred by foreseeing the consequences that were to ensue: but trifling as the occasion really was in the actual circumstances of the case, it was at the moment a severe trial of principle. . . . Transient as on reflection I must be conscious would be the feelings of the persons present, however strongly expressed, and little as I must have known I should permanently lose in reputation by the part I was about to take, it was nevertheless a great trial, &c. &c.

It is one of the many instances in which an attentive reader of the New Testament will have occasion to remark that it was written by an accurate observer of the nature and feelings of man, that so much stress is always laid upon the feeling of shame; and the strength of its influence on our nature is continually noticed, not only in the epithet, cruel, attached to mockings, and the trial put on a level with the greatest sufferings that could be endured—but on many occasions in which it might have been expected that feelings of another sort would be specified, shame is that which is mentioned. Thus of our blessed Saviour it is said, He endured the cross, despising the shame. (See also other passages.) "I am not ashamed of the gospel." "House of Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of my chain."

"Monday, Jan. 2d," he enters in his diary, "slept ill, and very indifferent—feared I was about to be as bad as the famous time," (1788,) "and suffered much—sent to Pitcairne. Had death, as probable, in view, and felt I hope resigned, but no ardour or warmth—confined for a few days."

An attack of severe illness interrupted for a time the course of his occupations, and at the desire of his physicians he went to Bath. "It has pleased God of his great mercy to raise me up again from this attack, which threatened much; I then thought death probably near. Oh that I might now better employ the time it has pleased God to allow me! May I be enlightened, and purified, and quickened; and having sadly wasted my precious faculties even since my thinking more seriously, may I now more constantly act as an ac-

countable creature, who may be called away suddenly to his reckoning." This thought appears to have altered his intention of "putting off his tract" for a season of greater leisure, and he begins his stay at Bath with the determination of giving to it all the time which health and society allowed. "May I be enabled to engage in this busy scene with benefit to others, and without harm to myself. Oh that I may feel the power of Divine grace in my heart to fill me with love of God and of my fellow-creatures! Oh how much do I want! what unnumbered blessings do I receive at the hands of God, and how unequal is my return! Yet let me remember He has encouraged us to apply to Him for His Holy Spirit. Let him that is athirst come. Create then in me this sacred thirst, and satisfy it with that peace of God, which Thou only canst supply."

He reached Bath upon the 14th of January, and dined that day with the "Miss Mores, who are all kindness, and have provided me excellent lodgings. Lord Galloway and his son. Lord Galloway talked incessantly two or three hours—useful and active, and how much better disposed than most of his rank—fond of Jeremy Taylor. Mrs. Hannah More gave his son Doddridge's 'Evidences,' and strongly recommended 'Rise and Progress of Religion.'

"I find little time here," he complained, "for study, not above two or three hours in a morning hitherto, at tract. Calls, of which I make about sixty, and receive as many—water-drinking—dinings out with people, who expect me to stay—many letters to write;—all this leaves me, though hurrying much, and I hope not idling, very little time." "I should like to be with you," wrote Dr. Milner, whom he had pressed to join him, "but not to dine with a gang of fellows on the Queen's birth-day." But towards the end of his stay, though he still speaks of "daily dinings out, and between sixty or seventy people to visit," he "managed to be pretty diligent in the mornings on" his "tract, chiefly revising;" and by the time of his return to London it was ready for the printer.

On the 14th of February he "reached London by five o'clock, and dined at Pitt's; but Grenville being there could not get out much, though I had given up going to Greathed's for suggesting about Eliot succeeding Lord Cornwallis."* This appointment he earnestly desired, as he knew

* As Governor General of India.

that Mr. Eliot's official influence in India would have been made subservient to the extension of Christianity; an object for which at this very moment he was devising fresh expedients. "There is considerable probability," he told Mr. Hey, "of our being permitted to send to the East Indies a certain number of persons, I presume we shall want ten or twelve, for the purpose of instructing the natives in the English language, and in the principles of Christianity. But the plan will need much deliberation. I really dare not plunge into such a depth as is required without previous sounding; lest instead of pearls and corals, I should come up with my head covered only with sea-weed, and become a fair laughing-stock to the listless and unenterprising. When I return to town we will hold a cabinet council on the business. Henry Thornton, Grant, and myself, are the junto." When Mr. Eliot's appointment seemed to be secure, both "Mr. Dundas and Lord Cornwallis preferring him to any other person," a dangerous attack of illness forced him to refuse the situation.

Parliament reassembled upon the 14th of February, "amidst a state of things" which appeared "most unpromising." The prospect soon became still more gloomy. "I have been trying," he says on the 26th, "for several days to see Pitt. This evening Eliot came in and told me of the Bank going to stop payment to-morrow. We talked much about it, and it disturbed my sleep at night."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"11 o'clock, Sunday night.

My dear Muncaster,

Eliot has just been with me to inform me that the Bank is to stop payment by command of government to-morrow morning. I have not been party to this counsel, but have of course suggested what has occurred to me to prevent riots, and secure a supply of provisions for the capital. I like to tell you bad as well as good tidings. O my dear friend, how this tumultuous state endears to one that heavenly peace, which, flowing from a source which worldly disturbances cannot reach, may remain entire though all around us be in confusion.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Two days afterwards he was chosen one of a Parliamentary Committee which took possession of the Bank, and examined into its solvency. "Saturday. Committee as usual. Examined Pitt—wanted to sit the next day, but I repelled." After a morning thus occupied, he spent his evenings in the House, where he was frequently called up by the bitterness of party spirit in defence of Mr. Pitt, upon whom he was still urging privately the necessity of making peace. "Dined at Pitt's quietly—he, R. and I. R. more unmanageable than Pitt. I counsel for peace." "Called at Pitt's—a most earnest conversation about peace, and degree in which I may fairly differ from ministry about it. Pitt exceedingly moved."

To his other business was soon added the renewed agitation of the Abolition question. His partial success in the preceding session had taught the West Indians the value of Mr. Dundas's policy; and they now turned aside his efforts by seeming but unsubstantial concession.

The resolutions with which he had begun this busy season, were, "to redeem time more; to keep God more in view, and Christ, and all He has suffered for us; and the unseen world, where Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God interceding for His people. I would grow in love and tender solicitude for my fellow-creatures' happiness, in preparedness for any events which may befall me in this uncertain state. I may be called to sharp trials, but Christ is able to strengthen me for the event, be it what it may." These resolutions he soon had to act upon in bearing a series of calumnious charges which were heaped upon him in a Cambridge newspaper. "I am abused for the grossest hypocrisy in Flower's paper, which states as a fact that I always had a prayer-book in the Pump-room, and said my prayers there." "There seems," says Dr. Milner, "to be something systematic meant against you. It really appears to amount to downright hatred and persecution, nor have I the least doubt that the person who writes in this manner would do you personal injury if he could with impunity. I have no question that he is some violent democratic Dissenter, and perhaps if you could unkennel him, some private anecdotes between you and him would turn up. The true way however is not to notice such a writer. He can do you no harm in any way. No man who does not hate you and your cause beforehand, will be induced to do so by such an intemperate account; and as to your book, they

cannot hurt it, though its contents will provoke them. God preserve you."

"My being moved by this falsehood," he says, "is a proof that I am too much interested about worldly favour. Yet I endeavour I hope to fight against the bad tempers of revenge and pride which it is generating, by thinking of all our Saviour suffered in the way of calumny. St. Stephen also and St. Paul were falsely accused. Let me humbly watch myself, so far as this false charge may suggest matter of amendment; and also I ought to be very thankful that with the many faults of which I am conscious, it has pleased God that I have never been charged justly, or where I could not vindicate myself. How good is God! The business of C. off so well; I left it more to Him than I have often done in such cases. Be this remembered for future practice. The real truth is that at Bath I carried sometimes a New Testament, a Horace, or a Shakspeare in my pocket, and got by heart or recapitulated in walking or staying by myself in the Pump-room. I had got a Testament which had not the common dress of one on purpose. I cannot recollect having had any movement of spiritual pride on this ground, but remember I thought it a profitable way. I got two or three of St. Paul's epistles by heart when otherwise quite idle, and had resolved to learn much Scripture in this way, remembering Venn's comfort from it. Thou, Lord, knowest my integrity, and it will finally appear; meanwhile let my usefulness not be prevented by this report, or that of my book thwarted. What a blessed institution is the Sunday!"

He had been engaged about "his book" ever since his return from Bath. Immediately upon coming to town, he "had seen Cadell and agreed to begin printing;" and throughout the session its revision occupied his spare time. He corrected the press when business flagged in the committee room; and the index and errata were the work of midnight hours, when the debate was over.

Upon the 12th of April his work was published—"My book out to-day." Many were those who anxiously watched the issue. Dr. Milner had strongly dissuaded his attempt. "A person who stands so high for talent," wrote David Scott, "must risk much in point of fame at least, by publishing upon a subject on which there have been the greatest exertions of the greatest genius." His publisher was not devoid of apprehensions as to the safety of his own speculation. There was then little demand for religious publications,

and "he evidently regarded me an amiable enthusiast." "You mean to put your name to the work? Then I think we may venture upon 500 copies," was Mr. Cadell's conclusion. Within a few days it was out of print, and within half a year five editions (7500 copies) had been called for. His friends were delighted with the execution of the work, as well as with its reception. "I heartily thank you for your book," wrote Lord Muncaster. "As a friend I thank you for it; as a man I doubly thank you; but as a member of the Christian world, I render you all gratitude and acknowledgment. I thought I knew you well, but I know you better now, my dearest excellent Wilber." "I send you herewith," Mr. Henry Thornton writes to Mr. Macaulay, "the book on religion lately published by Mr. Wilberforce; it excites even more attention than you would have supposed, amongst all the graver and better disposed people. The bishops in general much approve of it, though some more warmly, some more coolly. Many of his gay and political friends admire and approve of it; though some do but dip into it. Several have recognized the likeness of themselves. The better part of the religious world, and more especially the church of England, prize it most highly, and consider it as producing an era in the history of the church. The dissenters, many of them, call it legal,* and point at particular parts. Gilbert Wakefield has already scribbled something against it. I myself am amongst those who contemplate it as a most important work."

This was the universal feeling amongst those who looked seriously around them on the face of things. "I am truly thankful to Providence," wrote Bishop Porteus, "that a work of this nature has made its appearance at this tremendous moment. I shall offer up my fervent prayers to God, that it may have a powerful and extensive influence on the hearts of men, and in the first place on my own, which is already humbled, and will I trust in time be sufficiently awakened by it." "I deem it," Mr. Newton told him, "the most valuable and important publication of the present age, especially as it is yours:" and to Mr. Grant he wrote, "What a phenomenon has Mr. Wilberforce sent abroad! Such a book by such a man, and at such a time! A book which must and will be read by persons in the higher circles, who are

* In the year 1818, he was assailed in the "Scotsman" by an exactly opposite insinuation. "Mr. Wilberforce is a man of rigid Calvinistic principles," &c. In the margin of the paper he wrote, "False."

quite inaccessible to us little folk, who will neither hear what we can say, nor read what we may write. I am filled with wonder and with hope. I accept it as a token for good; yea, as the brightest token I can discern in this dark and perilous day. Yes, I trust that the Lord, by raising up such an incontestable witness to the truth and power of the gospel, has a gracious purpose to honour him as an instrument of reviving and strengthening the sense of real religion where it already is, and of commuicating it where it is not."

The aspect of the times, in which, says Mr. Hey, "hell seems broke loose in the most pestiferous doctrines and abominable practices, which set the Almighty at defiance, and break the bonds of civil society," led even the less thoughtful to look to its effect with some anxiety. "I sincerely hope," wrote the Lord Chancellor, (Loughborough,) "that your book will be read by many, with that just and proper temper which the awful circumstances in which we stand ought to produce." Its tone was well calculated to create these hopes. There was an air of entire reality pervading its addresses, which brought them closely home to the heart and conscience of the reader. It was not the fine-spun theory of some speculative declaimer, but the plain address of one who had lived amongst and watched those to whom he spoke. "Let me recommend you to open on the last section of the fourth chapter," was his advice to Mr. Pitt; "you will see wherein the religion which I espouse differs practically from the common system. Also the sixth chapter has almost a right to a perusal, being the basis of all politics, and particularly addressed to such as you." "I desired my bookseller," he tells Mr. Newton, "to leave at your house a copy of my publication; and though I scarcely suppose that your leisure will be sufficient to enable you to fight through the whole of it, you may perhaps look into it occasionally. If so, let me advise you to dip into the third or fourth chapters, and perhaps the concluding one. I cannot help saying it is a great relief to my mind to have published what I may call my manifesto; to have plainly told my worldly acquaintance what I think of their system and conduct, and where it must end. I own I shall act in my parliamentary situation with more comfort and satisfaction than hitherto. You will perceive that I have laboured to make my book as acceptable to men of the world as it could be made without a dereliction of principle; and I hope I have reason to believe

not without effect. I hope also that it may be useful to young persons who with general dispositions to seriousness are very ignorant about religion, and know not where to apply for instruction. It is the grace of God, however, only that can teach, and I shall at least feel a solid satisfaction from having openly declared myself as it were on the side of Christ, and having avowed on what my hopes for the well-being of the country bottom."

As a literary work it might be judged to need greater condensation; but its style was the best suited to produce effect. "I was purposely," he has said, "more diffuse than strict taste prescribed, because my object was to make an impression upon men in general." "Do not curtail too much," he once said to a friend, "portable soup must be diluted before it can be used." There is in truth throughout the volume a rich and natural eloquence, which wins its way easily with every reader. Its illustrations are happy; its insight into motives clear; and above all, its tone is every where affectionate and earnest. It was seen to be "the produce of his heart as well as of his understanding."

He addressed his fellow-countrymen moreover from an eminence on which he could be heard; as a layman safe from the imputation of professional bias; and as one who lived in the public eye, and was seen to practise what he taught. He raised indeed a strict, but his own example proved that it was a practicable, standard. His life had long been a puzzle to observers. Some had even thought him mad, because they could not comprehend the strange exhibition of his altered habits; but his work supplied the rationale of his conduct, whilst his conduct enforced the precepts of his work. Any one might now examine the staff of the wizard, and learn the secrets of his charmed book. "How careful ought I to be," was his own reflection, "that I may not disgust men by an inconsistency between the picture of a Christian which I draw, and which I exhibit! How else can I expect the blessing of God on my book? May his grace quicken me." "That he acted up," is the judgment of a shrewd observer, "to his opinions as nearly as is consistent with the inevitable weakness of our nature, is a praise so high that it seems like exaggeration; yet in my conscience I believe it, and I knew him well for at least forty years."*

* Entry on a blank page of the "Practical View," by J. B. S. Morritt, Esq.

The effect of this work can scarcely be overrated. Its circulation was at that time altogether without precedent. In 1826 fifteen editions (and some very large impressions) had issued from the press in England. "In India," says Henry Martyn in 1807, "Wilberforce is eagerly read." In America the work was immediately reprinted, and within the same period twenty-five editions had been sold. It has been translated into the French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German languages. Its influence was proportionate to its diffusion. It may be affirmed beyond all question, that it gave the first general impulse to that warmer and more earnest spring of piety which, amongst all its many evils, has happily distinguished the last half century.

As soon as his book was published he set off for Bath, where he was followed by the congratulations of many of his friends.

Not a year passed throughout his after life, in which he did not receive fresh testimonies to the blessed effects which it pleased God to produce through his publication. In acknowledging this goodness of his God, the outpourings of his heart are warm and frequent; though the particular occasions are too sacred to be publicly divulged:

"Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus."

Men of the first rank and highest intellect, clergy and laity, traced to it their serious impressions of religion; and tendered their several acknowledgments in various ways; from the anonymous correspondent "who had purchased a small freehold in Yorkshire, that by his vote he might offer him a slight tribute of respect," down to the grateful message of the expiring Burke. That great man was said by Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, when he had arranged his worldly matters, to have amused his dying hours with the writings of Addison. He might have added what serious minds would have gladly heard: "Have you been told," Mr. Henry Thornton asks Mrs. Hannah More, "that Burke spent much of the two last days of his life in reading Wilberforce's book, and said that he derived much comfort from it, and that if he lived he should thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world? So says Mrs. Crewe, who was with Burke at the time." Before his death Mr. Burke summoned Dr. Laurence to his side, and committed specially to him the expression of these thanks.

Amidst these circumstances his sobriety of mind remained

unshaken." "I was much struck," says a friend who was with him whilst at Bath, "with his entire simplicity of manners. The place was very full; the sensation which his work produced drew upon him much observation, but he seemed neither flattered nor embarrassed by the interest he excited." The secret of this easy self-possession may be read in the entries of his private Journal. "Bath, April 14th, three o'clock, Good Friday. I thank God that I *now* do feel in some degree as I ought this day. I trust that I feel true humiliation of soul from a sense of my own extreme unworthiness; a humble hope in the favour of God in Christ; some emotion from the contemplation of Him who at this very moment was hanging on the cross; some shame at the multiplied mercies I enjoy; some desire to devote myself to Him who has so dearly bought me; some degree of that universal love and good-will which the sight of Christ crucified is calculated to inspire. Oh if the contemplation *here* can produce these effects on my hard heart, what will the vision of Christ in glory produce hereafter! I feel something of pity too for a thoughtless world; and oh what gratitude is justly due from me (the vilest of sinners, when compared with the mercies I have received) who have been brought from darkness into light, and I trust from the pursuit of earthly things to the prime love of things above! Oh purify my heart still more by Thy grace. Quicken my dead soul, and purify me by Thy Spirit, that I may be changed from glory to glory, and be made even here in some degree to resemble my heavenly Father."

He was soon recalled to London by a letter from Mr. Pitt, urging his attendance in parliament. The summons was peculiarly unwelcome. "I doubt," he had written to a friend six months before, "if I shall ever change my situation; the state of public affairs concurs with other causes in making me believe 'I must finish my journey alone.' I much differ from you in thinking that a man such as I am has no reason to apprehend some violent death or other. I do assure you that in my own case I think it highly probable. Then consider how extremely I am occupied. What should I have done had I been a family-man for the last three weeks, worried from morning to night? But I must not think of such matters now, it makes me feel my solitary state too sensibly. Yet this state has some advantages; it makes me *feel* I am not at home, and impresses on me the duty of looking for and hastening to a better country." But his sentiments had

now undergone a considerable change. At Bath he had formed the acquaintance of one whom he judged well fitted to be his companion through life, and towards whom he contracted a strong attachment. "Jacta est alea," he says upon receiving her favourable answer, "I believe indeed she is admirably suited to me, and there are many circumstances which seem to advise the step. I trust God will bless me; I go to pray to Him. I believe her to be a real Christian, affectionate, sensible, rational in habits, moderate in desires and pursuits; capable of bearing prosperity without intoxication, and adversity without repining. If I have been precipitate, forgive me, O God. But if as I trust we shall both love and fear and serve Thee, Thou wilt bless us according to Thy sure word of promise."

A sudden call from Bath was, under these circumstances, what he would have gladly escaped. On that very day also he was expecting three of his most valued friends who were coming to him from a distance; but it was a call of duty, and he at once "resolved to obey it." It had been remarked by those who knew him best, as an instance of his confidence in God, that at such a time of general apprehension he should have resolved to marry. The prospect was now gloomy at home and hopeless on the continent; and with the strongest trust in that merciful Father who had hitherto protected him, he looked forward to approaching trouble as an altered man. He found already that he had given hostages to fortune. "Muncaster told me of the Emperor's separate peace. Much affected by it for *her* sake. Wrote to her and told her that I would not hold her to engagement against her will." "The intelligence we have received," he wrote, "of the Emperor's having made a separate peace affects me with emotions hitherto unknown; it is doubtful what the effects of the event may be on our internal situation. I seem to have drawn you into a participation of my fortunes at a most unseasonable time, and I am distressed by the idea of involving you in trouble and misfortune by the part it may be my duty to take in so perilous a conjuncture."

Yet this was but a passing cloud which shaded his habitual cheerfulness. "You have heard me say," he writes again a few days later, "that I am no predestinarian, and it is certainly true; yet when I review the incidents of my past life, and observe how God 'has led me by a way which I knew not,' has supported me when weak, has raised me

when fallen, has brought me out of darkness into light, has kept me from forming a connexion where it would have proved too surely a clog and a restraint to me, and has at length disposed our hearts mutually to each other; when I see these and ten thousand other such things, (many of them you will like to hear,) I can only lift up my hands and eyes in silent adoration, and recognize the providence of God disposing all things according to the counsel of His own will; and graciously recompensing the very feeblest endeavours to please and serve Him." "On looking back to my past life I see many instances, some greater, some smaller, of God's providential care and kindness. These infuse into me a humble hope that, though public affairs wear a most gloomy aspect, yet I shall be rescued from future evils, and shall be a specimen of His undeserved grace and kindness to those that humbly look up to Him. It would to some seem superstitious to note how good God has been to me in a variety of little instances (preserving me from evil, from discredit, &c.) as well as in more important cases."

Those troubled times needed such a ground of confidence. Whilst the naval mutiny was yet unappeased, discontents broke out amongst the military in the neighbourhood of London. At this moment it was buzzed about that Mr. Wilberforce had written to the soldiers to express his sympathy, and promise to bring their complaints before the House of Commons. So wide-spread was the rumour, that on the 13th of May he says, "Pitt sent to me about the soldiers," and "Windham" (Secretary at War) "called" on the same errand "in the course of the day." "I have no intention," was his answer, "of making any motion on the subject, but to do so at this time, and in such a manner, I should deem little short of positive insanity." Still it was asserted that an agent from himself had brought the message to the barracks, read aloud his letter, and actually shown to them his signature. Further inquiry brought out a solution of the imputation, highly characteristic of its object. One Williams, a needy, and as he thought penitent man, had been recommended by Mr. Scott to the charity of Mr. Wilberforce. He was a clergyman of the Church of England, and had reduced himself to abject want by unprincipled excess: on his apparent penitence he found in Mr. Wilberforce a generous supporter, who had continued privately to relieve his necessity, even after he had spit in his benefactor's face and had been kept by a Bow Street warrant from further

acts of violence. Finding him at last irreclaimable, Mr. Wilberforce had written to refuse him any further aid; and with this letter "wicked Williams"... such was his usual appellation... had visited the barracks, pretended to read the feigned message, and then exhibited the signature.

Upon the 15th of May, his motion on the Slave Trade was again before the House; but the West Indians maintained the ground which they had gained at the commencement of the session. They opposed the motion with a bolder front than usual. Mr. Wilberforce was ridiculed by Bryan Edwards for declaring that by the gloomy aspect of affairs he was reminded of the slumbering wrath of Heaven, which the Slave Trade must provoke; he was taunted with the humanity of the Liverpool merchants, and the distresses of the chimney-sweepers. A majority of 82 to 74 against the measure was only what had been anticipated from the existing House of Commons. "I wrote last night," he says the next day playfully in a letter to Bath, "whilst a very slow and heavy speaker was railing at me, to my lawyer about our settlement; so I did not want Christian love to keep me from falling out of temper, and I have been too long used to it to feel much disappointment on losing my motion."

"May 27th. Off after dinner, calling at Pitt's and strongly urging him to make a liberal offer at first to France; he convinced at length, that requisite to make immediate effort. I travelled on to Salt Hill. 28th, Sunday. Salt Hill. For some time past extremely hurried in London—but very poorly in health—never recovered since the influenza. Not able to sleep. Heat excessive, and I suffered from it more than I ever remember. Daily reports of the soldiery rising, and certainly some progress made. Pitt and the others now convinced that things *in extremis*, yet no apparent sense of God. I now feel exceedingly hunted and shattered." On the following day he reached Bath, and upon the 30th, was married to Barbara Ann, eldest daughter of Isaac Spooner Esq. of Elmdon Hall in the county of Warwick. "You will perhaps judge my way of thinking old-fashioned and queer," was the congratulation of his late colleague Henry Duncombe, "but I am greatly pleased that you have not chosen your partner from among the titled fair ones of the land. Do not however tell Lady C. so."

His first visit with his bride was to Mrs. Hannah More's. "Received at Cowslip Green with great kindness—delightful day and sweet ride. Sunday morning, as early as able,

tour of the schools—Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar. Delighted with all he saw, Cheddar in particular—a delightful scene, when old people collected together at afternoon reading. Home at night, after a pleasant drive." Already, at the expiration of the first week from his marriage, he condemns himself "for not having been duly diligent," and on the next day he set out again for London. His head-quarters were now in Palace Yard, and for an occasional retreat he rented of his friend Mr. Eliot his house on Clapham Common.

"Let me now," he says on his return to London, "commence a new era, guarding cautiously against all infirmities to which I am personally, or from circumstances, liable; and endeavouring to cultivate all opportunities. I go to prayer; may the grace of God give me repentance. Fix, O Lord, my natural volatility; let not Satan destroy or impair these impressions. I fall down before the cross of Christ, and would there implore pardon and find grace to help in this time of need. Let me use diligently and prudently to Thy glory all the powers and faculties Thou hast given me. Let me exhibit a bright specimen of the Christian character, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Let me go forth remembering the vows of God which are upon me; remembering that all eyes will be surveying me from my book, my marriage, &c.; that my political station is most important, my means of doing good numerous and great; my cup full of blessings, spiritual above all. The times how critical! Death perhaps at hand. May God be with me for Christ's sake."

He was summoned to Hull, by the sudden death of Dr. Clarke, who had married his only sister, and spent three weeks in cheering his aged mother and sorrowing sister.

Though the circumstances of his family saved him from the necessity of paying visits, yet he had little leisure. "Late morning hours and early dining, many calls, a vast many letters, and attention to my mother, prevent my getting any thing done. Reading the Bible with my wife." "I wish I could have a recluse, devotional, thinking birth-day, but that is impossible. On its return I have the utmost cause for self-humiliation, for gratitude, for grateful confidence, for earnest breathings after usefulness. I have no time to write, but let me use the few minutes I have in praying to God in Christ, the Author of my mercies, beseeching Him to hear me, to fill me with spiritual blessings, and enable me to live to His glory. My marriage and the publication of my book are the

great events of the past year. In both I see much to humble me, and fill my mouth with praises. Let me resign myself to God, who has hitherto led me by ways that I knew not, and implore Him yet to bless me."

A rope-yard behind his mother's house was almost the only place where he could here take his quiet musing walks; and the pleasure he had found in it he would mention long afterwards with gratitude. "It is hardly in human nature, I fear," wrote Dr. Milner, the day after his departure, "to continue long as happy as you are at present." "My cup was before teeming with mercies," he himself tells Mr. Macaulay, "and it has at length pleased God to add the only ingredient almost which was wanting to its fulness. In this instance, as in many others, His goodness has exceeded my utmost expectations, and I ought, with renewed alacrity and increased gratitude, to devote myself to the service of my munificent Benefactor. I am half ready to blame myself for thus descanting on the topic I have chosen, but it is the strongest proof I can give you of my friendship, that I have opened myself to you on a subject, on which, in speaking to a mere acquaintance, I should have been the least likely to dwell.

"We lately spent a week with our excellent friends, the Babingtons, who, to the blessing of their neighbourhood, are now returned to the Temple. I own I am obliged to bite my cheek and set my teeth hard, when I quit such an enviable retirement to plunge into the bustle and wickedness of political life. But slave or free, every one is to remain and do his Lord's work in that state in which he was called; and so I fall to work again, though, I own, mine is one of the last trades which I should have selected. But life will soon be over, and we are assured that no situation presents temptations which the grace of God cannot and will not enable us to resist, if we diligently seek it. Once more, my dear sir, farewell, and in the assurance of every friendly wish,

Believe me always sincerely yours,

W. Wilberforce."

Upon the 1st of November Mr. Wilberforce returned to London to be present at the opening of the session. The conduct of the French government during the negotiation of the summer months, convinced him that it was his duty as a loyal subject to strengthen the hands of administration; and on the first night of the session he made an effective

reply to an extravagant eulogy upon the political conduct of Mr. Fox.

Mr Pitt's scheme for raising the supplies came before the House of Commons upon the 24th of November.

On this subject he was now exerting himself greatly. "Saw very little of Pitt this last week—vexed him by plain dealing. Talked with others on economy."

He writes "It has long been my opinion, that next to the violence of opposition, this country has most to dread from the unbounded acquiescence of those who support administration. I have been urging these considerations in private upon Mr. Pitt, but unless my hands are strengthened, I doubt of my success. He is really—I say it solemnly, appealing to Heaven for the truth of my declaration—in my judgment one of the most public-spirited and upright, and the most desirous of spending the nation's money economically, and of making sacrifices for the general good, of all the men I ever knew: but I have met only with two or three (except truly religious men) who have been able to do obnoxious duties, and above all to act in opposition to the feelings of false honour, by resisting the improvidence and restraining the weakness of colleagues."

And again "I have been writing to the Speaker and to Pitt, confirming one and urging the other to a relinquishment of a portion of their income during the war."

These subjects he continued to urge upon the minister. "Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Dined at the Speaker's—large party—talked much with Pitt. Hatsell speaking of general corruption. 9th. Much serious talk with Pitt, stating the necessity, of economy, and preventing profusion and jobs." "You may perhaps think," he wrote afterwards, "that I was disposed to be liberal at the expense of others in advising ministers and official men to give up a part of their incomes; but in truth though I originally contended against encouraging the voluntary contributions as a general measure, yet when they had been set on foot, I subscribed at the Bank what, with my assessed taxes which are extremely low, amounted to near an eighth of my clear income, and also contributed in my parish, and for Mrs. Wilberforce in the ladies' subscription."

Whilst the Assessed Tax Bill was passing through the House, he was "exerting" himself "to prevail upon the merchants and bankers in the city, to bring forward in the commercial world a proportionate impost upon all property."

His support of the Assessed Taxes Bill was of great im-

portance to the ministry; as it evinced the judgment of an independent man in favour of its absolute necessity. "Nothing," he declared, "can make me support it, but the consciousness that we have no alternative. I dread the venomous ranklings which it will produce, during the three years of its operation."

The part he took rendered him peculiarly obnoxious to the opposition, and in the debate upon the final passing of the Bill, Mr. Fox charged him with indulging in acrimonious personalities. "Fox," he says, "unjustly accusing me. Uneasy—fearing that I had been guilty." "I was sadly disturbed," he writes afterwards, upon a fuller examination of his conduct, "at Fox's imputations—too much, alas, on scrutinizing, from the fear of losing credit with all, even the moderate oppositionists. But I think I can appeal to God that his charge was false, and that I feel even good-will to him. Oh may I learn to distrust and keep my heart with all diligence."

Having just rendered him such material service, he was much hurt by Mr. Pitt's conduct on the night the Bill passed through committee, in rejecting some slight exemptions which he pressed earnestly upon him. "Dec. 30th. House very late on Assessed Taxes. I sparred with Pitt, and he negatived several exempting clauses. I much cut, and angry." "Alas! alas!" is his reflection on the following day, "with what shame ought I to look at myself! What conflicting passions yesterday in the House of Commons—mortification—anger—resentment, from such conduct in Pitt; though I ought to expect it from him, and can well bear with his faults towards God—all these feelings working with anger at myself, from the consciousness that I was not what a Christian should be. Oh what a troubled state! When I got home I prayed to God, and looked to Him for help through Christ, and have in some measure found my heart restored to peace and love, to reconciliation, (which in the House was but hollow I fear,) and to a desire of returning good for evil, of being above the little slights and ruffles ments of this life, looking upwards and forwards. Yet even still I find my heart disposed to harbour angry thoughts. I have found the golden rule useful in quieting my mind—putting myself in Pitt's place, &c. May this teach me to know myself, to walk more watchfully, to seek more earnestly for strength, help, and peace, and love, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Oh may God guide me."

Though he had been so much occupied by public business since his return to London, yet his letters and journals refer continually to other important engagements. "Dined and slept at Battersea Rise," he enters on Nov. 9th, "for Missionary meeting—Simeon—Charles Grant—Venn. Something, but not much, done—Simeon in earnest." This was the first commencement of a plan for promoting enlarged missionary exertion, to which he had recourse upon the failure of his efforts to obtain by vote of parliament some national provision for Christianizing India. It occupied his attention for the two following years, and issued in the year 1800, in the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East.

"I may be indispensably occupied to-morrow, (December 31st,) so let me now look back on the past year, and bless God for its many mercies. Oh how wonderful are His ways! An eventful year with me—my book—my marriage—health restored in sickness. How ungrateful have I been, and how often tempting God to withdraw from me! But His mercy endureth for ever; and the vilest, prostrating himself before Him with penitence and faith in the blood of Jesus, may obtain remission of his sins, and the Spirit of renewing grace. This is my hope—here I rest my foot. Friends died this year—Eliot—Dr. Clarke—Joseph Milner. I still spared. How strongly do these events teach us that the time is short! Oh! may I learn and be wise. Public events—mutiny terminated—Dutch victory. I will go to pray, and humble myself before God. The lessons I have learned of my defects teach me to strive earnestly against pride; inordinate love of the favour of man; every feeling of malice; selfishness in not judging fairly between others and myself; above all, earthly-mindedness, not having my mind raised above the region of storms. May I learn wisdom and watchfulness from past falls, and so grow in grace. Oh what a blessed thing is the Sunday for giving us an opportunity of serious self-examination, retrospect, and drawing water out of the wells of salvation!"

The Christmas recess was spent by him at Bath, where he complains that his "time was frittered away in calls and dining out. Let me try to get more time for meditation and Scripture. I have read barely a chapter each day through this hurrying week. Dining out every day has a bad effect on the mind; I will try to dine at home, at least once, and if I can twice every week." "Entire solitude I find a diffe-

rent thing from even being with my wife only; it seems to give me over more entirely to the power, and throw me more absolutely upon the mercy of God. O what cause have I for gratitude! but my heart has been cold—it is overgrown with weeds; may God enable me at this crowded place to live to His glory." "This morning I thought I felt some of the powers of the world to come when I went to church. G. broke in upon my walk intended for meditation. I have found this week the benefit of reading Scripture almost daily."

Many important matters now claimed a share of his attention. He still acted as a director of the Sierra Leone Company: and that infant colony, struggling with peculiar difficulties, and visited with the ravages of European warfare, was a source of ceaseless anxiety to its conductors. "We have been," he writes to the Governor, "what we call *unfortunate* in having our ships so often captured, &c.: but we are a little prone (perhaps not a little) to expect to be secured by Providence against the common accidents to which human beings are liable, when engaged in works of piety and charity. It should cure us of this erroneous estimate of things to recollect that St. Paul, in recapitulating his sufferings, not only enumerates stoning and the malice of men, but 'thrice was I shipwrecked, a night and a day have I been in the deep.' In short, Providence seemed to fight against him, as well as a world which was not worthy of him."

At home he was still the watchful guardian of public morals, and at this time was especially engaged in an attempt to promote the better observance of the Sunday. "March 12th. All morning at the Bishop of Durham's on Sunday Bill. 13th. Bishop of London's—Sunday Association—long discussion—Archbishop unwilling." The result of these deliberations was the suspension of all attempts at legislative interference, and the adoption of a voluntary engagement to promote the observance of the day. Much was effected by this effort: many amongst the highest ranks made the declaration, and faithfully observed their pledge. One great object at the present moment was to stop the Sunday entertainments of the Speaker of the House of Commons; but the attempt was almost defeated by the too forward communications of some who were privy to the consultation.

"March 21st. Bishop of Durham's. The king to have the declaration laid before him by the Bishop of London. Bishop

of Durham's early on Proclamation sub-committee—Bishop of London's report. The King heard him out and turned the conversation. The Bishop of Durham tried the Speaker but in vain." "Evening to the Speaker on Sunday declaration plan; he very unreasonably angry—I deeply moved and much hurt. Stayed late with him, and afterwards could not get to sleep." "Interview with the speaker, who extremely offended at the declaration, and being asked to change [the] day [of his parliamentary meetings], 'Personal insult,' &c. I told him that it was not so meant. The attempt has failed, but I hope God will accept it."

He mixed too upon principle as much as he was able in general society.

"I am much disturbed between a sense of the necessity of not giving up the world, and the evil effects from my present great intercourse with it both to my heart and understanding." "Many doubts about company, whether I ought not in great measure to give it up." The secret of his maintaining an untainted spirit in this full bustle of worldly distractions may be found in the motive from which alone he mixed in them, and in the habits of self-communing which he carefully maintained. The perfect rest of succeeding Sundays . . . "I feel the comfort of Sunday very sensibly to-day." "Oh it is a blessed thing to have the Sunday devoted to God" . . . was of great service to him here; and the full entries of his Journal are a searching review of his conduct and spirit through the week.

"This last hurrying week has kept and now leaves my soul in a sad state. How little does my heart seem to have its affections above! I doubt about giving up much of this raffled hurrying system. May God for Christ's sake guide and support me. Last week, angry from pride at Pitt and the Speaker—vain in regard to Belsham's letter. Oh what a multitude of mercies have I to be thankful for! Compare my lot with K.'s."

"This last week, in which I hoped so much to be done, has gone by, and how little got through! And though my affections this day are a good deal called forth, how little have I of late been under the influence of real Christian tempers! How sadly defective am I in humility! When I look into myself I find myself poor indeed, compared with my highly-favoured state; but how little do I feel this habitually! How fond am I of distinction (my constitutional vice)! This would not be, if I was truly hum-

ble within, at the core. Here meditation daily, or as frequent as might be, would do much. Let me try for it. Oh may this day be of lasting service to me! and at this time, when probably war and tumult are at hand, may I serve God and fear nothing. May I boldly walk in the might of the Lord, and sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. May I grow in humility, peace, and love, in meekness, holy courage, self-denial, active exertion, and discreet zeal." "I feel a firm confidence, that if through God's grace I am enabled to keep close to Him in love, fear, trust, and obedience, I shall go on well; most likely even in this life, being perhaps remarkably preserved from evil: but at all events I shall be supported under whatever may be laid upon me. These are days in which I should especially strive to grow in preparedness for changing worlds, and for whatever sharp trials I may be called to. Oh what humiliation becomes me when I think of my innumerable mercies!" "I resolve to be up in time to have an hour before breakfast for serious meditation, prayer, and Scripture preparation for these dangerous times; also more time for unbroken thought; half or three-quarters of an hour on parliamentary topics."

His marriage interfered far less than might have been expected with his various occupations. "The cause of my long silence," he tells his sister, "has been really, as I believe, my having been more than even commonly busy. . . . How fast time and life too rolls away! It seems but a span since we were together at Hull; and more than six months have since gone over our heads. My hours have passed pleasantly; greatly indeed have I reason to be thankful for the signal blessing which Providence last year conferred upon me. My dearest wife bears my hurrying way of life with great sweetness; but it would be a sort of gaol delivery to her no less than to myself to escape from the tumult of this bustling town, and retire to the enjoyment of country scenes and country occupations. But I am well aware that it is not right for me to indulge in such reveries. My business is cut out for me, and Providence has graciously blessed me with the means of being cheered under it; which means I should do wrong to pervert into a source of indolent self-enjoyment, flinching from my collar and refusing to draw my load because a little weary of being in the harness. At all times in which one feels this sense of weariness, and longs for quietness and peace, one should endeavour to make it subservient to the purpose of raising one's mind heavenward, and of es-

tablishing a practical feeling of the vanity and transitoriness of all human things, and of this life being but a passage, and our home that 'rest that remaineth for the people of God.' "

Early in the spring he again brought the Abolition question before parliament. April 3d. "Busy preparing for Slave motion, which made. Fox, Grey, Sheridan, &c. came. Thought we had carried it—83 to 87." The debate was again long and earnest, and the West Indian opposition still fought under the cover of apparent concession. The horrors of the Trade were now candidly admitted by Mr. Bryan Edwards and his followers, who contented themselves with the safer objection, that a vote of Abolition would only substitute an illicit for a legal traffic.

Though defeated on the division, "on the whole," says Mr. Wilberforce, "we got ground." This conviction rendered the present and succeeding year a period of the most active exertion in the cause. It was resolved to propose the immediate Abolition of the Trade along the northern coast of Africa. Upon the 4th of May, the measure was brought forward by Mr. Henry Thornton; but the session was found to be too far advanced, and the House too full of business, for its present consideration; and on the 18th of June it was deferred until the following session.

As the season advanced the Diary exhibits his usual amount of daily occupation, with slight notices of the most important amongst passing events.

May, "27th. Whitsunday. Pleasant day, spent as Sundays should be. 28th. Ashley came in at my dressing time, and brought word of Pitt and Tierney's duel yesterday. I more shocked than almost ever. I resolved to do something if possible. 30th. To town. Found people much alive about duel, and disposed to take it up. I gave notice [of a motion on the subject in the House of Commons]. Letter from Pitt, evening."

TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

"My dear Wilberforce,

I am not the person to argue with you on a subject in which I am a good deal concerned. I hope too that I am incapable of doubting your kindness to me (however mistaken I may think it) if you let any sentiment of that sort actuate you on the present occasion. I must suppose that some such feeling has inadvertently operated upon you,

because whatever may be your *general* sentiments on subjects of this nature, they can have acquired no new tone or additional argument from any thing that has passed in this transaction. You must be supposed to bring this forward in reference to the individual case.

In doing so, you will be accessory in loading one of the parties with unfair and unmerited obloquy. With respect to the other party, myself, I feel it a real duty to say to you frankly that your motion is one for my removal. If any step on the subject is proposed in parliament and agreed to, I shall feel from that moment that I can be of more use out of office than in it; for in it, according to the feelings I entertain, I could be of none. I state to you, as I think I ought, distinctly and explicitly what I feel. I hope I need not repeat what I always feel personally to yourself.

Yours ever,

WILLIAM PITT.

Downing Street, Wednesday,
May 30th, 1798, 11 P. M."

The hope which had led Mr. Wilberforce, in spite of all his personal feeling, to give notice of his motion had now almost deserted him. Instead of being able to carry a strong resolution against the principle of duels, through the general feeling which had been excited by an apprehension for the safety of Mr. Pitt, he found that the fear of censuring the minister would lead many to defend the system in order to screen the man. He began therefore to doubt the wisdom of persevering in his motion. "June 1st. To town to-day and yesterday, and back in the evening. Much discussion about duel motion. Saw Pitt and others—all pressed me to give it up. Consulted Grant and Henry Thornton, and at length resolved to give it up, as not more than five or six would support me, and not more than one or two speak, and I could only have carried it so far, as for preventing *ministers* fighting duels. June 2d. Being resolved, I wrote to Pitt to give it up."

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

"My dear Pitt,

I scarcely need assure you that I have given the most serious and impartial consideration to the question, whether

to persist in bringing forward my intended motion or to relinquish it. My own opinion as to the propriety of it in itself, remains unaltered. But being also convinced that it would be productive on the whole of more practical harm than practical good, and that it would probably rather impair than advance the credit of that great principle which I wish chiefly to keep in view, (I mean the duty of obeying the Supreme Being, and cultivating His favour,) I have resolved to give it up; and when thus resolved, I cannot hesitate a moment in sending you word of my determination. At the same time, I shall be much obliged to you if you will not mention my resolution generally, though you may, where you may think it necessary; but for many reasons I do not wish it to be publicly known till it is heard from myself. The Speaker is the only person of our town friends, to whom I shall open myself at present.

I am sure, my dear P. that I need not tell you that the idea of my being compelled by duty to do any thing painful or embarrassing to you has hurt me not a little; but I know you too well not to be sure that even you yourself would not wish me to be influenced by this consideration against the dictates of my conscience. I will only hint the pain you have been the occasion of my suffering on the subject itself, which I had intended to bring into discussion. I will only say, that whatever mischiefs may hereafter flow from it, will not be imputable to me. It is my sincere prayer, my dear Pitt, that you may here be the honoured instrument of Providence for your country's good, and for the well-being of the civilized world; and much more that you may at length partake of a more solid and durable happiness and honour than this world can bestow. I am, and I trust I ever shall be,

Your affectionate and faithful Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Broomfield, Sat., June 2. 1798."

"Received an answer from Pitt that he was greatly relieved by my relinquishment—he seriously ill."

"Monday, June 4th. Stayed away from court on account of motion impending. The King asked the Speaker if I persevered. Pitt told me the King approved of his conduct. 5th. To town. House—declared that I gave up my motion because no support."

"16th. Letter to Sir Christopher Sykes on his rejoinder to

my refusal to ask Pitt for a living for his son—explained to him frankly and fully."

TO SIR CHRISTOPHER SYKES, BART. SLEDMERE, YORKSHIRE.

"Broomfield near London, June 16, 1798.

"My dear Sir Christopher,

Amidst the various feelings which your last letter excited, there were none, I can truly assure you, which were not of a friendly quality, and I was highly gratified by the frankness and candour with which you opened your mind to me. I did not receive it till late the day before yesterday, on my arrival in town for the House, and yesterday I was so much occupied as to be absolutely prevented from writing to you. This morning, (though my having had several inmates and visiters at our new residence, near Clapham Common, has swallowed up my time,) I prefer scribbling you a hasty reply to suffering you to wait for my answer till I have a little leisure.

The subject on which I shall have to give you my sentiments is one on which, whatever I write, though put down on paper in a hurry, will be the result of deliberate reflection. I can have no objection, my dear Sir Christopher, to treat you with the same frankness you have used towards me, and to state to you the principles on which I think it right to regulate my conduct in the case of all ecclesiastical preferments. What you say of the minister and Chancellor being, in their capacity of patrons, trustees for the public, is a very just remark, and shows that you have thought over the subject so as to have fixed principles on it. But there is another consideration to which, though I am sure it must have been in your mind, you have not so much adverted in your letter, and this therefore I will state as briefly as I am able.

As the influence any man possesses, and his opportunities of usefulness, are all so many trusts for the employment of which he will hereafter have to give account, so there are no opportunities of usefulness which are trusts from their very nature more weighty and important than the power of recommending to any ecclesiastical preferment which has the care of souls. To speak seriously, and otherwise I can scarcely do justice to the argument, the number of the individuals who may be rescued from eternal misery and brought to the enjoyment of eternal happiness,

and the degree of the eternal happiness even of the happy, must, humanly speaking, depend on the minister set over the parish to which they belong. Therefore, I am bound to remember, in the disposal of any living, (whether by my own presenting to it directly, or by using my influence with the patron,) that the interest the parishioners have in the nomination is that of as many persons as the parish consists of, and is of an everlasting, infinite value; that which the clergyman to be presented to it has in it is the temporal interest of one individual. It follows of course, that I must attend to the two following principles in my recommendations to church preferment. 1st, That of naming the man whom in my conscience I believe, on the whole, likely to do most good in the station to be filled; and 2dly, That of endeavouring to employ my influence, so as that any given measure of it may be productive of the utmost possible benefit. This will require me, in looking out for pieces of preferment about which to interest myself, to advert to the size of the parish and its circumstances, to the number and situation of the flock, rather than to the value of the pasture; thus endeavouring to place the most useful man I can find in the most extensive sphere of usefulness.

But I must be still more particular in order to give you any adequate notion of my sentiments. It is my fixed opinion, formed on much reading, consideration, and experience, that there has been for many years among the majority of our clergy a fatal and melancholy departure from the true principles of Christianity, and of the Church of England; from those principles which prevail throughout her Articles, her Liturgy, the writings of her venerable martyrs, and of many of her brightest ornaments. I am not speaking of speculative matter; this declension, or, if I would give it its true name, this heresy, is important, because its practical effects are in the highest degree mischievous. I have stated this in my late publication as clearly and as strongly as I could. The inference from it is obvious. In selecting a minister for any living it is not enough to know that he is diligent and exemplary in his conduct, nor yet that his talents, knowledge, and manner of officiating are every thing that one could wish, but I must ask, what are his doctrines?

I have said enough to put you in possession of my principles, and I hope I can add that I have acted on them uniformly and without deviation for many years. In the case

of those who have been nearest and dearest to me, I have adhered to them. I will only appeal in this view to the instance of Dr. Clarke, whose very laborious living produced him but about £250 per annum. The place was highly unpleasant (comparatively speaking) to him, and still more to my sister. But being convinced that he was on many accounts better fitted to do good at Hull than most other men would be, or than he would be in almost any other place, I made no other effort for fixing him in any situation more eligible as to temporals; though I will frankly tell you that I had the deanery of York in view for him in case he had lived, as being that for which he was eminently qualified.

The account I have received of your son from a friend to whom he is pretty well known, is in many particulars highly creditable to him, and such as to allow me not to give up the hope (a hope which I contemplate with real satisfaction) of some time or other being instrumental in his preferment. I shall be very glad to become acquainted with him. I need scarcely say that it was a painful effort to me to write to you the answer I did, and I am sure I should commence my acquaintance with him with a bias in his favour, both from his general character and my good will towards you and your family.

There is much more in my mind, but I have not time to put it on paper, and what is more material is already said."

It was only upon general grounds that he now asked any such favours at the hands of government. "When I was a young man," he told a friend who had requested his good offices in favour of a client, "I own I was often sanguine in my hopes of obtaining situations under government for persons, whom, for their own sakes or that of their connexions, I wished to serve. But a longer acquaintance with life damped these expectations, and taught me, though slowly, that a man who would act on my principles and go on my plan, must not expect to be successful in this competition. Such things are only to be got by an earnestness and importunity very unbecoming my situation."

Parliament was prorogued upon the 29th of June, and Mr. Wilberforce immediately established himself at Broomfield for the summer. "My situation here," he says, "though so comfortable, will require much watchfulness, and plan, and circumspection, or my time will be frittered away, my usefulness abridged, and my soul unspiritualized. I will

consider well how to turn it to the best account, and form my plan deliberately, with prayer for wisdom and for strength to keep my resolutions. My wife's health absolutely requires a villa. A plan of study and an arrangement of time to be formed, and the business of the recess to be chalked out. Oh what cause have I for shame, comparing myself with my advantages and mercies." "To try this recess at six hours between breakfast and dinner, and two hours before breakfast for thought and real business." "Surely," he writes during a sharp attack of illness with which Mrs. Wilberforce was visited, "God is punishing me for a feeling of exultation. 'I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Thou, Lord, of Thy goodness hast made my hill so strong. Thou didst turn away Thy face, and I was troubled.' How uncertain are all human things! I hope I feel some Christian resignation, and holy reliance on the mercy and goodness of God and my Saviour."

While he was here engaged with "books, letters, a little dictating, and many friends," he received an account of the illness, and by the next post of the death, of his aged mother. Unwillingly leaving Mrs. Wilberforce, who was on the eve of her first confinement, he set off immediately for Hull, to attend his mother's funeral. "You will join with me," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce from Stamford on his return to Broomfield, "in thanking God for His goodness in having thus far protected me on my way. This morning, at six o'clock, I set out with, (in spite of all remonstrances) some little pomp, in the funeral procession to Beverley, and the last solemn service being ended, I returned to Hessle, and was again at Barton by eleven; and now here I am only eighty-nine miles from London, and hoping to be with you on Monday evening. I shall of course stay here all to-morrow; and though, not having heard from you, some thoughts and wishes about you will steal in, I have a pleasure in the idea of halting, and spending a quiet day in blessing and praising that gracious Being, who to me has been rich in mercy, and abundant in loving-kindness. Oh that I were more warmly thankful and more zealously active!"

"Monday, up early, and travelled on as fast as I could; got to Broomfield by nine o'clock, safely, I thank God, and found all well." "My dear wife," he notes a few days later, "is now ill. How dependent does this make me feel upon the power and goodness of God! What a humbling impression have I of my own inability; that all my happiness, and

all that belongs to me, is at the disposal of the Supreme Being! So it ought always to be. This is 'to walk softly.'" "Oh what abundant cause have I for gratitude," he says the following week: "how well all has gone on, both with mother and child! I will take a musing walk of gratitude and intercession. How full of mercies is God to me, and how void am I of gratitude! How little desirous of diffusing the happiness so freely given to me! Oh may I still feel more the weight of my burden, charging it on myself and pressing it home; placing myself in Christ's sight, in that of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect. O Lord, renew me; let this corruption put on incorruption, even here in heart, and bring forth the graces of the Spirit."

At Broomfield he was within reach of his London business, and was surrounded by his friends. "July 11th. Burgh came to dinner—Henry Thornton—after it rational conversation."

"July 18th. Montagu came with his family—discussed affairs with him, he truly pleasing and philosophical. Evening, Carrington, very kindly about my accounts; he made me out richer than I conceived." This discovery was soon conveyed in a characteristic mode to Mrs. Hannah More.

"My dear Madam,

The letter you wrote to Mrs. Henry Thornton, concerning your Mongewell intercourse, has made a deep impression on me; and though no one can prize more highly than myself your services in Somersetshire, yet I believe it would be right for you to pay a visit to the Prince Bishop, at Auckland.* Henry Thornton and I agree in our judgment, that you cannot decline this new sphere of usefulness. Do you remember the idea of a great man, (I think Huygens,) that there might be stars, of which the light, though always on its journey, had not yet travelled down to us. It is somewhat like this with the light of the blessed gospel, to too many districts in this very country. I wish you to consider this as an opportunity of conveying it into a dark corner of the island. Go then to Auckland, and may the grace of God go with you. I am convinced that, on many accounts, you would be able to do far more than myself, or any other person living, with this primary planet, which is surrounded

* Mrs. Hannah More had been invited to assist the Bishop in his benevolent design of establishing schools in his diocese.

with satellites. It is more, it is a very sun, the centre of an entire system. I will with all my heart meet you there if possible. The Bishop has often invited me and Mrs. W.

But I am pressed for time, and have one point more on which I must detain you, I mean the extreme importance of your husbanding your strength. I have looked into the state of my finances, and am in good case in what respects this world. I can appropriate as large a sum as may be requisite for your operations. I am clear you ought to purchase ease, which is with you the power of continuing your exertions, though at a dear rate, by allowing yourself the accommodation of a carriage. Surely we know each other well enough to communicate on this or any other subject without embarrassment or reserve. You ought to permit the friends of your institutions to assist you with money to any extent which may be requisite for carrying them on. What signifies it in what shape and for what purpose the money is to be applied? In the composition and resolution of forces it all produces an effect in the required direction. It is really absurd that we who affect to be deeply interested for the maintenance of the system, should not give it the only support which our situation renders us able to afford. Each partner should supply that in which he most abounds: the moneyed, money; you and your sisters, what is far more valuable, and what no money can procure. Now do *act* if you are convinced." . . . "I love and admire the zeal of your young clergy. Indeed it refreshes and revives me when sickened by the shabby topics and shabby people, great and small, with whom I am of necessity too conversant, to turn my eyes to you and your little Christian communion of saints.

Believe me ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Never distress yourself, my dear Mary," he wrote this summer to another correspondent, "on the ground of my being put to expense on account of yourself, or your near relatives; you give what is far more valuable than money—time, thought, serious, active, affectionate, persevering attention: and as it has pleased God of His good providence to bless me with affluence, and to give me the power, and I hope the heart, to assist those who are less gifted with the good things of this life, how can I employ them more properly than on near relations, and when I strengthen your hands, who are always endeavouring to serve their best in-

terest. You may say to ——, that on your account, I am willing to take the charge of Charles's education for two or three years."

The sums which, as "a good steward," he thus dispensed to those who needed, formed a large portion of his annual income. As a young man, he had been charitable from the natural impulses of a generous spirit. By an account book, which has escaped destruction, he appears to have expended in the year 1783, between five and six hundred pounds in this way. There are in it many such entries as, "Sent to the Rev. Mr. Emeson of Keswick, a most excellent man with a large family, and mean to do so annually, a bank note, £20." But his conduct, was no sooner regulated by higher principles than he determined to allot a fixed proportion of his income (obtained often by personal self-denial in small things) to works of charity. Before his marriage, at least one-fourth of it was so employed; and in this year the record still remaining (and it is incomplete) accounts for more than £2000. Some of the particular entries show the hidden channels in which his bounty flowed, cheering many hearts who never knew their benefactor. Besides regular almoners for the distribution of small sums, to one of whom in the course of this year he intrusted above a hundred pounds, he was in the habit of relieving through many others the distress which came under their observation. This he did especially in the case of active clergymen, in whose hands he often placed an annual sum of considerable amount for parochial distribution. Four of those which occur this year, and are marked annual expenses, are for sums of £25, £26, £30, and £40, respectively. Great zeal in their vocation constituted of itself a claim on his assistance, even in districts for which he had no local interest. "Mr. Charles's schools in Wales, annually £21."

Some of these entries are highly characteristic. "Expenses of Mr. Atkinson's act for Leeds church £100." "Lent Robert Wells £13, which never expect again—he has a wife and six children to maintain, and ekes out a scanty income by a trade in old clothes." "Sent Dr. Chapman five guineas for a book which not read, and impertinently sent me; but Irving says he is a worthy man, and he must be distressed to act in this manner." "Sent Captain S. five guineas (a gentleman in distress sometimes most of all so)." "Sent him ten pounds in addition, which he said would render him completely comfortable." "C., only justified by my having

advised him originally to enter the law," £50." "Captain Pearce £5 5*s*. He is but a moderate hand I fear, but in urgent want." "Lent M. £100, not very willingly, because though I sincerely wish to serve him, I think this plan of paying off all his debts will not make him economize. It is Mr. Pitt's plan." "In compliance with my rule I must put it down *given*, but if he lives I shall receive again from Captain Hall, £100." "Given W. C. £55 on a solemn promise that he will never again issue a bill, and not borrow of any one without previously informing me. He is not economical, but has a claim on me from having lived in my service, and imprudence must be pardoned. He is sure that from his salary he can gradually repay me, but I cannot believe it." "Given W. C. £63 to enable him to refund what he has taken of the Board's money. I do it only because it would be ruin to him to withhold it. I doubt if even under these circumstances quite right. I have solemnly assured him it should be the last time of my assisting him, and have given him parting advice. He has treated me ill in applying only £21 of the last £70 I gave him to this purpose. As I have told him plainly, I fear he cannot be saved from ruin. I have had much anxiety and vexation from him, and my only comfort is that I treat him like a Christian, he me as a man of the world. He dislikes me, and feels no gratitude to me I know for what I have done. (Private; put down as a record of my judgment and feelings.)" "For Foulay Expedition, £50." "Rev. Mr. Scott, half a year of his son's College allowance, £15." "Paid Williams's bill for expenses of Dowlin and Devereux's trial, £200." "Remainder of Williams's bill unfairly coming upon me, £500." "For St. Anne's School annually £31 10*s*. 0*d*."

Almost every charitable institution of the metropolis, of Yorkshire, and of many other parts, (extending in some instances to Edinburgh,) is included in his list of annual subscriptions. He had also regular annuitants. Not a few who afterwards acquired independence and wealth were indebted to his support for carrying them through their early struggles. Two who rose to the judicial bench are this year mentioned as receiving from him £300. Besides his contribution to the Elland Society, he supported readily young men of promise in their education for Holy Orders; and through every year of its protracted continuance he drew largely from his own resources for the expenses of the Abolition contest.

It was especially his habit to relieve those who in the higher walks of life were reduced to unexpected indigence. Many letters acknowledging such aid, and tracing to it oftentimes escape from ruin, appear in his correspondence. One such instance has been furnished by his secretary. "'Mr. Ashley,' he once said to me, 'I have an application from an officer of the navy who is imprisoned for debt. I do not like to send Burgess' (his almoner) 'to him, and I have not time to go myself; would you inquire into the circumstances?' That very day I went, and found an officer in gaol for £80. He had a family dependent on him with no prospect of paying his debt; and as a last hope, at the governor's suggestion, had made this application." Mr. Wilberforce was well known among the London prisons, where, with the Rev. John Unwin, he had of old often visited and relieved the debtors. "The officer," continues Mr. Ashley, "had referred him to Sir Sidney Smith, to whom he wrote immediately. I was in the room when Sir Sidney called on the following morning. 'I know the poor man well,' he said, 'we were opposed to one another on the Baltic, he in the Russian, I in the Swedish service; he is a brave fellow, and I would do any thing I could for him; but you know, Wilberforce, we officers are pinched sometimes, and my charity purse is not very full.' 'Leave that to me, Sir Sidney,' was his answer. Mr. Wilberforce paid his debt, fitted him out, and got him a command.—He met an enemy's ship, captured her, was promoted; and within a year I saw him coming to call in Palace Yard in the uniform of a post captain."

He was much occupied at this time with a plan for setting up a periodical religious publication which should admit "a moderate degree of political and common intelligence." "Mr. Babington and I went this morning to Mr. Henry Thornton's to breakfast, to talk over the matter of the Magazine and its editor. We concur in opinion that a small committee, perhaps not more than three, would form the best editor. Mr. Scott is a man of whose strength of understanding, correctness of religious views, integrity, disinterestedness, diligence, and perseverance, I think very highly; he is systematically opposing the vices, both speculative and practical, of the religious world; and they are many and great, and likely to be attended with numerous and important mischiefs. But Mr. Scott is a *rough* diamond, and almost incapable of polish from his time of life and natural temper; he has not

general knowledge nor taste sufficient for such an office as you would commit to him. We have *anatomized* several other subjects, but I have not time to detail to you the result of our dissection."

After much consideration and discussion, the first number of the Christian Observer was published in January, 1802. Several of its early articles were from the pen of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton.

Early in September he left Broomfield, to join the family of Mrs. Wilberforce, in Warwickshire.

After spending a fortnight in Warwickshire, and paying a hasty visit at Yoxall Lodge, he got by "Oct. 3d, to Bath, through beautiful Rodborough vale; where rejoicings for Nelson's glorious victory; news of which first met us in detail there." "It is remarkable," he writes to Lord Muncaster, "that on the very same day which brought your letter expressing your confidence in the issue of any naval engagement under Nelson's auspices, the intelligence arrived of his most glorious action; the most signal victory with which a gracious Providence ever blessed our arms. The piety and naiveté of his letter would delight you, I am persuaded, as it does us." "Are not you almost as much delighted with Nelson's letter as with the victory itself. It is the most signal success with which Providence ever crowned our naval efforts."

At Bath, finding "the waters agree well," he remained above a month, "much in society," and engaged in reading "Locke with my wife and sister, Coxe's Walpole, Montesquieu, Roman History, Wakefield's Life, Bible, and much time in letters."

It was the natural consequence of his public character, that those who were in any difficulty, especially if it was connected with religion, applied at once to him as the redresser of their wrongs. The Sunday drilling which had just been introduced into the Channel Islands, was most offensive to the religious principles of the Wesleyan Methodists; and their refusal to conform to the appointment of the local government subjected them in many instances to fine and imprisonment. They appealed to Mr. Wilberforce, and whilst still at Broomfield he had seen Mr. Dundas upon the subject, and procured the promise of his interference in their cause. He now heard from Dr. Coke, that not only were these oppressive measures still maintained, but that on the 18th of October at the states meeting of the Isle of Jersey, it

was determined to proceed to banishment against those who refused to perform this military duty. To appeal against this Bill he moved hastily to London; and having reached Broomfield on the 10th of November "went on the 13th to town on the Methodist business;" but found that "neither Pitt nor Dundas were come." Within a few days he convinced Mr. Dundas of the injustice of such a needless violation of the rights of conscience, and after some delay succeeded in getting "the Jersey Methodists' cause decided in their favour—Banishment Bill assent refused."

Parliament met upon the 20th of November.

A severe attack of indisposition confined him to the house at the commencement of the session; but by the 25th of November he was nearly in his usual health. "My feeling, when so ill on Wednesday morning, was, that I had not been active enough in the cause of God: oh let me now employ with greater diligence the powers which he has restored."

During the remainder of the Session he was anxiously occupied with attendance upon the House; supporting the Irish Union notwithstanding the opposition of those friends whose opinions in many things he valued most highly.

Upon the 1st of March Mr. Wilberforce brought forward his motion for the immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The sameness of a contest which had lasted for eleven years, was in some degree relieved by the wit of Mr. Canning, and the eloquence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce. Having shown the folly of leaving, as was now proposed, the work of Abolition to colonial legislation, he again brought before the House the evils which its continuance inflicted upon Africa. "The coast of that great continent, for a distance of four thousand miles, is kept by the influence of this trade in the lowest state of darkness, ignorance, and blood. Such has been the effect of intercourse with Europe. For contrary to all experience, the civilization of the interior, is three centuries advanced. Yet even there, may be perceived some fatal influence from this deadly traffic. The storm upon the surface stirs slightly even the still depths of ocean." Again he warned the House not "to provoke the wrath of Heaven by this hardened continuance in acknowledged guilt. I do not mean, sir, that we must expect to see the avenging hand of Providence laid bare in hurricanes and earthquakes; but there is an established order in God's government, a sure connexion between vice and misery, which through the

operation of natural causes, works out His will and vindicates His moral government."

Though defeated by a majority of 84 to 54, he was convinced that the cause was gaining ground, and set himself to introduce into the system some immediate mitigation of its horrors.

His health had been unusually delicate this spring. "A serious return," he told Mr. Hey, "of illness, availing itself of the very severe and cheerless northeastern blasts, has stuck to me more obstinately than usual. This has compelled me to lessen the number of my working hours, and has crowded into them such a multitude of matters, that I have been quite unable to clear my way." This had enforced a "private resolution," which he tells Lord Muncaster he "had been forced to form, of giving up the dining system: for the evening is the only time when I can get an hour or two of uninterrupted quiet, and I cannot, like Burgh, extend my working hours at pleasure; expend a copious stream of midnight oil, and then be as fresh the next day as if nothing had happened." This resolution withdrew him in a measure from general society. More than once he mentions in his Journal "quiet as having had some good effect upon his heart, in enabling him a little to realize unseen things, and live more in the fear of God." "I have been more able to bridle my passions, and be more meek and gentle, and really full of love."

These impressions he was most solicitous to deepen, setting apart from time to time a day for abstinence, and meditation. "Saturday at Broomfield all day. I meant it to be a day devoted to God. The morning serious, by myself though not so completely as I had wished. I had refused several friends, but Carlyle came suddenly with offer about Lord Elgin, and compelled to see him. I have with some difficulty and management kept this day clear, to be set apart for humiliation and devotion, and such abstinence as my body will bear. I am now about to fall to self-examination, and confession, and humiliation; looking into myself; condemning myself before God, and imploring forgiveness for Christ's sake. Oh what a terrible array of sins do I behold when I look back!—early renunciation of God; then, many years entirely sinful; then, since the good providence of God drew me forth from this depth of iniquity in the autumn of 1785, how little have I improved and grown in grace! Let me now humble myself, chiefly for forgetfulness of God, and

Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and invisible things; for ingratitude to God, though loaded with mercies, recalled by sicknesses; . . a thousand gracious providences! I go to prayer, humbly throwing myself on the promised mercies of God in Christ." "Though, I thank God, I am less sensual than I was, yet I find my heart cold and flat. To-day I received the sacrament, but how dead was I! O God, do Thou enlighten me. May I attain what is real in Christian experience, without running into a sect, or party set of opinions."

As the session advanced, engagements increased upon him. The Slave Trade Limitation Bill, which had passed the Commons on the second of May, was exposed to severe opposition in the upper House. He was continually occupied in providing the witnesses who were examined at the bar, and watching daily over the interests of the Bill. "To Grenville's about Slave Limitation Bill. Drew up petition to the Lords. Then to city to get Sierra Leone common seal." "House of Lords—Slave Bill." "Dawes and Macaulay dined with me. Then House of Lords—Slave Limitation evidence." "June 4th. Did not go to the birth-day, because not well, and also Slave Limitation Bill not popular at court. 5th. To Bishop of Durham's—Proclamation Society—read Report. House of Lords—Slave Bill."

Nothing could exceed the hearty earnestness with which Lord Grenville defended the Limitation Bill. Unsupported by the immediate adherents of the government, he was left to withstand the repeated opposition of one member of the royal family, the commercial sagacity of Lord Liverpool, and the sturdy bluntness of Lord Thurlow; yet he was ready for every encounter, and maintained the conflict to the last. While this Bill was passing slowly through its different stages, Mr. Wilberforce was busy in the Commons with a measure prepared by Lord Belgrave and himself for suppressing Sunday newspapers. It was brought forward by Lord Belgrave upon the 27th of May; upon the 30th he successfully defended its enactments from the gibes of Mr. Sheridan; but "it was thrown out, June 11th, upon the second reading."

When the Bill was first designed, Mr. Pitt had promised Mr. Wilberforce his co-operation, but he was persuaded by Mr. Dundas to retract his pledge, that government might not be weakened by the loss of their unlawful succour; three out of the four Sunday newspapers supporting ministry. The measure, which had almost succeeded in the hands of inde-

pendent men, would have been carried through triumphantly with Mr. Pitt's concurrence.

Parliament was prorogued upon the 12th of July, and Mr. Wilberforce retired to the comparative rest of Broomfield. "The recess," he says, "is beginning. Oh may I spend it well, and try more and more to devote my understanding, and heart, and all my faculties and powers, to the glory of God and Christ, being more and more weaned from vanity, and the love of this world's praise; yet more and more active, useful, indefatigable, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Oh for more gratitude and love. Heard to-day of a clergyman in the Isle of Wight, to whom my book was blessed. Oh praise, praise!" "We trust," he wrote to Mr. Newton who was leaving London for a while, "that you will not forget us in your rural rambles, for I doubt not you have many an oratory where the spreading foliage forms your canopy, and the natural sounds of the country join with you in a harmonious chorus of praise. Farewell, believe me ever affectionately yours."

"I could not be quiet yesterday," he says the day after his birth-day, "though I got a contemplative walk, and even to-day I have less time than I could wish for looking back through the year, and awakening pious gratitude for the multiplied mercies of God. How often have I been sick and restored! How few, if any, days of suffering, either bodily or mental! My wife and child going on well, and a daughter born (July 21st) and doing well. Instances repeatedly heard of my book doing good. How gracious is God through Christ, to fill my cup with blessings, yet not to lessen or commute in what is still more important!"

The time which he now had at his disposal was eagerly employed in general reading; and the first week of the recess he was engaged in "letters, Robertson, Hume, Bible, &c." Yet he was too near London to obtain the rest from business and society which his delicate constitution needed; and repeated attacks of debility with fever compelled him to abandon his numerous engagements and seek an increase of vigour in the repose of the country, and ultimately forced him unwillingly to Bath. Here he spent four months in full enjoyment of domestic life; "with more quiet than ever since we married;" "getting through a good deal of work and reading." He mixed but little in society; and only for some such specific purpose, as, "Oct. 8th—evening to H.'s at Mrs. H.'s desire—and hoped with some serious intention,

but found none. He looked like a skeleton, yet gay and irreligious. I tried in vain to bring him to close quarters."

Compelled for a season to give up public life, his Diary shows that he watched quietly from his retirement the course of its troubled waters.

"Wilberforce has bought a house near Bath," says Henry Thornton, "which I a little lament, on the ground of the bad economy of it; for he is a man, who, were he in Norway or Siberia, would find himself infested by company; since he would even produce a population, for the sake of his society, in the regions of the earth where it is the least. His heart also is so large that he never will be able to refrain from inviting people to his house. The quiet and solitude he looks to, will, I conceive, be impossible, and the Bath house will be troubled with exactly the same heap of fellows as the Battersea Rise one."

"I bless God," he tells Mr. Babington, "I certainly am much improved in health since our arrival here; and we are now on a plan of great quiet, regularity, and ease. This is using the means, and I desire to use them with cheerfulness and gratitude, leaving the event to God. We have been reading, and are still engaged on, Gisborne's Moral Philosophy; and I am quite pleased I own to be able to say, that I think he has fully established his charge against Paley, and shown, with great effect, how little such a principle as general expediency is fit for man. If I mistake not there are some errors, and I doubt if he might not have made his charge against Paley still more manifestly valid. I am glad to find he is publishing again. While he goes on thus, I will allow him to live in a forest. I found that so much use was made of my going to Jay's that I have kept away."

The improvement of his health, and increase of his knowledge, were not the only ends which he sought to attain from this opportunity of leisure. He began and closed it with a day of more than ordinary devotion, and his weekly Diary marks the careful watch which he kept over his spirit. "For some time," he says, "I have resolved to allot this day to God; to spiritual exercises, especially in the way of humiliation. Fasting disqualifies me, God knoweth, for religious communion by disordering my body, so all I can do here is to be very temperate. I am now about, as it seems, . . but let me remember how uncertain are all earthly prospects, . . to spend near four months quietly, compared with my past life; wherein I shall be able to attend to my

health, which, next to my soul's prosperity, it seems right to make my chief object; and at the same time to study a good deal, and cultivate faculties, my neglect of which I number among my very criminal omissions. My objects therefore in this day of solemn supplication and (in my measure) fasting, are to beg God's guidance and blessing on my endeavours to spend the ensuing interval between this time and the meeting of parliament, piously, usefully, wisely, holily; first, however, humbly imploring pardon for all my past manifold offences, which to be particularly noted, and earnestly supplicating for grace to deliver me from the bondage of my corruptions. Then should come praise and thanksgiving, for the multiplied and prodigious mercies and blessings of God. Then resignation and self-dedication to God, desiring to submit myself to Him to do and suffer His will. Lastly, intercession.

"To prepare me for all the rest, let me open by earnestly praying to Him to bless me in my present attempts, to chase away from me all evil spirits, and all wandering thoughts and worldly interruptions, and to soften, enlighten, warm, enlarge, and sustain my heart, and my spirits also, that I may not weary in the work, but delight in it, and rejoice in the privilege of spending a day in communion with my God and Saviour."

"Last year," he says upon the 5th of January, 1800, "has been marked with mercies to me. . . . When I look back upon the time spent here, it seems but a week or two, instead of since the 28th of October; and when I look forward to London life, how do I recoil from it! I humbly hope that I am resolutely determined for Christ, and not solicitous about worldly greatness, wealth, reputation. . . And now that I am on the point of returning to London, I would humbly pray for a large measure of grace to enable me to stand against the world, the flesh, and the devil. I would humbly resolve through the Spirit to live by faith, and to go on diligently, devoutly, humbly, endeavouring to glorify God and benefit my fellow-creatures." In this spirit he returned to public life.

Before he returned to town he wrote to Lord Muncaster.

"Jan. 7th.

"My dear Muncaster,

'Merry Christmases' and 'happy New Years,' and all the good wishes that ever were poured forth from the fullest

reservoir of benevolence within the heart of man; or rather which, like some rivers, gushed out spontaneously with a force not to be resisted; all these have inundated me, and still I remain dry and silent. Oil we know resists water more than any thing, and if I were polished all over with the courtly varnish of St. James's, it might be accounted for; but that a man who has not shown his face at court for these eighteen months, should thus suffer his friends to have so slippery a hold of him, is wonderful indeed, and not to be accounted for on the ordinary principles of human depravity. Yet, though so long silent, I have not been unfeeling, and though I have kept my emotions to myself, I have been warmed with cordial good wishes for the happiness of you and yours. And now, though somewhat of the latest, accept my hearty prayers for your welfare here and hereafter.

The day of meeting approaches. You ask me what is then to come forward. I know not positively, though I suspect that the Income Tax Bill will be one of our first matters; and that the recent correspondence between the King and Buonaparte will find us some discussion. On this head I would be loath to form a hasty opinion. But I must say I was shocked at Lord Grenville's letter; for though our government might feel adverse to any measure which might appear to give the stamp of our authority to Buonaparte's new dignity, yet I must say that, unless they have some better reason than I fear they possess for believing that he is likely to be hurled from his throne, it seems a desperate game to play—to offend, and insult, and thereby irritate this vain man beyond the hope of forgiveness. Alas! alas! Muncaster, my heart aches. However there is a perfect home of love, and peace, and happiness, and we are invited to the enjoyment of it. Let every fresh proof therefore of the unsatisfactoriness of human things have the effect of urging us forward towards this one true point of rest with renewed energy.

Believe me ever affectionately yours,

W. Wilberforce."

He reached the neighbourhood of London upon the 23d of January, two days after parliament had met.

In the debate of February 13th, upon the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus, he supported ministers in a speech. Other business now multiplied upon him. "Much occupied," he says, Feb. 17th, "about the scarcity: urging government, which sadly torpid and tardy—Sheffield and Speaker our

way. King but middling. Dutch expedition debate. Government made good their point. Canning clever . . genius . . but too often speaking, and too flippant and ambitious. All things rising in price. What shocking work, Grattan and Corry fighting during debate, and Cradock putting the sheriff into a ditch, who stopping them."

"I have been striving," he tells Lord Muncaster, "to prevail on my Yorkshire manufacturers to make herrings half cured a material article of their consumption. You cannot well imagine how much prejudice must be encountered in such an attempt." The prospect of increasing scarcity rendered this a gloomy season. "We know not what times are coming on, but if God be for us, who can be against us? Oh may I therefore lay up treasure in heaven, and wait upon the Lord." "Now that He seems about to try His people, what cause have I to pray, and gird up the loins of my mind! May I grow in grace, and become more 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' How amiable is the simple, childlike spirit of Lady Catherine Graham!" "I have much before me, oh that God would enable me, and move the hearts of others: doubtless I might better hope it, if I were deeply earnest in prayer."

The plan which he was most anxious to persuade the minister to sanction, throughout this time of scarcity, would have proved no less politic than it was humane. Instead of meeting the present emergency, increased as it was by the sudden change of prices, by the ordinary machinery of Poor's Rates, and so establishing a dangerous precedent, he would have made an extraordinary grant for cases of extreme distress: but he could not prevail. "I am much grieved," he says, "at Pitt's languor about the scarcity. They will do nothing effectual. Great sufferings of the West Riding people. I dread lest God have given our government over to a spirit of delusion—that they should think of attacking the Dissenters and Methodists! I fear the worst. I am very doubtful if we had not better have consented to treat. Chouans seem melted away—Russia gone—Austria too perhaps. Pitt I am convinced has no trust in me on any religious subject. To see this design drawn out in a bill! Never so much moved by any public measure."

This was the impression of a moment of despondency: for though one at least to whose opinion Mr. Pitt naturally deferred on questions which concerned religion, was continually on the watch to lessen Mr. Wilberforce's influence, it

was still great, and in this very instance successful. "There are ideas," he tells Mr. Hey, "of materially abridging the privileges enjoyed under the Toleration Act. I am persuaded that restraints would quicken the zeal of the Methodists and Dissenters to break through them, that prosecutions would be incessant, and that the prevalence of the persecuted opinions and the popularity of the persecuted teachers would be the sure result. I hope still that I may be able to prevent any strong measure from being brought forward. I am not at liberty to open to you." Two days afterwards he writes, "All on the important subject on which I lately wrote to you remains in statu quo; except that the Methodists have got to the knowledge of some measures being in contemplation, through Michael Angelo Taylor at Durham. I have kept them quiet. I am more and more clear that if the measure does go forward, the effects will be most important."

"I told Mr. Pitt that I was ready to assent to one restriction, namely, that no one should exercise the office of a teacher without having received a testimonial from the sect to which he should belong. This would put a stop to the practice which I am told prevails at Salisbury, and (as I heard from Mr. Jay the dissenting minister) at Bath, of a number of raw, ignorant lads going out on preaching parties every Sunday. I fear the Bishop of Lincoln (this is whispered to your private ear in the strictest confidence) will renew his attempt next year. If such a bill as was lately in contemplation should pass, it would be the most fatal blow both to church and state, which has been struck since the Restoration.

"I believe I before told you, and I do not retract the sentiment on further reflection, that I place more dependence on Mr. Pitt's moderation and fairness of mind, (though less in this instance than in any other,) than either on the House of Lords or Commons. In short, so utterly ignorant in all religious matters is the gay world, and the busy, and the high, and the political, that any measure government should propose would be easily carried. I find no success in my endeavours to convince my friends on the bench, of the expediency of facilitating the building of new churches with a right of patronage. More than once I have proposed in private a general law to that effect; but it would answer no good end to bring forward such a measure in the House of Commons, without having previously secured support for it."

Among his private papers, there appears a full statement

of the great service to religious peace which he rendered on this occasion. "A member of parliament, who on his accession to a large fortune, by his father's death, discontinued the practice of the legal profession, but who acted as a magistrate with a considerable sense of his own importance, got into a quarrel with a person who came to be licensed as a dissenting teacher. Finding the applicant very ignorant, and somewhat forward, he at first resisted the man's claim, but discovering that the law clearly entitled him to a license on paying the specified fee of 1*s.* or 6*d.*, he warmly exclaimed, that if such was the law then, it should not so continue. Accordingly he considered how best to introduce some discretionary power to magistrates, in the granting or withholding of dissenting ministers' licenses. His purpose reached the ears of the Methodists and Dissenters of the city which he represented in parliament, and he soon found that if he should persist in his endeavour, it would be at the expense of his seat. His intention had perhaps been rather the effervescence of the moment, than the deliberate result of that consideration which so serious a subject might well require. He set himself therefore to devise how best to get out of the difficulty, and through what medium I never heard, he actually prevailed on Mr. Pitt's government, indeed on Mr. Pitt himself, to adopt his measure. The precise nature of the regulations I cannot recollect with certainty, but I am positively sure, that they tended materially to restrict the freedom hitherto enjoyed by Protestant Dissenters, and a fine for the first offence, and imprisonment for the second, were the sanctions by which they were to be enforced. The intelligence that some such measure was about to be proposed to parliament, reached the ears of some of the dissenting ministers, from one of whom I believe it was that I received the first intimation of the design.

"I lost no time in conferring with Mr. Pitt on the subject, but he had been strongly biassed in favour of the measure by Bishop Prettyman, on whom I urged in vain the serious consequences that must infallibly ensue. I well remember stating to him my firm persuasion, that within a few weeks after the passing of the intended law, several of the dissenting ministers throughout the kingdom, most distinguished for talents and popularity, would be in prison; and I urged on him, that even supposing them not to be actuated by a sense of duty, for which I myself gave them credit, or to be cheered by the idea of suffering for righteousness' sake, they

would be more than compensated for all the evils of imprisonment by their augmented popularity. The Bishop, however, would not assent to my view of the case, and finding Mr. Pitt intended to bring the measure forward, I begged I might have a full confidential discussion of the subject. Accordingly we spent some hours together at a tête-à-tête supper, and I confess I never till then knew how deep a prejudice his mind had conceived against the class of clergy to whom he knew me to be attached.

"It was in vain that I mentioned to him Mr. Robinson of Leicester, Mr. Richardson of York, Mr. Milner of Hull, Mr. Atkinson of Leeds, and others of similar principles: his language was such as to imply that he thought ill of their moral character, and it clearly appeared that the prejudice arose out of the confidence he reposed in the Bishop of Lincoln. I remember proposing to him, to employ any friend whose mind should not already have received a bias on either side, to visit the several places I had mentioned, to inquire into their characters, and to ascertain the principles and conduct of their adherents, adding my confident persuasion that both their moral and political principles would be found favourable to the peace and good order of society; indeed I went further, and alleged that they were in general friendly to his administration, from believing these to be promoted by its continuance. All however was of no avail, and all I could obtain from Mr. Pitt was an assurance that the measure should not be actually introduced without his giving me another opportunity of talking the matter over with him. Happily that opportunity never occurred; of course I was in no hurry to press for it; and the attempt never was resumed; but some years after, when Lord Sidmouth's memorable bill was in progress, which excited such an immense ferment and produced a vast number of petitions by which it was defeated in the House of Lords, Lord Redesdale (formerly Sir John Mitford) stated, that he well remembered that during Mr. Pitt's administration a stronger than the bill then in progress had been in contemplation, and that he did not know why it had been dropped. I must say considering every thing I have always been extremely thankful for any share I had in preventing the introduction of this scheme."

He was much "hurt," he tells Mrs. Hannah More this session, at the defeat of another measure bearing upon the moral interests of the people. "Sir William Pulteney, who

brought forward the bill to suppress bull-baiting at the instance of some people in the country, (I declined because I am a common hack in such services, but I promised to move it if nobody else would,) argued it like a parish officer, and never once mentioned the cruelty. No summonses for attendance were sent about as is usual. In consequence not one, Thornton, nor many others, were present, any more than myself. I had received from some county magistrates an account of barbarities practised in this generous pastime of Windham's, which would be surpassed only by the tortures of an Indian warrior. A Surrey magistrate told a friend of mine yesterday, that some people met for a boxing match, and the magistrates proceeding to separate them, they threw their hats into the air, and declaring Mr. Windham had defended boxing in parliament, called out, 'Windham and Liberty.' A strange and novel association, by the way! Canning, to do him justice, was ashamed of himself, and told me when I showed him the account of cruelties, (which Windham read coldly,) that he had no idea of the real nature of the practice he had been defending. Alas! alas! we bear about us multiplied plague spots, sure indications of a falling state."

"A letter from Rossie Castle," he writes at the same time to Mr. Ross, "finding me stewing in this crowded and dusty city in the middle of a delightful summer day, excites a natural longing for lakes, and mountains, and shady retreats, and other such luxuries of nature. But we have all our several posts, and, whether in town or country, 'the time is short,' and we have much to do in it."

Summer was now far advanced, but the House was still sitting, and this long continuance of business greatly exhausted his strength. "I had serious thoughts," he says, July 23d, "of attending the assizes this summer, but parliamentary business is not yet quite at an end, and we have sat so late that I shall have but a short time for 'pruning my feathers and letting grow my wings.' In truth, both body and mind with me, and understanding too, call for a little quiet after the incessant turmoil and drudgery in which they have been engaged for six or seven months." "I feel myself a good deal shattered, and reminded of the necessity of more regularity and care than I have of late observed." "I pant for a little quiet, and think I feel a more than ordinary languor permanently; however the promises of the gospel fail not, yet whenever I look back upon the little I have hitherto

done in life, I long to be more executive in what remains." Upon the 22d of August he was on his road into the country.

"Leatherhead, Aug. 22.

"My dear Muncaster,

My life has been one continual worry for some time past, and I quite pant for a little rest. I have been paying and receiving a few visits round the capital, though still a bankrupt in civilities; and we are now on our way to Bognor Rocks, that my wife and the children may breathe sea air, after repeated illnesses. In the beginning of October we design to move to Bath. A box full of unanswered letters accompanies me, but before I enter on the task of replying to them, I will break the long silence I have observed to you."

Soon after his arrival he wrote to Hannah More.

"Bognor, Aug. 29.

"My dear Friend,

I am in a course of answering a box full of letters, which have long reproached me for my negligence, but let me steal for a while from them, and their comparatively uninteresting subjects, and refresh myself by a few minutes' intercourse with you. Indeed I am ashamed of not having sooner replied to your last very interesting report. But first a few words of my own proceedings.

We spent three or four days with Lady Waldegrave, thence we came back to Broomfield to receive a visit or two, and at length, with no small difficulty, we got off with my budget at my back, and by slow but laborious journeys arrived at this quiet place on Saturday last. Henry joined us on Wednesday, and Mrs. Thornton and Mimy yesterday. So here we are reading and discussing, and through the mercy and overflowing goodness of God, enjoying ourselves not a little. We seem only too happy. It really shocks me to think that the flames of war still rage, and that there are multitudes who do not get off for an additional ten per cent. paid to the tax-gatherer, but who are subject to all its alarms, and dangers, and miseries. Oh be thankful that a gracious Providence has cast your part in pursuits so different. You are bold people to be thus flying at new game. Yet I give you so much credit for discretion, as to believe you would not be too adventurous, and without spirit nothing is to be done. I am really much obliged to you for your kind frank-

ness in calling on me for my debt; I will send you £50 in a day or two, indeed I have taken measures for it immediately.

Poor Mrs. Montagu is gone. It is an awful migration! Our friends were indefatigably assiduous in their care of her. Our whole house joins in every kind remembrance to you, Lieutenant-General Patty, and the whole family. May God bless you, guide you, and keep you. It is the cordial wish and frequent prayer of your

Affectionate and sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"What blessings," he says to Mr. Stephen, "do we enjoy in this happy country! I am reading ancient history, and the pictures it exhibits of the vices and miseries of man, fill me with mixed emotions of indignation, horror, and gratitude; and when I look on the water, and consider that the sea only is interposed between me and France..! But I am much pressed for time, and have no leisure for lucubrations."

"Since we have been here," Mr. Henry Thornton tells Mrs. H. More, "we have been chiefly reading history, and talking with Wilberforce over many points, left short through the hurry of our London life." This rest in the bosom of his family and with the society of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton, was most refreshing to his spirit. "We are all," he says, Sept. 11th, "I thank God, pretty well, and living more quietly than common, to my no small satisfaction." But this repose was not to last long. "Perhaps," wrote Dr. Milner, (Sept. 19th,) "these wonderful smiles are for some future trial: continue to watch." This very letter found him in the deepest anxiety, which he thus imparted to Hannah More.

"Bognor, Sept. 27.

"My dear Friend,

I am unwilling you should learn from any other pen, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest Mrs. Wilberforce with a very dangerous fever. I am told the final issue is not likely to be very speedy, but that from the violence of the outset, I have every reason for apprehension, though not for despair. But oh, my dear friend, what an unspeakable blessing to be able humbly to hope that to my poor wife, death would be a translation from a world of sin and sorrow, to a region of perfect holiness and never-ending happiness! How soothing

also to reflect that her sufferings are not only allotted but even measured out by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, who loves her, I trust! ay, better than a dear child is loved by an earthly parent. I am sure you will all feel for me, and pray for me, and for my poor dear sufferer.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton are all kindness and consideration for us. I am not sufficiently used to sick-beds, and it is extremely affecting to me to hear her wildness and delirious distresses, and sometimes fancies, mixed with her usual kind looks and gentle acquiescence. May we all be ready, and at length all meet in glory; meanwhile, watch and pray, be sober, be vigilant; strive to enter in, and assuredly we shall not be shut out. I had used to say such words as these, not I hope wholly without meaning; but how much more forcibly are they impressed on the mind by the near view of death to which I am brought! God bless you all. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all.

Yours always,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"You will, I am sure," he tells another friend three days later, "hear with no little emotion, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest wife with a very dangerous fever. I had, I own, nearly dismissed all hope. But to-day matters wear a more favourable aspect, though Dr. Fraser, who is with us, (having most kindly hurried down on my first imperfect statement, which conveyed to his discernment the idea of no time being to be lost,) tells us not to be elated, but still to be prepared for the worst. What an unspeakable consolation and support is it in such a moment to entertain full confidence that my dearest wife has made her peace with God, and is not unprepared for the awful summons! I thank God, I am enabled to submit to His chastisement (too much, alas! deserved) without murmuring, and I humbly hope with resignation, I would say cheerfulness and gratitude, to His holy will. He best knows what is good for us; and if our sufferings here serve in any degree, by rousing us from sloth, and urging us to cleave to Him more closely, to increase the happiness of eternity, well may we exclaim in the triumphant language of the apostle, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"But I must stop. I am sure you will feel for us. The Dean

and the Stephens are come, and the Henry Thorntons, who were with us, are all kindness and assiduity. What a blessing to have such friends! Kindest remembrances. Under every circumstance, I am yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. My dear wife has been delirious ever since we knew she was seized. How little could we have attended to her spiritual state if it had been before neglected, and we had wished to prepare for death! What a practical lesson to us all!"

"Wilberforce tells me," wrote his friend Henry Thornton to Hannah More, "that he has written to you a few lines on this distressing subject of Mrs. Wilberforce's illness. Poor fellow! he cleaves now to his old friends, and he finds a relief in employing a little time in writing to them, which is what we encourage, and especially as the sick-room is not the place either for him or for her. He seems more softened and melted than terrified or agonized, and shows the truly Christian character under this very severe and trying dispensation."

The issue of the fever was long doubtful, nor was it before the 14th of October, that he was able to thank God for any decided improvement. The tone of his own feelings throughout this painful time, shows the height to which he had attained in the school of Christ. Truly he had learned to take patiently the loving corrections of his heavenly Father. "Mr. Wilberforce," writes Mrs. Henry Thornton, "has behaved *greatly*, if one may so say of a Christian; he is now very calm, and waiting the event with much submission and quietness." "My mind, I thank God, is very composed. O Lord, take not Thy Holy Spirit from me: take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh; that under Thy chastisements, I may lift up to Thee a humble, reverential, and even thankful eye, and desire that Thy correction may work its due effect, and keep me closer to Thee for strength, and light and warmth, and all things. Much affected and struck to-day in the address, Rev. iii. to the Laodicean lukewarm church, (too much my own condition,) with the words of kindness at the close—'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.'" "I am much struck," he writes to a friend, with whom he was soon after called to sympathize, "by this fresh visitation. Alas! we go on commonly in a course of too uniform and

uninterrupted comfort. Read St. Paul's list of sufferings. Yet let us praise God, and extract good from present evil, and turn temporary suffering into everlasting happiness."

Carefully did he scrutinize his own spirit when the hand of God was taken from him, lest he should lose any of the blessing of affliction. "I have heard," he writes to Mr. Hey, "of all your affectionate sympathy with me in my late heavy trial. God has in his chastisement remembered mercy; and my beloved wife is spared to me, and is gradually recovering her health and strength. May I improve from the discipline through which I have gone; but it is truly melancholy and humiliating to observe, how the strong feelings of the mind in the moments of suffering decay, and grow cold after it is over. This hardness of heart towards God, in spite of the uniform and unvarying dictates of the judgment, is a sad proof of corruption."

His stay at Bognor was not much prolonged. A scanty harvest had increased the general discontent; and parliament was summoned to meet for the despatch of business on the 11th of November; "ministry," he says, "being, I fear, influenced not merely by the scarcity, but by a warlike disposition. My heart is sick at so much misery and sin, and when I consider what chastisement we deserve at God's hands on the one side, and contemplate the storms I see brewing on the other, I begin to tremble."

He was soon afterwards in London, earnestly endeavouring both in private and in the House of Commons to obtain some effectual relief for the sufferings of the working classes. "I have not," he tells Lord Muncaster, "for one morning omitted to take my place at the committee, and that cuts such a solid lump out of the day as to leave the rest composed but of fragments."

"I have been using my utmost endeavours to impress the minds of ministers, and of my brother members, with a sense of the necessity of taking effectual steps for the relief of the lower orders: and though thinking their measures too weak, I am by far the most urgent in pressing forward those very weaker measures, to the execution of which they proceed languidly and lukewarmly. It is really beyond expression vexatious to experience such indifference. Though the House of Lords concurred with us on Friday, Nov. 28th, in addressing the King to issue the proclamation, it was not issued until Thursday last; and nothing is yet done in consequence of it, though I have been daily pressing the extreme

urgency of our communicating the disposition to economize, like an electric shock, by the promptitude and force of our proceedings." "All this wears an aspect of exhibiting a show to the country. But we should either do less or do better. Alas, my friend, Providence has not done with us I fear! Not a word or a thought about God. We seem in general to recognise Him as little in His chastisements as in His mercies. How little does all seem, compared with His favour! May you and I, my dear friend, possess a share of it."

The year closed upon him in these employments; and early in the following spring he tells Mrs. Hannah More that he still has on him "the heavy burthen of obtaining relief for our starving manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The callousness, the narrow and foolish wisdom of servilely acquiescing in Adam Smith's general principles, without allowance for a thousand circumstances which take the case out of the province of that very general principle to which they profess allegiance, is producing effects as mischievous as the most determined and studied cruelty. This is rather too strong, but not much. However, I must leave this topic or I shall never have done. I send you half a bank note for £50. I beg you, besides my ordinary debt, to regard me as your debtor for any sum you may call for, on account of the peculiar distress of the present times. I thank God that I am able, without inconvenience, to make an extraordinary exertion; and as to keeping strictly within one's income at such a season as this, it is as unreasonable (not to say any thing of its wickedness) as it would be for a man to keep determinately to his ordinary rate of walking, when a hungry lioness was at his heels; but we feel for our own safety more than for other's sufferings.

"Mrs. Wilberforce, thank God, regains strength gradually. You hold out better than I expected; but the tenement gives indications (mine also) that it will ere long fall to pieces, and enforces on the spirit within, the duty of providing a surer and better habitation. Farewell, I am too much indulging my disposition to chat with you. Kindest remembrances.

Ever yours,

W. Wilberforce."

The opening of the nineteenth century was dark and

threatening. "What tempests," says the Journal of January, 1801, "rage around, and how are we urged to seek for that peaceful haven, which alone can insure real security and happiness!" He writes

TO LORD MUNCASTER,

"Near London, Feb. 7, 1801.

"My dear Muncaster,

I have strange tidings to communicate. The King and his Cabinet have quarrelled concerning the emancipation (as it is called) of the Irish Roman Catholics,—and Pitt, Dundas, Lord Grenville, Windham, and probably Lord Spencer also, and Lord Camden, are to go out of office.

The King and Pitt part on affectionate terms. The King saying, that it is a struggle between duty and affection, in which duty carries it. I am vexed that some of the Cabinet whom I least *affect* are to continue."

It was well understood that more pacific councils were to be expected from the new administration, and many of his friends hoped therefore that Mr. Wilberforce would be included in its number. He himself just felt the influence of the eddy which was sweeping by him. "I am too much for a Christian, yet not greatly, intruded on by earthly things, in consequence of these late political changes, and all the considerations which they call forth. I was for a little intoxicated, and had risings of ambition. Blessed be God for this day of rest and religious occupation, wherein earthly things assume their true size and comparative insignificance; ambition is stunted, and I hope my affections in some degree rise to things above." His views upon the Slave Trade differed too decidedly from those of the new Cabinet to allow him to take office with them, and he continued therefore with unbroken cheerfulness his independent labours. His great present object was to relieve that distress, which the failure of the harvest, and the continuance of the war, had produced in the manufacturing districts. "Indifferent health alone prevented" him "from going down into the West Riding to ascertain facts" for himself; and his private aid was given so liberally, that he speaks of having "spent this year almost £3000 more than his income;"* and as "thinking in conse-

* The sum of 3173*l.* is accounted for as bestowed during this year in charity.

quence of giving up his villa for a few seasons." "I should thus save £400 or £500 per annum, which I could give to the poor. Yet to give up the means of receiving friends there, where by attending family prayers, and in other ways, an impression may be made upon them, seems a great concession. And with Broomfield I can by management give away at least one-fourth of my income. O Lord, guide me right. But there or wherever else I am, O Lord, do Thou grant me Thy Holy Spirit to fill me with every Christian grace; love, joy, peace, long-suffering."

The summer was occupied with attendance on parliament, where he pressed earnestly and perseveringly on the government the duty of making some effort for the relief of the poor, who, especially in the manufacturing districts were suffering from the high price of corn.

"Our dear and benevolent friend," writes Dr. Milner from Palace Yard, "absolutely exhausts his strength on this subject. He is the most feeling soul I ever knew; and also the most patient and indefatigable in endeavouring to lessen the miseries of the people: and how he does get misrepresented and abused! But you may kick him as long and as much as you please; if he could but fill the bellies of the poor, he would willingly submit to it all."

Throughout this spring his Diary contains many interesting notices of passing events. Heard in the House of the King's being ill in the old way. The King's agitation at being urged to grant power to the Romanists, was not unlikely to expose him to such an attack. "At the Levee, on Wednesday the 28th of January, the King said to Dundas, 'What is this that this young Lord has brought over, which they are going to throw at my head?' . . . Lord C. came over with the plan in September . . . 'I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure. The most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of.' 'You'll find,' said Dundas, 'among those who are friendly to that measure, some you never supposed your enemies.'"

"Saturday, March 7th. To Speaker's Levee—changed to Saturday night. Shows the good of all such attempts—carried only half way at first. Much talk there, and home late. The King gradually getting better—very calm and resigned, on religious grounds."

"Saw Lord Eldon, and long talk with him on the best mode of study and discipline—for the young Grants—to be lawyers." The Chancellor's reply was not encouraging—"I know no rule to give them, but that they must make up

their minds to live like a hermit and work like a horse." "Eldon had just received the great seal, and I expressed my fears that they were bringing the King into public too soon after his late indisposition. 'You shall judge for yourself,' he answered, 'from what passed between us when I kissed hands on my appointment. The King had been conversing with me, and when I was about to retire, he said, 'Give my remembrances to Lady Eldon.' I acknowledged his condescension, and intimated that I was ignorant of Lady Eldon's claim to such a notice. 'Yes, yes,' he answered, 'I know how much I owe to Lady Eldon; I know that you would have made yourself a country curate, and that she has made you my Lord Chancellor.'"

"About ten days ago," he writes to Mr. Bankes in September, "I brought Mrs. Wilberforce and my three children to these my old bachelor quarters in Needwood forest; Gisborne my host. This you may remember is the forest which we devoted to the axe and the ploughshare a few months ago. I confess I have been not a little provoked to see such extents of miserable hopeless wastes suffered to continue in their present state of unprofitable nakedness, whilst these beautiful retreats are sacrificed. However, if wheat be pulled down one shilling a quarter, it will be a reimbursement."

He was still at Mr. Gisborne's when he "heard" upon the 2d of October, "from Pitt and Addington, that Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Otto had signed preliminaries of peace the evening before."

From Yoxall Lodge he went to Bath, from which place he wrote—

"My dear Gisborne,

* * * * * * * This is a sad place for visiters; and as I cannot think it right to say, through my servant, 'not at home,'* and am not allowed to tell people so myself, I may be interrupted before I have done writing the letter I have promised you. Before I enter on

* He was brought to this conviction by the bluntness of a faithful north-country servant, to whom he had carefully, and as he believed successfully, explained the true meaning of this conventional refusal. A tedious visiter had been suffered to intrude upon his busiest hours, and when he asked, "Why did you show him in? why did you not say that I was not at home?" the answer he received convinced him that he could not lawfully employ this convenient phrase. "So I did, sir," was the reply, "but he looked so hard at me, as much as to say, I know that you are telling a lie, that I was ashamed to stand to it, so I e'en let him in."

my task let me only assure you, as the best thanks I can offer for your hospitality, that I do not know when we have spent our time so happily as under your roof. I could enlarge, but time must be economized. Let us in such a world as this maintain between our families a close alliance, that by mutual aid and countenance we and they may the better, through God's help, stem the torrent in some degree, or at least (a rap at the door) stand our own ground. Kindest remembrances. God bless you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"My days," he complains, "at this place roll rapidly away, and in a most unprofitable and laborious succession of frivolities. Yet I know not how this could be avoided. I am returning soon to the bustle of London and political life. May God protect me by His grace, and enable me to stand the fiery trial. I shall if I honestly wait on Him." On the 27th he left Bath, "with a heart heavy from the prospect of returning soon to parliament; from the fear of the war's going on; from the bustle, turmoil, and contention of my parliamentary life."

"Pitt and Rose dined with me quietly to-day. Pitt very pleasant, and we stayed chatting politics. What wonderful magnanimity! wishing to form for Addington the strongest and best possible administration." "Opposition," he tells Lord Muncaster, "are laying aside their unreasonable prejudices against Addington. I should not wonder if several of them could so far conquer their repugnance as to accept office under him. You know I was always sanguine as to this administration, knowing Pitt might be depended on. He has really behaved with a magnanimity unparalleled in a politician; new instances of it are daily occurring." "I do not wonder if it be misunderstood," is the remark in one of his memoranda; "this may be owing not merely to prejudice, but to natural incapacity. Little minds cannot receive the idea; it is too grand for their comprehension. But to any one who fairly considers it in all its bearings, and who estimates its full worth, it will appear one of the noblest instances of true magnanimity that was ever exhibited to the admiration and imitation of mankind."

The estimate he here forms of Mr. Pitt may be transferred not unaptly to himself. It is a rare and most instructive sight which his private Journals of this date exhibit. There have

been many whom the love of ease has shielded from every temptation of ambition; and not a few in whom waywardness of temper has nourished a fierce and untractable independence; but it has seldom happened that one who was possessed of every quality of mind and fortune which could most encourage and reward ambition, has been seen to put away soberly and quietly its utmost offers. This he now did. Those who saw only the result, would never have suspected that his easy course was the result of any struggle—yet so it was: his freedom from ambition was no natural immunity, but a victory of Christian principle. "I have of late," he says, "perceived on looking inwards, the workings of ambition, of love of this world, its honours, riches, estimation, and even of worldly desires for my family, of which before I do not recollect that I was conscious. The settled judgment of my mind I would humbly hope is right. I trust that I am comparatively indifferent in my cool estimate of things to the goods of this life: but, alas! I become soiled and worldly-minded." "That our feelings do not correspond with our judgments, is one of the strongest proofs of our depravity and of the double man within us. I believe that retired, domestic life is by far the most happy for me, blessed as I am with affluence, &c. Yet when I see those who were my equals or inferiors, rising above me into stations of wealth, rank, &c. I find myself tempted to desire their stations, which yet I *know* would not increase my happiness, or even be more truly honourable I speak not of the desire of an increased power of usefulness. That is another and a right feeling. Mine, against which, however, in its risings I struggle, and which I strive to suppress, is a sadly depraved appetite, rooted in an inordinate love of this world. Oh may the compunction I now feel be the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit.

"I suspect I have been allotting habitually too little time to religious exercises, as private devotion, religious meditation, Scripture reading, &c. Hence I am lean, and cold, and hard. God, perhaps, would prosper me more in spiritual things if I were to be more diligent in using the means of grace. And though in the main I have thought myself pursuing the course chalked out for me by Providence, and with a diligence prompted and enjoined by the injunctions of Scripture, yet I suspect that I had better allot more time, say two hours or an hour and a half, to religious exercises daily, (besides Sundays,) and try whether by so doing I cannot preserve a

frame of spirit more habitually devotional, a more lively sense of unseen things, a warmer love of God, and a greater degree of hunger and thirst after righteousness, a heart less prone to be soiled with worldly cares, designs, passions and apprehensions, and a real, undissembled longing for heaven, its pleasures, and its purity.

"I know that all external means are nothing without the quickening Spirit; but the Scripture enjoins constant prayer, and the writings and example of all good men suggest and enforce the necessity of a considerable proportion of meditation and other religious exercises, for maintaining the spiritual life vigorous and flourishing. Let me therefore make the effort in humble reliance on Divine grace. God, if he will, can turn the hearts of men, and give me favourable opportunities, and enable me to use them, and more than compensate for all the hours taken from study, business, or civility, and devoted to Him. O God, give me a single heart and a single eye, fixed on Thy favours, and resolutely determined to live to Thy glory, careless whether I succeed or not in worldly concerns, leaving all my human interests and objects to Thee, beseeching Thee to enable me to set my affections on things above; and walking by faith, to wait on Christ, and live on Him day by day here, till at length, through His infinite and wholly unmerited mercy, I am taken to dwell with him hereafter in everlasting happiness and glory."

He had confined himself in the preceding session to a declaration of his unaltered feelings on the subject of the Abolition of the Slave Trade without bringing on his usual motion The prospect of peace had suggested to him a "grand Abolition plan," and he was "trying at a general convention." This scheme would have been impeded by a fresh defeat, upon which he could not but calculate in the existing House of Commons. He thought it better therefore for his cause to let the session pass in silence, and exert his chief strength in private with the government. To this attempt he was now urged afresh. He learned from Otto, the French minister, "that if our government would propose to negotiate for the Abolition, theirs would probably consent to it."

Under these circumstances he was "busy writing Addington a long letter on negotiation for general Abolition," begging him to allot to it a quiet half hour as soon as he was able.

He enters in his Diary "If Mr. Pitt had been minister when this peace was negotiated, the question would have come

into discussion;" but Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Addington could not be persuaded. "At last I wrote to both of them very serious letters, telling them I so did to leave it with them solemnly."

Yet, though unsuccessful, he was not disheartened. Within a fortnight he was again in correspondence with Mr. Addington. Ever since our occupation of Trinidad and the Carib lands in the Island of St. Vincent, speculation had been clamorous for their cultivation. Twice already he had defeated these attempts; and greatly was he now alarmed at hearing that the commission for their sale was making out.

"I am grieved at Addington's not at once recoiling from the idea of settling Trinidada with imported slaves, of which it would take a million. Pitt has had a long conversation with Addington, and says it was satisfactory."

He was not sufficiently satisfied with the conduct of the government to leave the matter absolutely to them. "The Slave Trade," he tells Lord Muncaster, "will, in some shape or other, be one of the first questions brought before parliament. Perhaps Canning will bring forward a motion for preventing the importation of slaves for clearing new lands. I am happy to tell you that I think Pitt remains firm. Oh what an eternal blot would it be on the character of parliament, if, after having resolved by an immense majority that the Slave Trade should be gradually abolished, we should enter on the cultivation of a new settlement, the complete peopling of which with negro slaves, reckoning the number always lost in opening uncleared lands, would take near a million of human beings!"

His Diary proves him to have been much occupied with various schemes of benevolence, both in parliament and in private life. "The Slave Trade," "Society for bettering Condition of the Poor," "Proclamation Society," "Sierra Leone," "Condition of Children in Cotton Mills," "Sunday Bill," "Oath Bill," are all frequently noticed as drawing his attention both in the House and in his conversation with his friends.

The adverse temper of the existing House of Commons on the subject of Abolition had been shown too plainly to be doubted. Mr. Addington had coldly and reluctantly engaged to pause before he opened St. Vincent's and Trinidad for the reception of another million of Africans; whilst the fierce conflicts of St. Domingo, and the insurrections of Do-

minica and Tobago, had brought general reproach upon the negro name. To all this was added the miserable state of Sierra Leone, which having struggled through external difficulties was now threatened with destruction by the rebellious spirit of the Nova Scotia negroes. Yet upon the whole he resolved to bring his motion forward, and introduced it upon the 3d of June, though "not able to get it on till too late, when the House was almost empty." But a dissolution was too near to allow him to bring his motion to any practical conclusion, and upon the 14th he felt "compelled to give it up for this year."

Parliament was prorogued upon the 28th of June, and dissolved upon the 29th. Upon the 30th, he was "off before nine from Broomfield," on his journey to the north. The "Beverley, Hull, and York elections" were already, "raging;" but "no opposition" was "talked of for the county." Early in the spring there had been some rumours of a contest, but they had "now vanished." He had, of necessity, been more than ever absent from the county since his last election; and this had given rise to a report, that he intended to retire from its representation. "I have been strongly urged," he told Mr. Hey, "to advertise my intention of offering my services in the ensuing general election. But I pause. Nor do I think it probable, unless something happens in the interval, that the peace of the county will be disturbed. I fear my pride would be wounded were I to be turned out; but after the risings of this bad passion should have been conquered, I own I should rejoice in my liberty. However, I would leave my continuance in public life to Providence, and not retire till its signal be given for my release."

"I can scarcely enough impress you with a sense of the degree in which I shrink from the very idea of a parliamentary struggle. Whether it be the effect of my being so much older, or from some other cause, I quite abhor the prospect of a general election; and to be active in preserving my situation seems like labouring to be permitted to tug at the oar like a galley slave with fetters on my legs and the lash at my back. I pant for quiet and retirement; and what is more, I entertain serious doubt whether I should not act wisely in retiring from my public station, whether I should not be able to promote the glory of God and the good of my fellow-creatures more in private. My pen might then be employed regularly and assiduously. But I am deterred from yielding to the im-

pulse I feel thus to secede, by the fear of carving for myself."

He reached the West Riding upon the first of July, and after a hasty canvass, was at York upon the "election day. July 12th. Got up earlyish to think of speech. To tavern by ten, and mounted at half-past ten. I pleased people in speaking, and did well. Crowded hall, and castle yard immensely so." "It was, indeed," says a by-stander, "an august and interesting scene; not one hand was lifted up against him, and the surrounding countenances were expressive of the greatest delight and esteem towards him."

Immediately on his election he returned to the labours of that honourable post which he had occupied for eighteen years. "The event," writes his cousin, Lord Carrington, (in a letter, docketted, "kind condolence on my re-election,") "which has given your other friends so much pleasure, has filled me with sentiments of an opposite nature. No constitution can stand, during the ordinary period of active life, such exertions as yours have been in the service of the county of York. It would have been better if, like Windham, but without his struggle and defeat, you had taken refuge in a close borough, the means of which I should have been proud to have afforded you."

A period of unusual leisure seemed now before him, and he entered on it with a degree of deep and serious reflection, for which few find opportunity in the middle of a busy life. He took a calm and thoughtful estimate of his situation and his faculties, inquiring where they were most capable of employment and improvement. The result of these reflections in "the reed house," (a favourite arbour in his garden,) he "put down on paper, that they might not be the fugitive thoughts of the moment, but the deliberate conclusions of his judgment recorded for his own use; or possibly, that my dear wife, for the benefit of my children, may know the considerations by which I am guided in the direction of my labours and the employment of my time.

"When I look into my own mind, I find it a perfect chaos, wherein the little knowledge which I do possess is but confusedly and darkly visible; and where, from the want of classification and recapitulation, and from having satisfied myself with a superficial acquaintance with things, and having propositions brought into and left in my mind, without settling the result, discriminating the true from the false,

the certain from the uncertain—I am in truth, shamefully ignorant of many subjects which I seem to know, and should be thoroughly acquainted with. What has brought me into this state is a treacherous memory, and my having from nature a quick perception and lively imagination, with an understanding (either naturally or from bad habits) defective in the power of steadily contemplating many objects without confusion. This is really weakness of intellect, but it might have been lessened by early and habitual efforts. The mathematics and algebra would here have been eminently useful to me; method too might have been highly beneficial in keeping me from a habit of half attention.—Alas, these remedies were neglected, and from 17 to 21, when I ought to have been under that strict and wholesome regimen which the peculiar diseases of my intellectual powers seemed to require, I was strengthening these natural maladies: and this till æt. 26. And though since that time I have been endeavouring to employ my talents, in the largest sense, to the glory of God, and the good of man; yet, alas, how ineffectually! and my peculiar situation, and the great variety of things and persons with which it renders me conversant, has kept me sadly back.

"I am tempted to think that it is now too late to mend my plan practically, with any effect; yet as it has pleased God to call me again to parliament, and as the greater my natural infirmities the more every aid is wanted, I am resolved to enter on a course of more systematic retention of the little I know or can acquire, and I mean to note down roughly the scheme of study it will be best for me to pursue. I would not overrate knowledge, or proficiency in any human pursuits or acquirements; but inasmuch as God works by human means, it seems to be our duty to labour diligently in the pursuit of those qualifications, which appear to be the instruments of usefulness for our particular station and occupation in life. Eloquence in its right sense is of great effect in every free community; and as it has pleased God to endow me with a certain natural turn for public speaking, and by His providence to place me in a situation in which there is room for the use of that talent, it seems to be my duty to improve that natural faculty, and cultivate that true eloquence which alone is suitable to the character of a follower of the Saviour, who was full of love, truth, and lowliness. Besides, the very basis of eloquence, in the sense in which I use it, is wisdom and knowledge, a thorough acquaintance with one's subject,

the sure possession of it, and power of promptly calling up and using it. But let me ever remember here what cause there is for continual watchfulness and godly jealousy, lest the pursuit should lead to an inordinate love of worldly estimation, to vanity, and pride; and if to them, in its consequence to the malignant passions."

The recurrence of his birth-day (æt. 43) led him again a few days later to review his situation and employment. He had of late found more time than usual for general reading. To this he was so much devoted, that he found it, he has often said, likely to encroach more than any press of business upon the hours allotted to devotion. "I find books," he says, "alienate my heart from God as much as any thing. I have been framing a plan of study for myself, but let me remember that one thing is needful, that if my heart cannot be kept in a spiritual state without so much prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, &c. as are incompatible with study and business, I must *seek first* the righteousness of God. Yet, O Lord, when I think how little I have done, I am ashamed and confounded, and I would fain honour God more than I have yet done."

Again he says, "Is it that my devotions are too much hurried, that I do not read Scripture enough, or how is it, that I leave with reluctance the mere chit-chat of Boswell's Johnson, for what ought to be the grateful offices of prayer and praise? Yet if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. I must then grow in grace. I must love God more. I must feel the power of Divine things more. Whether I am more or less learned signifies not. Whether even I execute the work which I deem useful is comparatively unimportant. But beware, O my soul, of lukewarmness.—I feel it difficult to adjust the due degree of time to be allotted to prayer, Scripture reading, and other religious exercises. God loves mercy better than sacrifice, and there is a danger of a superstitious spirit, of being led to depend on the forms of religion. Yet the experience and example of good men seems a fair guide. At all events, however, some way or other, my affections must be set on things above. God is willing to supply our needs. They who wait on Him shall renew their strength. I humbly trust in His promises."

"I have lately been led to think of that part of my life wherein I lived without God in the world, wasting and even abusing all the faculties He had given me for His glory.

Surely when I think of the way in which I went on for many years, from about sixteen to 1785-6, I can only fall down with astonishment as well as humiliation before the throne of grace, and adore with wonder, no less than remorse and gratitude, that infinite mercy of God which did not cast me off, but on the contrary, guiding me by a way which I knew not, led me to those from whom I was to receive the knowledge of salvation, (not more manifestly His work was St. Paul's instruction by Ananias.) and above all, softened my hard heart, fixed my inconstant temper, and though with sad occasional relapses, and above all, shameful unprofitableness, has enabled me to continue until this day. Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

His Diary proceeds to notice visits. "Venn called; kept him to dinner. Most interesting conversation; telling us many most affecting incidents about his father, displaying especially his zeal and success in God's cause, his powers of conciliating people who were prejudiced against him. Mr. Kershaw and another going over from Halifax to laugh, Kershaw completely conquered, and to his dying day devoted to Mr. Venn. Mr. Venn's trust in Providence, and one singular interference: when all gloomy for want of means to pay the butcher, a £50 note came; from whom he never found out. At Tadcaster the minister really proposed to him to drink a glass of brandy, and when he refused, said he would do the duty himself."

"Public events. Our government seems to have been remonstrating against Buonaparte's scandalous invasion of Swiss freedom, but the issue not yet clear. I think Buonaparte will give way in some degree, without owning it. Pitt still kindly helping Addington. Came to London and visited him at Richmond Park, just after Holwood sold. Pitt called, and spent a day and a quarter at Sir Charles Middleton's, going there to study farming. Sir Charles astonished at his wonderful sagacity, and power of combining and reasoning out. Says he is the best gentleman farmer he, Sir Charles, knows, and may be the best farmer in England. Bernard and I busy together about education plan for children of lower orders."

Parliament met on the 16th of November. "We re-elected Abbot to-day without opposition, after a most characteristic speech from Sir William Scott, who moved his being replaced in the chair. Nothing could be more appropriate than his language. As I was coming out of the House,

Canning accosted me, telling me that he had a violent quarrel against me; and when I stared, Nay, says he, on public grounds; and then explained that it was on account of my speech at York on my re-election, against continental connexions. I told him that certainly it was a question in which much must depend on circumstances and degrees, but that generally I was less friendly to them than many men; and that having been so ten years ago I had not of course become less diffident of my doctrines from the treatment we had received from our allies. From Canning's warmth you will guess a good deal, remembering that partly from constitutional temperament, partly from opposition feelings, he may carry his principles further than some other of our great political men. But I own I dread getting into a war. Above all, I am anxious that if we are to go to war at all, it may appear plainly to have been forced upon us, and not to have been resorted to as a measure of choice, as the result of closet reflection, and political calculation.

"O, my dear Babington, how little is all this varied scene of things regarded as the stage on which the Supreme Being is exhibiting His attributes, and guiding all the movements, however complicated, however minute or obscure, and causing them to effect the purposes He has fore-ordained! How thankful should we be, that He has pointed out to us the means whereby, whatever may become of our temporal interests, our eternal concerns may be placed beyond the reach of danger."

At the very commencement of the session, he declared his views upon our foreign policy. "Nov. 24th. Address moved. Opened debate. Spoke strongly against engaging in continental alliances as principals." And again, "Spoke, having been much urged by Canning and Ryder, on continental alliances." "Our national integrity and good faith renders us unfit to enter on them. We cannot keep or break engagements as it suits the convenience of the moment." He went on to urge upon the government a due employment of the present time of peace.

The part he took in these debates attracted much attention both in and out of parliament. "We hear a great deal of a famous speech of yours and Sheridan's," writes Mrs. Hannah More, "so much that we regret that our economy had cut off the expense of a London paper." "You talk of my speech," he answers; "whatever it was, the newspapers would have given you no idea of it. Never was any one

made to talk such arrant nonsense, and on a subject too on which I wished not to have been misstated."

The year concludes with some striking secret meditations. "How many and great corruptions does the House of Commons discover to me in myself! What love of worldly estimation, vanity, earthly-mindedness! How different should be the frame of a real Christian, who, poor in spirit, and feeling himself a stranger and a pilgrim on earth, is looking for the coming of his Lord and Saviour; who longs to be delivered from the present evil world, and to see God as He is! I know that this world is passing away, and that the favour of God, and a share in the blessings of the Redeemer's purchase, are alone worthy of the pursuit of a rational being: but alas! alas! I scarcely dare say I love God and His ways. If I have made any progress, it is in the clearer discovery of my own exceeding sinfulness and weakness. Yet I am convinced it is my own fault. Let me not acquiesce then in my sinful state, as if it were not to be escaped from. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, we may, I may, become holy. Press forward then, O my soul. Strive more vigorously. God and Christ will not refuse their help. And may the emotions I have been now experiencing, be the gracious motions of the divine Spirit, quickening my dead heart, and bringing me from the power of Satan unto God."

The new year began with his receiving the Holy Communion, and forming vows of more devoted service. "I will press forward and labour to know God better, and love Him more—assuredly I may, because God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and the Holy Ghost will shed abroad the love of God in the heart. Oh then pray—pray—be earnest—press forward and follow on to know the Lord. Without watchfulness, humiliation, and prayer, the sense of Divine things must languish, as much as the grass withers for want of refreshing rains and dews. The word of God and the lives of good men give us reason to believe, that without these there can be no lively exercise of Christian graces. Trifle not then, O my soul, with thy immortal interests. Heaven is not to be won without labour. Oh then press forward; whatever else is neglected, let this one thing needful be attended to: then will God bless thee. I will try to retire at nine or half-past, and every evening give half an hour, or an hour, to secret exercises, endeavouring to raise my mind more, and that it may be more warmed with heavenly fire. Help me, O Lord—without Thee I can do nothing.

Let me strive to maintain a uniform frame of gratitude, veneration, love, and humility, not unelevated with holy confidence, and trembling hope in the mercies of that God, whose ways, are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. I should almost despair of myself, but for His promises. Strive, O my soul, to maintain and keep alive impressions, first, of the constant presence of a holy, omniscient, omnipotent, but infinitely merciful and gracious God, of Christ our Almighty Shepherd, of the Holy Spirit, of the evil one, and the invisible world in general. Secondly, of the real nature and malignity of sin, as a holy curb on my inclinations, which will check me and keep me from evil. Thirdly, of my own vileness and unprofitableness. And to these let me add a fourth, a sense of the multiplied blessings of my situation. Surely never cup was so full. Oh that I were more thankful! My ingratitude should humble me in the dust." He was spending this vacation at Broomfield, though often called to London by the claims of charity and business.

The following characteristic entry in his Diary occurs at this time:—"Lord Teignmouth dined—much talk with him about Lord Cornwallis's statue inscription. Wrote a long letter to poor Finley. 20th. Vaccine meeting. Afterwards an interview with poor Finley in Newgate—very affecting—shocked at Newgate and its inhabitants."

This impression was, no doubt, increased by his having been too constantly employed of late to continue his early custom of visiting our prisons. This case had been brought casually before him. It was one of great affliction. Finley was an officer in the army, the son of a clergyman whose venerable widow still survived. "He had been patronized," Mr. Wilberforce writes to Mr. Babington, "by the Marquis of Buckingham, Windham, and others; and being dissipated and profuse beyond his means, is now under sentence of death for forgery, and sure to suffer. I heard of him through his wife, a poor Scotch girl, young and handsome, whom he had brought out of the north, and who has not a friend or an acquaintance in London, while, poor soul, she has a sucking child at the breast. I heard some things of the man which made me entertain an indifferent opinion of him, and was averse to sending any clergyman to him; but my dear wife prevailed on me to do it, and I put Doddridge's Rise and Pro-

gress into his hands, and Crowther* undertook to visit him. To be short, we trust it has pleased God to bless the means which we have used, and that the poor man is a true convert. Providentially he has had far more time than usual for preparation, and, as he remarked himself when I was with him the other day, he has enjoyed much more space and leisure for religious consideration than if he had been lying on a sick-bed. His venerable mother, a most pleasing old woman above fourscore, told me with tears, that she was indebted to me beyond what language could express for having been the instrument of her son's happy change."

Finley was executed upon the 8th of February.—"My note written to Crowther with a message to him, consoled and cheered him. Crowther came to dine. Delighted with his account of Finley's latter days—his deep humility and his soundness." What he witnessed in this instance strengthened his disapprobation of the usual haste with which execution is made to follow sentence. He had once intended to bring the matter before parliament, and gave it up only from the fear of inflicting a useless injury upon religion, by provoking an unsuitable discussion. "To bring forward," was his answer when it was pressed upon him, "such a motion would lead to much profane ribaldry, and no good result. You could only argue it on grounds to which the great mass of members are altogether strangers." No man with a bolder maintenance of truth united a nicer sense of the reverence due to holy things; and he would not needlessly expose the sanctuary to the hard gaze of coarse and careless spirits. He had studied carefully his audience, and would reprove the low tone of doctrine which he sometimes heard from the pulpit by remarking, "I could say as much as that in the House of Commons."

On the third of February parliament re-assembled, and he returned to active duty. "House of Commons—dined Stephen's. Busy about our helping Buonaparte with ships for St. Domingo" to re-establish slavery.

"Would that, as you desire," he writes to Mr. Stephen, "I could give myself wholly to this business. But it is impossible. I have had a deputation of clothiers with me for two hours almost, while your messenger has been waiting. If you can help me with good proof that the act we deprecate is contrary to the law of nations, I shall be most thankful for it. But the House adopts so implicitly the maxim, Cuilibet

* Rev. Samuel Crowther, Vicar of Christ's Church, Newgate.

in arte sua, &c. that all my assertions would weigh not a feather against Sir William Grant's ipse dixit, or Sir William Scott's pausing. If one could get an answer from a civilian of note, declaring the transaction illegal, the showing it to the merchants might deter them."

He was just about to bring on the Abolition question, when he was seized, he tells Mr. Babington, who was then resident in Madeira, "with a certain illness which is going through all London, called from its generality the influenza. I conceive it is this complaint under which I have laboured, for I am only now recovering, I thank God, after a more serious illness than I have had for many years. But this, as well as every other dispensation, has furnished abundant matter for thankfulness. I suffered no pain worth speaking of; I had every possible comfort; my mind was in a very tranquil, comfortable state, and the Dean of Carlisle *happened*, as we speak, to be upon the point of coming up, and was an unspeakable comfort to my wife."

Whilst he was still confined at home, "a message from the King announced the necessity of immediate military preparations." Silent leges inter arma: and for the remainder of the year threatenings of invasion and provision for defence engrossed the minds of all.

"Your heart would ache," he writes upon the 22d of March to Mr. Babington, "could I unload to you my budget and make you a partaker of my political grievances. The premier is a man of sense, of a generous mind, of pure and upright intentions, and of more religion than almost any other politician. But alas! he has sadly disappointed me; I trusted he would correct abuses, but in vain have I endeavoured to spirit him up even when convinced of their reality. Just now, when I expected I should hear of the members of a particular Board, that they were about to be hanged, or (as I am writing to a sober matter-of-fact man) more literally, that they were turned out with disgrace, I have heard that they are going to have £200 per annum each added to their salaries. In almost every department, but most in the different branches of the naval, there has been sad mismanagement. Then my poor slaves! This King's message, which came down before I had returned to the House after my illness, (by which I was attacked almost immediately after my arrival in London,) has made it improper to bring forward my intended motion. And all this time the wicked abominations of the Slave Trade are going on in a greater degree than ever."

"Two days ago I wrote a serious letter to Addington on naval and other mismanagement, which kindly received and answered. Peace and war still undecided."

All eyes were turned anxiously to this great question, as the hope of preserving peace became evidently weaker every day. It was at this very time amidst the din of warlike preparation, that the foundation-stone was laid of an institution which was to leaven all nations with the principles of peace. The great difficulty of obtaining Bibles for home, and still more foreign, circulation, had for some years been a matter of unavailing complaint. A new scheme to effect this purpose was now in agitation. The designers of the new society proposed to combine for this common object the scattered energies of all professing Christians; and so to create a mighty instrument for the circulation of the truth. Mr. Wilberforce had secretly done much in this very work; and the catholic aspect worn by this new society delighted his large and liberal mind. He was accordingly one of its first framers. "Hughes, Reyner, and Grant breakfasted with me," says his Diary, "on Bible Society formation." And a few days later, "city—Bible society proposal." Here, as he would often mention, "a few of us met together at Mr. Hardcastle's counting-house, at a later hour than suited city habits, out of a regard to my convenience, and yet on so dark a morning that we discussed by candle-light, while we resolved upon the establishment of the Bible Society."

Little did it promise, when thus planted as "the smallest of seeds," to grow to such a goodly stature amongst the trees of the forest. Mr. Wilberforce saw no danger to the Church from the co-operation of Dissenters, who at that time professed an affectionate regard for the national establishment. Bishops Porteus and Barrington, who had supported his efforts for enforcing the King's proclamation, readily joined with him here; and by no other machinery could the result have been obtained. So great was the torpor of the Church, that all more strictly regular exertions had absolutely failed, and they who devised this powerful instrument of good, are hardly to be blamed, though they have with a holy daring called up a spirit too mighty for their absolute control.

Every eye was now fixed upon the dangers of the country. An army of 500,000 veterans, flushed with victory and imbittered by former disappointments, lay just across the Channel, ready to invade its shores. He was giving a "dinner to King, the American minister, on his taking leave,

when Henry Thornton came over with the sad tidings of Addington's having declared in his place, that Andreossi had asked for a passport, that Lord Whitworth returning, in short, that war. The news had the effect on the sudden of making me feel a sort of intoxicating flush, though my judgment so deeply deplores it. 7th. Morning, on opening the Bible, after praying to God for guidance and protection, I accidentally just glanced my eye on Jeremiah xxxix. 16—18. Oh that I may have God for a refuge, and then it matters not what befalls me. I would not lay much stress on such incidents, because we are not warranted so to do by the word of God, but it seemed fit to be noticed and recorded."

His Journal during this year is more than usually full of the secret workings of his mind. "What a mystery of iniquity," he says, "is the human heart! How forcibly do thoughts of worldly pursuits intrude into the mind during the devotional exercises, and how obstinately do they maintain their place, and when excluded, how incessantly do they renew their attacks!—which yet the moment our devotional exercises are over, fly away of themselves. To-day the Slave Trade thus harassed me." And on a following Sunday—"I have been at prayer, and I hope with some fervency of desire for the blessings for which I prayed; but alas, my worldly mind! Surely it is the temptation of the evil spirit. Having called for the first time at Grant's on the way from church, and having talked quite at random of my probably taking a house near him with a back door to Museum Gardens, my mind keeps running on it; it absolutely haunts me, and will recur do all I can. Oh may Christ by His Spirit give me that self-possession and sobriety of mind, that low estimate of temporal things, that strong impression of their uncertainty and transitoriness, that I may not be thus at the mercy, the mere sport of my imagination. In these times especially (yesterday the news of Lord Whitworth's leaving Paris, and consequent expectation of war) I should be weaned from this world, and be as one who is here a stranger and a pilgrim."

The next day he "read the papers concerning the rupture with France on his way to Broomfield;" and found himself reluctantly compelled on the following Monday to oppose the government. "Lord Teignmouth came after breakfast to talk politics. He and I had taken exactly the same view of the state of affairs; thinking our government had improperly asked to retain Malta, and that they ought to have

offered to acquiesce in any arrangement for making it independent. Read the papers, and talked and considered. House till half-past twelve. Spoke late, and House very impatient, being against their opinions." "Malta," he said, "is indeed a valuable possession, but the most valuable of all the possessions of this country is its good faith. It is a possession which, above all others, we should watch with jealous circumspection, and guard from the very suspicion of infringement. This then is my grand objection to the conduct of ministers, that by claiming the possession of Malta, instead of its independence, they took ground which was barely tenable ; they gave our inveterate enemy an opportunity of mistating our real views both to France and to Europe." The debate was renewed the following day. "House till four in the morning. Divided in minority of 67 against 398. Henry Thornton, Bankes, and I agreed. Fox spoke three hours with wonderful ability, as Pitt last night, in quite different style, for an hour or more, appealing to national pride, honour, &c."

To this appeal he had himself replied in the conclusion of his speech. "I have not descanted on the evils of war, and endeavoured to affect your passions by turning your minds to the contemplation of its various horrors ; not but that I think a very unjust outcry is raised against all those who touch on those topics, whilst appeals to pride, to glory, to the reputation of our brave forefathers, are heard with delight and clamorously applauded. It might tend, sir, to the discovery of the path of truth and wisdom, if appeals to the passions were in all cases to be excluded from our discussions, and if we were to confine ourselves to a dry, cold, strict, logical investigation and analysis. But if we allow of appeals to those passions, the influence of which on persons in our rank of life must be particularly strong, surely we should not so squeamishly reject every appeal to those feelings of our nature, which teach us to sympathize with the widow and the orphan, and to deplore the various sufferings of which war is, above all other calamities, the sure and prolific source." He felt deeply upon this subject, and published his speech.

The palmy days of Addington's ministry were past, and the difficulties of the war soon displayed its inherent feebleness. "July 4th. People already begin to sicken of the war. I see secret discontents and fears, but no one speaks

openly. The citizens outrageous against Addington's incapacity, as they call it."

The excitement of these stirring times caused no relaxation of that careful scrutiny with which he tried his temper and his conduct. "I have not been considerate," he says, "or kind enough towards Addington. Poor fellow, what annoyances has he! He has no peace as I have, alas!" And again, "July 17th. I fear I did not act honestly in persuading myself that I might neglect the House of Commons yesterday for Lord St. Helen's, whom I had asked to dinner. It is dangerous to act contrary to conscience, in little things as well as great. It is tempting God to withdraw His Holy Spirit. That way of persuading ourselves, which we are apt to practise, when inclined to a thing which the first simple suggestion of conscience opposes, is to be carefully watched against. Yet we seem not to be deceived either, but to see as it were out of the corner of our eye the right all the while."

It was no light excuse which ever led him to absent himself from parliament. Three days after this last entry, he says, "To town, meaning Levee, but so poorly that I gave it up. House. Defence Bill till late. Alas, Sunday drilling introduced contrary to Yorke's declaration, from his being put out of sorts about another clause. I spoke. Pitt answered me." He never ceased to oppose this injurious practice until he succeeded in preventing it. "I strongly opposed this war," he wrote many years afterwards, "differing from those with whom I commonly agreed, at a great cost of private feeling; but when once it had begun, I did not persist in declaiming against its impolicy and mischiefs, because I knew that by so doing I should only injure my country."

No one saw with more regret the strange inertness of the government. His long and tried friendship for Mr. Addington made it the more painful to him, and he did all he could by personal remonstrance to stir him up to greater energy of conduct. He exerted himself to kindle a proper ardour in the country; and for this purpose he determined upon travelling into Yorkshire, to be present at a public meeting for voting an address. Upon the 26th of July he set out from London, and leaving his family at Wood Hall, in Hertfordshire, he pushed on to York, which he reached upon the 28th. "Found the meeting begun. I had better have been there the night before—many gentlemen—castle yard. I spoke, and pretty well, but I did not feel myself warmed."

To the expenses of the volunteer force he subscribed £500; and finding that he "could do no more good by remaining" in the north, he set out upon the following day, and on the 30th rejoined his family in Hertfordshire. Here he stayed some time; going to London on important questions, and rejoicing at every interval of leisure to shake off its dust and turmoil, and wander at will in the beautiful retirement of Wood Hall. Here he describes himself as "reading Hume, considering topics, running over many books. Much time consumed about letters—a great accumulation of these, and necessity of writing to stir up and do good in various ways; and," not the least characteristic, "visiting daily the sick-room of one of Mr. Smith's footmen, to read and pray with him." Aug. 5th. "A charming day. Walked about an hour with Cowper's Poems—delightful—park—deer—water—wood. Delightful walk in the evening—a most romantic scene for a gentleman's park. They have family prayers night and morning. What a lesson to try to do good by speaking to others! I remember when at Wilford, many years ago, I mentioned to my cousin about family prayers, and he adopted the custom the very next night."

Leaving Wood Hall late in August, and spending a week with his family upon the road at the house of his friend Matthew Montagu at Sandleford Priory, he arrived on the 3d of September at the village of Bath Easton, where he designed to take up his quarters for the remainder of the vacation. "Delighted with the beauty of our new villa. Weather delicious. Afternoon and evening read and heard, out of doors, in a lovely arbour by the river. This is a beautiful country; our house exactly like Westmoreland, saving lakes." "I am now come," he says on the first Sunday after his arrival, "to a place where there is a prospect of my living in more quiet than I have long enjoyed. Oh may I improve it for the best purposes. May I remember that such a precious opportunity as this place affords me of keeping my heart, and making a progress in divine things, may never occur again; that I shall have to render account of it as of a talent committed to my stewardship." He was "occupied chiefly on letters till arrears of correspondence were paid off. Last night had twenty letters ready. Reading a little Hume in dressing, also Greek Testament. Evening, on the water."

The public dangers which at this time beset the nation induced him to make his residence at Bath Easton a season of more than usual devotion: and the record of his employ-

ments on the first Friday after his arrival there, shows how he usually spent the days which he devoted to religious services. "Friday, Sept. 9th, half-past eleven. Destined this day for fast-day, meo more, with that degree of abstinence which may best qualify my weak body to go through the day without molesting the soul. My chief objects in this act of humiliation are, to deplore the sins of our country, and still more my own grievous share of them; my manifold provocations of the righteous displeasure of my God and Saviour. To deprecate the wrath of God from our land, and draw down His blessings on us. I would also beg a blessing on our residence at this place, that my time here may tend to my religious advancement, that it may be productive also of benefit to my children and family, and to others with whom the providence of God connects me."

"Half-past twelve—Let me go now to confession and humiliation, in direct prayer, for my time wears away. Let me deplore my past sins—many years in which I lived without God in the world—then my sins since my having in some degree become acquainted with him in 1785-6. My actual state—my not having duly improved my talents—my chief besetting sins." [Here a reference to a private paper carried about him.] "(My birth-day was worse kept this year than I have long known it, from its being my last day at a friend's house. This therefore to be a sort of birth-day review. I am come here into the arbour by the river side, and am quite secure from interruption.) How greatly are my sins aggravated by the extreme goodness to me of my God and Saviour! I am encumbered with blessings, my cup is so full of them as to overflow. During life all has gone well with me, so far as God has ordered matters, and all the evil has been the result of my own follies. All that I enjoy has been from God—all I suffer from myself. My temporal blessings are superior to those of almost any human being who ever existed. But then my spiritual! Born in the happiest country, at a season of the greatest enjoyment, for hitherto I have suffered nothing from the storms which have raged around me. In a condition of life perhaps the happiest of all, except that possibly a little lower might be both safer and happier, (because I can live less to myself, less in the privacy and quiet I am now enjoying,) but mine is surely one of the very happiest. Then as to what is personal—good natural talents, though not duly improved, and injured by early neglect; a cheerful and naturally sweet temper (a great bless-

ing); the want of that proud self-confidence, (though this has grown in me to the fault of too great diffidence,) which is unfavourable to the reception of religion; a most enjoyable constitution, though not a strong one; an ample fortune, and a generous disposition in money matters. (I speak of this as mere natural temper, not as having in it the smallest merit, for I hope, *at this moment*, I can feel that it is no more than any other natural instinct, except as referred to the will and power of God.) To these blessings have been added most affectionate friends, and near relatives." [Here a reference to his domestic relations.] "My being honoured with the Abolition cause is a great blessing.

"But far more my spiritual blessings. How few are there in parliament on whom the mercy of God has been so bounteously vouchsafed! On none of the early acquaintances with whom I entered life. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Above all, let me adore God's unspeakable kindness and long-suffering, in not being prevented from calling me to His fold, by the foreknowledge which He had of my hardness of heart and ingratitude. Then the preventing grace of God. What else has prevented me from bringing a scandal on my profession and Thy cause?" [Here a reference to some occasions in which he supposed himself in especial danger.] "Let the impression of these incidents ever remain with me, to humble me, to keep me mindful how weak I am in myself, how constantly I need the grace of God, how carefully I should avoid all temptation but such as occurs in the path of duty.

"After having lamented my sins before God, that I may feel them the more, and the contrition which they should produce, let me meditate awhile on the guilt of sin, on the majesty and holiness of God, on the base ingratitude and sottish stupidity of man. I will read (meditating way) Witherspoon's excellent sermon, 'A View of the Glory of God, humbling to the Soul.' O Lord, let Thy Spirit accompany me, let it make me see and feel towards sin as Thou dost, and long to be delivered from every remainder of my corruptions, and to be holy as Thou art holy. (I am reminded, by thinking I hear somebody coming, to pray ejaculatorily to God, to keep me from peevishness if I am interrupted. I have taken the best precautions against it, let me desire this day particularly to be full of love, meekness, and self-denial.)

"It is near half-past two; I have been hitherto quite free from interruption, and even the fear of it. Let me now go to

prayer, after a short meditation on the promises of God. I have been large, though how imperfect in confession. It remains for me to supplicate for the pardon of my sins, and for growth in grace—for a blessing on this place and its employments—for a blessing on my intercourse with others. (Constant previous ejaculatory prayer.) Intercession for country and mankind—slaves—enemies—then for servants —friends—enumeration of different classes, and wife and children. Then thanksgiving enumeration. O Lord, give me Thy Spirit to help me to pray, and praise Thee acceptably, to worship in spirit and in truth. Amen."

The following extracts are from his entry on the public fast day in the succeeding month, the appointment of which he had himself been instrumental in procuring.

"It becomes me on this day to humble myself before the Lord; first, for national sins, those especially wherein I have any share. And alas, I may too justly be said to be chargeable with a measure of that guilt, which I have not sufficiently tried to prevent. Have I then used my utmost endeavours to amend the public, or my own particular circle, or even my own family? Who knows but that if I had been sufficiently on the watch, and had duly improved all the opportunities of doing good, and preventing evil, which have been afforded me, many who are now strangers and enemies to God might have become known and reconciled to Him? Many grievous sins, which greatly swell the sum of our national account, might never have existed. What openings for usefulness have I enjoyed as an M. P. both in and out of the House of Commons; as an author, actual and possible; as a friend, an acquaintance, a master, &c. Alas, which way soever I look, I see abundant cause for deep humiliation. How much guilt might I have kept out of existence, and consequently how much misery:—East Indian idolatries; internal profaneness; even Slave Trade. And especially, have I sufficiently supplicated God, and done my utmost in this most effectual way, by calling in His aid?

"Secondly, for my own manifold transgressions. These I have down on another paper; they are present with me, and I humbly hope I lament them before God.—We know not what scenes we may be called on to witness. My own death may be at hand. O then, while it is day, work out, O my soul, thy own salvation. Pray to God—

"For thyself—that thou mayst be accepted in the Beloved; that thou mayst be supported under whatever trials

it may please God to expose thee to; and if it be His holy will, but not otherwise, that thou mayst be continued with thy wife and children in the enjoyment of domestic peace and happiness.

"For thy country—that God would have mercy on us, and deliver us from the power of our enemies; that He would also bless to us our difficulties and dangers, and cause them to be the means of our turning to Him with repentance and holy obedience; that He would restore to us the blessing of peace, and sanctify to us our enjoyments.

"For our rulers—the King and his ministers, and all the public functionaries.

"For my friends, acquaintances, and connexions, particularly for those whom I habitually remember in my prayers." —[Here a list.] "Another class."—[Here a list of his early connexions, including many political friends."] "These are relics of old times. I would especially implore the Divine mercy for Pitt, who is peculiarly exposed.

"Let me pray fervently and sincerely for our enemies, that God would have pity on them, that He would turn their hearts, &c.

"Let me pray for all my fellow-creatures, for all that are in pagan ignorance, particularly for the poor negroes, both in Africa and the West Indies. O Lord, do Thou at length visit them with spiritual blessings and a termination of their temporal sufferings. Amen.

"And to all my supplications and intercessions, let me add abundant and warm thanksgivings; for, O Lord, Thou hast been to us, and above all to me, abundant in loving-kindness. For our unequalled national blessings, both temporal and spiritual. Run them over in detail, whether as exemption from evils, or possession of goods, &c.

"For my own blessings. So peculiarly full a cup amidst so liberal a banquet. All around me are feasting, but mine is Benjamin's mess. Consider, O my soul, thy country; the period of the world wherein thy lot is cast; thy station in life; thy personal circumstances as to body and mind; thy externals—rank, fortune, favour with men, and especially numerous, kind, and useful friends; the events of thy life; thy having been kept out of office, and too intimate connexion with political companions; thy being kept from utter falling, &c." [Here an enumeration of particulars like that before given.]

Such was his preparation against those perils to which none but the careless were indifferent.

But while his attention was thus directed to the common alarm, he was preserved from one of those imminent and unexpected dangers which continually surround our path. He was a constant observer of the advice of Bishop Berkeley, "that modern scholars would, like the ancients, meditate and converse in walks and gardens and open air." His favourite haunt at this time was a retired meadow, which bordered on the Avon. A steep bank shaded by some fine trees, one of which by its projection formed a promontory in a deep part of the stream, was his common seat. On the 25th of October, he says, "Walked with pencil and book, and wrote. A charming day. I was sitting by the river-side, with my back to the water, on a portable seat, when suddenly it struck me that it was not quite safe. Writing, I might be absent, and suddenly slip off, &c. I moved therefore a few yards, and placed my stool on the grass, when in four or five minutes it suddenly broke, and I fell flat on my back, as if shot. Had it happened five minutes sooner, as I cannot swim, I must, a thousand to one, have been drowned, for I sat so that I must have fallen backwards into the river. I had not the smallest fear or idea of the seat's breaking with me; and it is very remarkable, that I had rather moved about while by the river, which would have been more likely to break it, whereas I sat quite still when on the grass. A most providential escape. Let me praise God for it."

Several of his private observations during this summer and autumn are too characteristic to be omitted. When visiting a house where there was much society of a trifling kind, "Sad work, indeed," he says, "oaths of minor kind, most unprofitable talk, alas! I would not live at 'a Place' to be subject to much of this, for almost any consideration. Quite tired of our relaxation. What absurd work!" At another time, "A servant here is dangerously ill. I know they have no objection to my talking to him, yet I feel a sad lukewarmness, and even averseness to it. Did Christ feel the same towards me and other poor sinners? Whatever be the cause of my disinclination, shyness, pride, what it may, let me not search out for reasons to justify the abstaining from what I wish to avoid, but obey the plain primary dictates of conscience." "Praying with the sick servant" —"I saw the poor man for twenty minutes, and prayed

with him"—appear as entries almost daily during the residue of his visit.

In another place he says, "Nothing could exceed the kindness with which our friends received us. Alas, it grieves me to see a family, in all respects so amiable, fooled at all by the world. Their wealth is their bane. It connects them with fashionable, thoughtless neighbours, connects their children with frequenters of scenes of dissipation. Oh may God bless them! How hard is it for them that have riches to enter into, and keep in, the narrow road! Beware, O my soul."

Among his Sunday's observations, he says, "I have allowed so little time for evening devotions, that my prayers have been too often hurried over. 'Tis my old fault; my profane studies, or my letters, engross me. Yet if we be alienated from God at all, it matters not by what it is, whether our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, or cares of this life: whether with literature, or pleasure, or ambition. I have often on a Saturday evening found in myself, though I hope not allowed, this kind of sentiment—'Oh I shall have time enough for religious occupations to-morrow, and how shall I find sufficient employment for the Sunday?' O Lord, this indicates a sad want of love. How different David's feelings, Psalm lxxxiv. Oh quicken me in Thy righteousness. Give me all holy affections in their just measure of vigour and force."

His Journal, in which he had lately inserted many notices concerning his state of mind, concludes with this striking caution—"Let me beware, lest I make Christ the minister of sin, by comforting myself too easily when any temptation has prevailed over me, with the reflection, that I have a remedy at hand; it is only to humble myself and implore pardon, and, the promises being sure, to obtain forgiveness. There is in truth no other way; but beware, O my soul, lest thou provoke God to withdraw His Spirit and leave thee to thy natural weakness. Not I hope that I sin in the view of this willingness of God to forgive, but I fear, after having discovered the workings of corruption, that I too easily take comfort. Let me rather, when I have thus detected in myself the humiliating marks of my imperfect state, go softly for some time. Let me think of that God and Saviour with whom I have trifled; of my base ingratitude; of the aggravating circumstances of my sins; of the multitude of the mercies which have been poured out on me; of the signal

advantages and privileges with which I have been favoured. These reflections, through the goodness of God and the working of His Spirit, may produce a more settled lowliness and watchfulness of mind."

His health, at all times weak, had been so shattered by the fatigues of the preceding session, as to create great alarm amongst his nearest friends. The quiet of the vacation, early hours, and the Bath waters, had in a great measure restored him to his average state; though he "was reminded by" his "sensations that" his "frame was not susceptible of that thorough repair which it used to receive at Bath in earlier days." How he would bear the renewed fatigues of London seemed a doubtful question, and one friend wrote repeatedly and urgently to press upon him the duty of withdrawing altogether from public life. But he was not of a temper to retire and leave his task half done; and though he was constitutionally inclined to defer too much to the opinion of those whose moral qualities he valued highly, in this instance happily his own view of duty was unshaken.

He returned to London at the meeting of parliament, and entered the house while the King's speech was reading. "How I love to be quiet with my family," he says at the close of the recess, "how long a period of retirement did it appear on looking forward, and now it is gone like a dream, and I am about to plunge into the bustle of life again."

The ensuing Christmas and the recess were now approaching, and he was as usual anxious to turn it to the best advantage. "Who knows but that it may be my last preparation for eternity." "My heart is in a sad state. O heal my backslidings. Bring me back to Thee. Take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh. Blessed be God that I am not now about to plunge immediately into the bustle and hurry of London and parliamentary business, but that a recess is before me, in which I may have the means of some privacy, and opportunities of meditation and devotional abstraction. O Lord, do Thou vouchsafe me Thy quickening Spirit; without Thee I can do nothing. Mortify in me all ambition, vanity, vain-glory, worldliness, pride, selfishness, aversation from God, and fill me with love, peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit." "This is a dull day with me; my mind is sadly heavy. I see with my judgment the great truths which this day commemorates; that he who enjoyed the glory of the Father before the world was, came

down, emptied Himself, and became a wailing infant for our sakes. I see that it was unutterable love, but I seem incapable of feeling any thing. I have got up early this last week, and have had some three quarters, or an hour, for private devotion in a morning. I hoped to have perceived on this day the blessed effects of it; but I believe I have too much reckoned on it as a settled thing, as any effect follows its cause. Res delicata est Spiritus Dei. Perhaps this dull, spiritless frame is designed as a punishment to me for this thought. But this same course, with more constant humility and watchfulness, must be right. O Lord, enable me to press on. How wonderful is this callousness! a sort of mental paralysis. It may not however be without its uses; it may make me feel more how absolutely helpless I am in myself; may keep me more simply dependent on the grace and Spirit of God. O Lord, I know not what I am, but to Thee I flee for refuge! I would surrender myself to Thee, trusting Thy precious promises, and against hope believing in hope. Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and therefore however cold and dull I am, yet, waiting on the Lord, I trust I shall at length renew my strength. Even now my heart seems to grow warmer; oh let me fall again to prayer and praise, and implore fresh supplies of strength and grace."

"Give me, Lord, spiritual understanding; let me drink of the water of life. To Thee, O Lord, I fly for succour; Thy promises are sure! and Thou wilt cast out none that come to Thee. *There* is my stay; otherwise Thou mightest well cast me out; but by commanding us to 'have grace,' 'to grow in grace,' Thou showest that we may. Oh let me then rouse myself, lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. I have found my heart much affected by looking at past entries in my Journal; and at the idea, that, to the eye of God, all my various crimes, vanities, and follies, are present, in their full, unabated, unsoftened size and character, as they at the time appeared to me. O Lord, enable me to purify myself as Thou art pure." "I humbly hope I feel deeply humbled at the footstool of God's throne, and prostrate I plead the atoning blood of Christ, and humbly trust in His promises of pardon and of grace. When I look forward to the scene before me, and think how ill I have gone on, I shrink back with dread. But, O Lord, I cast my care on Thee; I flee to Thee for succour. Saviour of sinners, save

me. Help, Lord, help, watch over me, and guide and guard me. Amen. Amen."

It is no slight proof of the high measure of holiness to which he had attained, that he should have been thus lowly in his own sight, whilst those who most continually watched his conduct, could only give God thanks for the great grace vouchsafed to him.

It is delightful to contrast with his own language the observation of one who, with as holy and as humble a soul, was just entering on his brief but glorious course. Henry Martyn was now passing a few weeks in London, and was brought by Mr. Grant to Broomfield. Here he saw Mr. Wilberforce surrounded by his family and friends. Their "conversation," is the language of Mr. Martyn's private journal, "during the whole day was edifying, agreeable to what I should think right for two godly senators: planning some means of bringing before parliament propositions for bettering the moral state of the colony of Botany Bay. At evening worship Mr. Wilberforce expounded sacred Scripture with serious plainness, and prayed in the midst of his large household."

The session opened upon the 1st of February, and the breach was evidently widening between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington. "I need not tell you," writes Mr. Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster, "that I have endeavoured to keep them in amity: but each has been surrounded with enemies to the other. Dear Muncaster, Pitt and Addington were intimate friends—I reflect with thankfulness to Heaven that I have friends who deserve that honourable appellation; who are bound to me by ties which no political differences can ever loosen."

It was in great measure his perfect freedom from the taint of party spirit which kept his natural affections unimpaired amidst the hardening incidents of public life.

It helped him also to maintain a sober estimate of their relative importance, amidst the crowd of objects by which he was surrounded; and he would frequently lament the want of this safeguard in other public men, even when he formed a favourable judgment of their real principles.

The holidays suspended for a time the rising strife of parties, but when parliament met early in April, things at once assumed a hostile aspect. Immediately on his return Mr. Pitt desired an interview. In the course of Wednesday Mr. Wilberforce "went up to Pitt, whom missed yesterday. Talked

with him. How changed from a few weeks ago !—ready now to vote out Addington, though he has not bound himself to Fox. I fear he has been urged forward by people of less wisdom than himself. I am out of spirits and doubtful about the path of duty in these political battles." "I fear that I am partly influenced by personal considerations. I cannot help regretting that Addington's temperance and conciliation should not be connected with more vigour. Lord, direct me right, and let me preserve an easy mind, resigned to Thee, and fixed on Thy favour. All else is vanity."

His Sunday thoughts turned in the same direction. "I am distressed just now by the state of political parties. My distress arises partly I hope from real doubts how I ought to act, yet I fear there is also a mixture of worldly fear, and also a weakness of nature, which though not unamiable, ought not to be suffered to influence conduct, or even to discompose me. O Lord, to Thee I will pray, to enlighten my understanding and direct my judgment, and then to strengthen me to take the path of duty with a firm and composed though feeling mind. Poor Addington ! with all his faults, I feel for him. But what a lesson does he read me ! Had he really acted up to his principles, he might probably have been above his present difficulties. O Lord, Thou rulest. Thy will be done. And keep me from being absorbed by, or too solicitous about, worldly things, remembering that a Christian is to regard and feel himself a stranger and a pilgrim, and to have his portion, his conversation, his treasure, his country in heaven. Be these my habitual feelings, through Thy grace, O Lord."

Various entries in his Journal prove the anxiety with which he laboured to maintain a friendly feeling between Addington and Pitt, but ineffectually. At length the disaffection of the people caused the King to place Pitt once more at the head of government.

The new ministry had no sooner entered upon office than Mr. Wilberforce renewed his motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The question had seemed to slumber for the last four years. In 1800 and 1801, the plan of abolishing by a general convention had appeared too promising to be risked by a parliamentary defeat. In 1802, the important object of preventing new crimes in Trinidad had produced such delay that the session had closed before the measure had made any progress ; and in the last year Mr. Wilberforce's purpose of securing the earliest season of discussion was defeated, first

by his own illness, and then by the public danger. The time for a renewal of his motion had at length arrived, and it was under fresh and favourable auspices that he resumed his arms.

It was not to the change of government that the Abolition was indebted for these brighter prospects; though the substitution of a Cabinet, in which it had many warm friends, for one almost wholly hostile, was a favourable circumstance. But the cause of Abolition "had obtained many converts of late years," through the altered situation of the country. Its failure in 1792 had been occasioned by a fear of French principles, which the conduct of some leading advocates at home had too much countenanced. The House of Commons which was returned in 1796, when this fear was at its height, had been unreasonably but deeply prejudiced against any change in our Colonial system. But the aspect of affairs had now altered. In France, democracy had assumed the less attractive features of military despotism; while the common danger had rendered an unsuspecting spirit of loyalty almost general in Great Britain; and Jacobinism happily was too much discredited either to render to the Abolition her destructive aid, or supply a convenient reproach for its supporters.

Besides this important change, some of the West Indian body had withdrawn or moderated their opposition. When mentioning, early in the year, that he was "about to bring on again the question of Abolition;" "some of the principal West Indians," he says, "begin themselves to relish the idea of suspending the Slave Trade for three or five years. They have not the assurance to pretend to be influenced by any principles of justice, (this is literally true,) but merely by a sense of interest. The soil of Demerara, Berbice, and Surinam, is so fertile that one acre will produce as much as three (generally speaking) in our old islands. There is also in them an inexhaustible store of untilled land, fit for sugar. Consequently, the proprietors of estates, knowing that the demand for sugar is not even now greater than the supply, are afraid lest they should be in the situation of owners of an old and deep mine, who are ruined by the discovery of some other where the ore can be obtained almost on the surface. I can of course consent to no compromise, but I shall rejoice in Africa's having such a breathing time, and I am really in hopes of seeing some fruit of my labours in this field. I shall esteem it one of the greatest mercies if I am permitted to see

the dawning of light in Africa; any disposition on our part to withdraw that black cloud by which we have so long shut out from its poor inhabitants the light of Christianity and the comforts of civilization."

He determined at once to introduce his motion; but not daring to look forward to entire success, he wished to engage Mr. Pitt to come forward to his succour by proposing the suspension of the Trade. To this proposal Mr. Pitt readily agreed, but wrote to him a few days afterwards, declining to do so.

He was therefore to renew single-handed this great contest, whilst against him was arrayed a body not stronger for its wealth and numbers, than for the character, talents, and station of many of its members; which extended its influence through the aristocracy of the land, which had a prince of the blood for its avowed advocate in the upper House of parliament, and above all was supported by men who, like George Ellis, ruled the literary world, and who plainly told him that they "differed from him totally on the great subject of Abolition."

Upon the 30th of May he moved the first reading of his Bill. Though complimented by one of his opponents for his ingenuity in finding new arguments on so hackneyed a subject, he was himself discontented with the spirit with which he introduced the question. "I never felt so discomposed, and stiff, and little at ease on any former occasion, and I own I think I did not do near so well as usual, though the Speaker said he hoped I had satisfied myself, as I had done every body else. The anti-abolitionists made no stand in speaking." They failed no less on a division. "We divided 124 against 49. All the Irish members voted with us. There was a great Irish dinner, 33 or 34 dining together. Lord De Blaquiere gave my health as a toast, and they all came and voted for us. Lee and Lord De Blaquiere spoke and did good. Addington in a speech of one minute opposed us as impracticable, and blindly threw out a Committee. Barham with us. Pitt and Fox a few words. On coming home found Brougham, Stephen, Macaulay, Grant, Henry Thornton, &c. John Villiers came, and he, I, Stephen, Brougham, and William Smith talked over and settled Bill. Stephen and I had more talk afterwards. To bed late."

Thus was the Abolition of the Slave Trade for a third time voted by the House of Commons; but not as formerly, through the hesitating concurrence of a scarce perceptible

majority. Its supporters were now as overwhelming in numbers as they had always been in argument. From that night the issue of the question was clear. The venerable Newton expressed his doubts whether he, who was "within two months of entering upon his eightieth year, should live to see the accomplishment of the work: but the prospect," he adds, "will give me daily satisfaction so long as my declining faculties are preserved." Mr. Wilberforce replied—

TO THE REV. JOHN NEWTON,

"Palace Yard, Friday.

"My dear Sir,

I steal one moment from business and bustle to thank you most cordially for your kind congratulations. I really scarcely deserve them for not having called on you for so long a time, yet I must do myself the justice to declare, that my having neglected so to do has in no degree arisen from any want of that affection and esteem which I must ever feel for you. O my dear sir, it is refreshing to me to turn away my eye from the vanities with which it is surrounded, and to fix it on you, who appear in some sort to be already (like Moses descending from the mount) enlightened with the beams of that blessed day which is beginning to rise on you, as you approach to the very boundaries of this world's horizon. May you soon enjoy it in its meridian lustre. Pray for us, my dear sir, that we also may be enabled to hold on our way, and at last to join with you in the shout of victory.

I fear the House of Lords! But it seems as if He, who has the hearts of all men in his power, was beginning to look with pity on the sufferings of those poor oppressed fellow-creatures whose cause I assert. I shall ever reckon it the greatest of all my temporal favours, that I have been providentially led to take the conduct of this business.

In extreme haste, I remain, my dear sir,

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

But many vexatious difficulties still opposed the progress of the Bill. Some friends deserted him, and even of Mr. Pitt he says, "never so dissatisfied with him as at this time." Through all his trials, however, he persevered with a patient determination which nothing short of the holy principles by

which he was actuated could supply. Nor did he allow the one object to absorb his attention and prevent his active co-operation in other plans for the benefit of his fellow-men.

"May 2d. Town—City Bible Society general meeting—they forced me to speak. 13th. After much doubt, resolved and went to hear Hall at meeting—very energetic and simply vehement, on 1 Tim. 'Glorious gospel.' He seemed to labour with a sense of the weight and importance of his subject. Truly evangelical also. Excellent indeed—language simple—thoughts just, deep, and often elevated—excelling in experimental applications of Scripture, often with immense effect—begins calmly and simply, warms as proceeds, till vehement, and energetic, and impassioned. All of us struck with him. Simeon with us—his first hearing of Hall. 14th. Breakfasted at Henry Thornton's to meet Hall—Hannah More and Patty. Hall very clever, unaffected, and pleasing in conversation. Town—Hatchard's—Suppression of Vice Society—read their report of proceedings—highly useful. Lord Radstock had in a month got them about 153 members, many of them of high rank.

"Town. Sierra Leone Committee. House. Fever Institution. Brougham and Grant dined—much talk. Brougham very unassuming, animated, and apparently well inclined to religion."

His own choice would have been a very different life. "Dined quietly," he says, "for the first time this age. How delightful is a little peace in the country!" At times, indeed, as he tells Mr. Hey, he was disposed to seek more quiet by a change of residence. "Broomfield, (I wish you knew it better,)" for even at this moment his hospitable spirit would have added to the crowd of friends around him, "is a scene of almost as much bustle as Old Palace Yard. So much so, that the incessant *worry* (it is an expressive word) of this house makes me think of quitting it, and I should not hesitate for a moment, were it not for our having several valuable friends so near us. The Henry Thorntons, Stephens, Teignmouths, Venn, &c. I consider the neighbourhood in which I fix myself a point of still more importance, now that I am the father of several children. I should scarcely be able to avoid occasional visitings among my neighbours wherever I might live, and what irreparable injury might my young people receive from their accidental conversations with those who by courtesy of language are called friends. I have already discovered that children are very sagacious and at-

tentive observers, and shrewd in detecting inconsistencies. Often when they seem to be playing about the room heedless of all that is going forward, it appears afterwards, that they heard and remembered too the conversation which was going forward."

Leaving Broomfield in the beginning of September, he moved with his whole family to Lyme, in Dorsetshire, where he "hoped to enjoy something of to me the greatest of all luxuries, as well as the best of all medicines, quiet. I allow myself two or three hours open air daily, and have enjoyed more than one solitary stroll with a Testament, a Cowper, or a Psalter, for my companion." He delighted to exchange the bustle of his public life for this domestic privacy. "Here," he breaks off in the midst of a letter to Hannah More, "I am irresistibly summoned to a contest at marbles, and in these days of the rights of man, as I would not furnish any valid ground for rebellion, and remembered I was *at Lyme*, I obeyed the call." He could now too indulge, in some degree, his keen relish of natural beauties, and the common air. He "read much out of doors, and wrote with a pencil," and "had many a delightful walk along the hoarse resounding shore, meditating on better things than poor blind Homer knew or sung of."

Yet this was no idle time. He tells Lord Muncaster, "You are not however to suppose me idle here, because I am not employed in business of the same kind as that which worries me in town. I scarce ever remember to have been more occupied. A friend has found me a good deal of work in revising an intended publication. I own I am selfish enough to grudge a little the trouble, for it sometimes costs me as much to piece in an addition which I think necessary, as it would to write a new chapter. I have also been scribbling a little thing for the Christian Observer, which I will send you, but you must not mention its author; and another for a similar work, for the benefit of our great cause. Thus I have given you a hint of some of my operations. But my letters are my grand employment; it is shocking to say it, but I brought to this place a box full of unanswered epistles, and each day has supplied a new demand. But surely I am become as great an egotist as the celebrated counsellor himself. Here have I filled all this sheet with an account of myself and my own avocations. It is not however egotism that is censured, but egotism in the wrong place. If I were to entertain the House of Commons with the manner in which I

spent my time at Lyme, I should justly become the object of ridicule; but not in writing to a friend, who loves to hook on and run in couples with me through the twenty-four hours, let me be employed how I may."

"Wrote an article for the Edinburgh Review; answer to Defence of the Slave Trade on Grounds of Humanity." "You would smile," he tells Mrs. Hannah More, "if you knew how I am now employed." "Also for Christian Observer—a review of Lord Chatham's Letters, with which I took pains; a paper on Baxter; and another introductory to a Narrative Series. Much of the morning spent in looking over Stephen's Manuscript, and Hannah More's intended publication on the Education of a Princess, and adding a good deal of new matter."

The 1st of January, 1805, found him "too busy to write much, yet desiring to record the goodness of the Lord; His great forbearance and long-suffering; His kindness during the last year in preserving us and our dear children, and enabling us to enjoy so much domestic happiness and social comfort, especially at this place. But I must stop and go to prayer."

This quiet happiness was speedily disturbed. Upon the 5th of January he "heard from Pitt that an opposition was expected the first day of the session," and judged "it right to come up." Mr. Pitt's summons was brief and earnest.

"Downing Street, Jan. 4, 1805.

"My dear Wilberforce,

I have hardly time for more than one word, and that word I am afraid must be '*Come*,' though I say so with reluctance under the circumstances you mention. But by my last accounts, opposition is collecting all its force, and it is therefore very important that we should secure as full an attendance as possible. There are a great many points on which I shall be very impatient to talk with you, but on which I have no time to write.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. P."

This call he at once obeyed, casting only one lingering look at the peaceful quietness which he was leaving. "If it were not best to acquiesce cheerfully and entirely in the will of God, I should grieve at being so poorly to-day, because it is probably my last Sunday before I go to London

to engage in the hurly-burly scene I there dwell in. I feel like one who is about to launch into a stormy sea, and who knows from fatal experience how little his own powers are equal to its buffetings. O Lord, do Thou fit me for it. Enable me to seek thy glory, and not my own; to watch unto prayer; to wait diligently on God; to love Him and my Redeemer from the heart; and to be constrained by this love to live actively and faithfully devoting all my faculties and powers to His service, and the benefit of my fellow-creatures. Especially let me discharge with fidelity and humility the duties of my proper station, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; submitting patiently to the will of God, if it be His will that we should be defeated in our effort to deliver our country from the load of guilt and shame which now hangs round her neck, and is, perhaps, like a gangrene, eating out her vital strength, and preparing, though gradually, the consummation of her ruin. O Lord, do Thou lead and guide me.

"On looking back, what sad proofs have I had lately of the inward workings of ambition, on seeing others, once my equals, or even my inferiors, rise to situations of high worldly rank, station, power, and splendour! I bless God, I do not acquiesce in these vicious tempers, but strive against them, and not, I hope, in vain. Remember, O my soul, no man can serve two masters. Have I not a better portion than this world can bestow? Would not a still higher situation place both me and my children in less favourable circumstances for making our calling and election sure? Covet not then, O my soul, these objects of worldly anxiety. Let God be thy portion, and seek the true riches, the glory and honour which are connected with immortality. Yet turn not from those who have these honours with cynical or envious malignity, but rejoice in their temporal comfort and gratification, while you pray for them, and strive to do them good by preventing them from being injured by their exaltation."

He reached Broomfield upon the 12th of January. "Through God's good providence we are all returned in peace and safety; and now, before I plunge into the stormy sea I am about to enter, I would pray to God through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to strengthen me with might in the inner man; to enable me to walk by faith, to let my light shine before men, and to become meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. O my soul, remember thy

portion is not here. Mind not high things. Be not conformed to this world. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and delight thyself in God. Let the men of this world pass by thee in the race of honours, but thine be the honour which cometh of God, thine the glory which is connected with immortality."

The following morning he "called on Pitt, who told me of the offer of negotiation from Buonaparte. His schemes large and deep. His hopes sanguine." "You will, I know," he heard from Mr. Pitt, "be glad, independent of politics, that Addington, and I have met as friends; but I hope you will also not be sorry to hear that that event will lead to political re-union." He was extremely pleased with this reconciliation between "two friends who had no public ground of difference." He was gratified too by Mr. Pitt's anxiety to acquaint him with it. "It showed me that he understood my real feelings." Upon the 1st of February he "called on Pitt, and walked with him round the Park. Pleased with his statements of disposition not to quarrel with Addington." "'I am sure,' he said, 'that you are glad to hear that Addington and I are at one again.' And then he added, with a sweetness of manner which I shall never forget, 'I think they are a little hard upon us in finding fault with our making it up again, when we have been friends from our childhood, and our fathers were so before us, while they say nothing to Grenville for uniting with Fox, though they have been fighting all their lives.'"

In spite of the accession of Lord Sidmouth's partisans, Mr. Pitt felt that his majorities were feeble, and wished to put aside all questions which could divide his friends. On this ground he pressed earnestly by private remonstrance for the postponement of the Abolition question; but Mr. Wilberforce would never "make that holy cause subservient to the interest of a party;" and being convinced by the experience of the former session, that he must begin at once if he would carry any measure through the House of Lords, on the 6th of February he gave notice of his motion. Mr. Pitt could estimate his motives—he "called upon me and was very kind about it." The Bill was "read a first time on the 19th, and the second reading fixed for the Thursday se'nnight." He had no fears about the House of Commons, but that night brought one of those reverses, by which his constancy was so often tried during the twenty years of this hard struggle. After a "morning of business as usual," and "eating at home in a hurry," he went down to the House

on the "second reading of the Abolition Bill. I said nothing at opening, and not enough at the close, but did not expect such an issue. Besides, felt as if I could not go well. Beat, alas, 70 to 77. Sad work! Though I thought we might be hard run from the face of the House, I could not expect the defeat, and all expressed astonishment. The Irish members absent, or even turned against us."

This failure pained him deeply. "I never felt so much on any parliamentary occasion. I could not sleep after first waking at night. The poor blacks rushed into my mind, and the guilt of our wicked land." Yet he had no doubts of his ultimate success. "I bless God," are his private reflections on the Sunday following this disappointment, "that I feel more than of late I have done, that humble, peaceful, confiding hope in the mercy of God, reconciled in Christ Jesus, which tranquillizes the mind, and creates a desire after that blessed state, where we shall be completely delivered from the bondage of our corruptions, as well as from all our bodily pains and sicknesses, and all our mental anxieties and griefs: where the injustice, oppression, and cruelty, the wickedness, the falsehood, the selfishness, the malignity, of this bad world shall be no more; but peace, and truth, and love, and holiness, shall prevail for ever. O Lord, purify my heart, and make me meet for that blessed society. Alas, how sadly do I still find myself beset by my constitutional corruptions! I trust the grief I felt on the defeat of my Bill on Thursday last, proceeded from sympathy with the wretched victims, whose sufferings are before my mind's eye, yet I fear in part also less pure affections mixed and heightened the smart—regret that I had not made a greater and better fight in the way of speaking; vexation at the shame of the defeat. O Lord, purify me. I do not, God be merciful to me, deserve the signal honour of being the instrument of putting an end to this atrocious and unparalleled wickedness. But, O Lord, let me earnestly pray Thee to pity these children of affliction, and to terminate their unequalled wrongs; and O direct and guide me in this important conjuncture, that I may act so as may be most agreeable to Thy will. Amen."

On the following day he told Lord Muncaster—

"London, March 4, 1805.

"Alas, my dear Muncaster, from the fatal moment of our defeat on Thursday evening, I have had a damp struck into my heart. I could not sleep either on Thursday or Friday

night, without dreaming of scenes of depredation and cruelty on the injured shores of Africa, and by a fatal connexion diffusing the baleful effects through the interior of that vast continent. I really have had no spirits to write to you. Alas, my friend, in what a world do we live! Mammon is the god we adore, as much almost as if we actually bowed the knee to his image."

He had been, as usual, overburdened with business throughout the session of parliament. "This living in Palace Yard," he complains, "is destructive to my time. In the morning I rise between eight and nine (being useless if I have not had my full *dose* of sleep). I dress, hearing Terry [his reader] from half-past nine to ten. Prayers and breakfast at a quarter after ten. From thence constant callers, or breakfasters—proper people—and my house not clear commonly, and I able to get out, till near one. Then I have often to call at the public offices, and if a committee morning, I have scarce any writing time before dinner. Then after House, friends—Babington, Grant, Henry Thornton, and others drop in, so that I get scarcely any time for thinking on political topics, or preparing for debates. A residence near London would withdraw me from company, and give me more time. Yet I dread the separation which my leaving Broomfield would make from my chief friends, the Thorntons, Teignmouths, Stephens, Venn, Macaulay, with whom I now live like a brother."

His feelings were again tried by "three of his warmest supporters in Yorkshire, who all solicited" of him "a living for M. I am forced to decline asking. I fear they will be affronted, yet God is able to turn the hearts of men as the rivers of water."

This was no unusual trial of his firmness. "I am much hurt by solicitations from my friend N. for a living. It *hurts* me greatly to appear ungrateful to one who has been so kind to me, and it may materially affect my interest also. But I must adhere to my principles, and trust the event to God. If I lose my seat really on this account, can I be removed more honourably? It would be a minor martyrdom."

His letters during this autumn bear marks of his nearness to the fountain-head of political intelligence. He not unfrequently "drove into town to see Pitt," and "had much talk with him upon political topics, finding him very open and kind."

TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

"Near London, Sept. 9, 1805.

"My dear Friend,

Having my pen in hand, I must chat with you for a few minutes, though they must be but few. I quite rejoiced in your having the Bishop of London under your roof: I can picture to myself his innocent playfulness and affectionate vivacity, and how very happy he would be with you, and you all with him. I wonder you could keep it all to yourself, for it is really true, that when I heard he was to be with you, I was very near scribbling to you on the moment, to wish you joy of an event which would give you so much fair pleasure. How truly amiable he is!

I have no comfort in public affairs, except that our friend Lord Barham is at the helm; for though never man came to it in such trying times, (this is especially true in his department,) yet I cannot but hope that we shall see an illustration of 'Him that honoureth Me I will honour.'

With the experience of the last war fresh in my recollection, how can I participate in those visions of glory, in which I fear a friend of mine is even still ready to indulge, though I am afraid they will never receive a local habitation and a name. Well—the Lord reigneth. We are more and more driven for comfort to that bottom, and it is sound anchoring ground which will never fail us.

Have you received any more intimations from high places, about the disposition to act up to your hints? I greatly rejoice in your having written that book, on every ground, both public and personal.

Poor Lady Waldegrave has been with us, and on the whole as well as one could expect, though sadly weather-beaten. Oh what a change will the next world make to her! Her voyage has been tempestuous, but I doubt not she will reach the desired haven. And 'Oh the thought that thou art safe!' Yes, my dear friend, there is nothing else worth living for. May we more and more feel this great truth, and live accordingly."

His want of confidence in the national counsels did not arise merely from his "recollection of the last war." His spirits were lowered by the consideration of the national sins. He reflected that there had been few, if any, symptoms of general amendment. "The parliamentary recognition of Sunday drilling has added, I must say, to the appre-

hensions which the Slave Trade, and the contemptuous treatment of Christianity in our colonial possessions, from first to last, have so long infused. I have been of late making strong representations to Lord Castlereagh, on the dreadful state of morals in New South Wales. I have been assured on good authority, that of near two thousand children now in the colony, there are not one hundred who receive any education at all."

One quarter, however, offered a less gloomy, though not less affecting prospect; and he did but share the feelings of the nation, at the news of Nelson's victory and death, when he was "so overcome that he could not go on reading for tears." There was too little of this chastened spirit in the official announcement of the great victory of Trafalgar. This was Lord Muncaster's remark upon their tone. "There would methinks have been something noble, dignified, and most uncommonly interesting in the great minister of the empire gratefully acknowledging as it were before the whole people, the Divine blessing given to the arms of the country. What *quizzism* could he have been afraid of, adopting the language of the hero victors? Lord Burleigh had not this fear when he made his reply to Walsingham. Lest you should not recollect it, I will briefly state it to you. Sir Francis Walsingham had been waiting to confer with him on some business or other, and at length Lord Burleigh coming in from prayers, Sir Francis jocularly (which in the cant of the present day would be styled quizzingly,) said to him, 'that he wished himself so good a servant of God as Lord Burleigh, but that he had not been at church for a week past.' To which Lord Burleigh thus gravely replied: 'I hold it meet for us to ask God's grace to keep *us* sound of heart, who have so much in our power; and to direct us to our well-doing for all the people, whom it is easy for us to injure and ruin; and herein, my good friend, the special blessing seemeth meet to be discreetly asked and wisely worn.' This single trait of Lord Burleigh's character, standing upon most excellent authority, has always lifted him more in my estimation, than all his wise policies and councils. I should have been truly delighted and gratified, to have had the public proof I have alluded to, that somewhat the same train of ideas governed the great minister of our day. Lord Collingwood appears to be a worthy successor of Nelson."

Mr. Wilberforce heartily assented to these views.

"Yoxall Lodge, Nov. 25, 1805.

"My dear Muncaster,

Had I been in town you may be pretty sure you would have heard from me of the signal victories with which the Almighty had vouchsafed to bless our naval arms. I well know how your heart would expand on the intelligence. Would to God, my dear Muncaster, (I say it seriously and from the heart, not with levity, and therefore vainly,) that the nation in general, and especially that our great men and rulers, felt as you seem to have done on the occasion; that they had looked like you beyond second causes, and had seen the kind hand of the Almighty Disposer of all things, in the many, many deliverances our highly favoured nation has experienced.

I was delighted with Collingwood's general orders for a day of humiliation and thanksgiving. The latter I had heard of in the case of Lord Duncan's victory and some others, but I do not remember to have ever heard of the mention of imploring pardon for sins, as well as returning thanks for blessings. The former pleased me particularly, for nothing can more magnify goodness than its being unmerited, and that, on the contrary, punishment has been rather deserved. But, my dear Muncaster, how abominable it is, that though, as we have recently learned, Lord Nelson and several others have ordered general thanksgivings on shipboard after victories, yet that these orders have never till now appeared in the Gazette; and consequently they have not been known, and have not produced their proper effect on the public mind."

He was on a visit to Mr. Babington when he heard "the sad news of the armistice after the entire defeat of the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. God can preserve us—apparently we shall be in the most imminent danger." But the full evil of this blow he did not learn until after his return to town. "Jan. 21st. To London on parliament's meeting. Heard sad account of Pitt, and opposition put off intended amendment." Austerlitz had struck a fatal blow at the health of this high-minded man, and a tie was about to be severed to which Mr. Wilberforce had owed much of the influence, and many of the difficulties, of his earlier years. "22d. Quite unsettled and uneasy about Pitt, so to town. Heard bad account. Called on various friends, and on Rose, who quite overcome. He had been long at Putney talking to Bishop of Lincoln. Physicians said all was hope-

less. Rose suggested to me about paying Pitt's debts, and even that I should make the motion. I thought, but I own on reflection, my judgment decidedly against it. Consulted Bankes. He likewise contra. 23d. Heard from Bishop of Lincoln that Pitt had died about half-past four in the morning. Deeply rather than pathetically affected by it. Pitt killed by the enemy as much as Nelson. Babington went to dine at Lord Teignmouth's, but I had no mind to go out."

TO LORD MUNCASTER.

"Broomfield, Jan. 25, 1806.

"My dear Muncaster,

* * * "There is something peculiarly affecting in the time and circumstances of poor Pitt's death. I own I have a thousand times (ay, times without number) wished and hoped that a quiet interval would be afforded him, perhaps in the evening of life, in which he and I might confer freely on the most important of all subjects. But the scene is closed—for ever.

Of course what I am about to say is in strict confidence. I have heard, not without surprise, that his debts are considerable, a sum was named as large as £40 or 50,000. This must have been roguery, for he really has not for many years lived at a rate of more than £5 or 6000 per annum. I do not say this lightly; and he has had an income since he got the Cinque Ports of £10,000 per annum.

To whom are the debts due? If to tradesmen, they ought to be paid, but might not debts to other sort of people, rich connexions, &c. be suspected; and the very idea of the people's paying these is monstrous. I must say, however, that considering the number of affluent men connected with Pitt, some of whom have got great and lucrative places from him, I cannot doubt but that, with perfect privacy and delicacy, a subscription might be made, adequate to the purpose."

During the next week he was unceasingly employed "to get people to agree to a subscription to pay Pitt's debts. Tried many, but cold in general, except Attorney-General, [Perceval,] who warm and generous as always."

His plan was finally defeated by the motion about the debts in the House of Commons. The sum of £40,000 which was due to tradesmen, was discharged by the nation. Mr. Pitt's private friends had raised £12,000 in the autumn of 1801, to relieve him from embarrassment; and one

amongst them who owed the most to the friendship of the minister, was anxious that these claims should be added to the public grant. This degrading proposition was happily defeated; but not till Mr. Wilberforce had solemnly declared, that if the matter were proposed in parliament, he would (being one of the creditors) give it his most earnest and persevering opposition. It is pleasing to turn from this conduct to that of Mr. Perceval, who, with a large family and moderate fortune, at once offered £1000 to the proposed subscription.

This is not the place for his matured estimate of his friend's character, but his letters written at the moment afford a lively picture of his first impressions. "Mr. Pitt had foibles, and of course they were not diminished by so long a continuance in office; but for a clear and comprehensive view of the most complicated subject in all its relations; for that fairness of mind which disposes a man to follow out, and when overtaken to recognize the truth; for magnanimity, which made him ready to change his measures when he thought the good of the country required it, though he knew he should be charged with inconsistency on account of the change; for willingness to give a fair hearing to all that could be urged against his own opinions, and to listen to the suggestions of men, whose understandings he knew to be inferior to his own; for personal purity, disinterestedness, integrity, and love of his country, I have never known his equal." "His strictness in regard to truth was astonishing, considering the situation he had so long filled."

TO LADY WALDEGRAVE.

"Broomfield, Feb. 1, 1806.

"My dear Lady W.

I was just about to take up the pen two days ago, when the account reached me of the melancholy event,* which will naturally call forth still more painful feelings and more tender sensibilities in your mind. It is indeed very awful, and is sufficient to strike with seriousness the most inconsiderate hearts, that just at this moment, when our old national fabric is assailed so powerfully from without, the Almighty seems to be taking from us our main props within; whatever was most eminent for talents and public spirit and

* The death of Lord Cornwallis.

heroism—Nelson, Pitt, and Cornwallis, all gone together. Yet the same events have very different aspects. It is possible, (reasoning from the contents of the Holy Scriptures, whence alone we can derive our scanty knowledge of the Divine principles of conduct,) it is possible, and I would hope, but I own with more than a counterbalancing of a contrary fear, that the Almighty may intend to show us our folly in trusting to an arm of flesh, and that He can deliver and protect us, when they are no more, in whom our ungrateful and irreligious nation has been used to repose its chief confidence.

How do these events tend to illustrate the vanity of worldly greatness! Poor Pitt, I almost believe died of—a broken heart! for it is only due to him to declare that the love of his country burned in him with as ardent a flame as ever warmed the human bosom, and the accounts from the armies struck a death's blow within. A broken heart! What, was he like Otway, or Collins, or Chatterton, who had not so much as a needful complement of food to sustain their bodies, while the consciousness of unrewarded talents, of mortified pride, pressed on them within, and ate out their very souls? Was he even like Suwaroff, another most useful example, basely deserted and driven into exile by the sovereign he had so long served? No, he was in the station, the highest in power and estimation in the whole kingdom—the favourite, I believe on the whole, both of King and people. Yes, this man who died of a broken heart was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The time and circumstances of his death were peculiarly affecting, and I really believe, however incredulous you may be, that it dwelt on the minds of the people in London for—shall I say, as I was going to say, a whole week?—I really never remember any event producing so much apparent feeling. But London soon returned to its gayety and giddiness, and all the world has been for many days busied about the inheritance, before the late possessor is laid in his grave. Poor fellow! It is an inexpressible satisfaction to me to be able to reflect, that I never gave him reason for a moment to believe that I had any object whatever of a worldly kind in view, in continuing my friendly connexion.

I have been interrupted, and must very unwillingly hasten to a conclusion. I had hoped to fill another sheet, and without unmeaning apologies for prolixity. Let me however add a few sentences. As to poor Pitt's death, I

fear the account in the newspapers is not correct. But I have not been able to learn many particulars. Indeed he spoke very little for some days before he died, and was extremely weakened and reduced on the Wednesday morning, when he was first talked to as a dying man. He expired early on Thursday morning.

Your Ladyship will conceive how this event has saddened my heart. Of Lord Cornwallis's death, I have not heard many particulars, and you will doubtless be fully and minutely informed. But I have learned from good authority, that the anxiety for the public good, and the earnestness in discharging the duties of his station, the forgetfulness of self, continued entire; and there were some remarkable proofs of it to the very last.

I have been labouring with great diligence, but unsuccessfully, to get poor Pitt's debts (amounting in the whole to near £50,000) paid by the private contributions of his friends, connexions, and admirers, rather than by the nation. I grieve lest the payment by a vote of parliament, should be made a precedent, though most unfairly, for the payment of other debts; and lest, considering the heavy burdens lying and still to be laid on the country, there should by-and-by remain in the mind of the bulk of the community an unpleasant feeling, which may have an effect on his memory, and associate with it an impression of a very undesirable kind. There are many who now join in the general cry, who will not hereafter be very tender of his credit.

You are near the Mores, if you see them give my kind remembrances, and do me the favour to say I would write, but that I am up to the chin in business. May God bless and support your heart, my dear Lady W. and cheer you under every trial; giving you in proportion to your temporal trials, a more than compensating taste of that peace which passeth all understanding, and that 'joy with which a stranger intermeddles not,' the peace and joy in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost. O blessed words, 'The rest that remaineth for the people of God.'

I hope Lord W. and all your Ladyship's family are well; always let me know of your and your family's going on, for a deep interest will always be taken in your happiness by,

My dear Lady W.

Your Ladyship's faithful friend and servant,

W. Wilberforce.

I have not time to read over my scrawl."

The death of Mr. Pitt dissolved the existing government, and the inheritance of his power was divided amongst the followers of Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and Lord Sidmouth. It was Mr. Wilberforce's general practice to support the King's government whenever he was able; and on this ground he now disclaimed at once all intentions of systematic opposition. He wished too, as far as possible, to conciliate their support in the approaching Abolition struggle; and greatly to the annoyance of many of his friends supported Lord Henry Petty in the contest for the representation of the University of Cambridge, which followed the death of Mr. Pitt.

Yet even to purchase support upon this question, he could not sacrifice his own independence. "Our great cause," he tells Mr. Gisborne, "has been considerably accredited by what has passed at the Cambridge election. Lord Henry Petty got a great deal of support, owing to his known zeal in it. His opponent Lord Palmerstone lost much owing to his being supposed, mistakenly I believe, to be our enemy; and numbers declared they would not, though satisfied in all other points, vote for an anti-abolitionist. So far well. The Chancellor of the Exchequer comes from Cambridge in a good state of mind quoad hoc. Fox a decided friend. Grenville ditto. Lord Spencer I believe favourable, but not very strong. Lord Moira I doubt; Sidmouth, Ellenborough. Erskine talking friendly to me, but always absenting himself. Lord Fitzwilliam I am not quite sure, but I think favourable. Windham contra. But the great point would be to get if possible the royal family to give up their opposition. Stephen had a plan suggested by his warm zeal, that we should send a deputation to the new ministry, to make a sort of contract that we would befriend them as we did Pitt, i. e. give them the turn of the scale, &c. if they would promise us to support the Abolition as a government measure. The idea is inadmissible, both on grounds of rectitude and policy, (the two parties would infallibly have different ideas of the practical extent of the obligation, and mutual misunderstanding would ensue,) yet I think we ought to contrive that the effect intended by it may be produced; and though I dare scarcely be sanguine when I recollect with whom we have to do, yet I cannot but entertain some hopes that the wish to mollify, and even conciliate, a number of strange impracticable and otherwise *uncomeatable* fellows by gratifying them

in this particular, may have its weight; at least it will tend to counteract the fear of offending the West Indians."

Upon these independent principles he acted from the first, and was compelled to oppose one of the first measures of administration.

The leading members too of the new government understood his principles; and to his great joy entered heartily into his abolition views. "Consulting about Abolition. Fox and Lord Henry Petty talked as if we might certainly carry our question in the House of Commons, but should certainly lose it in the House of Lords. This looks but ill, as if they wished to please us, and yet not forfeit Prince of Wales' favour, and that of G. R. and other anti-abolitionists." Notwithstanding these expressions, he never questioned the sincerity of Mr. Fox's attachment to his cause; and he learned afterwards with pleasure, that "the Prince had given his honour to Fox, not to stir adversely." After many conferences, in the following week, "with Lord Grenville, Lord Sidmouth, Fox, Lord Henry Petty, Stephen," he determined that a Bill for the prohibition of the Foreign Slave Trade (which would fix the advantages gained in the last year) should precede his general measure. This naturally followed Mr. Pitt's Order in Council; and would have been moved by Lord Henry Petty in the former session, but for the dangerous illness of Lord Lansdown. It was judged right to intrust this measure in the Commons to one of the law officers of the Crown; and Lord Grenville agreed to introduce it in the Lords, assuring Mr. Wilberforce that he should be "happy to promote the object in any way." The subject was immediately entered upon. While this Bill was passing through the Commons a similar one was introduced into the House of Lords, where it was carried triumphantly on the 10th of May. "I saw our strength," says Lord Grenville, "and thought the occasion was favourable for launching out a little beyond what the measure itself actually required. I really think a foundation is laid for doing more and sooner than I have for a long time allowed myself to hope." Mr. Wilberforce rejoiced in this success. "Sunday 18th. We have carried the Foreign Slave Bill, and we are now deliberating whether we shall push the main question. O Lord, do Thou guide us right, and enable me to maintain a spiritual mind amid all my hurry of worldly business, having my conversation in heaven."

He had intended to follow up this measure by the general Bill, but after "meeting Fox at Lord Grenville's, and holding some anxious consultations with them, and also with" his "own friends about the expediency of proposing the general question this year; when it was almost decided to try," he "most reluctantly gave up the idea on Lord Grenville's sure opinion, that no chance this session in the House of Lords; the Bishops going out of town, &c. But we are to have a general resolution for Abolition both in Commons and Lords. How wonderful are the ways of God, and how are we taught to trust not in man but in Him! Though intimate with Pitt for all my life since earliest manhood, and he most warm for Abolition, and really honest; yet now my whole human dependence is placed on Fox, to whom this life opposed, and on Grenville, to whom always rather hostile till of late years, when I heard he was more religious. O Lord, Thou hast all hearts in Thy disposal: oh that it may be Thy will to put an end to this abhorred system."

The debate came on upon the 10th, when he moved an address, calling on the King to use his influence to obtain the co-operation of foreign powers; "a measure which it obviously would not be so proper for any of the King's ministers to bring forward."

The resolutions, which were proposed by the leading ministers, declared the Slave Trade to be "contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy;" and that the House would, "with all practicable expediency" proceed to abolish it. "We carried our resolutions 100 and odd to 14, and my address without a division. If it please God to spare the health of Fox, and to keep him and Grenville together, I hope we shall next year see the termination of all our labours." Before the session closed, a Bill was passed rapidly through both Houses to prevent the employment in the Trade of any fresh ships.

During all this time county business had pressed hard upon him. Some of the taxes proposed by the new government were most injurious to his mercantile constituents. A projected tax on unwrought iron, was that which the manufacturers of Yorkshire most condemned. This he was a principal instrument in defeating. "It pleased God," he says, "that I got a good deal of credit in the iron business, having made myself master of it." This attention to commercial matters, and still more his conduct in the woollen trade inquiry, were highly valued in his county, and produced no

small effect in the elections which so unexpectedly followed. The woollen trade inquiry involved "a very fatiguing parliamentary attendance." The committee "had sat above five weeks," upon the 25th of May, and "continued till within a few days of the rising of parliament." During all which time he "never but one day was prevented from attending it."

After a long examination of witnesses, the Committee met to agree on their Report, "after wasting two or three mornings about it, reading it round a table—a sad way; they gave the preparation of it up to" him, "in a very confiding, but really very friendly manner." He "returned to Broomfield in the evening," intending at once to set about his task; but the following week was crowded with engagements. Tuesday was "the House of Lords debate on Fox's Slave Trade Resolution. Most gratifying, Ellenborough especially; and Lord Erskine—though theatrical. Carried it, 42 to 21. Lord Sidmouth as usual." Wednesday morning he was attending a committee, and not home till late in the evening. On Thursday and Friday he was "in town all day, and both nights at the House on Windham's Training Bill. Sunday drilling discussed." This evil custom he successfully resisted.

He took to himself no credit for this triumph. "How wonderfully," are his reflections on it, "does God teach us to look to Him! In the Sunday drilling, the House of Commons against us, and Windham himself against us, yet by Windham's having admitted the clause, I hope we shall keep it in."

All this had interrupted the preparation of his Report. It was to be presented on the Monday, when he "put off the meeting of the Committee, thinking it would be better afterwards to have taken a day more, and done it well. And so it proved. Nobody asks afterwards how long it took, but how well done. Speaker complimented me much upon it. I carried it almost finished to the Committee, and all of them delighted with it, and most pleasingly liberal and kind." It was a masterly composition; laying clearly down the true principles upon which the trade must be conducted; befriending the domestic clothier whilst it freed the manufacturer from all needless and harassing restrictions.

But the state of Mr. Fox's health soon occupied all his attention. June 27th. "William Smith with us after the House, and talking of poor Fox constrainedly; when at

last, overcome by his feelings, he burst out with a real divulging of his danger—dropsy. Poor fellow, how melancholy his case! he has not one religious friend, or one who knows any thing about it. How wonderful God's providence! How poor a master the world! No sooner grasps his long-sought object than it shows itself a bubble, and he is forced to give it up." "I am much affected by his situation. In great danger apparently. Oh that I might be the instrument of bringing him to the knowledge of Christ! I have entertained now and then a hope of it. God can do all things. His grace is infinite both in love and power. I quite love Fox for his generous and warm fidelity to the Slave Trade cause. Even very lately, when conscious that he would be forced to give up parliament for the session at least, he said "he wished to go down to the House once more to say something on the Slave Trade."

The cause of Abolition was now thought by men in general to be gained. Immediately after the Resolutions of June 24th, he was "congratulated" by a friend, the owner of a large West India property, "on the Abolition of the Slave Trade being carried, a work which you have had at your heart these twenty years. You will say I am superstitious, but I do not think I have ever done well in the world since I voted against it. Nothing has succeeded with me. I do not mean to say I am distressed, but my money has seemed so much dross, it turns to no account, or like sand is blown away. As you know my hand-writing I will not put my name, and only add that I am, my dear W., very affectionately yours."

But he knew that the struggle was not yet over, and until it was, he would not rest. "I am sick of bustle, and long for quiet, but I will not leave the poor slaves in the lurch." He found only a new motive for exertion in seeing that "the Abolition looked more promising than for many years." No measure was omitted which the most watchful prudence could suggest. The London Committee, which had reassembled in 1804, after an interval of seven years, and again held itself ready to act "subject to the call of Mr. Wilberforce," met regularly this year at his house "in Palace Yard;" and he made arrangements in various quarters for providing the evidence which the House of Lords might possibly require.

Nor were his labours over, when leaving the neighbourhood of London towards the end of August, he "slipped

into the snug and retired harbour of Lyme, for the purpose of careening and refitting." He had long designed writing an Address upon the Slave Trade, and he now set resolutely to this task. "What was once known on that subject is now almost forgotten, and so many new members have come into parliament, that even for their sakes it is desirable to state what we do really hold." "Esteeming it also as one of the greatest honours of my life . . the greatest political honour . . that I have been called forth by Providence to be the advocate in this great cause, I think I ought to leave behind me some authentic record of the real nature and amount of the question." He had long postponed this work, that it might come out just before the subject was debated in the House of Lords.

Here he was soon followed by the account of Mr. Fox's death. "So poor Fox is gone at last. I am more affected by it than I thought I should be." "How speedily has he followed his great rival! Thurlow too gone. Independently of all other considerations, there is something which comes home to a man in the gradual quitting of the stage of those who are parts of the same dramatis personæ as himself. Even I seem to myself to be reminded that I am verging towards the close of the piece." "Well may we also be ready."

In the midst of quiet home occupations he was "shocked by a letter from Lord Grenville announcing a dissolution of parliament." "Sadly unsettled by the news." No time was to be lost. Upon the 21st he was on his way to Yorkshire. At "Blandford saw Fawkes's advertisement in the Courier, and first knew of opposition. Travelled on through Salisbury. Landlord asked me for Cheap Repository tracts, saying those I had left had done great good, had reformed some of his men, had done himself good, and public too." On his road he addressed a letter to his constituents, and after an active canvass was triumphantly returned.

As soon as he returned home he "renewed his Slave Trade pamphlet," and continued hard at work upon it; quitting it only to engage in the necessary preparations for the approaching campaign.

He continued intent upon his work till near the end of January. At length, on the 27th, he made "a great effort to finish the book: which I did about six o'clock, and sent it to London, and it is to be out on the 31st, by dint of extreme exertion, and sent to the Lords."

He had expected much from the critical appearance of this book; and he was not disappointed. "Its beneficial effect," writes Mr. Roscoe, "could not escape the observation of any one, who attended the discussion in the Lords." Its effect was greatly strengthened by its mild and generous temper towards the defenders of the system. "In admiring your triumph," writes Mr. Hayley, "I also admire the lenity with which you adorn it. You treat your opponents with the mild magnanimity of a British admiral, who when the thunder of his cannon has reduced the ships of his enemies, exerts his fortitude and skill to rescue them from utter perdition."

The following extract from a letter to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, exhibits most forcibly his views on the subject of the certainty with which national punishments follow national crimes. How different is such an address from the violent party spirit which generally marks the character of such documents! "It is often rather in the way of a gradual decline," he says, "than of violent and sudden shocks, that national crimes are punished. I must frankly therefore confess to you that in the case of my country's prosperity or decline, my hopes and fears are not the sport of every passing rumour; nor do they rise or fall materially, according to the successive reports we may receive of the defeats or victories of Buonaparte. But he who has looked with any care into the page of history, will acknowledge that when nations are prepared for their fall, human instruments will not be wanting to effect it: and lest man, vain man, so apt to overrate the powers and achievements of human agents, should ascribe the subjugation of the Romans to the consummate policy and powers of a Julius Cæsar, their slavery shall be completed by the unwarlike Augustus, and shall remain entire under the hateful tyranny of Tiberius, and throughout all the varieties of their successive masters. Thus it is, that most commonly by the operation of natural causes, and in the way of natural consequences, Providence governs the world. But if we are not blind to the course of human events, as well as utterly deaf to the plain instructions of revelation, we must believe that a continued course of wickedness, oppression, and cruelty, obstinately maintained in spite of the fullest knowledge and the loudest warnings, must infallibly bring down upon us the heaviest judgments of the Almighty. We may ascribe our fall to weak councils or unskilful generals; to a factjous and over-burdened people; to storms which waste our fleets; to

diseases which thin our armies; to mutiny among our soldiers and sailors, which may even turn against us our own force; to the diminution of our revenues, and the excessive increase of our debt: men may complain on one side of a venal ministry, on the other of a factious opposition; while amid mutual recriminations, the nation is gradually verging to its fate. Providence will easily find means for the accomplishment of its own purposes."

As soon as his book was out he was again engaged in action. The approaching debate called for every exertion. "Grenville told me yesterday he could not count more than fifty-six, yet had taken pains, written letters, &c. The Princes canvassing against us, alas." It seemed clear that he would have no easy triumph. Two Cabinet ministers never withdrew their opposition, and the Dukes of Clarence and of Sussex declared openly against the Bill, speaking, as it was understood, the sentiments of all the reigning family. Yet the ice of prejudice was rapidly dissolving; and when he visited Lord Grenville on the morning of the debate, "he went over the list of peers, and was sanguine, counting on above seventy in all." The same evening came the crisis of the struggle. "House of Lords, Abolition Bill till five in the morning, when carried, 72 and 28 proxies to 28 and 6 proxies."

He had learned from frequent disappointments to look at the promise of success with a calm and tempered joy; but more from excess of anxiety than any exact apprehensions of danger. "I receive congratulations from all, as if all done. Yet I cannot be sure. May it please God to give us success." And on the day before the second reading he makes the following entry in his Diary:—"Never surely had I more cause for gratitude than now, when carrying the great object of my life, to which a gracious Providence directed my thoughts twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, and led my endeavours in 1787 or 1788. O Lord, let me praise Thee with my whole heart: for never surely was there any one so deeply indebted as myself; which way soever I look I am crowded with blessings. Oh may my gratitude be in some degree proportionate."

It was in this spirit that he entered the House upon the 23d of February. "Busy for Lord Howick in the morning. Friends dined before House. Slave Trade debate. Lord Howick opened—embarrassed and not at ease, but argued ably. Astonishing eagerness of House; six or eight starting up to speak at once, young noblemen, &c., and asserting high principles of rectitude. Lord Milton very well. Fawkes

finish, but too much studied, and cut and dried. Solicitor-General excellent; and at length contrasted my feelings, returning to my private roof, and receiving the congratulations of my friends, and laying my head on my pillow, &c., with Buonaparte's, encircled with kings his relatives. It quite overcame me." The House was little less affected by Sir Samuel Romilly's address. When he entreated the young members of parliament to let this day's event be a lesson to them, how much the rewards of virtue exceeded those of ambition; and then contrasted the feelings of the Emperor of the French in all his greatness with those of that honoured individual, who would this day lay his head upon his pillow and remember that the Slave Trade was no more; the whole House, surprised into a forgetfulness of its ordinary habits, burst forth into acclamations of applause. They had seen the unwearied assiduity with which, during twenty years, he had vainly exhausted all the expedients of wisdom; and when they saw him entering with a prosperous gale the port whither he had been so often driven, they welcomed him with applause "such as was scarcely ever before given," says Bishop Porteus, "to any man sitting in his place in either House of parliament." So full was his heart of its own deep thoughts of thankfulness that he scarcely noticed these unusual honours. "Is it true," Mr. Hey asked him, "that the House gave you three cheers upon the conclusion of the Solicitor-General's speech? And if so, was not this an unprecedented effusion of approbation?" "To the questions you ask me," he replies, "I can only say that I was myself so completely overpowered by my feelings when he touched so beautifully on my domestic reception, (which had been precisely realized a few evenings before, on my return from the House of Lords,) that I was insensible to all that was passing around me."

The debate proceeded with little show of opposition, except from one West Indian planter, who gave him an opportunity of replying in a speech "distinguished for splendour of eloquence and force of argument;"* and then came the cheering issue. "At length divided, 283 to 16. A good many came over to Palace Yard after House up, and congratulated me. John Thornton and Heber, Sharpe, Macaulay, Grant and Robert Grant, Robert Bird and William Smith, who in the gallery." It was a triumphant meeting. "Well, Henry," Mr. Wilberforce asked playfully of Mr. Thornton, "what

* Ann. Register.

shall we abolish next?" "The lottery, I think," gravely replied his sterner friend. "Let us make out the names of these sixteen miscreants; I have four of them," said William Smith. Mr. Wilberforce, kneeling, as was his wont, upon one knee at the crowded table, looked up hastily from the note which he was writing—"Never mind the miserable 16, let us think of our glorious 283." This was Reginald Heber's first introduction to Mr. Wilberforce. Heber had entered the room with a strong suspicion of his principles, but he left it saying to his friend John Thornton, "How an hour's conversation can dissolve the prejudice of years!" Perhaps his witnessing this night the Christian hero in his triumph after the toil of years, may have been one step towards his gaining afterwards the martyr crown at Trichinopoly.

The next day was appointed for a public fast. "I was forced to write to the Duke of Gloucester, from whom, as also from Lord Grenville, most kind and pious letters of congratulation. Then St. Margaret's church. Returning, talked with Stephen on Slave Trade Abolition Bill. Then Lord Howick sent for me about clauses, and not back till late."

For some weeks he continued "very much occupied, making other matters bend to the Abolition." But on one important occasion of a different kind he took an active part, opposing the increased grant which ministers designed to give to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth. Popery, he was convinced, was the true bane of Ireland, and he deemed it nothing less than infatuation to take any steps for its encouragement. This opinion he fearlessly asserted. "I am not," he said, "one of those men who entertain the large and liberal views on religious subjects, insisted on with so much energy by the honourable gentlemen on the other side; I am not so much like a certain ruler, of whom it has upon a late occasion been so happily said, that he was an honorary member of all religions." "Carried up the Bill to the Lords;" at which time it was supposed to be "clear that government was out, or as good as out." This "filled him with alarm about the Abolition Bill, lest it should fall through between the two ministries, neither being responsible, and the Bill perhaps being thrown out by the absence of friends, and the attendance of sturdy Africans and West Indians, the Princes taking the lead." To his joy he was assured by Mr. Perceval, whose attachment to the cause was above all sus-

picion, "that Lords Eldon and Hawkesbury, as well as Castlereagh, declare that now they will lend themselves to any thing needful for giving effect to the measure."

But the honour of passing such a measure was not to be reserved for the new administration. Upon the 23d of March he "travelled about all the morning between Speaker, Leigh, and Lord Grenville; parliamentary office, and Whittam's; about error in the Abolition Bill." The debate upon the third reading in the Lords came on, the same evening, and the Bill was passed. Two days afterwards, "received the royal assent".. and passed into a law. It was the last act of the old ministry.

And now his labours were indeed completed. Congratulations poured in upon him from every quarter. "To speak," wrote Sir James Mackintosh from the other Indies, "of fame and glory to Mr. Wilberforce, would be to use a language far beneath him; but he will surely consider the effect of his triumph on the fruitfulness of his example. Who knows whether the greater part of the benefit that he has conferred on the world, (the greatest that any individual has had the means of conferring,) may not be the encouraging example that the exertions of virtue may be crowned by such splendid success? We are apt petulantly to express our wonder that so much exertion should be necessary to suppress such flagrant injustice. The more just reflection will be, that a short period of the short life of one man is, well and wisely directed, sufficient to remedy the miseries of millions for ages. Benevolence has hitherto been too often disheartened by frequent failures; hundreds and thousands will be animated by Mr. Wilberforce's example, by his success, and (let me use the word only in the moral sense of preserving his example) by a renown that can only perish with the world, to attack all the forms of corruption and cruelty that scourge mankind. Oh what twenty years in the life of one man those were, which abolished the Slave Trade! How precious is time! How valuable and dignified is human life, which in general appears so base and miserable! How noble and sacred is human nature, made capable of achieving such truly great exploits!"

For himself, all selfish triumph was lost in unfeigned gratitude to God. "I have indeed inexpressible reasons for thankfulness on the glorious result of that struggle which, with so many eminent fellow-labourers, I have so long maintained. I really cannot account for the fervour which hap-

pily has taken the place of that fastidious, well-bred lukewarmness which used to display itself on this subject, except by supposing it to be produced by that almighty power which can influence at will the judgment and affections of men."

"Oh what thanks do I owe the Giver of all good, for bringing me in His gracious providence to this great cause, which at length, after almost nineteen years' labour, is successful!"

Mr. Wilberforce had been no unmoved spectator of the recent change of ministry. Most anxiously for the sake of his great cause, had he watched the several steps which led to their rupture with the King.

He was bound by his general principles to support the new ministry. "It is in one grand particular the same question as in 1784. My then principles, to which I still adhere, would govern my vote, even if I did not think so favourably of their leader, Perceval, as I do." But this he could not do without the appearance of ingratitude towards those who had assisted him so warmly in the Abolition struggle. Even to appear ungrateful gave him no little pain; but the law of duty was absolute, and he obeyed it strictly, finding only a new proof that "politics are a most unthankful business." "The debt of gratitude," he told his constituents, "which is due to the late ministry from myself, I shall ever be ready to acknowledge, and by all legitimate methods to repay; but I have no right to recompense their services by my parliamentary support. That is not mine to give or withhold at pleasure."

"My situation and feelings," he told Mr. Wrangham as early as the 24th of March, "are very embarrassing from the conflicting considerations and emotions which come into play. On the one hand, Lord Grenville, Howick, and Henry Petty have acted most zealously and honourably in the business of Abolition, and the success of that great measure, (for, blessed be God, we may now say it has succeeded, though in form the Bill has two stages more to pass through,) is, under a gracious Providence, to be ascribed to their hearty efforts. Yet on the other hand I feel deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of not embarking on a Roman Catholic bottom, (if I may so term it,) the interest and well-being of our Protestant empire."

On this ground he had boldly resisted the ministerial grant for enlarging the college of Maynooth, even when the

tardy success of twenty years of labour seemed to be endangered by such honest opposition. No efforts were spared to gain him over; but there was a simplicity of view in all his public conduct, which made such attempts absolutely powerless.

In the midst of anticipations of a difficult and laborious session he "was astonished by a letter from Perceval announcing a dissolution." This was most unwelcome intelligence. The angry feelings which had cost Mr. Lascelles his election in the last year were by no means allayed; and party spirit had been stirred to an unwonted pitch by late public events. He learned at once that his old colleague would again take the field; that Mr. Fawkes, though a man of large fortune, shrunk from the expenses of a contest; and that Lord Milton came forward in his place. No one could foresee the result of such a collision. In their calmer hours indeed all moderate men might think their own victory dearly purchased by the loss of their independent representative; but such feelings would be forgotten in the delirium of the conflict: while it is more than probable that the leaders in the strife would view with no great dissatisfaction, a result which would share again between their families the representation of the county. Whatever was its issue, the contest must be ruinous to any man of ordinary fortune. "Lord Harewood" was "ready to spend in it his whole Barbadoes property," and Wentworth House was not less threatening in its preparations. Mr. Wilberforce's fortune would stand no such demands; "and the plan of a subscription," said a leading politician in an adjoining county, "may answer very well in a borough, but it is hopeless where things must be conducted upon such a scale as in the county of York." Many of his friends dissuaded him from entering on the contest; but the moral importance which he attached to it, determined him to venture the attempt, and after "sending on the 25th of April, expresses to Leeds and other places," and hearing on the 27th "the King's speech read by the Speaker round the table to standers-by . . recommendation of union caught at by opposition" . . he set himself off for York.

He left London upon the 28th, after "a narrow escape from breaking my leg" (an accident which would have been fatal to his hopes) "just when setting out—Deo gratias—how are we always in his hands!" Upon the 29th he entered

Yorkshire, and was immediately engaged in the full bustle of the contest.

A meeting of his friends had been held on the preceding day at York; but whilst "Mr. Lascelles and Lord Milton had already engaged canvassing agents, houses of entertainment, and every species of conveyance in every considerable town," six important days elapsed before any number of his friends could be brought together. At length, upon the 4th of May, his principal supporters met at York, and agreed to establish local committees throughout every district, in the hope that voluntary zeal would supply the place of regular canvassing agents. Meanwhile he himself set out upon a hasty canvass of the West Riding, and traversed all its more populous parts with his usual rapidity and success. "Time was," as he said the year before, "when I did not dislike such scenes;" but he had now reached a calmer age, and "sickened at a contest." In the tumult of popular applause which waited on his canvass, "I look forward," he tells Mr. Hey, "with pleasure to the prospect of a quiet Sunday with you, and rejoice that half the week is gone by; yet I am daily, hourly experiencing the never-failing mercies of Heaven." "I have often told you," he writes from Mr. Hey's to Mrs. Wilberforce, "that I never enjoy this blessed day so much as during a time of peculiar bustle and turmoil. It seems as if God graciously vouchsafed a present reward for our giving up to Him a liberal measure of that time and attention, which worldly men would deem necessary to the success of their worldly plans."

The nomination came on at York upon the 13th, and nearly every hand was held up in his favour. So far all was promising; but how the expenses of the approaching contest could be safely met, was a most serious question. The nomination was followed by a meeting of his friends, at which this subject was brought forward. He at once "declared with manly firmness, that he never would expose himself to the imputation of endeavouring to make a seat in the House of Commons subservient to the repair of a dilapidated fortune."* He claimed therefore the promises of support which had been liberally made, and called upon the county to assert its independence. Those who were present on that day, can still remember the effect produced by

* Annual Register.

his appeal; and it was replied to nobly. "It is impossible," said a gentleman, who rose as soon as he sat down, "that we can desert Mr. Wilberforce, and therefore put down my name for £500." This example spread; about £18,000 was immediately subscribed; and it was resolved that his cause was a county object, and that he should not even be permitted to put down his name to the subscriptions opened to support his election.

The next day he set off to spend the few days which preceded the election in a canvass of the East Riding. On reaching Hull he was met by a great body of freeholders at the hall at Sculcoates; "and when standing up to address them, it seemed," says an eye-witness, "as if he was struck by the scene before him—the fields and gardens where he had played as a boy, now converted into wharfs or occupied by buildings; and pouring forth the thoughts with which the change impressed him—the gradual alteration of external objects, and the still greater alteration which had taken place in themselves—he addressed the people with the most thrilling effect."

The next day was Sunday, and he was able to "bless God that his mind was pretty free from politics." "I walked with him," says the Rev. Mr. Dykes, "for a considerable time. We called upon various friends, and I was much struck to see how totally he had dismissed from his mind all thoughts of the approaching contest. His conversation related entirely to subjects which suited the day. He was speaking particularly about the words 'being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' and seemed free from any sort of care about what was coming."

He returned to York on the day of election, (Wednesday, May 20th,) and here things assumed an unexpected aspect. The show of hands was against him; and on that day he was second, the next lowest, on the poll. This was in part owing to the want of conveyances, and to the impossibility of giving to volunteer supporters the order and arrangement of professional agents. Appearances were so unfavourable, that when his friends met at dinner after the conclusion of the poll—"I can see, gentlemen, clearly enough how this will turn out," said the barrister who had come from London as his professional adviser; "Mr. Wilberforce has obviously no chance, and the sooner he resigns the better." But if the combinations of regular discipline were more prompt in their effect, the vast muster of independent freeholders on the third day proved them to be no match for the voluntary zeal to

which he trusted. "No carriages are to be procured," says a letter from Hull, "but boats are proceeding up the river heavily laden with voters: farmers lend their wagons; even donkeys have the honour of carrying voters for Wilberforce, and hundreds are proceeding on foot. This is just as it should be. No money can convey all the voters; but if their feelings are roused, his election is secure."

"My having been left behind on the poll," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce on the evening of Friday, "seemed to rouse the zeal of my friends, (I should rather say, of my fervent adherents.) they exerted themselves, and have mended my condition. You would be gratified to see the affection which is borne me by many to whom I am scarcely or not at all known. Even those who do not vote for me seem to give me their esteem. I am thankful for the weather," (the preceding days had been rainy and boisterous,) "and indeed I am thankful for a quiet mind, which is placed above the storm."

How completely this was the case, may be better shown by the following letter to Mrs. Wilberforce.

"York, Sunday night, May 24.

"I am robbed of the time I meant to spend in writing to you, at least of a great part of it; but you will be glad to hear that I have spent on the whole a very pleasant Sunday, though this evening is of necessity passed in my committee-room. I have been twice at the Minster, where the sublimity of the whole scene once nearly overcame me. It is the largest and finest Gothic building probably in the world. The city is full of freeholders, who came in such numbers as to cover the whole area of the place (a very large one) where the service is performed, and every seat and pew were filled. I was exactly reminded of the great Jewish Passover in the Temple, in the reign of Josiah. It is gratifying to say that there was the utmost decency, and not the smallest noise or indecorum; no cockades or distinctive marks. Indeed, I must say, the town is wonderfully quiet, considering it is an election time. I am now writing in a front room, and I sat in one for two hours last night, and there was not the smallest noise or disturbance; no more I declare than in any common town at ordinary times.

How beautiful Broomfield must be at this moment! Even here the lilacs and hawthorn are in bloom in warm situations. I imagine myself roaming through the shrubbery with you and the little ones; and indeed I have joined you in spirit several times to-day, and have hoped we were ap-

plying together at the throne of grace. How merciful and gracious God is to me! Surely the universal kindness which I experience, is to be regarded as a singular instance of the goodness of the Almighty. Indeed no one has so much cause to adopt the declaration, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. I bless God my mind is calm and serene, and I can leave the event to Him without anxiety, desiring that in whatever state I may be placed, I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour, and do honour to my Christian profession. But all is uncertain, at least to any human eye. I must say Good night. May God bless you. Kiss the babes, and give friendly remembrances to all family and other friends. If it has been as hot to-day with you as with us, (the wind east, thermometer 77, in the shade, about twelve,) you must have suffered greatly. Every blessing attend you and ours in time and eternity."

After the first few days it was only by great skill in managing a most unruly audience, that he could ever gain a hearing. "While Wilberforce was speaking the other day," writes Mr. Thornton, "the mob of Milton interrupted him: he was attempting to explain a point which had been misrepresented; he endeavoured to be heard again and again, but the cry against him always revived. 'Print, print,' cried a friend of Wilberforce in the crowd, 'print what you have to say in a hand-bill, and let them read it, since they will not hear you.' 'They read indeed,' cried Wilberforce; 'what, do you suppose that men who make such a noise as those fellows can read?' holding up both his hands; 'no men that make such noises as those can read, I'll promise you. They must hear me now, or they'll know nothing about the matter.' Immediately there was a fine Yorkshire grin over some thousand friendly faces."

The poll was kept open for fifteen days, and until the twelfth he was daily in the full turmoil of this noisy scene. "Breakfasted daily at the tavern—cold meat at two—addressed the people at half-past five or six—at half-past six dined, forty or fifty, and sat with them. Latterly the people would not hear me, and shameful treatment. On Sundays allowed to be very quiet, to dine alone, and go twice to church." His temper of mind in the midst of this confusion was such as is rarely preserved in the rude shock of such a contest. "It was necessary," says Mr. Russel, one of his most active and friendly agents, "that I should have some private communication with him every day. I usually put myself

in his way therefore when he came in from the hustings to dress for dinner. On each day as he entered I perceived that he was repeating to himself what seemed the same words: at length I was able to catch them, and they proved to be that stanza of Cowper's—

> 'The calm retreat, the silent shade,
> With prayer and praise agree,
> And seem by Thy sweet bounty made
> For those that follow Thee.'"

Upon the twelfth day of the contest his active labours were suspended by a violent attack of epidemic disorder, which confined him to his room during the four days it still lasted. But though to all the other rumours that of his being dead was added, his victory was now secure. From the third day he continued to head the poll, and the final numbers as declared by the High Sheriff were, for Wilberforce, 11,806, Milton, 11,177, Lascelles, 10,989.

Every nerve had been strained by the two great parties which were opposed to him. "Nothing since the days of the revolution," says the York Herald, "has ever presented to the world such a scene as this great county for fifteen days and nights. Repose or rest have been unknown in it, except it was seen in a messenger asleep upon his post-horse or in his carriage. Every day the roads in every direction to and from every remote corner of the county have been covered with vehicles loaded with voters; barouches, curricles, gigs, flying wagons, and military cars with eight horses, crowded sometimes with forty voters, have been scouring the country, leaving not the slightest chance for the quiet traveller to urge his humble journey, or find a chair at an inn to sit down upon."

The mode in which the expenses of his contest were defrayed was not less remarkable than the fact of his success. When it had lasted little more than a week, £64,455 had been subscribed; and much of it from places with which he had neither political nor personal connexion. Contributions poured in unasked from London, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Colchester, Leicester, and many other towns. "My exertions," wrote the Rev. Thomas Robinson of Leicester, "for you in the last election proceeded not from the partiality of friendship, but from a strong sense of duty. With contested elections in this place I never interfere; but yours was an excepted case; and from your parliamentary conduct you

had an irresistible claim for support, not only upon the county of York, but upon the kingdom at large." "Here are the first characters of whom the metropolis of the world can boast," said one of the West Riding addresses, "stepping forward not merely with their good wishes, but with their purses and their hearts opened. For a long series of years they have witnessed the parliamentary career of our invaluable friend—his manly eloquence, his astonishing activity, his undaunted perseverance, his unexampled disinterestedness—and shall Yorkshiremen maintain a cold indifference towards him?" The answer of his own county to this appeal was one gratifying feature in his triumph. So great were the numbers who insisted upon coming at their own charges, that whilst the joint expenses of his two opponents amounted to £200,000, the whole charge of bringing to the poll his great majority was but £28,600. Forty-six per cent. was returned upon the Yorkshire subscriptions. Those of the south consisted of two sums of £10,500; one provisional, which was returned entire; and the other absolute, of which one-half only was employed. "Never," says Mr. Wilberforce, "shall I forget the spontaneous zeal with which numbers of all ranks came forward, subjecting themselves often to great trouble and fatigue, coming from considerable distances at their own expense, with other gratifying marks of attachment and esteem."

Some of these instances are worth recording. A freeholder presented himself to vote, whose appearance seemed to imply that the cost of his journey must be an inconvenient burden to him. The committee therefore proposed to him that they should defray his expenses. This he instantly declined. When however it appeared that he was a clergyman of very small means, who had travelled (and often on foot) from the farthest corner of the county, they renewed the same suggestion; and named a certain sum, which they pressed him to accept. "Well, gentlemen," he said at last, "I will accept your offer, and I request you to add that sum in my name to the subscription for Mr. Wilberforce's expenses."

"How did you come up?" they asked an honest countryman from the neighbourhood of Rotherham, who had given Mr. Wilberforce a plumper, and denied having spent any thing on his journey. "Sure enow I cam all'd-way ahint Lord Milton's carriage."

"Perhaps it may be thought," says Mr. Wilberforce in the

letter which after the election he addressed to the freeholders, "that we too much neglected pride, and pomp, and circumstance; the procession, and the music, and the streamers, and all the other purchased decorations which catch the vulgar eye. That our more sober system was recommended to me by economical motives, I will not deny. This economy may perhaps by some be thought to be carried too far; yet when it is recollected that it was not my money, but that of my kind and public-spirited supporters, which was expended, no liberal mind will wonder at my having earnestly wished to be parsimonious. But shall I confess for my friends as well as for myself, that we acted from the impulse of our taste, no less than from that of our judgment, when we declined all competition in parade and profusion? Our triumph was of a different sort. We may perhaps have too much indulged our love of simplicity; but to our eyes and feelings, the entrance of a set of common freeholders on their own, and those often not the best, horses, or riding in their carts and wagons, often equipped in a style of rustic plainness, was far more gratifying than the best arranged and most pompous cavalcade."

It is interesting to trace the secret safe-guards which kept his simplicity of mind untainted amidst such success and flattery. "Surely," are his private reflections, "it calls for deep humiliation, and warm acknowledgment, that God has given me favour with men, that after guiding me by His providence to that great cause, He crowned my efforts with success, and obtained for me so much good-will and credit. Alas, Thou knowest, Lord, all my failings, errors, infirmities, and negligences in relation to this great cause; but Thou art all goodness and forbearance towards me. If I do not feel grateful to Thee, oh how guilty must I be brought in by my own judgment! But, O Lord, I have found too fatally my own stupidity; do Thou take charge of me, and tune my heart to sing Thy praises, and make me wholly Thine." "When I look back on my parliamentary life, and see how little, all taken together, I have duly adorned the doctrine of God my Saviour, I am ashamed and humbled in the dust; may any time which remains, Lord, be better employed. Meanwhile I come to the cross with all my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and cast myself on the free mercy of God in Christ, as my only hope and refuge. Lord, receive and pardon me, and give me Thy renewing grace. Oh how inexpressibly valuable are the promises of Holy Scripture!

Thy ways, O Lord, are not as our ways; Thou art infinite in love, as in wisdom, and in power. O may I never forsake Thee; guide me, guard me, purify me, strengthen me, keep me from falling, and at length present me faultless before the presence of Thy glory with exceeding joy.

"There is something so stupendously great in the salvation of God, that when we are enabled to have some realizing sense of it, one is ready to cry out, 'Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me; surely I am utterly unworthy of all Thy goodness and love. So thou art, but Christ is worthy; and He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. And all the company of the redeemed, with the holy angels, and surely with myriads of myriads of beings, according to their several ranks, and orders, and faculties, and powers, shall join in adoring the infinite love of the Redeemer, and shall make up the chorus of that heavenly song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honour, and glory, and blessing,' &c. Oh may I bear a part in that bright and glad assemblage! Who will, who among them all can, have more cause than myself for gratitude and love? Meanwhile may I prove my gratitude on earth, by giving up myself to Thy service, and living universally to Thy glory. O Lord, enable me to be thus wholly Thine."

"O Lord, I humbly hope that it is Thou who knockest at the door of my heart, who callest forth these more than usually lively emotions of contrition, desire, faith, trust, and gratitude. Oh may I hear His voice, and open the door and let Him in, and be admitted to intercourse and fellowship; may I be really a thriving Christian, bringing forth abundantly the fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God. O Lord, I am lost in astonishment at thy mercy and love. That Thou shouldst not only quit the glory and happiness of heaven to be made man, and bear the most excruciating torments and bitter degradation for our deliverance and salvation; but that Thou still bearest with us, though we, knowing all Thy goodness, are still cold and insensible to it. That Thou strivest with our perverseness, conquerest our opposition, and still waitest to be gracious; and that it was in the fore-knowledge of this our base ingratitude and stupid perverseness, that Thou didst perform these miracles of mercy. That Thou knewest me, and my hardness, and coldness, and unworthy return for all Thy goodness, when Thou calledst me from the giddy throng, and shone into my heart with the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. O well may we exclaim, 'Thy ways are not as our ways, nor Thy thoughts

as our thoughts; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts.' O Lord, I cast myself before Thee, O spurn me not from Thee; unworthy, though I am, of all Thy wonderful goodness. . . O grant me more and more of humility, and love, and faith, and hope, and longing for a complete renewal into Thine image. Lord, help me and hear me. I come to Thee as my only Saviour. O be Thou my help, my strength, my peace, and joy, and consolation; my Alpha and Omega; my all in all. Amen."

"I have far too little thought of the dangers of great wealth, or rather of such affluence and rank in life as mine. O my soul, bethink thee of it; and at the same time bless God who has given thee some little knowledge of the way of salvation. How little also have I borne in mind that we are to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth! This impression can be kept up in those who are in such a state of prosperity and comfort as myself, by much prayer and meditation, and by striving habitually to walk by faith and to have my conversation in heaven." "O Lord, direct me to some new line of usefulness, for Thy glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures. I have been thinking of lessening the number of oaths."

The new parliament met upon the 22d of June, and continued till the second week in August.

In the middle of December he had a sudden attack of dangerous illness. "Dec. 20th. A good deal of pain in my side, and my breath much affected. 22d. Pitcairne called and bled me—thought the complaint very serious—inflammation on the lungs—the last I should have feared. How are we reminded of our continual dependence upon God! 23d. Better, I thank God, but still in a ticklish state. 25th. Surprisingly recovered, I thank God." This amendment continued without any check; and upon the first day of the new year, he acknowledges "the great mercies I have received of the Lord. How good has God been to me in recovering me so rapidly from a very dangerous disease, and during the course of it, preserving me from any great suffering, and giving me every possible help and comfort! My dear kind friend the Dean came up to us. My servant very obliging. Pitcairne very kind and attentive, and my dearest wife all tenderness and assiduity. I was taken ill on the 18th of December, and though not yet down-stairs, I am almost myself again. O Lord, bless to me this dispensation! Cause me to live in a

more practical sense of the shortness and uncertainty of all human things; and oh bring my soul, more effectually than ever hitherto, to God in Christ, and give me a large measure of Thy Spirit. May I be enabled to live by faith above the world, looking for a better country, with my heart supremely set on it. O Lord, I know too well my own weakness, but Thou canst strengthen the weakest, and hast promised that Thou wilt, if we earnestly pray to Thee. Lord, be with me, and strengthen me. Enable me to maintain a closer walk with Thee; and while I live a life of faith and hope, having my affections set on things above, may I discharge the duties of my station, so as to let my light shine before men, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Amen, and Amen."

Amongst the memoranda of a day "set apart" shortly afterwards, the meeting of parliament being at hand, "for prayer and meditation, and other religious exercises, with moderation in food," after acknowledging "God's mercy in his late recovery from sickness," he prays "above all for the love of God and my Redeemer, that this blessed principle may be like the main-spring of the machine, prompting all the movements, and diffusing its practical influence through every disposition, action, plan, and design. And (if it be consistent with the Divine will) for a more assured hope of the favour of God and Christ. May the God of hope fill me with all joy and peace in believing. O Lord, do Thou break, soften, quicken, warm my cold heart; and teach me to feel an overflowing love and gratitude, or rather a deep and grateful sense of obligation, not as a transient effusion, but as the settled temper and disposition, the practical habit of my soul: that so I may here begin the song of praise, to be sung with more purified and warmed affections in heaven. Worthy is the Lamb; and blessing, honour, glory, and power, &c."

On the subject of the East Indian Missions, he wrote

TO W. HEY, ESQ.

"Near London, Feb. 5, 1808.

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"You must have collected from the pamphlets that have been advertised, that the subject of East Indian missions has been interesting the public mind; but possibly you may not have heard how active and earnest 'the enemy' has been

(in writing to you I may call things by their true names) in stirring up opposition to any endeavours for diffusing Christian instruction throughout our East Indian empire. A motion has been made in the Court of Directors by one of the most able, experienced, wealthy, and well-connected members of their body; the effect of which would have been to bring home all the missionaries, to recall Buchanan by name as a culprit, and to prohibit the circulation or even translation of the Scriptures. The Court seemed in general but too well-disposed to such proceedings, but the most strenuous efforts were made by Mr. Grant and Mr. Parry, Lord Teignmouth and others, and happily the first attempt was defeated by a considerable majority; and we hope that, though it is dreadful to think what is the general opinion and feeling of the bulk of the higher orders on this whole subject, we shall be able to resist all the endeavours that are used to bar out the light of truth from those our benighted fellow-subjects. Mr. Perceval has stood our friend.—Buonaparte, by all accounts, is preparing on a great scale for an expedition to the East; and should this country use the powers of its government for the avowed purpose of shutting the Scriptures out of our Indian empire, how could we hope that God would not employ his French army in breaking down the barriers we had vainly and wickedly been rearing, and thus open a passage by which Christian light might shine upon that darkened land. The Dean's warnings have kept me out of town hitherto, but on Monday next I hope to return to London, and to attend parliament. Farewell, my dear sir.

I am yours most sincerely,

W. Wilberforce."

He now resumed his attendance at the "House almost every night," where he complains of the "debates" as "poor compared with former times; yet Perceval improved, and Canning extremely clever."

He was now again in the full stream of business. "Much worried, many committees. East Indian—lottery—woollen committees. Friends at dinner before House. Letters." "11th. To town, Proclamation Society about Smithfield market. 14th. Heard that Danish Davis's Strait* settlers had not been attended to, and talked with Pole and Gambier

* They consisted principally of Greenlanders under the charge of the Moravian brethren, and depended for sustenance on supplies from Europe.

about them. Was to dine at Broomfield, but stopped in town, and drove to Shadwell dock, Col. Mellish, about them." For a month he steadily renewed these applications, and at last succeeded in procuring the despatch of vessels on this work of mercy. Upon the 5th of May the "House" was "again on Maynooth business, and very hot and violent even to bitterness. I spoke—I hope not violently, but, alas! much bitterness in many. I reproached for Methodism. My own final judgment not made up on the Catholic Question—I strongly incline to their coming into parliament, though not to their seeing with other men's (priests') eyes."

"May 28th. Catholic Question. Grattan's speech excellent and temperate. I spoke, and though abstaining from all reflections on popery, and arguing the question on grounds of time and circumstances, I was extremely abused." "We have had a very long and most unpleasant debate," he writes the next day. "It is grievous to see that we are only nominally a Protestant people." "Alas, they are driving the Roman Catholics to rebellion. How mad to be thus stimulating them, by telling them they are enslaved and oppressed! It is irreligion and immorality of which Ireland is sick. These popery has increased and fomented."

Business meanwhile was increasing on his hands. Private cases abounded. Clients of every kind crowded his anteroom and breakfast table; and friends flocked round him at all hours, and assembled daily at his easy and hospitable dinner. The parliamentary attendance was "the most severe" he "ever knew;" so that though "the country was exquisitely beautiful in the first burst of spring, or rather summer," he "never got to Broomfield, being often absent from" his "family from Monday morning to Saturday night, or even Sunday morning." In truth he was ever watching at his post, the ready supporter, both in and out of parliament, of every moral and religious question. Every morning he was at "the Smithfield Market Committee, in the hope of altering the Monday market," though the "room was hot" and "little done. Parties so strong—ours most respectable, theirs far most numerous; so much so that painful to persevere, but we must please God, and assert His cause." "Shattered from a bad night, from being uneasy at not having reprobated M. A. Taylor's shameless declaration, 'that interest alone to be our guide, not right or justice.' The House only laughed, and he mistook it. I was over-persuaded, but I deeply repented, and still am sorry."

The eyes of Europe were now fixed upon the Spanish patriots, who promised an effectual resistance to the modern "scourge of God." "Sheridan would, against the advice of all the opposition friends, electrify the country on the Spanish business. He came down to the House, but the opportunity being delayed, he going up-stairs got so drunk, as to make him manifestly and disgracefully besotted. Yet he seemed to remember a fair speech, for the topics were good; only he was like a man catching through a thick medium at the objects before him. Alas, a most humiliating spectacle; yet the papers state him to have made a brilliant speech, &c."

On this subject he wrote from where he had fixed his summer quarters.

"East-Bourne, July 19, 1808.

"My dear Muncaster,

How many a mile are we now separated! yet, in confirmation of Cowper's beautiful line, 'How fleet is a glance of the mind!' in a moment I can fly on the wings of imagination, from the shore of the Channel to Julius Cæsar's old castle in Eskdale. It seems shamefully long since I wrote to you, but you have kindly let me know of your goings-on, for which I thank you.

"What an extraordinary spectacle is now exhibiting in Spain! Surely Buonaparte would not have proceeded as he has done, if he had not been absolutely intoxicated by his prosperity. To publish to the world that Joseph Buonaparte was to be King, and his children in hereditary succession to succeed to the crown after his death; and failing his issue, Louis and his heirs: and failing Louis, Jerome and his heirs; and failing all these, to revert to us, Napoleon! Surely this is so heaping insult on injury, that he might have foreseen that human nature would scarcely bear it. I have often thought that it might perhaps please God to pull down this giant when raised to his highest elevation, and apparently glorying the most reasonably, as well as most proudly, in his strength. Do you recollect the chapter in Isaiah, in which the prophet introduces the King of Assyria as at first boasting of his victories, and after having been reminded that he was but an instrument in the hand of the Almighty, he is represented as brought down to the pit amid contempt and derision. Lowth, I remember, justly states it to be, for its length, the finest poem almost in existence."

He was the more deeply interested in the success of the

Spanish arms from its apparent bearing on the cause of Abolition. These hopes he soon expressed to Mr. Stephen.

"My dear Stephen,

Just at present the Spanish patriots must necessarily be wholly engrossed by the exigencies of their own situation, but doubtless they are precisely in the circumstances in which, if it please God they succeed, (and may the Almighty favour them,) that generous temper of mind will be produced, which will abhor oppression and cruelty, consequently will abolish the Slave Trade. And surely we ought to be immediately taking all proper preparatory measures for diffusing information on the subject. Such prospects open to my view when I look around on both sides of the Atlantic, as quite to enrapture me. To the fertile soil of your mind let me commit the seed of this idea, and let me earnestly conjure you to give it immediate attention. Many of the priests appear to have joined the popular cause in Spain; probably, therefore, also, in Portugal. They may, perhaps, be worked on by the double motives of the spirit of liberty and of religion, to exert themselves for so glorious an object as ours. I will immediately write to Canning, desiring him to mention the subject to the Spanish deputies. Do you desire Perceval to do the same. I have an idea, also, of writing to Lord Holland, as well as to Brougham, whom we ought here to carry along with us, for his knowledge of Portugal people, &c. render him capable of being a useful ally. Farewell.

I am ever yours,

W. Wilberforce."

At East-Bourne he had escaped the crowd of visiters who dogged his Broomfield hours, and he rejoiced in being able to associate freely with his family, and find some time for meditation and for study. But one great hinderance still remained. His letters still followed, pouring in upon him in multitudes. "They are become an unspeakable plague to me. They form my chief occupation, and I must contrive some means of lessening the time spent on them; for there is no acquisition of knowledge, no exercise or improvement of talents." Yet he was as far as possible from cultivating an idle and unmeaning correspondence. In truth, like his open house, and broken London mornings, it sprung of necessity from his peculiar situation. Without his letters

he could not have been for years the advocate of every moral and religious cause; the friend and counsellor of all who were in need of counsel; the very Attorney-General of the unprotected and the friendless.

With "inconceivable sorrow" he heard just at this time "of all the schoolmasters being dismissed in Ceylon. We are to save only about £1500 by what is the moral and religious ruin of the island. O Lord, how deeply do we provoke Thy resentment! Yet have mercy on us, and spare us, much as we deserve punishment. I have had some intercourse with Lord Castlereagh about it." Happily he did not remonstrate fruitlessly; some of the old schools were restored, and the place of others supplied by new institutions.

East-Bourne was his head quarters until the 19th of November, when he took possession of a new house at Kensington Gore, of which he had bought a twenty-five years' lease in the preceding spring. It was not without "great regret that" he "gave up Broomfield, a place endeared to" him "by much happiness enjoyed in it, as well as by its own beauty. I give up also the living near my friends in this circle; yet I trust my connexion with them is so firm that the removal will not weaken it." The Dean of Carlisle suggested another incidental benefit, pointing out to him "a danger in living altogether at Clapham—danger of conceit and spiritual pride, and a cold, critical spirit. He imputes this less to me than to some others—but the danger great." Upon the whole, he thought "the change of residence best —may God bless it—I trust that it is made on grounds of which He approves." The distance of Broomfield made a London house essential to his parliamentary attendance, and separated him almost entirely from his family. By settling within a mile of Hyde Park Corner, he hoped to be much oftener with them; and by the exchange of "the old house in Palace Yard," for "lodgings on the Terrace, (for I must have a nest close to the House of Commons,)" he hoped to promote that economy by which he still kept up his ample charities.

These ends were in a measure answered. As long, indeed, as he sat for Yorkshire, and actively "represented a tenth part of England," he was often kept throughout the week at his lodgings in Westminster. Yet upon the whole he was more with his family; and from the size of his new house was able to exercise, with greater comfort, the hospitality in which he delighted. There are still many who re-

member with no little interest, the cheerful and enlightened intercourse of the house and grounds of Kensington Gore. The house was seldom free from guests when he was in it. The first hours in the morning were all that he could strictly call his own, and these were spent in devotional exercises. "I always find that I have most time for business, and it is best done, when I have most properly observed my private devotions." "In the calmness of the morning," was his common observation, "before the mind is heated and wearied by the turmoil of the day, you have a season of unusual importance for communing with God and with yourself." After this secret intercourse with his heavenly Father, which cheered and sustained his laborious pilgrimage, he joined his assembled household for morning prayer—a service which he conducted himself, and with peculiar interest. With breakfast, which was thus made somewhat late, began his first throng of visiters. His ante-room, which still justified abundantly the witty simile of Hannah More, furnished many breakfast guests; and his extraordinary social powers were never seen to more advantage, than in drawing out and harmonizing all the shades of character and feeling which were here brought suddenly together. Thus whilst he was endeavouring to relax the stiffness of a "starched little fellow whom" he "was not anxious to disgust, Andrew Fuller was announced—a man of considerable powers of mind, but who bore about him very plainly the vestigia ruris. Not a moment was to be lost. So before he came in I said to my little friend, 'You know Andrew Fuller?' 'No, I never heard his name.' 'Oh then you must know him; he is an extraordinary man, whose talents have raised him from a very low situation.' This prepared the way, and Andrew Fuller did no harm, although he walked in looking the very picture of a blacksmith."

His household economy abounded in cheerful hospitality, and in the highest charms of conversation and social intercourse: but there was nothing costly or luxurious in his style of living; these were banished on principle, and none of his guests missed them. "You can do what you please," said a friend, who was celebrated for the excellence of his table; "people go to you to hear you talk, not for a good dinner." "I am almost ashamed," was the thankful simplicity of his own remark when first entering Kensington Gore, "of the handsomeness of my house, my veranda, &c." "I am almost uneasy about my house and furniture, lest I am

spending too much money upon it, so as to curtail my charities." The very next entry is a good commentary on this characteristic fear. "E. forced his way in to see me—the poor midshipman who about eight months ago wrote to me from Morpeth gaol, at the suit of a tailor for uniform, whom I got released, and sent him a few pounds. He called to thank me, and said he should never forget my kindness—not ashamed of it; and would subscribe five pounds per annum to Small Debt Society. Eat yesterday a turkey, sent me by the person whom I helped to recover a landed estate of three or four hundred pounds per annum."

He was at this time meditating a trip to Bath, and wrote to Mr. Perceval to ascertain the day of meeting. "Parliament," was the reply, "will not meet unless something unforeseen at present should occur, until Monday the 16th of January. I hope therefore you will lose no time in getting your health well set up at Bath." His watchfulness for public morals at once suggested to him the amount of Sunday travelling which such a day of meeting would create; and he begged in answer, that it might, if possible, be altered.

"I thank you for your note of yesterday," rejoined the conscientious minister, "and am really sorry that I have given occasion for it. I feel myself the more to blame, because, upon the receipt of your note, it brought back to my recollection (what I had till then forgot) some observations which the Speaker made to me some time ago upon the same subject; if they had been present to my mind when we settled the meeting of parliament, I would not have fixed it upon a Monday. We were, however, almost driven into that day."

Two days later he wrote again.

"Downing Street, Dec. 10, 1808.

"Dear Wilberforce,

You will be glad to hear that it is determined to postpone the meeting of parliament till Thursday the 19th, instead of Monday the 16th, to obviate the objections which you have suggested to the meeting on that day.

Yours very truly,

SPENCER PERCEVAL."

"The House," says his Diary, "put off nobly by Perceval, because of the Sunday travelling it would have occasioned."

The leisure of the Christmas holidays left him time to look at Cœlebs, which had just appeared. None of Hannah More's usual confidants had been let this time into the secret, and no rumour had betrayed its author. "Cœlebs," says his Diary, "variously talked of. The Henry Thorntons affirm that it cannot be Hannah More's, and are strong against it, surely without reason." His critical discernment was more faithful. "Reading Cœlebs in the afternoon, and much pleased with it; it is Hannah More's all over."

"Kensington Gore, Jan. 7, 1809.

"My dear Friend,

'What! did I not know thy old ward, Hal?' I had not read ten pages before I was reminded of aut Erasmus, &c. And without paying you any compliments, I may say, that it is a piece in my judgment, of which you, even you, with all your well-earned and well-merited credit, need not be ashamed; on the contrary, I really am delighted with it, and have been kept up night after night reading it after supper. I hope too, which will please you better, that it will do as much good, as such a composition, from its very nature, and from the state of mind it necessarily generates, can do. It will, I trust, draw on to other and more serious studies. It will accredit true religion and its ministers, and its consistent professors. It will—but I must break off. I am come too late from London, and have to prepare for a large party to dinner, preceded by a consultation on a matter of great importance to a friend."

In the midst of great political contentions, the morning of the 3d of May presented to him a more grateful sight. His views in joining the Bible Society have been explained already; and giving others credit for that pure spirit with which he was animated, he saw in its anniversary a "grand" and pleasing spectacle—"five or six hundred people of all sects and parties, with one heart, and face, and tongue." But this was only a moment's calm amidst the troubled scenes in which he was compelled to take an active part. "I want more time for reflection, and consideration of political subjects. The times are highly alarming. The Duke of York's affair, and parliament's conduct in it, has infused a general jealousy of public men. The House of Commons has lost the public confidence; there is no man of such talents as to take the ascendency like Pitt or Fox. It would

be worse to try to stifle inquiry than to prosecute it. Yet I see the people may be inflamed to madness, or at least to the most mischievous excesses and measures. Oh may He who rides in the whirlwind direct the storm for our good!"

During the year 1808-9, he took an active part in the discussion of the various matters which were brought before Parliament. At one time provoking the ill-will of the King and royal family by opposing the wishes of the Duke of York, and at another thwarting the views of ministry with the entire fearlessness of honest independence. Wishing to spend the summer of 1809 in quietness, the offer of a quiet parsonage near Cowper's haunts fell in exactly with all his inclinations. "I always observe," he would often say, "that the owners of your grand houses have some snug corner in which they are glad to shelter themselves from their own magnificence. I remember dining, when I was a young man, with the Duke of Queensbury, at his Richmond villa. The party was very small and select—Pitt, Lord and Lady Chatham, the Duchess of Gordon, and George Selwyn (who lived for society, and continued in it, till he looked really like the wax-work figure of a corpse) were amongst the guests. We dined early that some of our party might be ready to attend the opera. The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames in all its glory—but the Duke looked on with indifference. 'What is there,' he said, 'to make so much of in the Thames—I am quite tired of it—there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same.'" "What a blessing it is," remarks Mr. Wilberforce, this summer, on meeting an acquaintance who could not be happy out of London, "to have a taste for simple and virtuous pleasures! Religion gives this, but some have it naturally." He possessed it strongly, and enjoyed, therefore, exceedingly this "Cowperizing summer."

To Lord Muncaster he thus communicates the place of his retirement.

"Near Newport Pagnell, Sept. 1809.

"My dear Muncaster,

——And where is Wilber? I hear you saying. Near Newport Pagnell! Out comes Cary, and the inventive genius and geographical knowledge of the young ones are set to work; but I defy you all. The truth is, I had been

long looking round for a ready-furnished house for a few weeks. Not being able to find one, I carried my household to our old quarters at East-Bourne, and there I should have been glad to continue till November, but for its being so fully peopled that I could not walk out without being joined by people, my only connexion with whom arose from our inhabiting different numbers in the same row. I wished to pass a little time as much as possible with my family, of whom I literally see scarcely any thing during the whole session of parliament. Really too, though summer by the calendar, it has been so like winter by the weather, as to prompt me rather to look for some snug hiding-place, than to bask, without sunshine, on an open shore. I therefore am come inland, calling first to spend a day with the Speaker, whom I left contrary alike to our own feelings, and his kind pressings to stay; and then halting for five or six days with Henry Thornton, where I carried Mrs. Wilberforce and my six children to the same house in which were now contained his own wife and eight; but which he and I once inhabited as chums for several years, when we were solitary bachelors. How naturally I was led to adopt the old patriarch's declaration, With my staff I passed over, &c. and now I am become two bands! Thence we came to this place, where I inhabit the house of a friend, who having failed in his attempt to hire one ready furnished in the neighbourhood, has kindly lent me his own. It is the parsonage, and he occupies the house of the curate, who is now serving another church, and whom I provide with a temporary residence.

I must own that from my earliest days, at least my earliest travelling days, I never passed a parsonage in at all a pretty village, without my mouth watering to reside in it. And this longing has been still more powerful since the only objection, that of solitude, has been removed, by my bringing my own society along with me. The best of this place is, that though the immediate neighbourhood has no other beauties than those of peaceful rural scenery, yet we are near the scene of Cowper's rambles; and, devoted as I am to Cowper, the idea of treading in his track is not a little delightful. It is quite classic ground to me, and I shall read both his prose and his verse here with a double relish. I have once already, (but the day was bad, and I mean to do it again,) carried some cold meat to a venerable old oak, to

which he was strongly attached. I have been to see Stowe with my charming young friend Bowdler, whom I think I introduced to you in London; if not, I have yet to introduce you to a man who will one day I think make a figure. How much was I impressed with the idea of grandeur's not being necessary to happiness!

"My dear Muncaster, I wish we were within talking distance, I should have much both to say and to hear, but unless I had more time at command I feel no comfort in beginning upon political subjects. Oh! it is a gloomy sky, but there is a Sun behind the clouds. In one particular I quite agree with you, in ascribing all the great events which are taking place to a higher hand. Indeed He is always the supreme Agent, but there are times, and this seems to be one of them, when His arm is lifted up, and His hand displayed with more than common plainness. This consideration administers the greatest comfort to my mind. For being persuaded that there are many among us who still love, and fear, and serve the great Governor of the universe, I cannot but hope that, though justly deserving the vengeance, we shall experience still the mercy of Heaven. * *

Believe me ever, my dear Muncaster,
Yours most sincerely,
W. Wilberforce."

Legh Richmond's neighbouring parsonage supplied a piano forte; and "music generally in the evening" was added to the other sources of his pleasure. Here he thoroughly enjoyed himself. Mr. Richmond was almost his only neighbour, and him he occasionally met with freedom and pleasure. "Dined at Richmond's. His old mother there. It is just twelve years since he became serious from reading my book on Christianity, lent him by a brother divine, who said, 'I am no reader,' and begged him to run it over, as he did in three days. He showed it me in the original cover." This naturally added to the pleasure which he always felt in seeing the interior of a well-ordered parish. He attended with delight at a cottage reading, amongst many of "the people in their common working-clothes;" and he adds that "Richmond, who is a most affectionate, warm-hearted creature, has made great way in Turvey. Every body favours him, and God has greatly blessed his preaching." "Of Olney I hear but a very melancholy account. It is indeed an awful instance of mercies slighted and privi-

leges abused. I suspect also from what I have heard, that some of the former ministers of the place, like my excellent friend Mr. Newton, not being quite enough on their guard respecting dissenting, and Dissenters, has been not unproductive of evil."

In this unusual quiet, "reading much, correcting the Practical View for a new edition, and much with" his "family," the weeks passed happily away. "Oh what a blessing it is to be living thus in peace! Surely no one has so much reason to say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Never was any one so exempted from suffering, so favoured with comforts. Oh that I were more grateful!"

Mr. John Bowdler's sketch of this time of peaceful harmony is so happily expressed, that though it has appeared in print already, it will be read again with pleasure.

"I arrived here last Saturday morning at breakfast-time, having been kept by Mr. Wilberforce much longer than I intended; but he is like the old man in Sinbad's Voyage—wo be to the traveller that falls into his grasp! It required a considerable effort to disengage myself, and I have promised another short visit on my return, which will be greatly to my inconvenience and delight. Mr. Wilberforce, I think, enjoys his parsonage as much as possible; to say that he is happier than usual is being very bold; but certainly he is as happy as I ever beheld a human being. He carried me one day to Weston, and we wandered over many a spot which Cowper's feet had trod, and gazed on the scenes which his pen has immortalized. On another day we visited Stowe—'a work to wonder at,' for we were still in the land of poetry and of music too, for Mr. Wilberforce made the shades resound to his voice, singing like a blackbird wherever he went. He always has the spirits of a boy, but" here "not little Sam himself can beat him, though he does his best."

Yet this was no season of indolent recreation or mere idle enjoyment. Whilst he thanked God for "this wholesome retirement," he was most anxious to turn it to the best account. "O Lord," he prays, "direct and guide me, so as to make my residence here a blessing to me." And he watched as well as prayed. "Laying out" his "plans so as to secure time for evening devotions, emptying" his "mind of business and literature;" examining himself whether his "mind had wandered whilst reading the responses or the psalms in church, or during the singing of praises to God;"

and reminding himself, "that if here I find not my mind ungovernable, yet that this is a most favourable situation: all about me favourable to holiness, except that I commonly find literature more seductive than any thing. I should then be striving for the habit of heavenly-mindedness, that I may maintain it in more worldly scenes and societies." Here therefore, as well as in the crowded life of London, he could exclaim upon his Sundays, "O blessed days these, which call us from the bustle of life, and warrant us in giving up our studies and our business, and cultivating communion with God."

Some days too he set apart in this season of retirement for more entire devotion to religious offices; and then, with such a measure of abstinence as his strength allowed, he gave the day to prayer and meditation. Deep at these times was his unfeigned humiliation, as he searched out before God all the suspected corners of his heart, condemning himself—for "selfishness, though I do not pass for selfish, and am not allowed to be so; Lord, increase my love to others" —for "ambition, or rather worldliness, but ill cured, often bubbling up and breaking out, though my judgment I trust does not allow them, and though I am ashamed of them" —for "want of love, of real caring for my fellow-creatures" —for "want of delighting in God. Alas! can I say that I find more pleasure in religious meditation than in literature, which always presents itself to my mind as an object of gratification?" Then too would he note down the remembered sins of long past years, feeling he had gained his end when he could add, "How does this review, in which my own mind fixes on specific objects, shame me! How should I be ashamed if others could see me just as I really am! I often think I am one grand imposture. My heart is heavy; oh, there is nothing that can speak peace to the wounded spirit, but the gospel promises—and the promise is sure. God is love; and is able to save to the uttermost, and He will cast out none who come to him. He it is I trust who has excited in me a disposition to come, and I will therefore press forward, humbly indeed, but trusting to His mercy who has promised so many blessings to them that seek Him. O Lord, yet strengthen me, and, if it please Thee, fill me with all peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Amen."

At times too there are bursts of more than ordinary joy. "I humbly hope that I have felt this day, and still feel, somewhat of the powers of the world to come. I feel indeed the

deepest sense of my own sinfulness; but blessed be God for His gracious promises. To Thee, O Lord, I humbly devote myself; O confirm me to the end. Make me perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle me. O præclarum illum diem." "What cause have I for thankfulness! Which way soever I look I am heaped up with blessings, mercies of all sorts and sizes. I wish not to spend time in writing, but, oh let me record the loving-kindness of the Lord."

In the midst of this life of quiet, his ordinary political cares startle us with their unwonted sound. "I opened the papers this morning to see if there is any confirmation of Buonaparte's madness; for I cannot but think it conformable to the providence of God, to manifest thus His ability in a moment to pull down the lofty from his vain-glorious throne, to confound the wisdom of the politic and the plans of the crafty. Lord Castlereagh and Canning fought a duel early on Thursday morning. What a humiliating thing it is! In what a spirit must our national counsellors have been deliberating!"

A letter to Mr. Bankes, written on the second of October, turns upon these subjects.

"Then this strange hurricane of the elements of the administration. Could you have conceived any men's being so absurd, to say nothing of higher motives, as to make the public exhibition afforded by Castlereagh and Canning. I can only account for it in the former, to whom as the challenger it is nine parts in ten most probably to be ascribed, by his Irish education and habits. Manent adhuc vestigia ruris. I wish the King would declare that neither of them should ever serve him again in a public station. That would effectually prevent the spreading of the example."

Upon the 20th of November, his quiet Buckinghamshire quarters were again exchanged for the neighbourhood of London.

He could not long be quiet within a mile of Hyde Park Corner. "Dined with Perceval; who very kind and good-natured; and pleased me more than ever before by his speech about not exciting a spirit against America. "My time," he tells Mr. Bankes, "was never more fully occupied when parliament was not sitting; foreseeing that when the House should meet, I must almost renounce all private society, I have been both giving and receiving a most unusual number of visits." These brought before him a most mis-

cellaneous set of characters—from "Lord Sidmouth, who dined tête-à-tête, and much political talk with him," to "a missionary going to the Namaqua country," and "poor W. who declared most seriously that he liked spiders better than my dinner. 'Spiders are very good food;' and looking round the corners of the room, 'You have no spiders here,' as much as to say, I would soon convince you if you had—a singular man—appears a strong predestinarian."

Here though mixing more freely in society, he did not forget to watch carefully for the improvement of his time.

His high sense of the value of it led him to watch over his conduct in society; and though probably unrivalled in the happy art of leading conversation to the most improving topics, yet he was often little satisfied with his attempts. Thus he says, after giving a "dinner to Lord N. and I. H. who chatted till late; Lord N. a strange twist; I fear the evening was sadly misspent. No efforts to improve the opportunity and impress them aright. When in my closet, as now, I feel a sincere desire to do good to others, and to embrace occasions for it; but, alas! when in society I am too apt to lose the sense of God's presence, or possess it feebly and faintly, and I do not try to turn the conversation, and practise the company regulations which I have made. Lord, quicken me." "I have a vast multiplicity of objects soliciting my attention . . . and I seem to myself to be failing in the discharge of the duties of my several relations, as member of parliament, as father, and as master. To Thee, O God, I fly, through the Saviour; enable me to live more worthy of my holy calling; to be more useful and efficient, that my time may not be frittered away unprofitably to myself and others, but that I really may be of use in my generation, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour. I long to carry the plan through for lessening the number of oaths—for reviving the Proclamation Society; but I am a poor, helpless creature, Lord, strengthen me."

During the session of Parliament which followed, his time, attention and feelings were all deeply interested by the subjects which came before it. Much attached as he was to Mr. Perceval, he voted against him in all the stages of the inquiry respecting the ill-fated Walcheren expedition; and in the case of Sir Francis Burdett, he opposed his committal to the Tower and spoke in behalf of a "reprimand." In Sir S. Romilly's Bill for reduction of Capital Punishments, he was also warmly interested, and as usual, the various details of

the "Slave Trade," "Indian affairs," and many objects of charity and public usefulness received his support.

From these various employments he was suddenly removed by an accident, which he describes in a letter to Lord Muncaster.

"London, June 18, 1810.

"My dear Muncaster,

The kindness which I have ever experienced at your hands assures me, that if you were to hear a loose report of my having been confined up-stairs for a week in a recumbent posture, you would become very uneasy till you should receive some authenticated report of my well-doing. You would, and you will nevertheless laugh heartily when you hear the whole story:—That playing at cricket with Mr. Babington, a ball struck my foot with great violence, and that by the positive injunctions of my surgeon, I have been ever since sentenced to a sofa. It will lesson the marvel, and render the tale less laughable, to hear that my son William was the main personage in the dramatis personæ of the cricket-players, and I have not played with him at cricket before, for I know not how long. But here, as in so many other instances, I have abundant cause for thankfulness to the good providence of God; for Mr. Pearson (and there is not a more able surgeon in London) declares that if the ball had struck me an inch or two higher, and it is very uncommon for a ball to come along shaving the ground as that did, it would almost certainly have broken my leg."

He much feared that he should not again reach the House of Commons before the prorogation. "It is a great disappointment to me; but I hope it is the indication of Providence that I am to be quiet." But on the 20th, "having the Sheffield Address, loyal and constitutional, and well signed," he "resolved to present it, and so was carried to the door of the House, and limped to the Treasury Bench. I had prepared myself for a speech of an hour of closing advice, and useful parting admonition, but there not being above forty or fifty members, and as the appearance would evidently have been that of going cold-bloodedly to make a formal speech, I had not nerves for it; yet wishing to say something, I could not abridge well." One object of this parting speech was to enforce the reasons by which he had

been led a month before to vote for Mr. Brand's motion on Parliamentary Reform.

On the question of Reform in Parliament, he complains this spring: "All seems quiet now, but how little are men aware of the real dangers of the country! How little do they look forward to our probable state fifteen or twenty years hence!" His words seem almost prophetic of that storm of political excitement, in the midst of which the Reform Bill was at length carried through. How full may be their accomplishment, our children will best know.

The garden at Kensington Gore was one of his great sources of pleasure, when his time was at his own command. During the sitting of parliament, he could "never get there sufficiently early, or stay there in the morning long enough, to witness the progress of the spring;" but now that he had somewhat more leisure, whenever the weather made it possible, he sat long, both writing and with his books, under a spreading walnut-tree, which was known amongst his children as his study. "Pretty quiet to-day—went out and sat under walnut-tree, where now writing. I should like much to stay in this sweet place, amidst my books, if I could be quiet." "We are just one mile," he tells an American correspondent, "from the turnpike-gate at Hyde Park Corner, which I think you will not have forgotten yet, having about three acres of pleasure-ground around my house, or rather behind it, and several old trees, walnut and mulberry, of thick foliage. I can sit and read under their shade, which I delight in doing, with as much admiration of the beauties of nature (remembering at the same time the words of my favourite poet, 'Nature is but a name for an effect, whose cause is God') as if I were 200 miles from the great city." But in other respects he was less favourably circumstanced. "My situation near town produces numerous visiters, and frequent invitations, difficult and painful to resist."

These interruptions lasted as long as he remained near London. He longed for greater quiet, and soon afterwards withdrew into the country. He moved first to Barham Court.

In a letter to Lord Muncaster, he says, "During my confinement from my accident, my being such a fair shot for all who had not much to do with their time, procured me incessant callers, and my unanswered letters accumulated on my hands to a size that was quite terrific. I have only just (in-

deed not quite) cleared away the arrears. Have you read the Lady of the Lake? Like a good economist I waited till it should come out in octavo, but I had but tasted it before, though it had been folio instead of quarto, I could not without extreme difficulty have resisted the impulse to gratify my appetite for it without stint. Really I did not think that I continued in such a degree subject to the fascination of poetry. I have been absolutely bewitched. I could not keep the imaginary personages out of my mind when I most wished to remove them. How wonderful is this dominion over the heart which genius exercises! There are some parts of the poem that are quite inimitable—all that precedes and follows 'And, Saxon, I am Roderick Dhu.' I regret there not being so much of moral as in Marmion. I must break off—farewell."

Early in September he took possession of an empty country-house, which the kindness of a friend had placed at his disposal. His own was lent at the same time, and he assured its inmates, "It is a pleasure to me that my house should be of use to my friends when I am away from it." "I always feel the more rewarded for the money I spent upon Kensington Gore, when my friends come to it freely, whether we are present or absent. For those who are occupying a friend's house in his absence, what so natural as to have another friend occupying their own? I only beg you will be in no hurry to quit."

One main purpose of his summer retirement was to "watch the tempers and dispositions of his children." "I mean," he tells Mr. Babington, "to make education my grand object. Pray for me, that I may be able to succeed. I can truly say I feel my own deficiencies." "We are about to quit our pleasant retirement," he tells Dr. Coulthurst, "pleasant, chiefly because it has been so retired, where we have been residing for almost three months. This occasional abstraction from the bustle and turmoil of the world, is highly beneficial to mind, body, and estate; and I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with my own children, who, it really is not exaggeration to declare, seldom get a quiet minute with me during the sitting of parliament."

As he had not married until middle life, when he was most busily engaged in his engrossing duties, this was literally true. So long as they were infants, he had not time to seek amusement from them. Even whilst they were of this age, it made a deep impression on his mind when one of them be-

ginning to cry as he took him up, the nurse said naturally by way of explanation, "He always is afraid of strangers." This he could not suffer to continue when they grew out of mere infancy. During the session indeed he was so busy, and so much from home, that he could see little of them through the week; but Sunday was his own, and he spent it in the midst of his family. His children, after meeting him at prayers, went with him to the house of God; repeating to him in the carriage hymns or verses, or passages from his favourite Cowper. Then they walked with him in the garden, and each had the valued privilege of bringing him a Sunday nosegay, for which the flowers of their little gardens had been hoarded all the week. Then all dined together, at an early hour, in the midst of cheerful, yet suitable conversation. "'Better,'" was one of his Sunday common-places, "says the wise man, 'is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith;' but, my children, how good is God to us! He gives us the stalled ox and love too." Never was religion seen in a more engaging form than in his Sunday intercourse with them. A festival air of holy and rational happiness dwelt continually around him.

But with Sunday ended for the time the possibility of domestic life. "While the House is sitting I become almost a bachelor." When the session was over, and he had retired into the country, it was his delight to live amongst his children. His meals were as far as possible taken with them; he carried them out with him on little pleasurable excursions, and joined often in their amusements. Every day too he read aloud with them, setting apart some time in the afternoon for lighter and more entertaining books, (one of these this summer was the Arabian Nights,) and selecting one of them to read more serious works to him while he dressed. Happy was the young performer who was chosen for the office. The early and quiet intercourse which his dressing-room afforded drew forth all a father's tenderness, whilst the reading was continually changed into the most instructive conversation.

All his efforts were aimed at opening the mind, creating a spirit of inquiry, and strengthening the powers; while he was jealous of such acquirements as yielded an immediate return, and so afforded opportunities for gratifying vanity.

All this time he was watching carefully the indications of their various character; and many a remaining entry of the long-past incidents of childhood, show how observant was

his eye of things of which he seemed to take no note. "—— a heavy-looking child, but showing at times much thought—used (in fact) in play yesterday Euclid's axiom, Things that are equal to the same are equal to one another." "—— has far more courage and character than all the other children." "Heard W. read to me for an hour after dinner one of Miss Edgeworth's Tales. How entirely free from religion is her morality, which however stolen from Scripture!" "Stopped to buy —— a book, because he was good yesterday—having much wished to go with the rest; and though at first he cried, he almost immediately got the better of it, and desired (our driving off being a little delayed) to come and wish me good bye, which he did with a cheerful face. This deserves most serious consideration and suitable treatment."

The practical character of his personal piety was of the utmost moment in his treatment of his children. He was always on his guard against forcing their religious feelings, and shielded them carefully from the poison of Antinomian teaching. Though he never weakly withheld any necessary punishment, he did not attempt to dissemble the pain which its infliction cost him. "Alas!" he says at such a time, "—— grieved me much to-day, discovering the same utter want of self-government or self-denial when disappointed of any thing on which he had set his heart, as he had done before. He behaved very ill. I talked with him plainly, and set him a punishment. Poor fellow! it made my heart heavy all the evening, and indeed ever since. But I hope he will mend. God will grant much to prayer; and I humbly trust it is our object to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

This careful observation of his children's characters, joined with the most lively tenderness, is beautifully illustrated by a paper of directions which he drew up about this time for the private use of two of his sons, who were now at school together.

BROTHERLY LOVE AND CONDUCT.

"Hints for my dear ——, to be often read over, with self-examination.

"1. Endeavour to bear in mind, that you will be often tempted to behave to your brother —— not so well as you

ought. That you may be on your guard against all such temptations—

"2. Recollect, if you can, what the occasions are which have most commonly led you to behave ill to your brother, and try to keep them in your memory by now and then thinking them over; and when such occasions are about to occur, whether at play, in reading, or wherever else, then be doubly on your guard, and try to lift up your heart in an ejaculation to God, that you may be enabled to resist the temptation; and if you do resist it, lift up your heart again in thanksgiving.

"3. Remember one season of temptation will always be, when you are at play, especially where there are sides, whether you are on the same side as —— or not.

"4. Remember it is not sufficient not to be unkind to your brother; you must be positively kind to all, and how much more then to a brother!

"5. Remember you will be under a temptation to resist unkindly ——'s disposition to command you. If Christ tells us not to resent little outrages from any one, (see Matt. v. 39, 44,) how much less should you resent his commanding you! Though perhaps it may be not quite right in itself, yet an elder brother has a right to some influence from being such. See 1 Pet. v. 5.

"6. Often reflect that you are both children of the same father and mother; how you have knelt together in prayer; have played together as children, and have sat round the same table, on a Sunday, in peace and love. Place the scene before your mind's eye, and recollect how happy mamma and I have been to see you all around us good and happy.

"7. You are not so lively by nature as he is, but be willing always to oblige him by playing at proper times, &c., though not disposed of yourself. Nothing more occurs to me, except, and this both mamma and I desire to press strongly on you, to desire you to be on your guard against being out of humour on a little raillery, and always to laugh at it; nothing shows good humour more than taking a joke without being fretful or gloomy.

"May God bless my dearest boy, and enable him to profit from the above suggestions of his most affectionate father,

W. Wilberforce."

BROTHERLY LOVE AND CONDUCT.

"Hints for my dear ——, to be often looked over, with self-examination.

"1. Endeavour to bear in mind, that you will be often tempted to be not so kind to your brother —— as you ought to be. That you may be on your guard against the temptations when they do occur—

"2. Recollect, if you can, what the occasions are which have most commonly led you to be unkind to your brother, and keep them in your memory by now and then thinking them over; and when such occasions are about to occur again, whether at play, in reading, or wherever else, then be doubly on your guard, and lift up your heart in prayer to God, that you may be enabled to resist the temptation; and if you have been enabled to get the better of it, lift up your heart to God again in thanksgiving.

"3. Remember one season of temptation will always be, when you are at play, especially where there are sides, whether —— is on your side or on the opposite side.

"4. Remember it is not enough not to be unkind to ——. We ought to be positively kind to all, but how much more so to a brother!

"5. Remember you will be tempted to command him too much. Guard therefore against this temptation.

"6. Sometimes reflect that he and you are children of the same parents. Recollect him a little fat child, and how we used to kiss his neck and call him Bon. Recollect how you have knelt together in prayer with mamma and me, and how, especially on a Sunday, you have sat round the same table with us in peace and love. Try to place the scene before the eyes of your mind, and recollect how happy your mamma and I have appeared to see you all good and happy around us.

"7. I will specify the times and circumstances in which you ought to be peculiarly on your guard against behaving improperly.—When you have done your own business, or are not inclined to do it, beware of interrupting him in doing his.—When you are with older companions than yourself, beware of behaving to him less kindly, or with any thing like arrogance.—When you are in the highest spirits, having been at play or from whatever other cause, you are apt to lose your self-government, and to be out of

humour on having your inclination crossed in any way. Beware in such circumstances of being unkind to him.

"May God bless my dearest ——, and enable him to profit from the above suggestions of his most affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

These hints afford a fair sample of his mode of managing his children. He constantly referred them to the highest principles of action. Education, indeed, when otherwise conducted, he always looked at with suspicion. "William Allen," he says shortly afterwards, "and Joseph Fox came about Lancaster's schools, to tell me all about them, and press me to be a vice-president. Heard Fox's most interesting account." For a fortnight he was doubtful how to answer this appeal; but having fully weighed the question, he "wrote to William Allen to decline being a committee man, though it gave me great pain to refuse him; but emulation and vanity are the vital breath of the system."

All public business was deferred by the illness of the King, and the continual hopes which were held forth of his speedy convalescence. "Our beloved old King the physicians declare is recovering, and they have scarcely a doubt of his being even speedily well, if his restoration be not retarded by some of the circumstances, which if he were not a King he would not experience." "Dec. 9th. The King getting better, but with occasional relapses. Perceval said on Thursday, that as well then as when Thurlow declared him well, and sealed the commission in 1789. I believe it. I remember that it was then said in private that the King was not quite well." These hopes were continually deferred, and the examination of the royal physicians before a committee of the House of Commons, (of which he was a member,) was the only public business which engaged him before Christmas; yet he was fully occupied.

Devoted as he was all through his life with so much patient perseverance to the deliverance of the negro race, his zeal for that great cause never led him to neglect any opportunity of doing present good. He was just as active in redressing individual wrongs, just as ready to assist the distress, and poverty, and friendlessness which surrounded his own doors as to labour in the world's eye for the ill-used tribes of Africa. This, while it increased his usefulness, saved him also from that diseased contraction of thought and feeling

which is so apt to grow on those who are identified with one pursuit. He was the very opposite of "Mr. Fantom." The healthy vigour of benevolent exertion was ever fostered in his mind by his mingling individual acts of kindness with all his general plans. Thus whilst he was "calling upon Perceval, and discussing with Macaulay, Stephen, Brougham, and others, about African and West Indian matters," he was also "off early to London to the War Office about the boy Nowell, unlawfully recruited;" and finding that Lord Palmerston had not yet read the minutes of the second examination, which decisive," he went on "to the Colonial Office about the case of Marsden and a poor woman," getting home at last "too late for dinner;" and being "off" again next morning "after breakfast to the Horse Guards, where talked to Lord Palmerston about the poor boy," and got the necessary "orders sent down for his discharge:" and this is only a sample of a multitude of works of mercy in which he was every day engaged. And yet he could say in his most private entries, "Alas! I feel my uselessness and unprofitableness, but I humbly hope I desire to employ my faculties so as may be most for God's glory, and my fellow-creatures' benefit." It was this high motive which gave such uniformity to his conduct. "I hear," says his Diary, with beautiful simplicity, a few weeks later, "that I am likely to be popular now amongst the West Riding clothiers about poor Nowell, the boy falsely enlisted. How this shows that God can effect whatever He will, by means the most circuitous, and the least looked for. This might have a great effect in case of an election."

With the new year set in the full tide of public business. The King's illness was painfully confirmed, and the appointment of a regency inevitable. In these circumstances, the mind of Mr. Pitt's friend reverted naturally to the debates of 1788; and to the great actors in that drama who had left the stage before himself. His mind was constitutionally free from that fretfulness of spirit which too often embitters such recollections, and his estimate of things was just and sober. "I believe," he tells Mr. Babington, from whom he had heard an instance of "Perceval's sweetness melting down Whitbread's rough churlishness, and extorting a eulogy for suavity and kindness," "that he is a man of undaunted spirit, but his modesty prevents his taking that high tone, which at such a time as the present rendered Pitt so equal to the emergency."

The mental derangement of the king, and the necessity of making provision for carrying on the government during its continuance, caused great excitement in the political circles in which he largely participated, and his Journal abounds with entries which manifest the anxiety with which he watched the progress of events, as well as with striking comments on the characters and actions of the most prominent members of parliament.

In the midst of this "bustle" graver entries intervene, and reflections which strikingly illustrate the calm and watchful temper in which he passed through its turmoil. "Lying awake long in the night my thoughts were not naturally so serious as usual, and my mind more disturbed by the rushing in of a great variety of topics. Alas! how much of my life is fumed away in trifles which leave no mark behind, and no fruit! O Lord, enable me to redeem the time better in future; to live more on plan, though really this has been in some degree my object, and to be more devoted in heart and life to Thy glory, and to the good of my fellow-creatures." These were not the indolent desires of occasional feeling; strict practical rules grew out of them. "Let me try to keep myself reminded of invisible things by something which will call attention, though not produce pain, and by varying the expedients; when I grow familiar with one, I may use another. I did try a little pebble in my shoe. Why should such secondary means be despised? Oh that they were unnecessary, and so they may become by degrees! Oh may I learn to live above this world, and set my affections on things above!"

"Friends dined with me, and stayed too late—and though I brought out books and read passages, it was wasteful work. How foolish that people cannot understand each other better! What good done by this visit? How unprofitable was our intercourse, partly from want of topics ready for conversation! They would often remind me of useful subjects for discussion—yet last night I really was thinking how to do the young man good, but no aspirations—I am quite faulty here." "Dined at the Speaker's—he very kind, and particularly obliging in his public attentions to me. Sat between Bankes and Sir John Sebright—latter a man of much energy in the pursuits he engages in, and many right dispositions, feelings, and opinions—very upright as a member of parliament. I tried to introduce some religious conversation, but I knew not well how. Alas! I was too much

admiring and enjoying the splendour, &c. in itself. It is much the handsomest thing of its size I ever saw, and so say others who live in and see the most splendid houses; but how little did I keep my heart with due diligence! how little was I poor in spirit, the mortified, humble, meek servant of the lowly Jesus! Surely I was intoxicated with the glitter and parade, and too much like others. It must be good for me, who am called so much necessarily into social intercourse, to retire when I can to my own home and family, and give up as much as possible dining out—my health is a fair plea for it—it always suffers from late dining, though less I think than formerly."

"Mr. Pinkney sent me a letter which was written to him by the President of the United States, intimating a disposition to enter into negotiation with England on Abolition Enforcement questions distinct from others; and Pinkney said that he had never had a convenient opportunity of reading it or showing it to Lord Wellesley, who was out of town all the summer, and he saw his Lordship rarely. This looks very ill. Lord! give peace to an afflicted world."

A letter to Lord Muncaster describes his occupation, and shows the cheerfulness he maintained amid it all.

"Near London, April 10, 1811.

"Alas! my dear Muncaster, how little your sanguine hopes of my being by this time at liberty, are verified! To-day, as again to-morrow, I am doomed to that vile and hateful drudgery of presiding in a committee, where a private bill is very hotly contested; and what is worse, contested between those who are all my friends; and what is worst of all, the case is one in which it is really very difficult to form a clear judgment. Yet, notwithstanding this difficulty, you would suppose, from the warmth with which the partisans on each side abuse the other, that there was no room for any difference of opinion, but that dishonesty or sheer stupidity could alone cause any one to hesitate on which side to give his vote. I am now writing on the evening of Saturday the 13th of April, having every day since that on which I wrote the first five lines of my letter been incessantly engrossed, except on the day which of course was claimed by considerations and feelings peculiar to that season when we commemorate the event on which we depend for all our hopes of future happiness. Alas! I am begin-

ning my recess with so great an arrear of business that I am ready to burn my papers, and *shut up shop*.

You surprise me by your account of the blooming state of your walls, though I was prepared to hear accounts which might seem strange to any one who did not know that the seasons with you are not such as your degree of latitude might lead any one to suppose. But, my dear Muncaster, though you have stayed till all around you is so beautiful that you can scarcely persuade yourself to quit the loves of the castle; yet come you must, or I shall send the serjeant-at-arms to disturb your privacy; and what is more, you must bring your daughters with you, or they also shall be summoned on some pretence or other to give evidence concerning the practicability of a tunnel through Scawfell to facilitate your communication with Winandermere. We abound with projects this session, and there are some little less extraordinary. I guess how you will rejoice in the late accounts from Portugal. They really gratify me more than any public news which I have heard for many years. Why, it is enough to drive Buonaparte mad. What! L'Enfant gaté flying before Lord Wellington?

I must break off. Nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni. With kind remembrances,

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Bring the lasses."

None of this abundant crop of "projects" caused Mr. Wilberforce more trouble than Lord Sidmouth's abortive attempt to regulate the licenses of protestant dissenting teachers. He disliked the whole measure, but feared especially lest, whilst aimed at others, it should cripple the pastoral instructions of the clergy. This fear he early expressed to Mr. Perceval; having, on the 26th March, "opened to him about the North American Indians—the Irish people and system, actual and proper—the English church—the clergy, and the operation of the Conventicle Act; with the benefit derived from religious societies conducted with caution by the minister himself. I told Perceval these effects in Richardson's case and others, and stated to him Richmond's diligence and its effects."

"I was chiefly afraid lest he should stop the private religious meetings of the clergy; and I urged the danger of all

who should come under serious impressions, going off in that case to the Methodists, and described the excellence of their discipline."

The Methodists rose against it as one man; and on the motion for its second reading in the Lords, it was negatived without a division, and with the expressed concurrence of the Lord Primate and the government. Yet out of this business grew one of those irritating rumours which infest the course of the most simple-minded politician. "Have I told you," he asks Mr. Stephen, "that it is reported and credited, that Lord Sidmouth told the deputation that I had been of his cabinet, and had instigated him to the measure, and had been his counsellor; and that when Thompson told me what Lord Sidmouth had said, I stamped upon the ground and wept, exclaiming, Then Lord Sidmouth has betrayed me—or as some accounts give it, that I was in an agony; but these agree in saying that I exclaimed, Lord Sidmouth has betrayed me? (You see that this implies the most consummate villany possible.) Yet this is believed of a man whom some of them, at least, must know to have defeated a similar attack, only worse, in 1796 or 7, and who has had nothing to do with the Methodists since, but their being such zealous friends to him in the contest of 1807. By the way, I have not mentioned to Thompson what I doubt about mentioning even to you, (on account of Matt. vi. 3,) but I will—as it bears on my real feelings about the Methodists, (though more about one of their founders,) that from respect to that great and good man, Charles Wesley, I many years ago prevailed on two friends to join in allowing his widow an annuity, which she still receives. I have often, I own, thought it a great reflection on the Methodists, that they suffered such a person to be in real want, as she was when I undertook her cause."

It is strange that such a report should have gained credit, but so it was; and he heard of "the Sidmouthian declaration to the Methodist deputation of my hostility to them," as "bruited about with natural comments and additions," at Kidderminster, Leeds, and many other places. Though he was by this time pretty well case-hardened, and accustomed to walk with truth "through evil as well as good repute," yet he felt at first "perhaps too much the personal injustice done" him, "just as a cut gives a sharper pain, than a heavy weight which overbears you." Yet even then he was chiefly "hurt by this story, because it goes to disparage religion;

and though its falsehood may be proved to sensible men, it will leave a cloud behind. Is it," he adds strikingly, "that God, knowing me to be fond of popular favour, means thus graciously to mortify the passion? At least let me try to derive from it this benefit. I ought however to vindicate myself by all fair means."

Many matters of great interest engaged his attention during the remainder of the session. In the closing debate on the 19th of July, he gave utterance to his feelings on the probability of a war with America. "Deeply, sir, do I deplore the gloom which I see spreading over the western horizon; and I most earnestly trust that we are not to be involved in the misfortune of a new war, aggravated by possessing almost the character of civil strife—a war between two nations, who are children of the same family, and brothers in the same inheritance of common liberty." Upon the following day he joined his family at Herstmonceux.

The vacation opened with its usual employments. "Letters my chief business. Writing a long one to-day to Mr. Roberts, vindicating myself against Mr. W.'s charge, and against his own declaration, most kindly and frankly made, of my being too hurrying and immethodical, and thereby lessening my influence."

Nothing could be more characteristic than the history of this correspondence. Mr. Roberts, with whom he had before no particular acquaintance, had called on him in the bustle of the session, by an appointment which had escaped Mr. Wilberforce's recollection. The rest may be told in his own words—"Wrote to Mr. Roberts, from whom I received a most frank and honest letter; too strongly charging me with deceiving people, though ascribing it to my attempting more business than I can execute. I love his frankness, and thanked him for it; yet how hardly am I used! If I do my utmost, yet if I do not succeed, or if delays happen, they are charged on me; yet I am not clear of the fault of taking more on me than I can get through, though not intentionally to blame. Of late years I have refused multitudes of things. Let this letter, and what it states of another person, who charged me with deceiving him, speaking fair, but performing nothing, though all this is false . . . yet let it be a lesson to me to avoid all appearance of evil."

Mr. Roberts, though with no such intention, had taken the shortest road to his confidence. "A friend who will frankly tell me of my faults in private," was a possession

that he valued above all price. "I must spend what time remains," he says two days afterwards in his private Journal, "in humiliation and prayer; but let me just put down the record of a most striking letter from Mr. Roberts of Sheffield—the most truly Christian, candid, kind, friendly remonstrance I ever remember; especially considering the erroneous views of my conduct under which he wrote. I had unhappily forgot an appointment made with him four days before; and just when raw and fresh from this instance of my negligence, he met at my door a neighbour, who charged me with the most gross misconduct, in making people dance attendance on me, and perhaps, at last, not only deceiving, but even opposing them, &c. Yet he had the firmness and Christian spirit of love to make him not credit this, and to ascribe what ground there was for it to my undertaking more than I could execute."

"I should do violence to my own feelings," he tells Mr. Roberts, "if I did not without delay assure you solemnly, that I greatly respect your frankness on general grounds; but that still more on personal grounds I consider you as entitled to my warmest gratitude for what I must deem a signal act of friendship. Two of the best friends I have in the world, have endeared themselves to me in no small degree by the same friendly frankness. Amongst other advantages which follow from dealing thus openly, is this, that if a man be not in fault, or not in fault greatly, he has an opportunity of vindicating himself in whole or in part; or if he be in fault, he has the opportunity of acknowledging, and as far as possible of repairing it. * * One word for the person whom you met at my door; you will add to the obligations I owe you, if you will tell me who it is, or what the case is on which he applied to me. I can solemnly declare, that for many years I have been particularly on my guard never to excite expectations which I was not sure I could realize; but I must say public men are often used very hardly, and a person in my situation is made answerable for measures he cannot control. I will strictly observe any injunctions of secrecy under which you may lay me; but conscious that I have not meant to deceive, I cannot but be very anxious to exculpate myself, if it be only in your opinion, which I must say I value highly from the specimen you have given me of your character."

Mr. Roberts's reply enabled him fully to refute this charge. "Another most kind and Christian letter," is his memoran-

dum of it. "N. was the man who gave him that account of me. How curious! Never had any man more reason to complain of another than I of him; and because I kept back all my complaints, he goes about abusing me, and even such a man as Roberts is the dupe of his account. Yet I am not clear that it is not more stupidity than intentional roguery." His correspondent's frankness deserved, he thought, a fuller explanation of the truth. "It is really extraordinary," he tells him in an early letter, "but I find myself opening to you with all the unreservedness of an old friend, and entering with the same confidence of friendly sympathy into my private circumstances and feelings. Frankness begets frankness. My temper is naturally, I believe, open, and you have been so kindly unreserved to me, that in return I open the window of my bosom, you will remember the allusion, as soon as with my mind's eye I see you ready to look into it."

As soon therefore as the leisure of his holidays allowed, he replied at length to Mr. Roberts, entering naturally into a detailed sketch of his whole life in parliament.

"Herstmonceux, near Battel, July 29, 1811.

"My dear Sir,

The strong claim on my esteem and gratitude which you established by your first letter is much augmented and confirmed by your last. I speak the real sentiments of my heart, when I assure you that I feel deeply indebted to you. How much do I wish that you had been long ere now in the habit of occasionally addressing me in the same style of friendly, and I will add, Christian, animadversion, and also, when needed, of reproof! Such communications are unspeakably valuable to any public man, who wishes, on the one hand, to do his duty, and who, on the other, is sufficiently aware of the difficulty of his task, and of his own various imperfections.

I am sorry I have not as much time at my command as I should be glad to employ in considering your letter, before I reply to it. But weeks might be spent, neither idly nor unprofitably, in discussing topics of such importance and extent. Before I enter on them, let me assure you, that your last letter, by informing me that it was N. to whom you had alluded, has afforded material relief to my mind. For, though I was conscious that I had never intentionally trifled with or deceived any one with whom I had business

to transact, yet I was but too well convinced that from inadvertency or forgetfulness, arising from the multiplicity of my occupations and engagements, I had occasionally been justly culpable; (how could I be otherwise than impressed with the consciousness of this, when engaged in writing to you, in whose case such a circumstance had arisen?) and I could not foresee into what extent of apparent criminality I might not have been drawn by the same causes. By informing me, that —— and —— were the person and case in question, you have therefore, I repeat it, considerably relieved me. * * * *

I have spent so much time on the former part of your last letter, that the latter and more interesting part must be despatched more briefly; and I will be honest enough to begin by confessing that I wish I could vindicate myself as satisfactorily, even to my own judgment, against the general charge, which you urge so kindly, and therefore with increased force, of a want of order and method in the general discharge of my business, and I cannot deny the consequences which you ascribe to these imperfections. I strive, and will strive still more earnestly, against them. But let it not be supposed that after this frank confession, I am seeking covertly to do away the effect of it, when I go on to remark, that though conscience compels me to plead guilty to the indictment, there is much to be alleged in extenuation, much in explanation of my offence. And before I proceed to state these particulars, let me bar any conclusions in this case, to be drawn from the last session of parliament only; because the truth is, that about ten months ago I lost my secretary, and hence my papers have been in confusion, my letters have been unanswered, and I have been forced to spend time in writing with my own hand many which ought to have been written by my secretary, with a gain to me of the time for better purposes.—But you will easily suggest to yourself, how such a cause must diffuse its effects throughout the whole of my day, and of my work. In the next place I ought perhaps to mention my not having any great share of bodily strength, were it not that though this prevents my being able occasionally to work double tides, and so get through a great quantity of work in a few days on any emergency, yet my constitution has been such as to enable me, I believe, to get through on the whole as much business during six or seven months as many far stronger persons: the inability to bear great fatigue does, however,

sometimes cause my affairs, papers, letters, &c. to fall into confusion, because I cannot, after having been kept up till four or five in the morning, rise at my usual hour, and pass my time according to its ordinary system of allotments. Conscious also of this, I dare not make engagements for an early or even moderate hour in the ensuing morning, because I cannot foresee how long I may be kept up on the preceding night. This leads me to remark in the next place, that in the case of a member of parliament, it is not merely the quantity of work which he has on his hands, but the uncertain hours he must keep, which prevents his having the full command of his time.

And now in going on with this explanation, I find myself embarrassed by the fear of subjecting myself to the imputation of vanity and self-sufficiency, if I proceed to state particulars, which it would yet be unjust to myself to forbear mentioning. But if the great apostle of the Gentiles, when his character was called in question, felt that he was justified in speaking of his own actings and sufferings in the cause of Christ, in a manner which but for the occasion would have rendered him liable to the charge of boasting and vain glory, I may surely, at least to your friendly ear, state concerning myself particulars which, but for the circumstance which calls them from me, ought not to proceed from my own pen. With this excuse then let me state to you, that there is scarcely any member of parliament who has much, or I might almost say any private business, who attends the discussions on public questions with any thing like the same degree of regularity as myself, or who takes part so much in them. Again, there is scarcely any such member who is so generally put on the public committees, which from time to time are appointed for the despatch of important business, for conducting delicate and important inquiries, &c. Observe, I do not put myself on these committees, but bearing in mind that I am member for Yorkshire, I own I think it right that I should be present at the agitation of all public questions of moment, and for the same reason, that I should not shrink from the attendance on committees. The number of these to which I belonged during the last session was very great. Let me also state that you can scarcely conceive the prodigious amount of inconvenience which I sustain from not thinking it right to allow my servants to say, when I am within, that I am not at home, but only that I am engaged. . . . I will just state, that

my scrupulousness here is not on my own account so much as on my servants; it has been a matter of so much importance to me, as to have made me observe the effect on their minds of saying, Not at home; and I see that nine out of ten of them conceive that they are telling a falsehood for their master's convenience. How then can I afterwards speak in Scriptural terms of the guilt of lying? and will they not be likely to infer, that if they are allowed to stretch a little when it is for their master's benefit, they may do the same for their own? . . . But the inconvenience which I suffer from it is extreme. For my servants assure me, that in spite of all they can say, of my being engaged, of my not seeing persons unless they come by appointment, (Yorkshire men however are excepted from this rule,) people will force their way in, and then you may conceive the consequence. Indeed I believe you have in some degree witnessed it; I say in some degree, because I doubt whether I had the pleasure of seeing you at Kensington Gore, and if not, you can little conceive how difficult it often is for me to force my way out of my own house. But though I own I might do better, and hope to do better than I have done, the above causes, with the additional circumstance of the grand evil of all, my very great correspondence, render it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to allot certain hours to certain occupations, in the degree which you perhaps suppose. There is however still another consideration to take into the account, and a consideration of as much practical importance and operation as any that has been mentioned, and that is, my not being a party man,

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,

which surely the member for Yorkshire ought not to be; for as I have no such easy principle to decide my vote, in nine cases out of ten at least, as that of the side of the House from which the motion proceeds, but profess to take my part on every question according to my own unbiassed judgment, much reading is necessary, much reflection, much talking matters over with able and impartial friends, when facts are brought forward, concessions made, &c., which do not appear in public debates. The questions on which we have to decide are often, believe me, of great nicety; on which, if a man will give a fair hearing to all that is to be urged on both sides, he will own it is very hard to judge

which of the two scales preponderates. I must add, by the way, that you are not to estimate the attention I pay, nay the share I take, in public debates and conversations, by what you see in the newspapers; for belonging to no party, I am naturally, as well as on other accounts, very unpopular with the reporters, who are always strong on one side or the other. Hence I am often left entirely out, and more frequently dismissed with a much shorter account of what I have said, than is given of what comes from other speakers. . . . The evil of which I am here speaking, if it affected myself only, would scarcely deserve to be noticed; but considered in its general operation, as it tends to aggravate party violence, to produce a disposition to cultivate the favour of the reporters, instances of which I have seen in men who might have been supposed incapable of such servility, to destroy in short all independence of principle and character,—viewed in these and other consequences, the evils arising from the partial and unfair way in which our debates are now reported, and more especially in which any neutral, particularly if he is supposed to be unreasonably religious, is treated, are of the very first importance, and tend as I really fear to the ruin of our country.

But I have been led away, though not unnaturally, into this general discussion. I will finish this train of egotisms, of which I really am heartily ashamed, by stating that my irregularity does not proceed from my having less time to give to parliamentary business from social engagements, domestic comforts, other occupations, &c. for I make all other business bend and give way to that of parliament. I refuse all invitations for days on which the House sits. I commonly attend all the debate, instead of going away after the private business is over for two or three hours, and coming down again after a comfortable dinner; on the contrary, I snatch a hasty meal, as I may, before the public business begins, in the short interval sometimes between the end of the private and the beginning of the public. I see little or nothing of my family during the session of parliament, (though, blessed be God, of a more tender, excellent wife no man ever received 'the gift from the Lord,' you know the quotation,) and I have stayed till the very end of the session, I believe, every year of the last twenty-three or twenty-four. This very year, I had gone down to my family, when the new business which so unexpectedly sprung up gave a call, to which I did not turn a deaf ear. Now, my

dear sir, once more I assure you, I am ashamed of myself for running on thus.

But that which I account the part of my public conduct in which I have acted the most faithfully by my constituents, and in a manner the most becoming the member for the first county in England, is my not having rendered the situation the means of benefiting my relatives . . of whom I have had several with large families reduced from great affluence to entire destitution by commercial misfortunes . . or connexions, or friends; nor still more, the means of aggrandizing myself, or my family, or rather, which was the greater temptation to me, of securing a quiet seat in the legislature of my country, exempt from expense, trouble, or risk, and which would have allowed me to attend as much or as little as I liked without impropriety. This, I dare say, has never struck you; but when you consider on the one hand, that more than half of the present House of Lords has been created or gifted with their titles (excluding all hereditary descent) since I came into parliament, and on the other, that my intimacy with Mr. Pitt for so many years may be supposed to have rendered it not difficult for me to obtain such an elevation, you may assign more weight to this circumstance, than at first sight might appear to you to be due to it. I remember Mr. Cobbett commenting on this subject with his usual fairness observed, that my pride was more gratified by being M. P. for Yorkshire, than by receiving a peerage from any minister; and I will not deny all force to the remark; but I can assure him, that this pride would never have had the effect of preventing my accepting a seat in the House of Lords—they were principles of a very different and far higher order which produced that operation.

And thus for the first, and let me hope for the last time, finding myself in a rural retirement at a friend's house, where I could scribble on with little interruption, I have suffered myself by your friendly expostulation to be drawn into this exposure of the real sentiments of my heart, respecting my parliamentary conduct. But after all I have been led into saying in my own favour, I ought in fairness to add, that I am myself conscious of many, many imperfections, and defects, and errors; of more perhaps than are known by any other person; though I can truly declare that they have not been caused by my sacrificing a sense of public duty to my own personal advantage, or, I will add, personal gratifica-

tion. I will also confess my fear lest from the infirmities of age beginning to appear, (for though I am not quite fifty-two, a man's age is not to be always measured by the number of his years,) there have been more imperfections within the last year or two than formerly—the memory first declines, and in my intercourse with you there was a notable instance of its being defective. Let me not forget to assure you that I consider myself, in all that I have been saying, not so much defending myself against the accusation you brought against me, as against that which I brought against myself—that to which I was conscious I must appear justly subject, in the judgment of fair and unprejudiced observers. I should not, however, though I have been so insensibly drawn on into pouring forth the unrestrained effusions of my heart as they have flowed forth without preparation or arrangement, I should not, I think, send off such a mass of egotisms, (as I must again style what I have been writing,) if the friendly frankness with which you addressed me, had not made me feel that I could open to you the whole interior of my mind. Once more I thank you from the bottom of my soul for the friendly and Christian freedom which you have exercised towards me.

The postman is come. He departs hence, most inconveniently for me, at a very early hour; and to save a day I will send off this letter without reading it over;—it will at least show, that I wish to stand well in your estimation,—you have in fact convinced me, that you form your judgment of men with an observing, and at the same time a candid, eye. But after all, it is of little real importance what judgment is formed of us by our fellow-creatures. To obtain the approbation of the man within the breast, as conscience has been well called, should be our object, and to seek for that true honour which cometh from God. Believe me, with real esteem and regard, my dear sir,

Your obliged and faithful,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The alarming illness of the King called him at this time to an immediate decision upon a most important question, suggested to him by that consciousness of failing memory which he expresses in this letter, as well as by the earnest advice of some of his most confidential friends. "I am thinking just now whether or not to give up the county of York: it is a most serious question, may God direct me right in it. I can

truly say, that if I knew which was the right path, I would follow it."

His great humility disposed him, as has been already said, to defer too much to the judgment of his friends; yet this was more perhaps in appearance than in truth. It led him indeed to seek their counsel with unusual freedom, and to weigh it with proportionate anxiety, and thus sometimes gave to a suspended judgment the appearance of a want of resolution; but on all important points he at last acted on his own convictions. Yet whilst forming his own judgment he was often "much embarrassed by the conflicting advice of friends—Babington strong for absolute retiring—Stephen and others for giving up Yorkshire—but Grant and Henry Thornton against my quitting the county."

This important question was far from occupying all his time. He complains indeed of being robbed of his usual holiday leisure for literary enjoyment.

Of more serious work, as he tells Mr. Babington, his hands were full; and in no vacation did he find, "as Dr. Johnson phrases it, a more plentiful lack of time."

He reached home upon the 6th of September, and felt his "mind affected by having all around me on my first return home, but somewhat turmoiled from the consciousness of the number of people I had to see and things to do." Here he spent a busy fortnight, pressing forward by continued personal exertion his West Indian efforts, and consulting with his natural advisers on his own doubtful question. He was gradually adopting his ultimate decision. "It seems best to quit the larger sphere, and yet remain at least for awhile in parliament, at the beginning of a new reign, when one knows not what may be intended in favour of popery, or against morals." "I think I am pretty well resolved against Yorkshire, which I humbly hope is pleasing to God. I am sure it is not from the love of ease or quiet. I feel exquisitely the giving up all my old ways and habits, and still more, I humbly hope, the becoming unable to render any public services such as those in which I now am engaged. Still God can find instruments. He seems to have prepared a new employment and new pleasures for me, and I humbly hope that I shall also know Him better and love Him more. O Lord, bless, and keep, and guide me!"

Meanwhile he was full of business, "several important matters having been stored up to meet me. Several missionary concerns. With Lord Liverpool, Lord N. and

others. Heard with pleasure from Lord N. that justice would be secured for the Hottentots. He bore strong testimony to the effects of the Moravian missions—less to those of the Methodists—said Vanderkemp and Kichener worthy men, but enthusiasts. Alas! poor Lord N., how little dost thou judge according to the Scripture's estimate! Was not then St. Paul an enthusiast?"

The next two months were spent by Mr. Wilberforce in paying, with his family, some long-promised visits. Signs of thankfulness to God, and love to man, mark every halt along his route. "Elmdon, Sunday, Sept. 29. Walked a little with Cowper—the beautiful end of the 6th book—'the promised Sabbath.' What a prospect! Oh the unspeakable mercies of God; what can I desire which he has not granted me? And then when I compare my state with that of all the rest of the world, in other countries, and even in this little oasis of security, and prosperity, and peace! Oh that I were more grateful! Oh let me strive more to love God and Christ, to delight in them, and be grateful to them in some proportion to what I ought." "Oct. 28th. Off for Lord G.'s, where very kindly received. It is a fine place, and improved with great taste. Their kind compulsion kept us over another day. Lord G. very pleasing and friendly, but these fine houses do not suit me. Surely they see too little of their children. Alas! I fear I did little good. Resolved to take opportunity from a conversation we had at N. to write to Lord G. to press on him the reading of St. Paul's writings. Oh may the effect be blessed! He is of a sweet disposition, and most superior understanding. Alas! how unspeakable are his disadvantages, and how much does he suffer from high life! How thankful should I be for having a wife who is not of the fashionable sort! How thankful for my not having been made a peer in earlier life! It would, humanly speaking, have been the ruin of my children, if not of myself." "Finishing in the evening a letter of Alexander Knox's, of fine imagination, rich in thought and beautiful in language; ingenious too, and devotional, but yet fanciful, and full of guesses and subtleties leading to dangerous practical errors, or rather perhaps arising out of them, and then lending their filial support."

By the end of November he was again at home.

A few extracts from letters written at this time to Mr. Simeon exhibit some of those secret links by which all through his long public life he was connected with the efforts

of religious men in every quarter. Mr. Simeon was anxious to set up at Cambridge an Association of the Bible Society, and he at once appealed to Mr. Wilberforce for help. In reply he promises "to do his best," and after many efforts to promote the object writes as follows—thus manifesting his deep interest in the progress of this noble institution.

"Near London, Dec. 10, 1811.

"My dear Sir,

Io triumphe! or rather let me more properly praise God for the greatly altered view of things. When all my prospects were dark and gloomy, behold the light suddenly breaks forth. Who should be announced to me this morning, but the Duke of Gloucester, who with a cheerful countenance accosted me by saying, that he had come himself to let me know that though on the whole he still thought it would not be proper for him to attend in person, he had written to desire that it might be stated to the meeting that he highly approved of it, and took a lively interest in the Society's success; that he desired to be put down as a subscriber of 50 guineas; and that if there should be a request made to him to become President or Patron of the Society, he should not decline the situation. The Duke suggested, that if the Bishop of Bristol, from delicacy toward his brother of Ely, should not like to attend, Lord Hardwicke would be the fittest person to represent and speak for him at the meeting. The Dean has not absolutely decided, but I think he will go. I press him to go down as strongly as with propriety I can.

With kind remembrances to common friends,

Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The day following the meeting, its success was thus communicated to him in a letter from the Bishop of Bristol.

"Trinity Lodge, Dec. 13, 1811.

"My dear Sir,

Were I ever inclined to think lightly of the character and merits of the British and Foreign Bible Society, your opinion of it would convince me that I could not be wrong in lending my humble assistance to that which has deserved the support of the friend of every thing which is right, humane, and good. Unfortunately, for reasons I will explain when

we meet, I could not attend the meeting. But our great and admirable friend, the Dean of Carlisle, who is himself instar omnium, did; and there exercised his extraordinary powers to the credit of himself and the furtherance of this most important cause, which I have the happiness to say was well planted, and is likely to be most thriving. I have the honour to be, with the sincerest regard, my dear sir,

Yours most obediently,

W. Bristol."

The Christmas holidays had now brought his two schoolboys home, and all his six children were gathered round him —"A true family party," but "how sadly do I feel my own exceeding incompetency to the work of education! O Lord, to Thee do I flee. Thou hast promised wisdom to them that ask it sincerely; grant it then to me, that I may be kind and cheerful, and yet steady with my young ones." He was at this time labouring under a distressing oppression on the chest which for some weeks almost deprived him of his voice. Yet was he striving to make their home cheerful to his children. "It is of great importance to preserve boys' affections, and prevent their thinking home a dull place." "R.'s birth-day, so they had their play of King and Queen in my court dresses—in the evening chess. Evening, air-pump, and Southey's Curse of Kehama—imagination wild as the winds—prodigious command of language, and the moral purity truly sublime—the finest ideas all taken from the Scriptures." "Oh what a consideration is it, that magnificent as are the visions of glory in which Southey's fancy revels, and which his creative genius forms, they are all beneath the simple reality of the Christian's hope, if he be but duly impressed with it! May the eyes of my understanding be enlightened, that I may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of His glorious inheritance. Amen."

On Saturday "William Allen the Quaker dined with us by three; and soon after dinner, till half-past eight, showed us galvanic and chemical wonders." "How truly edifying," he continues in that tone of hearty praise which sprung ever readily from his habitual humility, "to see such a man's goings-on! Though so attached to science, in a large business, and so busy at Lancaster's schools, lecturing at Guy's publicly—he attends all charitable meetings where needed, and assigned as a reason why he could not attend us on Monday, that he must be at the meeting for distributing

soup at Spital Fields from six to nine. Thus can he contract into the smallest dimensions, or expand into the largest, for beneficent purposes."

The new year opened with his usual song of praise. "Oh what mercies have I to acknowledge during the past year! Surely it is a solemn season, but I go to prayer; only let me put down my gratitude and humiliation. I must especially try to husband time more. O Lord, enable me to redeem it! I must try to keep an account of time and work, to take security against trifling." "I have been detained long at church," he tells Dr. Coulthurst, "according to a custom which I have observed for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, of devoting the new year to God by public worship in a sacrament on the 1st of January—but you shall hear from me to-morrow; and at this season, when it is usual for friends to interchange good wishes, accept the assurance of my best remembrances and kindest wishes for yourself and all that are dear to you for time and for eternity."

The approaching crisis with America filled him with uneasiness. "There seems real reason to fear a war with America, yet honest Butterworth's correspondents say that we need not heed the war cry, as being only meant to intimidate. It may be so; but nine times out of ten it is a game at brag, wherein each party depends upon the giving way of the other, or would not himself push on so warmly. Alas, alas! Feb. 3d. Bankes thinks with me that there is no chance of the Prince's changing the ministry, or consequently of a speedy dissolution, but we both fear an American war. I am wanting my voice much, that I may plead the cause of Christianity in India, and soften the asperity of hostile tempers between Great Britain and America." "I am so much affected," he tells Mr. Babington, "by the probability of a war with America, that I am strongly disposed to go to the House if Whitbread brings on this motion,* that I may declare the grief and pain with which the very thought of a war with America fills my heart. I have often thought that we have not enough borne in mind that the people of America have a great influence over their government, and that their thinking that a great number of people in this country feel for them might tend to allay irritation, even if a war should break out." Mr. Whitbread's motion came on upon the 12th of February, and after "thinking a little about

* For the correspondence between the two governments.

American question in the morning—he went down to the House for the first time this session. People kindly welcomed me—I spoke for about twenty minutes without suffering in voice, and very well heard. Whitbread angry at me for voting and speaking against him, and very rough and rude. He seemed himself to think so, for he came up next day and talked with me some time, saying how much he had been disappointed by my going against him. Yet all our set voted with me—much misrepresented in the Morning Chronicle next day. I went against my wife's remonstrance, to soften and prevent irritation."

To his friends in the country he thus explains the motives of his conduct.

TO S. ROBERTS, ESQ.

"Near London, Feb. 15, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

My complaint has been much more serious, and has hung on me far longer than I expected. I thank God, I am convalescent I hope, though not well. But on Thursday last, the great anxiety I felt, and indeed continue to feel, on the American question, carried me to the House of Commons much sooner than perhaps was prudent: and really I have been as usual so misrepresented and traduced in the newspaper reports of the debates, that I almost regret my not having stayed away. It is a satisfaction to me however to reflect, that I went for the purpose of soothing any irritation which might arise, and of preventing any mischievous discussions. I have not time to be at all particular, but I can assure you, had Whitbread's motion been complied with, and the various particulars mentioned in the correspondence between the British and American ministers come into discussion, the most acrimonious debates and the strongest charges (and I must say, well-founded charges in some instances) against the American government, and its representative, General Armstrong, must have come forward.

Again, I fear there is too much cause for apprehending, that the American government, finding its threatening language produce the effect of making our parliament take the negotiation into its own hands, would conceive that it need only go on threatening with increased warmth, to insure our conceding all it should require; whereas, I know it would thereby call forth a spirit of a directly opposite kind in many

of our country gentlemen, as well as in government, and would consequently produce the rupture which I so greatly deprecate. But I must say farewell; and believe me, with esteem and regard, my dear sir,

Yours sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE."

The other great cause which he "wanted voice to plead," and which eighteen years before he had pressed so earnestly on parliament, was brought on at this time by the approaching expiration of the East India Company's charter. He was most anxious that the Church should assume her proper station in this noble undertaking, of diffusing the blessings of Christianity, and was therefore "trying to keep back the Dissenters and Methodists, until the Church fairly come forward, from fear that if the sectaries begin the Church will not follow. I wish them therefore to delay applying to the legislature, for instructing the East Indians, or for the repeal of the Conventicle Act, which they are about to attempt in consequence of the judgment of the King's Bench that a man must be a teacher of a separate congregation."

He was himself endeavouring to arouse the Church; "setting hard to work on a paper for the Christian Observer urging clergymen to come forward and press the communication of Christian light to the natives of India;" and using freely in all directions his own personal influence.

He called on Mr. Perceval "entirely about the East India charter occasion, for securing the means of introducing Christian light into India. He freely professed himself favourable to the object, but saw great difficulties in the way, and asked for some distinct proposition. I had told Grant he would. I replied by saying that at least parliament might in the Act insert some such general declarations of principles, as in the two resolutions I moved in May, 1793, and carried in the Committee and House, but which Lord Melville would not put into the Bill. But more—that we must secure the entrance of missionaries. To whom can any discretionary power of granting or refusing leave to go be trusted? I must think over this most important point, but I have long conceived that probably those who are interested for religion will be compelled to join the great body of commercial and political-economy men, who will I doubt not contend for destroying the monopoly of the Company, and leaving the road to the East Indies free and open;" "and I cannot doubt that

the most mature consideration will only confirm the present inclination of my mind, to throw open the whole, and even abolish the East India Company altogether, rather than not insure a passage for the entrance of light, and truth, and moral improvement and happiness into that benighted and degraded region."

"I am sadly disappointed," he says a week later, "in finding even religious people so cold about the East Indian Instruction. Partly produced I think by the sectaries having had a notion that the Church of England to be established. Alas! alas! let us have some substance before we differ about form."

Public affairs meanwhile were of a highly interesting character. "29th. Mr. Alexander Baring came at one by appointment to talk of Orders in Council and licenses till four. The scales doubtful; but if an American war certain provided the Orders are retained, *that* makes them preponderate." "I never was a warm friend to those measures; or rather no friend at all, but an enemy to parts of them. I am sick at heart from the sad prospect of a war with America."

He was now leading his usual London life; constant in the House, full of all plans for public or private charity, and showing to others no symptom of the decay which he suspected in himself. One "day at home writing and correcting a paper about Danish confiscation;" then "to Rose at the Council Office with Latrobe about the Moravian missionaries in Greenland," or "all the afternoon busy about setting up a dispensary for our neighbourhood," and "waiting on the Duke of York to ask him to be patron of it. He very obliging and civil, and consented"—an amiable trait in his Royal Highness towards a conscientious opponent, which he always loved to mention. In the House he spoke more than once upon the system of punishments in the army, "enforcing my argument that no flogging but by general court martial."

Another cause to which he freely gave his time and thoughts, was the welfare of the different religious societies. Most of them he had seen arise around him since his entrance into public life; for they owed their origin to the increased attention to religion, which was in great measure the fruit of his exertions. When he was most occupied this spring, he still found time to attend the "general meeting of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. A grand assemblage—I spoke with acceptance. It went off

well." "African and Asiatic Society's dinner—took the chair. Then House, where sat late. May 6th. British and Foreign Bible Society, annual meeting—all went off admirably. Immense meeting—I spoke with acceptance—several bishops present."

The meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge led to some important consequences. To the committee then appointed, Mr. Wilberforce transmitted Dr. Buchanan's sketch for an ecclesiastical establishment in India, which they embodied in their resolutions; and thus the first great steps were taken which led to the appointment of our Indian bishoprics.

In the midst of these peaceful occupations he was startled by a shock which was felt throughout the kingdom. On Monday, May 11th, some friends had been breakfasting with him to talk over the East Indian question, and then "considering the question of sinecures preparatory to the third reading of Bankes's Bill for their abolition. Late in town. Stopped to dine at Babington's at half-past four. Babington (who was chairman of the Committee on the Orders in Council) at the examination, which began at four, when he returned to us (Henry Thornton, Mrs. Babington, &c.) about a quarter to five, greatly agitated, stating that Perceval had been shot dead in the lobby. We could scarce believe it. I went, after calling at Perceval's and Arbuthnot's, who quite overwhelmed, to the House, to the Prison rooms, where the poor wretch Bellingham [was, they were] examining him. I carefully perused his face for some time, close to him—a striking face: at times he shed tears, or had shed them; but strikingly composed and mild, though haggard. Called William Smith's, who close to Perceval when he dropped, and who thought it was myself, till he looked in the face. Smith, with another, carried him into the Secretary's room. Poor Lord Arden quite wild with grief—"No, I know he is not here, he is gone to a better world." The next day he went "early to town to the Speaker's, by whom summoned about the proposition to be made for the provision for poor Perceval's family."

"Perceval," he says in his private Diary, "had the sweetest of all possible tempers, and was one of the most conscientious men I ever knew; the most instinctively obedient to the dictates of conscience, the least disposed to give pain to others, the most charitable and truly kind and generous creature I ever knew. He offered me at once a thou-

sand pounds for paying Pitt's debts, though not originally brought forward by Pitt, and going out of office with a great family." "Oh wonderful power of Christianity," he adds upon the following Sunday. "Never can it have been seen, since our Saviour prayed for His murderers, in a more lovely form than in the conduct and emotions it has produced in several on the occasion of poor dear Perceval's death. Stephen, who had at first been so much overcome by the stroke, had been this morning, I found, praying for the wretched murderer, and thinking that his being known to be a friend of Perceval's might affect him, he went and devoted himself to trying to bring him to repentance. He found honest Butterworth trying to get admittance, and obtained it for him and Mr. Daniel Wilson, whom at my recommendation he had brought with him. The poor creature was much affected, and very humble and thankful, but spoke of himself as unfortunate rather than guilty, and said it was a necessary thing—strange perversion—no malice against Perceval. Poor Mrs. Perceval after the first grew very moderate and resigned, and with all her children knelt down by the body, and prayed for them and for the murderer's forgiveness. Oh wonderful power of Christianity! Is this the same person who could not bear to have him opposed by any one?"

To Mr. Hey he opened at this time his mind.

"London, May 15th, 1812.

"My dear Sir,

Alas! into what times are we thrown! I cannot help thinking I see the source of that savage spirit which prevails so much. The reverence for authority, and law, and rank, and high station, has been effaced from the minds of the lower orders; and where the fear of God has no place, the consequence is that all control is withdrawn from the bad passions of men. To this cause I think may be added the modern system of making expediency the basis of morals and the spring of action, instead of the domestic and social affections and the relations of life and the duties arising out of them. Not that the lower orders understand this generalizing abstract way of thinking and feeling; but the opinions and emotions which are taught and imbibed in this school, receiving their stamp in the mint of the higher orders, if I may so express it, obtain a currency throughout the inferior classes of society. I trust we are introducing

the true remedy, indeed, the only remedy of our diseased nature, by teaching the mass of our people the knowledge of the Scriptures. Surely it is an indication of the favour of the Almighty, that we have been enabled to spread so extensively the system of education. I must also ascribe much to the seditious publications which have been circulated so industriously.

It is no small pleasure to me to believe that Mr. Perceval had an habitual desire to please God; and I doubt not he looked to Him with unfeigned humiliation, through the Redeemer. It is really an honour to our House, that his private virtues were so generally recognized among us. How much I wish that I may not hear that in our county the account of Mr. P.'s death, and of the horrid circumstances which attended it, was received with joy and exultation, as in Nottingham, Leicester, and I fear other places! Well, my dear Sir, 'there remaineth a rest,' and pray for me and mine, that we may enter into it after the short voyage of this stormy and tempestuous life. With kind remembrances to all your family,

I remain, my dear Sir,
Ever your sincere friend,
W. WILBERFORCE."

In the midst of all the public bustle and political contention which followed the death of Mr. Perceval, growing out of the difficulty the Prince Regent experienced in forming a ministry, about which he was consulted by Mr. Canning on the course it was best for him to pursue, it is most refreshing to turn from the entries of his busy nights and hurried days to the record of his inner feelings. He was now again separated from his family, and his letters to them breathe the simplest and most natural affection. The troubled gusts of politics never ruffled its peaceful current. "I feel," he tells his sister, "as if I were unkind in never writing to you, and I have often thought of doing it. But every day brings with it claims upon my time far beyond my powers of satisfying them. Yet nothing can ever prevent my having at liberty for your use my kindest thoughts and affections."

"For once," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, who was travelling with his children to the coast, "I rejoice in an east wind, since I recollect that it will meet you and prevent your all suffering from the heat . . . In comes John Villiers, and he has released me only by my absolutely forcing him out at

half-past three, and I ought to have gone to town an hour ago . . . I have been sitting under the trees reading and writing. The only part of the garden which I did not enjoy, was one to which I went purposely to see how all looked—the children's gardens. Even the fullest exuberance of summer beauties could not supply the want of animal life. Barbara's gum-cistus is in high beauty, and the roses in full bloom. My own room produces something of the same melancholy sensation as the children's gardens; but I am going to dine at Babington's to meet Mr. Robert Hall, (the Dissenting minister,) whose shyness is such that he could not bring himself to come to me, though, hearing that he wished to see me, I wrote him a long letter to banish all such feelings, and settle about our meeting."

On the Sunday following he writes again from Broomfield, where he was passing one day with Mr. William Hoare. "After having dated my letter I need not inform you that the various rooms of this house, and walks of this place, call up many interesting recollections in which you all have the principal share. It was impossible for the main features of the place to be ever changed. The walk under the oaks and the opposite close one—the various rooms, &c. . . . I hope I do not look back on the past scenes without some of that gratitude which they justly claim in overflowing measure. I am but poorly to day, and have been robbed of the portion of time which I value more in common than any other in the whole week, that I mean which elapses between returning from church and dinner."

His affections were naturally lively, but it was not to this only that he owed the preservation, all through his busy life, of their early morning freshness. This was the reward of self-discipline and watchfulness; of that high value for the house of God, and the hours of secret meditation, which made his Sundays cool down his mind and allay the rising fever of political excitement. Sunday turned all his feelings into a new channel. His letters were put aside, and all thoughts of business banished. To the closest observer of his private hours he seemed throughout the day as free from all the feelings of a politician, as if he had never mixed in the busy scenes of public life. "I have been much affected by hearing old Scott of the Lock for the first time these many years. The beginning of his sermon . . 'I have been young, and now am old' . . that twenty-seven years ago he preached for the first time in that chapel, was remarkably applicable to me;

for then I first heard him at the beginning of my Christian course. Oh how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy follow me! And may I not hope that my being thus humiliated is a sign that the Saviour is knocking at the door of my heart, and that I am ready to let Him in? Mr. Sargent preached, and pleased us all greatly—simple seriousness, and consequent pathos, the character of his preaching."

"What a blessing," he says, "is a cheerful temper! I felt most keenly ——'s behaviour about Bowdler, and his not coming to me; but for his sake, and I hope from Christian principles, I resolved to struggle against bad temper about it, and now all is over." Thus was his spirit kept unruffled by all the exasperating influences of the life he led; whilst he walked safely, with a cheerful seriousness and disengaged affections, in the heated and infectious air of public life—in the world, but most truly not of the world—ever remembering the end. "How will all this busy and tumultuous world appear to have been all one great bedlam when we look back on it from a future state!"

The summer was far advanced before Mr. Wilberforce got off from London, "holding it a duty to stay till the last." He reached Sandgate upon the 29th of July, and resumed his usual summer occupations. "My first employment must be writing—to clear away an immense arrear of unanswered letters and unread papers." "Besides the mass of trash, I have letters for Europe, Asia, Africa, and America."

Here he was exposed to few external interruptions, and was therefore able to devote more time than usual to his children: whilst he indulged in "a little miscellaneous reading. Sometimes parts of the Reviews or poetry, Heber's Palestine, The Lady of the Lake;" and took part in "the general reading of the family—Rollin and Shakspeare. This afternoon in walking I ran over for an hour The Vicar of Wakefield. What an utter ignorance does it indicate of true Christianity! Morality is its main vital principle; yet the story, though strangely unnatural, is beautifully told and inimitably interesting."

To these employments must be added attempts to benefit his temporary neighbours. It was one of his first cares to form an accurate estimate of the moral and religious state of the surrounding population. At Sandgate he found much to regret. "It is grievous," he laments to Mr. Stephen, "to see this place—hot and cold sea baths, library, billiard table, ponies, donkeys, every thing but a church, or chapel, or any

thing of the kind, though it is a sort of preserve of the Archbishop's. There is not even a Sunday school. We are trying to get something of the kind set on foot." He was almost disqualified by feeble health from personal exertions in visiting the poor; yet what he could he did, even in this way; stopping often in his solitary walks to drop some word of wisdom for those who casually met him . . ." Thursday: walking early, met a boy aged fourteen, John Russell, who cannot read, and utterly ignorant of religion—did not know what would become of us hereafter—may this meeting be for good" ...while upon those whose circumstances made it possible, he continually pressed the happiness and duty of thus ministering to their wants. "Miss E." he says this spring, "now going on admirably. Her health and spirits improved, and she very active amongst the cottagers, doing them good. A most useful lesson taught by this; that the best course when any one is low spirited and distressed with anxieties, is to set them to action in doing good to others. Trust thou in the Lord, and be doing good."

But one important subject now pressed for instant decision. Lord Sidmouth had privately informed him that an immediate dissolution was at hand; and the time was therefore come, when he must make up his mind to retain or to resign the representation of his county. "I shrink," he says, when weighing all the arguments upon the subject, "from absolutely deciding to resign my situation as from annihilation. Yet my judgment commends it more and more; and it is not annihilation if I stay in the House, though not for Yorkshire. May the Lord guide me aright. The urgent claims of my children upon my thoughts, time, and superintendence, strongly enforce my relinquishment, and are the deciding consideration. My declining health and memory seem improved; but I ought not to be an occasional attendant on parliament if M. P. for Yorkshire. O Lord, give me wisdom to guide me rightly. I mean to spend a day in religious exercises, and to make this with my children the great objects with God." His decision was soon made, and was announced two days afterwards in the following letter.

TO CHARLES DUNCOMBE, ESQ. DUNCOMBE PARK, YORKSHIRE.

"Sandgate, near Folkstone, Sept. 8, 1812.

"My dear Duncombe,

After much serious consideration, I have at last made up my mind on the important point on which I wrote to you some time ago—I have resolved to resign that high station with which the kind partiality of my Yorkshire friends has so long honoured me, and in which you have yourself so kindly, and actively, and perseveringly constributed to place me. The truth is, that I find I must either continue to allot less time and thought to my family than it justly claims, or that I must cease to be a constant and assiduous member of parliament, which I am sure I ought to be if I undertake so serious and weighty a trust as that of the representative of the county of York.

Yet I will fairly own to you that it is not altogether without difficulty that I have brought myself to form this determination; but my judgment being clear, and that after much and long reflection, (for it is more than a year that this plan has been in contemplation,) and my own opinion being confirmed by those of several of my best friends, I ought no longer to hesitate; and having come to a decision, you are the first person to whom I communicate it. The probability of a dissolution of parliament in the ensuing autumn is so strong, that it seemed right for me to make up my mind; and I will own to you that I wish it to appear clear that I am not influenced in my judgment by the fear of an opposition, of which, if I were to offer myself, I am clear there would be no probability. The higher orders are not liable to sudden changes of their opinions in cases of this sort, and I have every reason to believe (some which no one almost knows but myself, but which would be of very powerful operation) that I should be warmly supported by the great body of the clothiers. I hope you will not suspect me of not estimating at their due amount the trouble and expense which another contest would occasion to my supporters; but I own, that if I believed there were in a certain quarter any design to oppose me, that very circumstance would produce in me so strong a disposition to stand my ground, that I should find it very hard work to force myself to retire, if I could do it at all—not, believe me, from personal motives, though I dare not affirm that they would not mix, but because I should no longer think it my duty so to do; for believing that four-

fifths at least of the freeholders are friendly to me, I could not bear the idea of a member, be he who he may, being forced upon our great county by the one-fifth of the freeholders, against the sense of the other four parts, merely by the dread of the expense of a contest; which our experience in 1807 proves may be carried on for a sum by no means difficult to be raised in our county, without pressing too heavily on the candidate himself.

But it is in confidence that to your private ear I thus whisper my secret feelings, and as strictly secret I beg you will consider what I have said. Though I have consulted none but very particular friends I cannot but suspect that there has been some leaky vessel, and that hence has arisen that abominable report of a compromise between Mr. H. Lascelles and myself, which would have been highly dishonourable to us both, though far more so to me than to him. Several friends however on whose judgments I place great reliance, are so earnest with me not to quit parliament altogether, that I have agreed to accept the very kind offer of a dear friend, and through marriage a near relation, which will probably place me in a seat in which my occasional attendance in the House of Commons will not be inconsistent with other claims. But let this also be strictly entre nous at present. I am doubtful as to the proper time of announcing my intended resignation publicly, and shall be glad of your opinion on that head, on which I mean also to consult Creyke and another friend or two. If the dissolution of parliament should seem really likely, or pretty certainly to take place, it might, and I conceive would, become right for me to declare my intention without further loss of time; but if we seem likely to live through another session, the declaration might this year be premature. I cannot conclude without thanking you most cordially for all the kindness which I have experienced from you during my connexion with York; for though I am not vain, or rather foolish enough to ascribe your support to personal motives, which indeed would be a supposition dishonourable to yourself, yet I should be void of all gratitude if its emotions were not called forth by the long course of continued good offices with which you have favoured me. Let me again however earnestly request, that all I have said may be at present considered as strictly confidential.

Let me beg you to present my own and Mrs. W.'s kind remembrances to Lady Charlotte, who, with all the family, I

hope is well, and to believe me, my dear D. with real regard,

Yours very sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE."

His intentions did not long remain a secret. On the 21st, hearing from good authority that parliament was about to be dissolved he sent "his resigning advertisement." "I humbly trust that I have done right; but I cannot say that I do not feel a good deal. Surely it is much to quit such a situation with a high character, and with the wishes of friends that I should retain it. I go to prayer. My heart is deceitful, I scarcely know myself what it wishes, still my judgment is for Bramber."

This unexpected announcement was very variously received. Those who had witnessed the amount of labour which his sense of duty had long imposed upon him, and compared it with the powers of his slight frame and tender health, rejoiced in his decision. Such was Mr. Bankes's judgment.

His Yorkshire friends, almost to a man lamented it. "You cannot be ignorant," writes one of them, "that by the nation in general you are looked up to as the advocate of religion amongst the higher orders of society, and particularly in that legislative assembly, of which, happily for this country, you have so long been a conspicuous and efficient member."

The applause which he feared to seem to seek, followed him into his retirement. The county at large on the day of nomination recorded solemnly their judgment of his character in an enthusiastic vote of their unanimous thanks; and his own town of Hull followed with a similar memorial of affection.

In the following fragment of his own dictation, his long and singular connexion with the county is reviewed.

"Surely if I cannot but look back upon the circumstances which attended the first formation of my connexion with the county of York without recognising the traces of providential guidance, neither can I forbear to acknowledge the same gracious favour in my having so long continued in my honourable station. May I not well wonder that in a county accustomed to so much attention from its members, so much that was likely to give offence should be endured in me without the slightest expression of disapprobation. My

religious character and habits might alone be expected to produce disgust. My never attending the county races, or even the assizes; my never cultivating the personal acquaintance of the nobility and gentry (an omission which would have been culpable, but for the expenditure it would have occasioned of time which I wanted for important purposes); my seldom visiting the county, sometimes not going into it for several years together;—all these might fairly have been expected to have alienated from me the good-will of the freeholders; yet it never produced this effect, and I have every reason to believe that I never should have experienced another opposition. But I began to perceive traces of infirmity, which, from considerations alike of duty and prudence, determined me to retire from my dignified station, and to accept the friendly offer of a seat in parliament which would absolve me from the obligation of constant attendance.

"Several of my Yorkshire friends were for the first time dissatisfied with me; and the letters which I received from various quarters were such as could not but be gratifying to any liberal mind. And here I cannot forbear mentioning a trifling anecdote, which is not without importance in the proof it affords that the general course of a public man may be approved by many who may not concur with him in his political opinions. On my way to the House of Commons one day soon after my having exchanged my seat for Yorkshire for the borough of Bramber, I met Mr. Sheridan. After we had exchanged salutations, 'Do you know,' said he, 'that I was near writing to you some little time ago?' On my asking the occasion of his intended letter, 'Why,' said he, 'I read in the newspaper your farewell Address to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, and though you and I have not much agreed in our votes in the House of Commons, yet I thought the independent part you acted would render your retirement from parliament a public loss. I was about therefore to write to you, to enforce on you the propriety of reconsidering your determination to retire, as I supposed, from public life, when I was informed that you were to come into parliament for Bramber; this information made me lay aside my intention.'"

His Sandgate retirement was now interrupted by the conclusion of his children's holidays; as he wished himself to place one of his boys with a new tutor in Leicestershire. "On Friday last," he tells Lord Muncaster, "I set out from

Sandgate with my two boys, to convey them to their respective places of education."

This journey is a good illustration of his parental tenderness. "I had resolved," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce from Leicestershire, "to set my face towards Cambridge this very day; but at length I thought it better, (after a rumination on my pillow when I lay awake against my will thinking of dear ——, who lay in a little bed by my side fast asleep, and whom I conceived I was about to leave for *good*,) to return southward. I feel so nervous about leaving him, that but for shame I think I should bring him back again." "After having prayed with ——, and had a tête-à-tête with Mrs. ——, I set off for Leicester. Poor dear boy, he was much affected at parting with me, turning round and bursting into tears, first quietly, and afterwards with sobs. I was near crying too as I said to Mrs. ——, 'I must get off, or else—' but she I trust will watch over him with Christian care."

Another incident on this journey must stand in his own words. "I am much grieved at having yesterday passed by, without stopping, a man in a ditch by the road-side between Barnet and London, whom two or three gentlemen were attending to. The Leeds coach with the back seats empty was just behind, and multitudes of passengers, so that help could not be wanted; yet it was wrong in all respects to pass by. It is an adjudged case since the good Samaritan parable—at which I should have been instinctively prompt. It was not hardness of heart I believe either. I was busy hearing Bowdler's paper upon Dugald Stewart, and I was flurried by the Leeds coach, on the outside of which were people who I thought knew me; yet if so it was worse—not glorifying God, &c. Lord, forgive me, forgive me! I felt (and now condemn it) more, that to-day is the anniversary (Oct. 25th) of my escape from drowning in the Avon, by a most providential suggestion." So little had thirty-two years of public life hardened his affections, or blunted a most tender conscience.

On the 26th of October he was again at Sandgate, and purposing to "set apart a day for devotional exercises, in which my main objects will be Divine guidance and blessing as to my children, and for a blessing on my new plan of life. For guidance and strength to walk in the right path. Oh what cause have I for gratitude!"

To the eye of a stranger he appeared at this time full "ten

years older" than he was; but more intimate acquaintance removed this impression. Delicacy of health had indeed set on him already some of the external marks of age, and a stoop which he contracted early and which lessened his apparent stature, added much to this effect. But the agility of his step, the quickness of all his senses, (though he only heard with one ear,) his sparkling eye, and the compass and beauty of his voice, contradicted all these first appearances. And those who listened with delight to the freshness and exuberance of thoughts, sometimes deeply serious, sometimes playful and humorous, which enriched his conversation, could hardly believe that he had long borne the weight even of manly years. At the breakfast table, and again from the setting-in of evening until midnight were his gayest times; at the last, especially, all his faculties were in the fullest exercise; and when being read to in his family circle, which was his delight, he poured forth all his stores, gathering around him book after book to illustrate, question, or confirm the immediate subject of the evening.

From Barham Court on the 5th Nov. 1812, he thus writes to Mrs. Hannah More.

"You really provoke me, my dear friend, when you begin your letter by saying that you are always sorry to break in upon me. As if you did not know, that to hear from you is always to me like a piece of fine smooth-shaven down to a horseman who is almost worn out by plodding his weary way through deep clayey roads, or picking his steps among stony paths. The very animal he rides is revived by the change, and instinctively sets up a canter. I suppose my reader is the animal's archetype; though he, less lively than the four-footed performer, does not seem to partake of the animation. Or rather, to speak the truth, he would not, for I need not assure you that I do not commit your epistles to his perusal. The idea was suggested by his being at this moment at my side, in a state not unaptly described by my representation. * * *

"To see so little of you is a standing grievance of my life (I speak seriously). But you possess a first place in my heart. May the Almighty support and bless you. I am concerned for poor Patty also. But *this vile body* is to be the exclamation here below. By and by it will be, Thanks to God, who hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ! Farewell. Let me hear from you occasionally, and never be so affected again as to talk of breaking in upon me.

"Mrs. Wilberforce desires me to send her kindest remembrances; give mine to the sisterhood, and believe me,

Ever your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Alas! alas! this sad war with America! I never felt any public incident so deeply. Yet on the whole I thank God I can lay my head on my pillow in peace, for our government is not chargeable with the blood-guiltiness; but Madison, Jefferson, &c."

In the quiet hours which he could now command, he was looking forward to his London life, and resolving on such rules as he thought would be then useful to him. Above all he now determined, "when not unavoidably prevented by company or House of Commons, to take an hour, or at least half an hour, for private devotions, including Scripture reading and meditation, immediately before family prayers. Besides other benefits, one will be to send me back into society with a more spiritual mind, and to help me to preserve it through the evening, and to make the conversation more edifying and instructive. How can I expect a blessing otherwise? Oh let me reform here; it has been my standing sin of late: I must therefore remember that I shall find it difficult to adhere to the reformed system. The best hope will arise from my bearing about with me a deep impression of the difficulty, and of my own weakness, and of the urgent need of Divine help.—Also aim at universal holiness, guard against self-indulgence, and love of human estimation. Oh how that vile passion will creep in! Even now it is at work fold within fold. Lord, Thou knowest me; I cast myself on Thy pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace."

Upon his return to London, he set apart a day for more especial private devotions. "I have had serious doubts, whether or not it is right to do so when I have so many important subjects to consider, and so much to do; yet the examples as well as the writings of good men, and above all, the Holy Scriptures, taking the precepts which directly treat of fasting and comparing them with others, warrant it. N. B. Christ's words about the demons, which expelled only by fasting and prayer. Then as to my being now extremely occupied, Owen's remark in some degree applies, (inference from Malachi,) that we should give God if needful our best time. O Lord, Thy blessing can render far more than a day's time as nothing even in my worldly business, and if the

main-spring's force be strengthened, and its working improved, (cleansed from dust and foulness,) surely the machine will go better. Lord, what I do I trust is pleasing to Thee, accept and bless my service."

"Let me look over my 'grounds for humiliation,' my 'company regulations.' How sadly apt am I to lose all recollection of these, and of keeping my heart when I am in society! Lord, strengthen me with might. Let Christ dwell, not merely occasionally visit, but dwell in my heart by faith. Let me cultivate more an habitual love of God—Butler and Barrow—habitual gratitude. Let me try some memorandum analogous to the phylactery. See Numb. xv. 38, 40."

With such resolutions he returned to London life. "Dec. 1st. House—I meant to speak rather for peace, but expressed my meaning imperfectly, and the newspapers putting in only what is calculated, as they conceive, to make me unpopular, and leaving out all the rest, I am made to be far more warlike than I am, or should have been supposed to be, if I had been silent. They omitted all I said about my thinking it a favourable time for treating, and that I hoped they would take every fair opening; but that giving them credit for this intention, (mentioning Lord Sidmouth in the ministry,) I would not hamper them, and probably injure the country's cause by instructing them to treat by a parliamentary direction; when they would feel bound to obey, and the enemy of course conclude that he might treat on terms proportionably more favourable."

He writes to Sheffield:—"I congratulate you on the intelligence yesterday received. May the Almighty be pleased to prove to the warrior of the present day, as He did to a predecessor of old times, that he is but an instrument to accomplish the Divine purposes, the rod of His anger, and that when sufficient chastisement has been received, he can be at once checked in his career."

His time was now so fully occupied by important questions in the House of Commons, and pressing business out of it, that as yet he found little increased leisure from his change of station. His Diary shows the nature of his present occupations.

"Dec. 7th. Breakfasters numerous, and not clear from company till time to go to British and Foreign Bible Society's monthly committee meeting, to get a grant of Testaments for the West Indies, 2000 willingly granted. To

Babington's and wrote letters. Met Butterworth fresh from Ireland . . his communications show sad hostility of mind between Protestants and Roman Catholics . . then House. Moving for papers about Slave Trade at Cape, and Mauritius. Lord Wellington's grant of £100,000 to buy an estate. After the House a discussion at Henry Thornton's with Babington, the Dean, and Stephen. At night home with the Dean. 8th. Fuller of Kettering breakfasted, and talked much about East Indian Gospel Communication plan. Then town, Manufacturers' Committee—Duke of Kent in the chair, and very civil. Then Hatchard's, letters—home to dinner—Stephen, Simeon, the Dean, and others—the House. 12th. Forced to dine with the Duke of Gloucester. One of his mixed parties—Lord Sidmouth—Vansittart—Hastings, quite aged. All splendid—Lord Sidmouth clever. Sheridan said of a person whom Lord Sidmouth does not like, O he has an iron heart, but Lord Sidmouth has a fine spirit. 14th. To town to find out about Dr. B— from Yarmouth, who had written for £20, without which he with his wife would be ruined—could learn nothing—so sent it doubtingly. African Institution, and home. Voice not well today. Duchess of York took my antelope. 18th. Letters and callers till two. African Institution. House on grant to Russia £200,000*—spoke but middlingly. 23d. To town about twelve to meet Brougham at Lord Bathurst's about Parke's Journals. Heard of Russian meeting, and that Duke of York in the chair. Went to Crown and Anchor, and found Lord Liverpool, Duke of York, Lord Castlereagh, N. Vansittart, Lord Harrowby, Lord Buckinghamshire, and several under secretaries, and four or five Russian merchants—Samuel Thornton speaking—sixty or seventy common people—meeting utterly unknown—tried to get it put off; but being desired to speak, did shortly—rather pressing adjournment, but they had not presence of mind for it. Brougham had sent to know if any Whig, and then he would come. I pressed him to write to Lord Holland to make a second meeting. I fear the folly, if not worse, of not taking pains to have a full meeting, (perhaps for fear of having the business taken out of certain hands,) prevented more notice; and now there is danger of its being considered as cooked up between ministers and a few interested Rus-

* A sum of 200,000*l.* was voted for the relief of the sufferings brought upon the Russians by their gallant resistance to the common enemy. The meeting of the 23d, was to raise funds for the same purpose by private charity.

sian merchants—sad, so to spoil a noble work which would have taken admirably, and have given rise to a noble testimony of national admiration, esteem, benevolence, and gratitude. 24th. Town—read Report, corrected from Allen's draught at Freemasons' Hall—distressed manufacturers—Duke of Cambridge in the chair—he had never heard of Russian meeting, nor Stephen. So vexed at the folly of its managers, that after talking with Brougham and Lord Bathurst, I wrote to Lord Liverpool and S. Thornton to get the meeting stated as a preliminary one before Christmas. 26th. To Lord Liverpool's by half-past eleven, to confer about undoing the evil done by the Russian subscription management. Lord Harrowby, Vansittart, S. Thornton came. Agreed upon notifying another meeting—acting on my advice. Still I fear all or a hundredth part of the mischief cannot be undone. Thence to secretary of Russian embassy, to tell him that the manufacturers wished to give supplies of manufactures.

"30th. Owen of Lanark, Dale's son-in-law and partner, breakfasted with me, and stayed long talking with me of his plan of education, and of rendering manufactures and morals compatible." This visit was renewed soon after, and Mr. Grant and Henry Thornton met Mr. Owen by appointment. When Mr. Owen was proceeding to detail his schemes, he gently hinted that the ladies present might be suffered to retire from a discussion which must prove beyond their comprehension. Mr. Wilberforce eagerly dissented from the proposition; and it was well for Mr. Owen that he yielded, for he had not read long before "Grant, Henry Thornton, and I were all fast asleep, and the despised ladies were his only real audience." "One of my great principles, Mr. Wilberforce," said the schemer, "is, that persons ought to place themselves in the situation of others, and act as they would wish themselves to be treated." "Is that quite a new principle, Mr. Owen?" was his answer, with that look of suppressed humour, which gave his countenance an archness of expression which no description can convey. "I think I have read something very like it in a book called the New Testament." "Very possibly it may be so," gravely answered the imperturbable philosopher. Yet such was his universal kindness, that Mr. Owen left him to tell others that Mr. Wilberforce was charmed with his discoveries.

At times, in the secret struggles of his heart, he laments that he was "unable to realize the presence of God. It was

as if there had been a wall of separation that I could not penetrate or see over; and my heart dead and cold. Surely it is not enthusiasm to notice these sensations, as David does. Lord, renew and quicken me." But this was not his common state. His secret entries testify that habitual peace, combined with the deepest humility, were in him the blessed fruits of keeping God's watch carefully. They are well expressed in an entry at this time. "I am just returned from a highly impressive sermon by Mr. Dunn. I hope that my sensibility is in some degree the effect of the Holy Spirit, the knocking of Christ at the door of my heart. I must not spend any of my few minutes before dinner in writing; but let me just record my feelings of deep humiliation, yet of confiding, though humble faith—looking to the Saviour as my only ground of hope. I cast myself at the foot of the cross, bewailing my exceeding sinfulness and unprofitableness, deeply, most deeply aggravated by the infinity of my mercies. I plead Thy precious promises, and earnestly pray to Thee to shed abroad in my heart more love, more humility, more faith, more hope, more peace, and joy; in short, to fill me with all the fulness of God, and make me more meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Then shall I also be better in all the relations of life in which I am now so defective, and my light will shine before men, and I shall adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things."

A busy session was now opening on him. "I am reading," he says, (Feb. 5th,) "on Catholic Emancipation, and thinking too. I grieve to see so much prejudice. Talking the question over with friends; one, though a most able man, not knowing that Dissenters may sit in parliament." This question now agitated all the country, and there were "meetings against Roman Catholics in all parts of England." "I am very doubtful which way right." This was his only question; general popularity and party principle were no rule for him to steer by; and though he suffered keenly from shocking, upon such a question, the conscientious scruples of those whose principles he most esteemed, yet even this feeling could not for a moment bias his decision. "Lord direct me," he prays on this question; "all the religious people are on the other side, but they are sadly prejudiced." "It grieves me to separate from the Dean, and all my religious friends; but conscience must be obeyed. God does not direct us to use carnal weapons in His cause." He displays at this time the exact balance of his mind in a letter to William Hey.

"Near London, Feb. 22, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

I have been and still am longing to devote my time and thoughts to the Roman Catholic question; yet pamphlets and other documents lie unopened on my table. My opinion is far from made up on that momentous subject; and I heartily wish I could employ a few weeks in quietly studying and considering it. It is not however on this head that I now take up the pen to address you, though mindful of your late kind communications, I begin with a few words on it; and having touched on it, I will go on to add, that I am quite decided against granting to the Roman Catholics eligibility to *all* civil offices. My chief doubts are concerning their admissibility into parliament; and there is one consideration which I do not see that even you yourself, who to do you justice have considered the question more maturely than nineteen-twentieths of those who write or speak on it, have duly borne it in mind. The Bishop of Lincoln's charge, which is otherwise able, entirely leaves it out, and even proceeds on a supposition of there being no such consideration. It is that whatever the Roman Catholics, if admitted into the House of Commons, could effect through the medium of law for establishing their hierarchy and injuring that of the Protestants in Ireland, they can do just as well (in one important respect better) through the medium of members of parliament, *called* Protestants, but who being elected by Roman Catholic voters, and having little or no real religion themselves, are implicitly subservient to their constituents' purposes. I say, they can serve the Roman Catholics even better in one respect, inasmuch as they do not call into action the opposite Protestant spirit in the same degree.

But while the Roman Catholics thus possess parliamentary influence, they do not possess it in such a manner as to render it a personal privilege, or gratification to them; and therefore so as to give them an interest in the existing legislature, and to connect them to the Protestant system by the various ties which unite men who act together in parliament, and which would render it improbable that they would join a foreign enemy in separating Ireland from Great Britain; and where can be the wisdom of retaining the prison dress, when you have set the men at liberty? I must break off. I remain, my dear sir, with cordial esteem and regard,

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Under this view it was a mere question of political expediency. The principle had been long since conceded. Political power the Romanists possessed already, and the only object was to provide for its being most innocently exercised. He was now almost convinced that this end would be promoted by a change of system; for that "the actual state of the laws," as he told Mr. Charles Butler, "so far from affording any security to the Established Church, or to the Protestant cause in general, augmented their danger; and so far from lessening or weakening the influence of the Roman Catholic church over its members, maintained and extended its force."

As yet, though he "had prepared" himself "upon this question," he "had found no opportunity for taking part in the debate. Lord, direct me. I have been reading some of the East Indian charter documents, which are immensely voluminous; and on Catholic Question. How difficult it is to attain to truth in these complicated cases; and therefore with what moderation should we hold our own opinions, and with what candour allow for those of others; whereas in both the exact opposite prevails! Alas! Lord, guide and bless me. Blessed be God, they cannot be finally wrong in thy sight who obey conscience, having taken due pains to inform themselves and judge rightly."

But this great question was far from having an undivided hold upon his thoughts. Besides many other minor matters, he had perfectly resolved to fight to the very last the battle of Christianity in India, and the moment of the contest now drew near. Though he had been long making preparations, he had not satisfied himself. "I sadly fear," he says on the 16th of March, "that we have been too negligent about the grand question of communicating Christianity to our Indian fellow-subjects. We have heard of excellent Martyn's death in Persia, on his way to the Mediterranean homewards. It is a mysterious Providence. Alas, when the interior is opened, the missionary and religious party in India are not so much at one, nor so free from human infirmity, as I had supposed. Oh did the world see into the hearts of religious professors, how much would it triumph over them! Yet they are better as well as worse than the world suspects. It confirms old Baxter, 'Good men neither so good, nor bad men often so bad, as the world supposes.'"

It was evident that the struggle would be arduous. The great mass of Anglo-Indians were convinced that the attempt

to Christianize the East must infallibly cost us our dominion; and though they might reluctantly assent to the scanty ecclesiastical establishment for the English residents in India, which government had been persuaded to propose, they were determined to abate none of their hostility to missionary efforts. They proposed therefore that the entire regulation of the subject should be left for the next twenty years to the East India Company, who had unequivocally shown what would be their rule of conduct. On this point then the contest was to turn.

The temper of the House of Commons could not be mistaken, and it was only by bringing forcibly to bear upon it the religious feeling of the country, that he could hope to carry through this most important measure. And now that he was in the strife, he set about the necessary steps with an energy and resolution which had never been exceeded even in the vigour of his early manhood, when he fought the Abolition battle. "The truth is," he tells Mr. Hey, "and a dreadful truth it is, that the opinions of nine-tenths, or at least of a vast majority, of the House of Commons would be against any motion which the friends of religion might make; but I trust it is very different in the body of our people; and petitions are to be promoted with a view to bring their sentiments and feelings to bear upon the opposite tenets and dispositions of the members of parliament. Surely there can be no doubt that all who are zealous in the cause of Christ would do their utmost to enlighten our East Indian fellow-subjects. I must have sent you a letter which I drew up last year for general circulation: I would send a copy but that it is out of print. It was composed too hastily, but it contained such arguments and motives as I think no Christian could resist."

Not a day was lost in calling to his aid the expressed religious feeling of the country. On the day following the first debate he wrote a multitude of letters to all his leading country correspondents, in the following strain.

"London, March 25, 1813.

"My dear Sir,

I wish I had an hour or two which I could give to writing to you, but I have scarce as many minutes. The subject on which I wish to open my mind to you is the pending renewal of the East India Company's charter, and the opportunity it offers of doing away that great national crime of

committing the control of the only entrance for religious light and moral improvement into India to the Directors, who are decidedly adverse to every attempt that can be made to Christianize, or raise in the scale of being, our East Indian fellow-subjects.

I beg you will attend to these last expressions; for great as is the importance of the subject in a religious point of view, it is only less important in that of humanity. It is a shocking idea that we should leave sixty millions of our fellow-subjects, nay of our tenants, (for we collect about seventeen millions sterling from the rent of their lands,) to remain in a state of barbarism and ignorance, the slaves of the most cruel and degrading superstition, lest they should not be so easily governed by a small number of Europeans; though it is the opinion of many of the ablest East Indian statesmen that this doctrine is as false as it is wicked; and that by gradually and prudently proceeding to Christianize our East Indian population we should greatly add to the stability of our Oriental empire. Now I grieve to say, it is intended to commit, as before, to the Court of Directors the uncontrolled power of granting licenses, without which no one shall be permitted to go to India; indeed to leave them the exclusive direction as to religious and moral concerns in all that regards our East Indian dominions. Mr. Stephen, I, and others, loudly exclaimed against the proposed system of barring out all moral and religious light from the East Indies, and declared that we were confident the friends of religion, morality, and humanity throughout the kingdom would petition on the subject. Now you I trust will make good our words. You petitioned in the case of the Slave Trade, and those petitions were eminently useful; so they would be now; and what is more, after having been talked of, their not coming would be highly injurious; so lose no time. The petitions should be from each place separately.

To you I will confess I feel another consideration strongly. The Methodists and Dissenters will, I doubt not, petition; but let it not be said that they only take an interest in the happiness of mankind, and that the members of our Church are not as zealous when there is a real call for such exertions. I cannot write to-day to Huddersfield, or Bradford, but do you exert yourself.

I remain ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was now "excessively busy stirring up petitions," feeling that it was "the greatest object which men ever pursued." "The spirit of petitioning scarcely spreads as one could wish." Yet the leaven was at work, and he soon adds, that "already Bristol, Hull, Glasgow, (excellent resolutions,) and Birmingham have spoken out." His own personal efforts meanwhile were incessant. Upon the 24th of March he went "early to town to Freemasons' Hall for committee of annual meeting of the African Institution. After business over, consulted about East India charter's religious bearing, and agreed on a public meeting for Monday, March 29th." Two days later he was again "off early, and after calling at Lord Liverpool's and Buckinghamshire's, to Seeley's. Meeting of committee on the religious bearing of the East India Company's charter. Long discussion." On the Monday following, March 29th, "an effective public meeting on the subject was held at the City of London Tavern."

On the next day began the examination of the witnesses before the House of Commons. This was now his daily business. "Writing almost all morning about East India charter—examinations, sharp work—extreme ignorance and bigotry. We examine daily from half-past four to near eight before other business." The object of the enemies of missions may be seen from the general tenor of their questions. "Would not," they inquired, "the appearance of bishops encourage a fear amongst the natives that force would ultimately be used to establish Christianity amongst them?" "Would it be consistent with the security of the British Empire in India, that missionaries should preach publicly that Mahomet is an impostor, or speak in opprobrious terms of the Brahmins and their religious rites?" In such an examination they had clearly a perilous advantage. Few or no witnesses could be produced to prove the safety of what had so rarely been attempted; whilst almost every Anglo-Indian was ready to come forward and swell by his separate evidence the general cry of danger.

This made the issue of the question most uncertain; "I should not much wonder if, unless the sense of the religious part of the public is expressed by petitions, both the ecclesiastical establishment for India, and all security for preventing the door from being barred against the admission of religious and moral light, should be altogether abandoned. Now this conduct it appears to me would be one of the most crying insults that ever called down the vengeance of Hea-

ven. While we are going so far in favouring the Roman Catholics, shall Christianity be the only religion which is not to be tolerated in India?"

The examinations were evidently tending towards this result; and something must be attempted to prevent a fatal impression of the risk of all exertion being fixed upon the House. No time was to be lost; and as the examination by the Lords was to commence the following day, a meeting was summoned on Sunday, the 4th of April, at Henry Thornton's, Palace Yard, at three—"Stephen, Grant, Henry Thornton, Babington, and I, to discuss about the Lords' examination of witnesses on religious business—agreed that I should call to-morrow on Lord Grenville and Lord Wellesley, and settled one or two other points. Dined there, which I had not done on Sunday since I lived there."

He was so convinced that his cause could only be carried by the influence of the religious community, that although one Anglo-Indian witness had declared "the resolutions of the recent meeting in the city likely to excite a general ferment amongst the Hindoos, and favour an idea which (once obtained) would cause our expulsion from Bengal and India," he determined on appealing to another. On the 13th, therefore, he was "early in the city, at the general meeting of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. Made the report of our deputation, and agreed to a petition to both Houses, for introducing Christianity in India." As the best means of supplying the defect which was occasioned by the omission of all evidence upon the subject of religion, he "moved for sundry papers to illustrate the moral character of the Hindoos, and the shocking practices prevalent there."

The Easter week now for a short time intercepted the proceedings of the House of Commons, and he had long been engaged to spend it with his family in visiting Lord Gambier. "Our going put off once or twice already, but after a severe struggle I resolved to give it up entirely. I cannot spare the time now, when it is so much needed for East Indian religion and seeing people on it." This was one great branch of his exertions. All had access to him, and he could enter every where. He was the link between the most dissimilar allies. Bishops and Baptists found in him a common term. "After breakfast Messrs. Gutteridge, Weymouth, and Shaw, three Baptist committee gentlemen, called on me about East India Baptist missionaries.

Called on the Bishop of St. David's, and tried to stir him up. Called Earl ——'s about East India religious business, found him full of prejudice and ignorance. How sad that so noble a mind as his should be rendered so indifferent to the happiness of our fellow-creatures!"

In the midst of this engrossing struggle, he was threatened with a serious attack of sickness, and for one day was very ill. The temper of his mind under this distressing interruption, is a striking proof of the degree in which the prayer with which he entered on the cause had graciously been answered. He had asked for simplicity of purpose, and his cheerfulness when laid aside, shows how pure had been the motives of his activity. "April 24th. A blank day; and really I could do nothing but think of God's goodness to me, in that even when I am ill, I suffer no pain. General Calvert told me of Col. ——'s most painful operation, (twenty minutes long,) after great previous suffering, undergoing immense fatigues, and unable to spare himself when suffering agonies. Oh! how much will men bear for a corruptible crown! Poor fellow! it is very affecting. May God touch his heart. How thankful ought I to be for having been spared it all! Here, as usual, God most merciful. My Saviour spares me."

The hidden safeguard of his happy simplicity of purpose, may be found in the record of his secret hours. "Secured," he says at his busiest time, "an hour for private devotions this morning and yesterday, and found the effects of it." "This East Indian object," was his declaration when he undertook it, "is assuredly the greatest that ever interested the heart, or engaged the efforts of man. How wonderful that a private man should have such an influence on the temporal and eternal happiness of millions; literally, millions on millions yet unborn! O God, make me more earnest for Thy glory; and may I act more from real love and gratitude to my redeeming Lord." "Oh how does this little check of sickness," he continues after his recovery, "impress on me the duty of working while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work! Let me not take my estimate of myself from others who do not know me, but from my own self-knowledge and conscience. Oh what cause have I for contrition! What misspent time, what wasted talents, what means of grace (no one so many and so great) with how little profit; what self-indulgent habits; what softness, instead of the hardness of a good soldier of Christ! It may be

shown in any improper want of self-denial. O Lord, may my faith and love be more active, bringing forth more the fruits of the Spirit."

In this temper he resumed his work. Its conduct needed great address. All the feeling of the more religious classes of the nation must be brought effectively to bear, for political assistance he had none.

The fresh application upon which the friends of the cause now decided had a more favourable issue. May 26th, he says, "Lord Buckinghamshire acceded to our terms;" and on the following day when he "visited the public offices, Lord Castlereagh agreed to Lord Buckinghamshire's and our arrangement for East India Christianizing Resolutions—far surpassing my expectations." "Let me express my humiliation," he adds upon the following Sunday, "and my gratitude to God, for enabling us to agree with government as to the conditions for sending out missionaries, and in general as to improving, moralizing, and Christianizing India. I humbly hope that God has great designs in view for the East, and that they will be executed by Great Britain."

But though the government had yielded to his wishes the battle was not over. The Resolutions which they had adopted, the House of Commons might reject; and in the House of Commons lay the strength of the Anglo-Indian party. The day of trial was approaching; upon the 22d of June Lord Castlereagh moved the adoption of the 13th Resolution. "The appearance of the House at the beginning of the evening was as bad as could be, but Lord Castlereagh opened the subject very discreetly and judiciously." The morning of the 22d had been given up to preparation, and he was now at his post, with his mind full of his subject. Never did he speak with greater power, or produce more impression. Twenty years before, he had appeared in the same place, the eloquent advocate of this same cause. He had beyond all expectation been spared to lead the onset in a new engagement; and he told the House that his silence during that long period was not because the subject had faded from his recollection, but because he had meanwhile been devoted to the payment of another debt to humanity which was even yet but imperfectly discharged. He went through the whole subject at length, proving the degraded character of the Hindoo superstition, and calmly reasoning out his own conclusions; yet relieving the unavoidable prolixity of such a speech by occasional flashes of

the brightest eloquence. "He who knows my heart," he said in closing his account of the Hindoo superstitions, "knows that I have not drawn this melancholy picture to exult over its blackness. It is with grief and shame I view it; mourning, sir, over my own country, which for fifty years and more has left so many millions of our fellow-creatures in this state of misery and vice. I am not bringing a bill of indictment against the Indian race—but I have lived long enough to learn 'that flatterers are not friends.' I am the true friend of this people, who am willing to allow their present degradation, that I may raise them to a higher level."

"We carried it, about 89 to 36, beyond all hope. I heard afterwards that many good men had been praying for us all night. Oh what cause for thankfulness; yet almost intoxicated with success." The impression of nine hundred petitions, a number then wholly without precedent on such a subject, could not be mistaken. "Let no man think," was Mr. Wilberforce's warning to the House, "that the petitions which have loaded our table, have been produced by a burst of momentary enthusiasm; or that the zeal of the petitioners will be soon expended. No, sir, it will be found to be steady as the light of heaven. While the sun and moon continue to shine in the firmament, so long will this object be pursued with unabated ardour until the great work be accomplished."

One great argument of his opponents was grounded on, the enthusiastic character which they imputed to the missionary body. India hitherto had seen no missionary who was a member of the English Church, and imputations could be cast more readily on "Anabaptists and fanatics." These attacks Mr. Wilberforce indignantly refuted, and well had the noble conduct of the band at Serampore deserved this vindication. "I do not know," he often said, "a finer instance of the moral sublime, than that a poor cobbler working in his stall should conceive the idea of converting the Hindoos to Christianity; yet such was Dr. Carey. Why Milton's planning his Paradise Lost in his old age and blindness was nothing to it. And then when he had gone to India, and was appointed by Lord Wellesley to a lucrative and honourable station in the college of Fort William, with equal nobleness of mind he made over all his salary (between £1000 and £1500 per annum) to the general objects of the mission. By the way, nothing ever gave me a more lively sense of the low and mercenary standard of your men of honour, than the manifest effect produced upon the House of

Commons by my stating this last circumstance. It seemed to be the only thing which moved them." Dr. Carey had been especially attacked, and "a few days afterwards the member who had made this charge came to me, and asked me in a manner which in a noted duellist could not be mistaken, 'Pray, Mr. Wilberforce, do you know a Mr. Andrew Fuller, who has written to desire me to retract the statement which I made with reference to Dr. Carey?' 'Yes,' I answered with a smile, 'I know him perfectly, but depend upon it you will make nothing of him in your way; he is a respectable Baptist minister at Kettering.' In due time there came from India an authoritative contradiction of the slander. It was sent to me, and for two whole years did I take it in my pocket to the House of Commons to read it to the House whenever the author of the accusation should be present; but during that whole time he never once dared show himself in the House."

Once more, upon the 12th of July, the Resolution was contested, but passed, in spite of Mr. Tierney's and the Anglo-Indian opposition.

His own personal influence had been a powerful instrument in gaining this result. Never had he been able to bring forward in the House so openly his own religious principles; never had they been more respectfully received. "Last session," says a shrewd and even caustic critic, whose sentiments were wholly different, "when the House had been tired night after night with discussing the endless questions relating to Indian policy, Mr. Wilberforce, with a just confidence in his powers, ventured to broach the hackneyed subject of Hindoo conversion. He spoke three hours, but nobody seemed fatigued: all indeed were pleased; some with the ingenious artifices of his manner, but most with the glowing language of his heart. Much as I differed from him in opinion, it was impossible not to be delighted with his eloquence; and though I wish most heartily that the Hindoos might be left to their own Trinity, yet I felt disposed to agree with him, that some good must arise to the human mind, by being engaged in a controversy which will exercise most of its faculties."

His friends were looking with some anxiety to the effect which these great exertions might produce upon his weakly frame.

This too was far from having been his sole business in the last session. Almost every day had brought its separate

burden. A few extracts from his Diary, with which it was impossible to break the chain of facts connected with his leading business, will show how closely the interstices it left were packed with other matters.

"March 4th. Lock Hospital meeting. Then African Institution—Duke of Gloucester. Dined Henry Thornton's, and House. 5th. Hudson and Smith, chemists, about Apothecaries' Bill. Then Burder and Osgood about latter's plan. Wrote a little. Town—Berbice meeting. Long talk with Lord —— about the governor's ill usage of us. Poor Lord —— very unreasonable and positive. How calm one can be, when acting with real disinterestedness! Yet curious, that I only arguing with him for his own interest and credit's sake. 19th. Castlereagh showed me what he had told me before, Sweden's abolition and Guadaloupe surrender—Euge. April 7th. Jews—London Tavern. First stone laying at Bethnall Green—Duke of Kent, Lord Erskine and Dundas, &c. Dinner afterwards. Grand day, and above £1000 collected. Erskine's animated speech. Way's fire. Frey's pathos. 10th. African Institution meeting. Lords Grenville, Landsdown, &c. about Registry Bill, and large meeting. 20th. Canning came to me about Roman Catholic Bill; with him to Mr. Ponsonby by Grattan's desire. Mr. Elliot there. Sir J. Newport, Romilly, and Sir Ar. Pigott, besides Ponsonby and Grattan. Talked over the matter. 28th. Breakfast with Canning. After talking over Roman Catholic business, to Hatchard's, to meet Blair. Pearson, John Villier's, &c. to revive the Lock Asylum. 29th. Forced to attend a meeting for Lock Asylum—right, but an hour and half expended. Called Grattan's, Lord Erskine's and Donoughmore's. Lodgings —and House. Then with Henry Thornton to City of London Tavern—anniversary dinner for foreigners in distress, Duke of Gloucester in the chair—very civil. Near 200 people, and excellent object, but no foreign minister. Near £1000 collected after dinner.

"May 4th. Annual sermon, and meeting of Church Missionary Society for Africa and East. Dealtry, excellent sermon. Meeting afterwards, and spoke. Late to Asiatic Society, where took the chair—then House. 5th. British and Foreign Bible Society anniversary—full meeting—I spoke, and well received. Dined Lord Teignmouth's—Bishops of Salisbury, St. David's, Cloyne; and Norwich was to have been there, but prevented. 6th. Prayer Book

and Homily Society—spoke, after a sermon, which could not attend causâ meeting at Gloucester House—Lord Grey, Lansdown, Stephen, Macaulay, Harrison, Vansittart, about Registry Bill. 7th. Jewish Meeting anniversary—sermon yesterday, Randolph of Bath—I spoke. 12th. Archbishop of Cashel called morning—much talk with him about Ireland. 13th. Morning busy. Dined hastily Henry Thornton's. House on Catholic Question. Charles Grant spoke, beautiful but too elaborately. I, alas, too strong afterwards; as professing to act from higher principles, I ought to be more affectionate, and gentle, and meek."

This entry is a striking instance of the careful watch over his tongue which he so jealously maintained. Other members in the course of the debate declared that he had not spoken more severely than the occasion fully justified. But he judged by another standard, and in his next Sunday's meditation beautifully adds—"Having so little time I must not spend any in writing. Let me only record my own grief and shame; and all probably from private devotions having been contracted, and so God let me stumble. How much too strongly did I speak in the House of Commons, concerning Sir J. Hippisley! Alas, how little exhibiting the temper of the meek and lowly Jesus! Yet I humbly hope I have bewailed my sin with bitter contrition, and but for the weakness of my eyes could shed many tears. Lord, I flee to Thee for mercy, and do Thou guide and direct me. Yesterday's decision to have a committee of inquiry concerning the state and treatment in law and fact of the slaves and coloured people in our West India islands, will bring on me an immense load, if I undertake it; greater I fear than I can bear. Yet, Lord, to Thee I look, for 'Thou delightest in mercy.' O soften, quicken, warm, and sanctify me."

His children now were much upon his mind. They had all gathered around him at Sandgate, and he watched over them as usual with the deepest interest. "I can scarcely," he wrote to a friend, with an enclosure which had been sent for his perusal, "conceive any earthly pleasure greater than that of receiving such a letter from a beloved son, who shows by his conduct that he writes the real sentiments and feelings of his heart. I am conscious of my own extremely inadequate powers in all that concerns the work of education, but I humbly trust that I can say with truth that the spiritual interests of my children are my first object, I mean

that I wish to see them become real Christians, rather than great scholars, or eminent in any other way: and I earnestly pray to God for wisdom to direct me, and that His grace may be given in large measure to my children; resolving at the same time, since the Almighty acts by means, to consider thoroughly and after consideration to pursue the dictates of my judgment. I own I am rather sanguine in my hopes of the result, on ground of the Scripture promises. Join your prayers, my dear friend, to mine, and give me also from time to time the benefits of your friendly counsel." In the same tone he tells Mrs. Wilberforce—"My best hopes for them rest on the declaration, that God hears and grants the prayers of His people through the merits and intercession of the Saviour. Oh let us press on to a higher proficiency in the Christian life as the surest expedient for their good. We do not—even those who hold the truths of Christianity correctly—we do not think enough or speak enough of the Saviour. I would gladly have Him continually before me. I find the sense of His presence produces a humble, calm, confiding dependence, making me 'walk softly.' To you I open all my heart. I feel very lonely without all of you, though nothing can be kinder than Stephen."

The conclusion of this autumn was spent in paying several long-promised visits of duty and affection in the south and west of England.

Amongst those which had been the longest promised was one to Barley Wood.

It was seven years since he had seen Hannah More, except a single day that she had spent with him in the summer; and it was with no little pleasure that he again found himself, his wife and daughters, beneath the roof of the sisterhood. Death indeed had visited their dwelling, and taken one from the united band; but she who was gone had died in Christian hope, and they who yet survived lived on in Christian cheerfulness. It was still, as it ever had been, the favoured seat of intellectual and religious sunshine.

Parliament had been sitting nearly for a fortnight when Mr. Wilberforce returned to town; but no important questions had required his presence. Little more was done in the early part of the session than to follow with votes of thanks the successful progress of our army.

But though little was at this time doing in the House, his time was fully occupied. His children had gathered round him for the Christmas holydays, and he was giving his usual

attention to them. "Chatting with them all the evening, and reading Miss Edgeworth's tales to them. I extremely wish to attend to them, but I sadly feel my incompetence to discharge the parental office." These feelings were quickened at this time by his seeing "in the newspapers that poor C. N. was killed. Alas! alas! I fear it will go hard with my good old friend his father. I used, I fear too sanguinely, to hope that God would hear the prayers of all who called on Him for their children. Yet surely good old N. prayed, and so did she, for poor Charles. Oh what a lesson to us to give all diligence with our children as well as with ourselves, and also to live closely with Him, that our interest with Him may be greater!" "S.'s interesting account of poor C. N.—yet while eulogizing him, said he had no benevolence or kindly feelings. S. thinks that he was overdosed with religion, and that of an offensive kind, while young. It is an awful instance, and well deserves the study of all parents; they should labour to render religion as congenial as possible. It is worth inquiring what the failure was in poor N.'s case, if any; which it seems difficult not to suppose considering all his sons to be such as they are."

Many other matters soon claimed a large share of his attention. Amongst the most troublesome was a long inquiry into charges brought by a governor of Sierra Leone against his friend Zachary Macaulay. "Poor Macaulay, after all his sufferings, labours, and disinterestedness for Africa, in reality put on his defence; and having the mortification of seeing even well-disposed people jealous, and taking up with idle and malignant tales against him—what a lesson to us not to set our heart on worldly favour, even that of good men! Yet he will come pure out of the fire."

His full London season was now begun, and he was often "worried by many morning callers upon business." "Breakfasters," too abounded; while all his rooms were occupied by various friends. "Dr. Buchanan came to stay with us a little. Dear Bowdler also an inmate—much pleasing talk." Yet however he was occupied, he could not decline any pressing work of mercy. On the 3d of January, "we were," he says, "a very large party at breakfast, Mr. Cardale and several others, first time about the Lascars and Chinese brought over in our East India ships; and shall we not provide for them, or for their return?" In this work he called a few days later for Mr. Stephen's aid—

(Private.)

"My dear Stephen,

I have but a few moments for writing, but if you will be at liberty I will call on you between two and three o'clock, that we may proceed together, if you like to join me, to the East India House. At all events I wish to let you know something of a case which has been some time before me. But consider yourself as having promised not to divulge it, without my permission. Mr. Cardale some few days ago brought hither three or four Lascars. It appears that these people, about 1500 in number, are quartered in Ratcliffe Highway, the East India Company paying ten shillings per head weekly for their board and lodging. Some neighbours reported that the poor creatures were very hardly treated, and there had been much private inquiry, and long and numerous discussions, before I was apprised of it.

Attention was kept more awake through some benevolent and intelligent young men employing their leisure in teaching them English, and in learning from them Bengalee, Hindoostanee, and Chinese. I was expecting almost daily to go into the city to inquire, when Mr. Cardale four or five days ago wrote me word, that the superintendents of these poor creatures had learned that some of them had been complaining of their treatment, and that they had therefore resolved to send the grumblers off by the first ship. Matters were in this state when about three quarters of an hour ago, surrounded by ten or twelve visiters of various sorts and sizes, I received the enclosed letter, which you will concur with me in thinking requires immediate attention. I mean therefore to proceed to the India House immediately after an interview with Lord Melville which is appointed for half-past one o'clock. Will you meet me at the India House?

I am ever yours, in extreme haste,

W. Wilberforce."

The singleness of spirit in which he undertook such causes, may be seen in the alacrity with which he resigned the leading part to others. "Grant," he tells Mr. Babington, "has been asking me to spend some time with him to-morrow, to settle a plan for the protection, and I hope instruction, of the Lascars; will you help him to form it? It is a business just suited to you, and it would be aiding the accomplishment of a great act of humanity as well as of friend-

ship to Charles Grant, jun. who is to bring the business before the House of Commons. I believe you know some particulars about these people, to which I may add their willingness and capacity to receive instruction. Mrs. Babington will laugh and say, I am at my old trade of bringing you into the harness."

To put others forward was indeed his "old trade." He had set on foot about this time another plan, to which he found himself unable to attend as fully as he wished, and went down therefore to the committee whom he had set to work, to "advise their putting it into the hands of some other M. P. who could attend to it, and carry it through. It soon appeared that —— had already made this very application to two M. P.s. There could not," he continues with beautiful simplicity, "be better men for a business of this kind; and therefore though it was not handsome in him towards me who had first named the matter to him, I appeared unconscious of it, and truly declared I would help them in any way I could, and that I was glad it was in such hands. It is a great part of true wisdom and Christian conduct to set others on good scents instead of following them oneself."

He was at this time busy in another charitable work, in which he was thrust forward into an unwilling prominence. The destitution on the continent, for which he had last year done much to obtain relief, was greatly aggravated by the ravages of the last campaign; and he was now most anxious to obtain substantial aid for the German sufferers. On the 27th of January, he was "off early to the City of London Tavern to the meeting for relieving the distressed Germans. I moved the first resolution. The Duke of Sussex prevented attending by the asthma. But a poor meeting as to our respectable people. Henry Thornton in the chair."

Not satisfied with this attempt, he was soon afterwards "trying to effect a meeting in the West End of the town." When he reached Freemason's Hall, upon the 25th, he found "the Archbishop already there, and the Duke of York soon after. All in confusion from one 'contrary' Lord, who however I am told is a benevolent, kind-intentioned man. The Duke of Sussex behaved nobly about ceding the chair and then coming. He received me most kindly when I called on him about it. Though he had been led to consider himself as chairman, he gave it up most liberally, and said he trusted he should show he was actuated by a better principle than vanity. Sir James Mackintosh too has acted nobly in coming

and being ready to speak, but we could not manage it either for him or for Charles Grant. I was at length called forward to second Lord Buckinghamshire's motion of thanks to the Duke of York, and most kindly received. —— burst into tears at seeing me so applauded. Madame de Stael there.* Oh while this should humble me in the dust from the consciousness how little I deserve their praises, how assiduous should it make me to use my influence wisely! How graciously God's good providence favours me! I had scarcely thought at all before, and had no plan of speech, yet for a few sentences went on very well. My merciful Saviour has never yet forsaken me. O God, what thanks do I owe Thee!"

Besides these calls of charity and business, society had many claims upon him, and often occupied his time, though he watched more narrowly than ever over his motives and conduct when he entered into it. This spring affords some striking illustrations of his principles in this particular. "When attending," on the 8th of February, "a meeting of the African Institution, Sir S. Romilly told me aloud that Madame de Stael assured him she wished more to be acquainted with me than with any other person. The Duke of Gloucester made me by her express desire fix a day for meeting her at dinner, chez lui—Saturday se'nnight. This is mere vanity, and perhaps curiosity; and I felt my vanity a little rising too on the occasion. Oh how full are we of this degrading passion; and how diligently should we counteract it by calling up the ideas of what degrades us, and of the judgment we should form of others in whom we saw the same temper of mind! Thus we learn to abhor ourselves, and to sit in judgment on ourselves as on others. Lord, enable me thus to scrutinize and condemn myself more and more. She told the Duke of Gloucester that I did not think how really religious she was. I must read her L'Allemagne, in order not to excite her prejudices. It will also enable me better to distinguish between her religion and the true, in conversing with others."

19th. Dined Duke of Gloucester's to meet Madame de Stael, at her desire—Madame, her son and daughter, Duke, two aides-du-camp, Vansittart, Lord Erskine, poet Rogers,

* She has described this meeting in her Considerations sur la Revolution Française, "L'homme le plus aimé, et le plus consideré de toute l'Angleterre, M. Wilberforce, put à peine se faire entendre, tant les applaudissements couvraient sa voix."

and others. Madame de Stael quite like her book, though less hopeful—complimenting me highly on Abolition—'All Europe,' &c. But I must not spend time in writing this. She asked me, and I could not well refuse, to dine with her on Friday to meet Lord Harrowby and Mackintosh, and poet Rogers on Tuesday se'nnight. This would lead to an endless round of dinners, but it neither suits my mind or body; when I dine late, the previous hours are worth little, and the rest of the evening goes to society. I greatly doubt about the doing any good by dinings-out. By going out now and then in the evening, when I have dined early, and am fresher and brisker, I should be better fitted to adorn religion and seize occasions of doing good: now I am often sleepy, and not having duly cultivated the religious principle by private devotions, it is weak, and I grow worldly and useless. I may fairly assign weak health, and dine early and so get more hours for business."

"I must secure more time for private devotion, for self-examination, for meditation, for keeping the heart, and even doing the duties of life, or the most pressing claims will carry it, not the strongest. I have been living far too publicly for me—'Notus magis omnibus.' Oh may it not be 'ignotus moritur sibi.' Lord, help me. The shortening of private devotions starves the soul, it grows lean and faint. This must not be. Oh how sad, that after trying to lead a Christian life for twenty-eight years, I should be at all staggered by worldly company—Madame de Stael, &c. I will not however, please God, enter and be drawn into that magic circle into which they would tempt me."

"23d. Breakfast, Mr. Barnett about the poor. Letters. Wrote to Madame de Stael and poet Rogers, to excuse myself from dining with them. It does not seem the line in which I can now glorify God. Dinner quiet, and letters afterwards."

"March 4th. Much unpleasant doubting what I ought to do about Madame de Stael. Lady S. tells me that there has been much discussion whether I should go, and wagers laid; but Madame de Stael said she was sure I should come, because I had said I would. What care this shows we should take, because we shall be more closely watched, more strictly judged! I must do away the effect of this in her mind, that she may not think I conceive I may speak conventional falsehoods, the very doctrine and crime of the world, which so resents what it calls lies and the imputation of them.

"10th. I have consented to dine with Madame de Stael; I could not well do otherwise. Bowdler said much to persuade me. Let me try to speak plainly though tenderly to her. 18th. Dined with Madame de Stael—her son and daughter, and two other foreigners, Lord Harrowby, Lord and Lady Lansdown, Sir James Mackintosh. Lord and Lady Granville Leveson were to have dined but Lady Spencer died that morning. She asked me to name the party. A cheerful, pleasant dinner.—She talking of the final cause of creation—not utility but beauty—did not like Paley—wrote about Rousseau at fifteen, and thought differently at fifty. Evening, assembly, but I came away at half-past eleven. A brilliant assembly of rank and talent." "The whole scene," was his next day's reflection, "was intoxicating even to me. The fever arising from it is not yet gone off, (half-past 8, A. M.) though opposed by the most serious motives and considerations both last night and this morning. How dangerous then must such scenes (literally of dissipation, dissipating the spirits, the mind, and for a time almost the judgment) be to young people in the hey-day of youth, and life, and spirits! How unfit for those who are to watch unto prayer, to walk soberly, to be sober-minded! Something in my own case may be fairly ascribed to natural high spirits, and I fear, alas! much to vanity, and a good deal to my being unaccustomed to such scenes; yet after allowing for these weaknesses and peculiarities, must not the sobriety of my age, my principles, my guard, (prayer preceding my entering into the enchanted ground,) be fairly considered as abating the effect, so much as that I may be a fair average sample of the effect of such scenes on young people in general of agreeable manners, and at all popular ways and characters? I am sure I durst not often venture into these scenes. Then the seasoning is so high that it would render all quiet domestic pleasures insipid. Even poor Paley used to say, (though I hope jokingly,) 'Who ever talks to his wife?' This showed even in him the danger of being fascinated by social gayety. O Lord, enable me to view last night's scene in its true colours, and shapes, and essences. I have not time to trace out the draught. May I remember that they and I are accountable, dying creatures, soon to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and be asked whether we avoided temptation, and endeavoured to preserve a frame of spirit suited to those who had to work out their salvation with fear and trembling."

"I am now engaged to many parties, yet I must not go on thus. It unfits my mind for private devotions, and makes me too late, steals me from my children, and even from my business, which from my weak health I must do by contrivance. O Lord, guide me; let me not do any thing contrary to the liberal and social spirit of Thy religion, but let me have wisdom to see what is really required from me, and resolution to perform it. My own soul should doubtless be my first object, and combined with it, my children, . . how much better might I serve them if I cultivated a closer connexion with God! . . my business, and doing good to others. I am clear it is right for me to withdraw from the gay and irreligious, though brilliant, society of Madame de Stael and others. I am, I hope, thankful to God that I am not given up to these pleasures. O let me labour that I may not be merely gratifying an indolent spirit by staying away. Let me cultivate a spiritual mind, that if any be really in earnest I may then approximate and show them that I can feel; and oh may God touch their hearts also. How surely is every one who is in earnest useful to others! Poor Lord G.! Let me talk with him, and guard him against the deception of being satisfied with the world's religion. Indeed he knows too much for that. But O may I above all pray and strive for a larger measure of softening, warming, quickening grace. Amen."

This calm and self-denying judgment of himself is not a little striking in one, whose past labours and long-settled character would have exempted him in the eyes of the most scrupulous from the necessity of such rules of conduct. Nor was it that any touch of age had damped the exuberance of his younger spirits; and that he withdrew morosely from scenes in which he could not as of old give and experience pleasure. "Mr. Wilberforce," was Madame de Stael's declaration to Sir James Mackintosh, "is the best converser I have met with in this country. I have always heard that he was the most religious, but I now find that he is the wittiest man in England." His social qualities are about this very time thus described by his friend Mr. Harford. "The first time I met Mr. Wilberforce was at the house of his friend, Mr. Henry Thornton. I had heard him speak in the morning, in a crowded meeting, at the anniversary of a public charity, when elevated sentiments and touching appeals, rendered doubly impressive by the fine tones of his musical voice, had deeply affected the feelings of the audi-

tory. There was a dinner party at Mr. Thornton's, and several of the guests were among the particular friends of Mr. Wilberforce. Mr. Thornton before we sat down to table expressed a hope that he would join us in a few minutes. We had not been long seated when he entered the room with a smiling, animated countenance, and a lively vivacity of movement and manner; exchanging as he advanced kind salutations with his friends, whose faces were lighted up with peculiar pleasure at his presence. From my earliest youth I had been taught to reverence the name of Wilberforce, so that my delight was great to find myself in his company. His manner and address throughout the afternoon were marked by kindness and vivacity, and his style of conversation was brilliant and easy.

"Those who never saw him till within eight or ten years of his decease, when his figure had become a good deal bent, and his head depressed upon his chest by the weight of years acting on an extremely delicate frame, cannot easily form a just idea of him at the period to which I now refer. Some tendency to these infirmities, it is true, was already apparent, but the elasticity and spring of his movements, the comparative erectness of his figure, and the glow on his cheek, presented a strong contrast to the decrepitude which gradually stole upon him in his declining years. His frame was at all times extremely spare, and seemed to indicate that the ethereal inhabitant within was burdened with as little as possible of corporeal encumbrances; but from this attenuated frame proceeded a voice of uncommon compass and richness, whose varying and impressive tones, even in common conversation, bespoke the powers of the orator. His eyes, though small, and singularly set, beamed with the expression of acute intelligence, and of comprehension quick as lightning, blended with that of cordial kindness and warmth of heart. A peculiar sweetness and playfulness marked his whole manner. There was not a single handsome feature—there was scarcely one that was not in itself plain; but the mingled emanations of imagination and intellect, of benevolence and vivacity, diffused over his countenance a sort of sunny radiance, which irresistibly acted as a powerful magnet on the hearts of all who approached him. At this time, and till within a very few years of his death, he wore powder; and his dress and appearance were those of a complete gentleman of the old school."

In a letter written at this time, he says,

"How wonderful are the events of the last few days!

After hearing that Buonaparte had dashed into the rear of the Allies it seemed doubtful what would happen; when suddenly we heard on Tuesday that they were marching on to Paris. Then we hoped the best; but how little expected that to-day, Saturday, we should hear of Buonaparte's accepting the Emperor of Russia's offer, renouncing the throne and agreeing to retire to Elba!" "Have you good authority for believing that Toussaint perished in Elba? If so, and if Buonaparte himself selected it, he is harder-hearted than Shakspeare would have rendered his greatest villains."

To the congratulations of his friend William Hey upon the continental triumph he replies a few days later.

"Near London, April, 1814.

"My dear Sir,

If I had not 'extremely occupied' to plead in my defence, I should feel quite uncomfortable at having been, I had almost said churlishly, irresponsive to your animated call. And I own I have been condemning myself for not echoing back the songs of grateful acknowledgment. Never surely was the hand of the Almighty more strikingly manifested. Had not Buonaparte been absolutely infatuated, he never would have broken off the conferences at Chatillon. I like your verses much, and can imagine my old friend joining in chorus and singing with all his might. I have been thinking how to convey them to the hands of the Regent, but have not yet devised a way. For I have been for some time, till two days ago, a close prisoner from an attack on the lungs, or rather trachea; for which a blister and silence were prescribed to me by Dr. Baillie. I thank God I am much recovered, indeed nearly well again. I am just now extremely occupied, both mind and thoughts, with considering about, and taking measures for, effecting a convention among the great powers for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It would be indeed a glorious termination of the hurricane. But do not talk publicly of this."

"It would be too shocking," he says to Mr. Gisborne, "to restore to Europe the blessings of peace with professions of our reverence for the principles of justice and humanity, and at the same moment to be creating, for so it would really be doing wherever the Slave Trade is extinct, this traffic in the persons of our fellow-creatures. We are

much occupied with the grand object of prevailing on all the great European powers to agree to a convention for the general Abolition of the Slave Trade. Oh may God turn the hearts of these men! What a great and blessed close would it be of the twenty-two years' drama!"

His own special part was to prepare a letter to the Emperor Alexander. "I am about to correspond with a real live emperor," he concludes a letter to Mr. Gisborne, "not merely such a sort of Birmingham emperor as Buonaparte; so admire my condescension, which can bestow all this penmanship upon you." At this he set to work directly, though he found it difficult to rescue from his other occupations the time which it required. "An incessant succession of inferior concerns," he complains, "prevents my doing this really important business. I cannot yet please myself at all; and I have written to beg Bowdler to try his hand at a head and tail piece at least. Use your influence with him. I cannot keep myself from interruptions." "Though I have as little conception," replied Mr. Bowdler, "how to address an emperor as if he were an inhabitant of the moon, I half had intended to put what occurred to me upon paper, in order that after seeing the failures of other pens, you might be better satisfied with your own. Depend upon it, whatever styles you employ as contributory, if you consult the wise they will insist on your ultimately adopting your own."

This in the end he did, though little able to secure the leisure he desired. "I find myself," he says, "stupid and slow, and not able to move at all to my liking in composition. My mind must be filled and warmed, then I can pour along pretty well. I am like a horse which cannot get into a gallop till it has some space in which to come to its speed; the incessant interruption of little things obstructs my progress. I have been sadly bothered about the French translation, and forced to write so many letters that I could not get to my work till very late." Now however he kept close to it; "writing the foul copy" of his letter as he walked "in the garden;" and even giving to it some of that time which he most reluctantly conceded to any worldly care. "I stay at home to-day, (Sunday, April 17th,) on account of my cold, and I am about, after a short prayer for the Divine blessing, to set to work on my letter to the Emperor. I do it as in God's sight. Surely this occupation is pleasing to Him who says, Mercy is better than sacrifice. I can truly say in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, that I do not

engage in it from inclination, for the contrary is the truth, but because it is a business which presses greatly in time, and which tends eminently to the glory of God, and the present and eternal happiness of men." Yet on the following Sunday he says, "I will not quit the peculiar duties of the day for my Abolition labours. Though last Sunday I set about them with a real desire to please God, yet it did not answer; my mind felt a weight on it, a constraint which impeded the free and unfettered movements of the imagination or intellect; and I am sure that this last week I might have saved for that work four times as much time as I assigned to it on Sunday. Therefore though knowing that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, yet let me in faith give up this day to religious exercises, to strengthening the impression of invisible and divine things by the worship of God, meditation, and reading. I trust He will bless me during the week, and enable me to make up what might seem lost."

He concludes his letter to the Emperor as follows—

"To the Divine blessing I now consign these pages. May that Almighty Being, whose I trust you are, and whom you serve, who has raised you up to be the chief agent in delivering the European continent from the bonds in which, by a mysterious Providence, it had been so long held, render you the honoured instrument of accomplishing in Africa also His purposes of mercy. May you live, sire, to witness the blessed result of your beneficence, in the prevalence throughout those benighted regions of Christian light, and moral improvement, and social comfort; and to hear her sable children, when, in the language of Scripture, 'they spread forth their hands unto God,' call down not temporal only but everlasting blessings on the head of Alexander Emperor of the Russias, as the greatest of their earthly benefactors."

"I staved off yesterday," (Sunday,) his Diary continues, "the thoughts of the Abolition arrangements, but to-day they rushed on me, and grieved me deeply." On that evening, when Lord Castlereagh, on his return from Paris, entered the House of Commons, he was received with loud and enthusiastic cheers. "The only voice which remained mute amidst the fervent burst of joy, was that of Mr. Wilberforce. No heart beat more highly than his with patriotic emotions, but this feeling was mastered by another which forbad its utterance." The acclamations therefore were no sooner

hushed, amidst which Lord Castlereagh laid on the table a copy of the treaty, than he "opened upon him." "I can assure my noble friend," he exclaimed, "that if I have not been able to concur in the salutations with which he has been welcomed on his return, it is not from any want of personal cordiality, but because seeing him come up to the House bearing the French treaty, and calling to mind the arrangements made in it respecting the Slave Trade, I cannot but conceive that I behold in his hand the death-warrant of a multitude of innocent victims, men, women, and children, whom I had fondly indulged the hope of having myself rescued from destruction. It is not, however, to give vent to the feelings of an overloaded mind, that I have now risen, for in truth my feelings are far too deeply seated for me to be thus eased of them, but I rise chiefly to notice two particulars to which I entreat my noble friend's immediate attention." One of them was the preventing a five years' revival of the Dutch Slave Trade, the other the imposing restrictions upon that of the French. "When I consider," he continued, "the miseries that we are now about to renew, is it possible to regard them without the deepest emotions of sorrow? Still as all this was known to my noble friend, I will not suppose that he could lightly or without what appeared to him the most imperious and almost irresistible necessity set his hand to such a treaty. For my own part indeed I frankly declare no considerations could have induced me to consent to it." "My noble friend must allow for my extreme regret, if when at length, after a laborious contention of so many years, I had seemed to myself in some degree in possession of the great object of my life,—if then, when the cup is at my lips, it is rudely dashed from them, for a term of years at least, if not for ever."

Amidst these various disappointments, he was not a little "thankful to hear that the Emperor Alexander charged himself with the Abolition in a Congress. He wishes to see me." On the evening of the 10th of June he "received a note summoning" him for one o'clock upon the morrow. "Sunday, 12th. Got up by half-past six, that I might pray to God for a blessing on my interview. Lock—from which, to the Emperor. In his waiting-room were several of his nobles—Prince Czartoriski, Prince of Oldenburgh, and others. At length the Emperor who was absent at Messe (Greek Church) returned, with the Princess of Russia, (Oldenburgh,) and I was summoned up-stairs, and soon

after into the inner room to the Emperor. He took me by the hand, very cordially, and assured me that he was much interested for my object, and very glad to see me. On my stating my fear that the French would not in fact abolish at the time settled, he replied heartily, 'We must make them;' and then correcting himself, 'we must keep them to it.' I asked leave, before I left him, to write to him, conceiving that any thing I should say would be driven out of his mind by the incessant bustle of his situation. He frankly assented, and told me he should be glad to hear from me, and was obliged to me. He shook hands with me cordially. When I was expressing my concern about the treaty, he said, 'What could be done, when your own ambassador gave way?"

More than once he was summoned by Alexander to conversations, in which the Emperor spoke French, and he replied in English. The Duchess of Oldenburgh, and the King of Prussia, alike desired to see and talk with him; and from the latter he received a set of Dresden china, "the only thing," he playfully declared, "I ever got by spouting." But none amongst the band of monarchs and nobles interested him more than Prince Czartoriski, a Polish Prince, formerly Foreign Secretary to the Emperor. "Czartoriski came in and talked to me for an hour or two about his country, and especially our institutions, with a view to their adoption. He seems eager for useful information, and whatever could improve the people. He acquiesced when I lamented the Emperor's being only fêted, and not let alone to see useful things, courts of justice, &c."

Such reflections could not but force themselves upon the mind of calm and rational observers of these brilliant days. "After we had, Hezekiah-like, ostentatiously exhibited our riches," says Mrs. H. More, "our gold and our silver, after having gorged them with banquets, which I hear they disliked, why were they not introduced to something serious besides the Quakers' meeting? I did not dislike to let them witness our own grandeur, and I like to express our respect and admiration for them, but why keep back from them every thing that was useful? They had really little more good to carry home than poor Omai had." He at least was free from this reproach. "Too late," he says, June 30th, "for dinner, because writing about the Bible Society for Czartoriski, and getting for him some Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor." Many years after-

wards, almost the last visit Mr. Wilberforce received was from this interesting man, when having resigned Russian greatness to fight the battles of his injured country, he sought the shores of England as an exile and a refugee.

The temper of his own mind indeed was wholly undisturbed by the agitation around him. "How delightful," he says after an evening spent in social intercourse, "to see the love, simple devotedness, and gratitude of the three ——'s! How it shames my lukewarmness! Lord, forgive and help me, and let the example spur me on to greater diligence."

It is well worth while to trace up to its fountain head, the quiet recollection of his principles amidst the hurry of his public life. Another entry of his Diary will point it out. When most engaged this summer, he says, "I must try what I long ago heard was the rule of Elliot the great upholsterer, who when he came from Bond Street to his villa, always first retired into his closet. I will do it, though but for a short time. It will, with God's blessing, be useful both for self-examination for the past, and seeking God for the future." "I have been keeping too late hours, and hence I have had but a hurried half hour in a morning to myself. Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition, that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean. It is remarkable that at such times my business and worldly concerns have also gone on ill; enforcing on me old Sir M. Hale's remark, which might have been deemed too strong. O Lord, help me. I will try to assign at least an hour in the morning, and when circumstances will permit, the same in the evening, for Scripture reading, private devotion, and meditation. How little can I now realize the circle of angels and unseen spirits! Yet I hope I can truly say I allow not my corruptions. O Lord, strengthen my faith, send the Spirit of Thy Son into my heart, that I may call Thee Father, and set my affections upon things above."

At the end of July he left London, to devote the quiet of the summer to his great design. All his hopes hung on the result of the approaching Congress. It was therefore of the utmost moment to give to the public mind on the continent the same impulse which it had received in England. He had already tried, through Cardinal Gonsalvi, to influence the Romish conclave, and he now opened a correspondence with a number of literati, Alexander Humboldt, Sismondi, Chateaubriand, and Madame de Stael, in the hope that he might act through them upon their countrymen. He was himself

preparing his chief effort, a printed letter to Talleyrand, which was to contain the strength of the Abolition cause, and to be dispersed as the manifesto of its supporters. "How time flies away!" he writes. "For a third time are we now all collected at Sandgate, enjoying wherever we are the overflowing bounty of the Almighty. The quiet of this place, so great a contrast to the bustle of my London life, produces a general sleepiness and stupefaction, which almost disqualify me for all active employment of my mental faculties. I must try to rouse and lash myself into something like animation; but I can truly declare that I wish the office of writing a piece for general circulation devolved on a more able hand. I will do my best however, after having executed two or three lesser duties which require immediate attention. I mean to write to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, and a private letter to Talleyrand. I hope herewith to transmit one to Chateaubriand. You know probably that Lord Castlereagh charged himself with communicating with the Pope. Have you seen the article in the Edinburgh Review on the Revival of the Slave Trade? I do not think it quite fair, and any statements which can justly be pronounced unfair are always in the end injurious as well as unjust."

The want of books, and a wish to be near Peltier, the translator of his work, obliged him at length to return to London. This was no inconsiderable sacrifice. He loved to spend his summer holidays in the retirement of the country surrounded by his children; with whom he had "begun walking, and examining them in walks in the books which they are reading, and talking them over together." While "in the evening," almost the greatest of their treats, he was "reading to them Shakspeare." Occasionally, too, he made excursions with them for the day; and in "Cæsar's camp and the cherry orchards" all the burden of his business was thrown off, and he was the most cheerful of the party. "We took our dinner with us upon Saturday," is the description of such a day this summer in the letter of a guest, "and were fourteen in number. Mr. Wilberforce made us all very happy. He read, and talked, and carved, and reminded us of the benevolence of God in making the avenues of innocent pleasure so numerous, and forming us for so many enjoyments which have nothing sinful in them." "There is no way," is his own remark on this day, "in which children's tempers are more indicated than in such excursions." With the same watchfulness for their advan-

tage he now tells Mr. Macaulay, that though "at first disposed at once to cut his cables and slip off for London," he had postponed his journey "until Monday, because I am to take —— with me on his way to school, and I like to make Sunday his last day at home. I think it tends to associate religion and domestic tenderness; to identify them with each other, and thereby augment both."

He continued his work at Battersea Rise, where he was a guest in the house which he had inhabited so many years before. He had left Sandgate hoping only to be kept a few days near London, but the claims of business multiplied upon him. On the 2d of September he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "My anticipations are verified. I am forced to stay three or four days longer, I trust not more. The interests at stake are so prodigious that even the probability of advancing them constitutes an object of vast amount. What a comfort it is that my absence from you and our dear children is not when I am engaged in the work, however necessary for self-defence, and therefore justifiable, of blood and tears—making others miserable while endeavouring to secure our own happiness; but on the contrary, in the work of mercy and love; a work which may truly be said to breathe the same spirit as that of Him whose coming was announced as 'peace on earth, and good-will towards men!' Ay, and surely we need not leave out the most honourable part of the service, 'Glory to God in the highest.' For I am occupied, I trust, in preparing an entrance into Africa for the gospel of Christ. I must say that I account it one of the greatest of the many and great mercies and favours of the Almighty, (oh how many and how great!) that his providence connected me with this good cause. I might have been occupied as honestly, but in ways, political ways for instance, in which the right path was doubtful."

He touches here upon a secret spring which led to many of his Abolition efforts. "I greatly fear," he tells Mr. Stephen, "if Hayti grants to France a colonial monopoly in return for the recognition of its independence, that all commerce with us will be excluded, and with it our best hopes of introducing true religion into the island. Now I will frankly own to you, that to introduce religion appears to me the greatest of all benefits. I blame myself for not having earlier stated to you my feelings on this head. It has arisen from a want of reflection, for my principles have always been the same. God grant we may not hinder the gospel

of Christ. O remember that the salvation of one soul is of more worth than the mere temporal happiness of thousands or even millions. In this I well know you agree with me entirely."

There was nothing more remarkable about him than the cheerful spring of his natural affections, even under the heaviest pressure of perplexing business. "There," he said when hurried once almost beyond bearing, calling the attention of a friend to a sudden burst of voices, "how can I be worried by such trifles, when I have such constant remembrances of God's goodness to me?" It was his children playing over head with a noisy glee which would have jarred upon the feelings of almost any one besides himself. Thus amidst his present business he rescued time enough to write to his second son.

"Battersea Rise, Sept. 14, 1814.

"My very dear ——,

I do not relish the idea that you are the only one of my children who has not written to me during my absence, and that you should be the only one to whom I should not write: I therefore take up my pen, though but for a very few moments, to assure you that I do not suspect your silence to have arisen from the want of affection for me, any more than that which I myself have hitherto observed has proceeded from this source. There is a certain demon called procrastination, who inhabits a castle in the air at Sandgate, as well as at so many other places, and I suspect that you have been carried up some day, (at the tail of your kite perhaps,) and lodged in that same habitation, which has fine large rooms in it from which there are beautiful prospects in all directions; and probably you will not quit a dwelling-place that you like so well, till you hear that I am on my way to Sandgate. You would meet the 'to-morrow man' there, (it just occurs to me,) and I hope you will have prevailed on him to tell you the remainder of that pleasant story, a part of which Miss Edgeworth has related, though I greatly fear he would still partake so far of the spirit of the place as to leave a part untold till—to-morrow. But I am trifling sadly, since I am this morning unusually pressed for time. I will therefore only guard my dear boy seriously against procrastination, one of the most dangerous assailants of usefulness, and assure him that I am to-day, to-morrow, and always while I exist,

His affectionate Father,

W. Wilberforce."

It is not a little interesting to turn from public objects which consumed so much of his time and attention to the details of his private life. He soon returned to Sandgate, living in the midst of his children, studying the Scriptures daily with some of them, "walking and reading with them all, and bringing them into the habits he desired by kind, not violent means." He was as busy too doing good to those around him, as if his sympathies had never wandered from his own immediate circle; entering eagerly into any individual tale of suffering—as when he "heard" this year of a case, ("the shocking account of Mrs. R.'s cruelty to her child,") which he took up and carried through, at a great expense of time and trouble, and in spite of repeated threatenings of personal violence from the brutal parent—and labouring too by schools and other institutions to relieve the want and ignorance around him. "The adult school," wrote a friend staying at this time in his family to Mr. Arthur Young, "is established here; a room and teachers provided, and all will be left in good train. Mr. Wilberforce went himself, read them extracts from Pole's History of Adult Schools, and made them a little speech, saying how much he respected their good sense for coming. You would have been delighted with seeing him seated by the old ladies, with the utmost patience, kindness, and humility, fairly teaching them their letters, and quite unconscious that it was at all more remarkable in him than in any common person. This was beautiful in him, and highly useful and encouraging in its effects upon the institution."

It is no wonder that thus causing and enjoying the present social happiness, he should have "felt melancholy at the idea of breaking up and going to town." But the session was about to open, and duty called him up to London.

"We have seen much of Wilberforce," Mr. Henry Thornton tells Hannah More, "and heard his letters from many of the renowned of the earth, all seeming to pay homage to him. Lord Castlereagh tells him that he has obeyed his commands, and put his book into the hands of each of the Sovereigns. Talleyrand's last letter has rather a clearer acknowledgment than before of his sympathy with Wilberforce, as to the grand object. The most happy part of the intelligence is an official assurance of an 'ordonnance' of some sort issued recently by the French government, excluding French slave-traders from all the northern parts of Africa; and the line is so drawn that Sierra Leone, and all the settlements re-

stored by the treaty with France, as well as a very large district below Sierra Leone, are exempt from their molestations. I almost anticipate more good from these new efforts of our friends than even from the Abolition voted here; and the name of Wilberforce has attained new celebrity, and his character and general opinions a degree of weight, which perhaps no private individual not invested with office ever possessed. My delight has consisted much in observing his Christian simplicity, and the general uniformity in his character and conduct, amidst the multitude of compliments from the great made, on the part of some, with much feeling. He is indeed in his usual bustle, but he reminds me nevertheless of that saying which was applied to Fox, that the greatest objects, or the most heavy load of business, seemed never to put him into that petty tumult which is the common mark of inferior men."

The hostile feelings of the French ministers were not however abated. They even attempted to abridge the exemption promised to northern Africa by making Cape Three-points its southern limits, thus opening the Bight of Benin to the Slave Trade.

The measures, however, which Louis XVIII. either would not or could not carry, were now about to be accomplished by a stronger hand. From his rock of Elba, Buonaparte had not been an unobservant witness of the feelings of this country, which he now probably for the first time believed to be sincere. Upon his sudden return to power, he attempted to ingratiate himself with England by proclaiming a total and immediate Abolition of the Slave Trade. Thus was the bloody cup dashed from the hands of France, and the scourge of Europe became the pacificator of Africa. And when Louis was again restored by British arms, he was not suffered to revive the hateful traffic. "I have the gratification of acquainting you," writes Lord Castlereagh, "that the long desired object is accomplished, and that the present messenger carries to Lord Liverpool the unqualified and total Abolition of the Slave Trade throughout the dominions of France. I must beg to refer you to his Lordship for the terms in which this has been effected; but I feel great satisfaction in persuading myself that, as they will leave you nothing to desire on the subject, so you will trace in them the undeviating and earnest exertions of the Prince Regent's ministers to effectuate this great object, which had been so impressively given them in charge."

Mr. Wilberforce had been long accustomed to make the opening of a new year a time for serious and devotional reflection. After morning service, on Sunday, Jan. 1st, (1815,) "I was much affected," is his entry, "O may it be permanently, by the reflections the seasons suggest. Read in the evening a sermon on the fig-tree a cumberer of the ground to my family." He was now occupying Barham Court, and partaking of the holyday employments of his children.

Mr. Thornton was at this time occupying his house at Kensington Gore, to be nearer medical advice. His health, which was at no time robust, had been much weakened by a fit of illness in the autumn; but it was hoped that he was rallying from it, and no apprehensions were expressed of its ultimate result. On the 9th of January Mr. Wilberforce was "so busy with" his "letters" that he "could hardly find time" to leave the country; "but it would be unkind not to go to town for Henry's sake, if, as they think, I could be any comfort to him." The next day therefore he went up "to Kensington Gore, but did not see dear Henry till the next morning for fear of flurrying him." He had come to town with no idea that his friend was in any danger, and was "shocked" therefore "to hear" when he "saw Halford early the next morning, that a sad change had taken place within the last five or six days; inflammation going towards the heart, and the greatest danger. I ordered myself to be refused to all but particular friends. Dealtry and I up praying with Henry and Mrs. and Miss Thornton."

"My mind," he tells a friend at the conclusion of a business letter, "is in reality engrossed all this time by a different subject, and I scarcely need tell you that it is the loss of one of my oldest, kindest, most intimate, and most valuable friends. His death is indeed a loss, though so much more to poor Mrs. Henry Thornton than to any of us, that all comparison is at an end. However the old, well-worn consolation is not worn out, our loss is his gain, and we should indeed be selfish if we could even wish to call our friend back to inhabit once more an emaciated, suffering body, from the far different scene on which he has now entered. I knew my deceased friend well, and I can truly say, after living in the same house with him for several years, and on terms of the closest intimacy and the most unreserved and unintermitted society for eighteen or nineteen subsequently, that a more upright character I never knew—taking the word in the largest sense, as expressing the fulfilment of every duty,

and the cultivation of every Christian grace and moral virtue on right principles. To me who was used to consult with him on all public questions, and who profited so often from the extraordinary superiority of his understanding, the loss is almost irreparable. But it is the will of the Almighty, and it becomes us to submit. It is the ordination of infinite wisdom and goodness, and it becomes us to say, Thy will be done. I will not apologize for the serious strain of my letter, because I am persuaded you would wish me to pour forth of the fulness of my heart."

Another blow soon followed. There was not perhaps any one amongst his younger friends whom he loved and respected as he did John Bowdler. "I loved him so warmly," he says when four busy years with all their obliterating influences had passed by since his death, "that it quite delights me to find him estimated at his true value. If poor Kirke White had lived he might have grown into something of the same kind. But Bowdler had a dignity—he would have become capable I assure you of thundering and lightening. And then he was the tenderest, and the humblest, and the most self-forgetting creature." Bowdler too had just been mourning with him. On the sorrowful day which followed Henry Thornton's death, Mrs. Thornton had "sent for him. He came in the evening, and I had much talk with him. I took him to town next morning." It was the last time they met on earth. The very next day "about one in the morning dear Bowdler burst a blood-vessel, and until about seven, when his bed-maker came in, he lay in his chambers, humanly speaking in the most desolate state. Yet he told C. afterwards that his mind was then so filled with the Saviour that he thought of nothing else." Such was the colour of his thoughts for the ten following days, during which he meekly bore the sudden breaking up of the strongest natural affections, and the highest intellectual powers. Upon the 31st of January, he was pronounced "better, the inflammation of the lungs subdued, and its conquest thought a great point." Yet on the following evening, when Mrs. Henry Thornton's business had again carried Mr. Wilberforce to town, "a note came to" him at seven, "telling me of dear Bowdler's death at twelve o'clock this morning. Oh how little did I foresee, when we met lately at Kensington Gore, that it would be the last time of my intercourse with him on earth! O sit anima mea cum Bowdlero. I went on to Grosvenor Square, and saw his lifeless and ghastly frame."

To Hannah More a few days later he pours out his heart.

"London, Feb. 11, 1815.

"My dear Friend,

Scarcely had a week passed away after the death of our dear friend Henry Thornton, before the excellent and elevated Bowdler was called out of this world, only less dear a friend as of more recent acquisition; and scarcely had we returned from his funeral, . . though there also I speak figuratively, because I was unable to attend from the continuance of the same indisposition which kept me from joining in the same sad office to my earlier friend, . . when the tidings arrive of the departure of Dr. Buchanan. How striking! We are all involuntarily looking round and asking with an inquiring eye, Who next, Lord? Oh may the warnings have their due effect in rendering us fit for the summons. But I at this moment recollect some important and urgent claims on my time (too little for them) before I must go out of town, and I must therefore break off unwillingly, for my stream of thought was in full flow, and it beats against the barrier. Kindest remembrances. Farewell. I enclose the half of a bank note; the remainder shall follow.

Yours ever most sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE."

These deep tones of manly affection are strikingly contrasted with his lowly estimation of himself. On Sunday, Feb. 12th, he was at Battersea Rise and received the "Sacrament. Mrs. H. Thornton stayed for the first time since her husband's death, and was much affected. Indeed, so hard a creature as myself was so. What letters did I see yesterday, one quite exquisite from M. How wonderfully the power of true Christianity is displayed in the tempers, feelings, and even reflections of the several sufferers! Harford, one of them, having lost a beloved father, indicated the same blessed sentiments and feelings." To this friend he wrote two days later.

TO J. S. HARFORD, ESQ.

"Kensington Gore, Feb. 14, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

Even by those who think and feel concerning the events

of this chequered life as real Christians, such an incident as the death of a parent, or even of a near and dear friend, will be felt severely; and indeed it ought to be so felt, for here, as in so many other instances, it is the glorious privilege of Christianity and the evidence of its superior excellence, that it does not, like the systems of human fabrication, strive to extinguish our natural feelings, from a consciousness that it is only by lessening them that it can deal with them, if I may so express myself, and enable us to bear the misfortune as we ought, but it so softens, and sweetens, and increases the sensibility of our hearts, as to make us love our friends better and feel more keenly for the whole of this life the loss of our former delightful intercourse with them, and yet at the same time it so spiritualizes and elevates our minds as to cheer us amidst all our sorrows; and enabling us, on these as on other occasions, to walk by faith and live by the Spirit, it raises us to the level of our ascended friends, till we hear almost their first song of exultation, and would not even wish to interrupt it, while we rather indulge the humble hope of one day joining in the chorus.

Yet the loss of so excellent a man as Bowdler, at what seemed to us so premature a period, when we might have hoped that for so many succeeding years the world would be instructed by his wisdom, and charmed by his eloquence, and above all, edified and improved by his example, must be deeply felt by the survivors. And even in the case of Mr. Henry Thornton, I at least may naturally feel this who was of the same age; much it might be hoped still remained for him to do for the benefit of his fellow-creatures and the glory of God. And Buchanan too! but, I am silent. . . ."

Mr. Wilberforce would not listen to the more violent counsels of some of his coadjutors in the great work of Abolition. "You," he tells Mr. Stephen, "are full ten degrees above me." He was resolved in the first instance to strengthen the ameliorating influence of the Act of Abolition, by preventing the illicit introduction of fresh labourers. Thus the Bill for a Register of Negroes was the first move in this new conflict; and yet in this mildest and most necessary step, the principle of all his later conduct was in fact involved. For it was in truth the appeal of the slave population from the narrow-minded island legislatures to the supreme council of the empire; from the corrupted currents of Jamaica and Barbadoes to English sympathy and moral feeling. It led

therefore to every after-effort for the mitigation of their sufferings; and when all these had been tried in vain, it led step by step to the great principle of entire emancipation. But he and others around him saw not as yet to what they should be led. They had never acted upon the claim of abstract rights; and they reached emancipation at last only because it was the necessary conclusion of a series of practical improvements. "They looked," says Mr. Stephen, "to an emancipation of which not the slaves, but the masters themselves should be the willing authors."

The energy and decision of his character was exhibited strikingly during the period at which the public discontent ran so high on the question of Corn Laws, some extracts from his Diary will illustrate at one view the excitement of the times and his own feelings on the occasion. "March 6th. House. Corn Bill in committee—sad rioting at night. Both doors of the carriage, which set down members, opened, and member pulled out. None much injured. 8th. House —Report of Corn Bill, and tendency to riot. 9th. House. Some mobbing, and people savage and inveterate—alas! alas! Charles Grant, and Mr. Arthur Young, the agriculturist, slept with us for security on Tuesday." Mr. Young was now entirely blind, and found his chief pleasure in such society as that which he continually found in Mr. Wilberforce's house. "He says that in his present state of Egyptian darkness, Kensington Gore is still like the land of Goshen to him; and that while he has the hope of hearing Mr. Wilberforce's voice, he will not say that he finds 'in change of place, no change of scene.'"

"At my prayers this morning," his Diary continues, "March 10th, I reflected seriously if it was not my duty to declare my opinions in favour of the Corn Bill, on the principle of providing things honest in the sight of all men, and adorning the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. I decided to do it. I see people wonder I do not speak one way or the other. It will be said, he professes to trust in God's protection, but he would not venture any thing. Then I shall have religious questions and moral questions, to which my speaking will conciliate, and contra, my silence strongly indispose men. Besides, it is only fair to the government, when I really think them right, to say so, as an independent man not liable to the imputation of party bias, corrupt agreement with landed interest, &c.; so I prepared this morning and spoke, and though I lost my notes, and forgot much I

meant to say, I gave satisfaction." "I am sure that in coming forward, I performed a very painful act of duty, from a desire to please God, and to serve the interests of religion, and I humbly trust God will protect me and my house and family. If not, His will be done." "Sir Joseph Bankes's house sadly treated; all his papers burnt, and his house nearly being so."

A letter to his eldest son, now seventeen years old, enters into more particulars.

"London, March 15, 1815.

"My very dear W.

I do not recollect with any precision when I last wrote to you, but my feelings have been for some days intimating to me that it is long, too long, since we either of us heard from the other, and therefore I gladly avail myself of a leisure half hour, which I enjoy in consequence of Mr. Whitbread's, or rather of Lord Castlereagh's, business being put off, to despatch a letter to Aspeden.

You did not mention, I think, the subject of your declamation—I wish you had, and shall be glad if you will name it in your next letter to me or your mother. What are the speculations of the Aspeden politicians on the escape of Buonaparte? We old hands are, if we would confess it, as much at a loss as you what predictions to utter. In short, I for one have learnt from experience to be very diffident in my speculations on future events. It is however an unspeakable comfort in such circumstances to be assured that able, and active, and wicked as Buonaparte is, he is no less under the Divine control than the weakest of human beings. He is executing, unconsciously, the Divine will; and it is probably because the sufferings which he before brought upon the nations of Europe did not produce the intended effect of humiliation and reformation, that he is allowed once more to stalk abroad and increase the sum of human misery.

Were you to enter the dining-room at family prayer time without having received some explanation of our appearance, you would probably begin to think that we were expecting a visit from the ex-emperor and his followers at Kensington Gore, and had prepared a military force to repel his assault. For you would see four soldiers and a sergeant, together with another stranger, who as far as bodily strength would go, would play his part as well as any of them. The

fact is, that we had some reason to apprehend mischief for our house, in consequence of the part which I judged it my duty to take on the Corn Bill; and as your mother, &c. was advised to evacuate the place, I preferred the expedient which had been adopted by Mr. Bankes, and several others of my friends, that of having four or five soldiers in my house—the very knowledge of their being there, rendering an attack improbable. But it was a curious instance of the rapid circulation of intelligence, that at Covent Garden market early on Saturday morning, John Sharman, who sells garden-stuff, being there to purchase for the supply of his shop was hooted after, with 'So your old master has spoken for the Corn Bill,' (I had spoken only the night before,) 'but his house shall pay for it.' All however is hitherto quiet, and I trust will continue so. But I was aware of the danger when (to you I may say, it was at my prayers) I resolved to speak for the Bill; but I judged it my duty to show that I was in favour of the measure, (though thinking 76*s*. a preferable importation price to 80*s*.) I thought that if I remained silent, many might say Mr. Wilberforce professes to trust in the protection of God, but you see when there is danger to be apprehended from speaking out, he takes care to protect himself by being silent. Again, I sometimes need parliamentary support for measures of a class not so popular as some others, as missionary questions, or any others of a religious kind. Now by coming forward and speaking my mind on the present occasion, I knew I should render people better disposed to support me in any of these cases, while on the other hand my remaining silent and snug as it might have been termed, would have produced a contrary disposition. I acted in short on the principle of 'providing things honest in the sight of all men, and of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.' But observe, I was clear in my judgment in favour of the Bill.

I did not intend to give you this long history. And as I have expended all my own time, and have trespassed on yours, I must hasten to a conclusion, not however without a few words to assure my dear —— how often I think of him, how often pray for him. O my dearest boy, let me earnestly conjure you not to be seduced into neglecting, curtailing, or hurrying over your morning prayers. Of all things guard against neglecting God in the closet. There is nothing more fatal to the life and power of religion; nothing which makes God more certainly withdraw His grace. Farewell, my be-

loved ——, my first-born: and O my dearest boy, bear in mind what a source either of joy or sorrow you will be to your affectionate mother, and

Your affectionate Father and Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P. S. Kind remembrances to any young friends that I know."

His Journal continues on the 14th of March; "All quite quiet here, but sad accounts from France; Buonaparte having got to Lyons, and Horner anticipating the worst. The soldiers (Scotch) behave extremely well; they come in to prayers, and pleased to do so."

In the midst of much daily business, encountered with the utmost diligence, comes in the result of a Sunday's self-examination. "April 10th. I humbly hope that I enjoyed yesterday more of a Christian feeling of faith, and hope, and love, than of late. But I have been to blame in point of hours. Lord, forgive my past unprofitableness, and enable me to mend in future. 21st. Being unwell, I kept the house, but busy on letters, and chiefly African Institution Report; and occupied evening. Committee on Lascars' business called just when dinner going on table. I too faint, and, alas, impatient, forgetting Christ's talking with the woman of Samaria, and neglecting the solicitations of hunger, and the distress of faintness."

"May 3d. Anniversary of Bible Society. It went off well. Robert Grant spoke beautifully. I was well received, but very moderate in real performance. As I came out, a truly pleasing Quaker accosted me, and with the true *friends'* frankness and kindness, without any thing of forwardness and vulgarity, asked me concerning peace or war, 'having been much exercised about conferring with me' on that topic, wishing me 'to become a fool that I might be wise,' &c. I walked with him some time, and was affected to tears. 10th. Early to see Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool about Abolition and St. Domingo. Castlereagh clear that the Bourbon government will never revive the Trade. I hear every where that the Duke of Wellington is in high spirits. I am distressed and puzzled about politics; but surely without being clear it would not be right to oppose the government. If Buonaparte could be unhorsed, it would, humanly speaking, be a blessing to the European world; indeed to all nations. And government ought to know both

his force and their own. Yet I greatly dread their being deceived, remembering how Pitt was. 29th. Wordsworth the poet breakfasted with us, and walked garden—and it being the first time, stayed long—much pleased with him."

"June 1st. A report to-day from Brussels that it is still said there will be no fighting; Buonaparte will retire—surely there is no ground for this idea. 7th. House. Notice about Register Bill. 8th. Duke of Gloucester's on Registry Bill—Lords Grenville and Lansdown, Romilly, Calthorpe, Horner, William Smith, Stephen, Babington, and Macaulay. I against bringing on the measure this year. But Grenville strongly for it, and all the rest gave way. 9th. First quiet thought of the plan of my speech for Tuesday. Then African Institution, Captured Negroes' committee. Then House. Dined Sir G. Beaumont's to meet Wordsworth, who very manly, sensible, and full of knowledge, but independent almost to rudeness. 12th. Off early to Stephen's, Chelsea, to prepare for motion; any quiet time here being next to impossible. 13th. Busy preparing all morning; but not having settled plan of speech before, much less finishings, I felt no confidence. Got through pretty well, speaking an hour and fifty minutes."

Sunday, the 18th, was spent at the parsonage of Taplow, where his family had been staying for a week. It is described in his Diary as "a quiet day." Above measure did he enjoy its quietness. He seemed to shake off with delight the dust and bustle of the crowded city; and as he walked up the rising street of the village on his way to the old church of Taplow, he called on all around to rejoice with him in the visible goodness of his God; and "perhaps," he said to his children, "at this very moment when we are walking thus in peace together to the house of God, our brave fellows may be fighting hard in Belgium. O how grateful should we be for all God's goodness to us!" The next day he "returned to London for Lord Roseberry's Divorce Bill, religionis causâ;" and almost the first news which met him showed that his grateful reflections on the Sunday had been uttered whilst the battle of Waterloo was being fought. "22d. Dr. Wellesley came and told us of the Duke of Wellington's splendid victory of the 18th." "A dreadful battle," he writes word to Taplow. "British victorious; but great loss. Duke of Brunswick and Lord Errol's eldest son killed. We are said to have lost 25,000, the French 50,000. Oh my

heart sickens at the scene! Yet praise God for this wonderful victory."

On Saturday, the 24th, he again plunged into the country, but hastened back upon the Monday, for "the Duke of Wellington's reward; I preferring infinitely a palace to be built, to buying one ready made. 28th. Breakfasters again—Sanders, a black man—Spanish, Blanco White; yesterday Prince Blucher's aide-de-camp who had brought the despatches—desired by Blucher several times over to let me know all that passed." "Did Marshal Blucher," he was asked at his audience by the Regent, "give you any other charge?" "Yes, sir; he charged me to acquaint Mr. Wilberforce with all that had passed." "Go to him then yourself by all means," was the Prince's answer, "you will be delighted with him." The veteran soldier's lively recollection of the efforts made in the preceding year to succour his afflicted countrymen, is highly to his honour. "I have fought," he wrote to the managing committee, "two pitched battles, five engagements, masked three fortresses, taken two; but I have lost 22,000 men. Will the people of England be satisfied with me now? Desire Mr. Wilberforce to bestir himself." Though he had lately lamented his forgetfulness, and begged a friend "to act always as his flapper," he needed in truth no such assistance. He took at this time the leading part in another meeting for the Germans, and in the midst of his busiest preparations for the introduction of his Registry Bill he "came back and took the chair at a private meeting of the neighbours, for a fund, raising for the widows and children of the killed and wounded of the 1st Life Guards always quartered at Knightsbridge—a small meeting, but cordial."

A grateful remembrance of the gallant services of our soldiers and our sailors was deeply wrought into his mind, and appeared often in his conversation; as when he said to a friend, "I never see a soldier or a sailor without a mingled feeling of gratitude and compassion. I think of the privations they suffer, and of the dangers, moral as well as physical, to which they are exposed in our defence, while we are comfortably at home by our firesides, enjoying freely our domestic blessings and our Christian advantages." Or when at another time the conversation turned upon the beauties of our English villas. "I must speak," he said, "of the comfort and security of English cottages. It is delightful to think how many there are in this country who though having no title to personal security from the extent or importance

of their possessions, are so completely guarded in their little nooks and tenements by the power of the law, that they can enjoy undisturbed every comfort of life as securely as the first peer in the land. I delight to see, as one sometimes does, an old worn-out sailor—poor fellow! seated in his queer boat-like summer-house, smoking his pipe, and enjoying himself in a state of the most happy independence."

The session was now drawing to a close. On the 5th of July the Registry Bill was introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, and read a first time. It had for some time been determined to carry it no further till another session. A tragical event marked painfully the conclusion of the session. On the 6th, and more fully on the 7th, he was "shocked to hear of Whitbread's death—having destroyed himself. It must have been insanity, as the jury immediately found it. Oh how little are we duly thankful for being kept from such catastrophes! Doubtless the devil's instigation." "The newspapers," he writes on the same day to Zachary Macaulay, "will state to you the dreadful end of poor Whitbread. I need not say how much the event has shocked me. There can be no doubt of insanity having been the cause, and from what is said the impulse must have been sudden. Are not such acts most probably to be referred to the evil spirit's operation?" He found some slight alleviation of these painful feelings, in bearing witness on the 11th, when a new writ for Bedford town was moved for, "in a few words which I found pleased his friends," to the thoroughly English character of this rugged but manly statesman. What a beautiful evidence of the "charity" which filled his heart—the same Whitbread who a few weeks previously had "reproached him ill-naturedly" in the House with being ungrateful.

After a tour through some of the southern and western counties for the gratification of his eldest son, he settled with his family at Brighton, not only for the benefit of his own health, but of that of Mrs. Henry Thornton, who died during his sojourn there. His Diary mentions his "reading and praying" with her, and ultimately her death in a state of "sober triumph." During his separation from his family, which he left at Brighton while he attended the body of his friend to London, he writes to them as follows. "I will use my pen no more than to express what however I express much more at large on my knees, my earnest wishes that God's best blessings may be ever strewed abundantly upon you all. Oh! how blessed will be that day, when after all our conflicts and

anxieties we shall be made partakers of that rest which remaineth for the people of God! Oh let us all strive lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. But if we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, we never shall, we never can fail, for the promises of the God of truth are the pledges of our security. But let us all remember that if we would be admitted hereafter into heaven we must be made meet for it here. That striking passage in the 8th of Romans quite haunts me—'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.' Oh let this thought quicken our endeavours and our prayers."

On the 14th of November he returned to Brighton, and to business, for he complains, "I cannot even read during the day all the letters which the morning's post has heaped upon me: twice within the last few days I have had five or six packets beyond my number."

In the midst of these over-occupations, he perceived with no great pleasure a new feature of resemblance added to "Piccadilly by the sea-side," in the presence of the Prince Regent, and the consequent claims of the court and society upon his straitened time. "I at the Pavilion once. The ministers have been down with the Prince for two or three days each. Lord Sidmouth and Bathurst called on me yesterday. Lord Castlereagh before." "The Prince and Duke of Clarence too very civil. Prince showed he had read Cobbett. Spoke strongly of the blasphemy of his late papers, and most justly. I was asked again last night, and to-night; but declined, not being well." This excuse however would not long serve, and three days afterwards he was again "at the Pavilion—the Prince came up to me and reminded me of my singing at the Duchess of Devonshire's ball in 1782, of the particular song, and of our then first knowing each other." "We are both I trust much altered since, sir," was his answer. "Yes, the time which has gone by must have made a great alteration in us." "Something better than that too, I trust, sir." "He then asked me to dine with him the next day, assuring me that I should hear nothing in his house to give me pain, . . alluding to a rash expression of one of his train, when I declined the other day—'Mr. Wilberforce will not dine with you, sir,' . . that even if there should be at another time, there should not be when I was there. At dinner I sat between Lord Ellenborough and Sir James Graham. The Prince desired I might be brought forward."

"At night in coming away I opened to Bloomfield, very civilly as I am sure I ought, saying I felt the Prince's kindness, but told him that it was inconvenient to me to come to the Pavilion often—children causâ. He at once said, I understand you. When I next saw the Prince, he gave me a kind and general invitation. I heard afterwards that Lord Ellenborough was asked to Pavilion expressly to meet me. I was glad to hear it, as indicating that I was deemed particular as to my company." Several times in the ensuing weeks he was again a guest at the Pavilion, and met always with the same treatment. "The Prince is quite the English gentleman at the head of his own table." "I was consulted by the Queen's desire, whether proper to keep the Queen's birth-day, which fell on the thanksgiving-day. I replied that not wrong, but rather doubtful. I went myself, being forced to obey the sergeant and summons, otherwise should have deemed it for me ineligible, and therefore wrong."

"No, my dear Stephen," he wrote in reply to the playful taunt, "you will live to be a peer at last," "I am not afraid of declaring that I shall go out of the world plain William Wilberforce. In one view indeed I seldom have had less reason to be dissatisfied with that less dignified style: I mean in the degree of civility or even respect to which even plain W. W. may be deemed entitled. For really had I been covered with titles and ribands, I could not have been treated with more real, unaffected, unapparently condescending, and therefore more unostentatious civility. But, alas! still better reasons suggest the same dispositions. I become more and more impressed with the truth of good old Baxter's declaration, that 'the great and the rich of this world are much to be pitied;' and I am continually thankful for not having been led to obtain a station which would have placed my children in circumstances of greatly increased danger."

On the first Sunday after his return to London, he says, "I am fresh from Brighton, a place much to be avoided in the winter except for some special purposes—wishing to see the Prince, or some other persons, whom one would meet only there. It must be a bad place for the generality of young women; infusing a pleasure-loving, dissipated spirit. How different this from crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and making no preparation for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof! How ill-suited to the baptismal engagement to resist the pomps and vanities of this wicked

world! I find it steals on myself though so advanced in years."

With him and his meanwhile, the year had closed with thoughts of soberness and prayer. "What a change has a single year and less made in the circle of my acquaintance! Mr. Henry Thornton and his widow, and their excellent young friend and mine, Mr. Bowdler, who was carried off just when he was about to be married to the daughter of another friend. Mrs. Henry Thornton dying at this place, it was my privilege to be much with her in her latter days, and a more peaceful, humble, grateful, hopeful death I cannot conceive. 'I trust,' she said a few days before her decease, 'God is gently leading me to that blessed world which He has prepared for those that love Him.' I thank God we are well. We overflow with blessings."

"Sunday, Dec. 31st. Church morning. After church, we and our six children together—I addressed them all collected, and afterwards solemn prayer. How little likely on the 30th May, 1797, when I married, that we and all our six children (we never had another) should all be living and well! Praise the Lord, O my soul."

The year 1816 opened with a storm of opposition well fitted to try the firmness and ascertain the reality of his principles. "The stream runs most strongly against us. Marryatt's violent and rude publication, Matthison's more fair, and Hibbert's well-timed one, all come out to meet us at the first opening of parliament. But how vast is the influence of government; it is of that only we are afraid! Our cause is good, and let us not fear; assuredly God will ultimately vindicate the side of justice and mercy. Marryatt's new pamphlet is extremely bitter against my religious profession, thinking that nail will drive. Poor fellow! I hope I can bear him no ill will, but allow for, and pity him."

It was comparatively easy to throw aside one or two such attacks, but it became a real trial of his principles when they were daily repeated throughout years of patient perseverance in efforts for the good of others; when scandalous insinuations were multiplied, and every day produced a new set of slanders of such an aggravated kind, that "if they had been true," he told the House of Commons, "nothing but a special Providence could have prevented my being hanged full thirty years ago." Yet he stood the trial; never in his most unguarded hours did he manifest any bitterness of feeling; never in public was he led into angry

recrimination. Often did he provoke some of his more impetuous colleagues by taking the part of the West Indian planter—suggesting excuses for his conduct—alleging that there was no class of persons whom it was so much the interest of the actual managers to keep in darkness as to the abuses of the system—and so extenuating their moral guilt that he drew upon himself a portion of the storm which lowered over his West Indian slanderers. His severest public answer was an apt quotation of the words of Gibbon to an abusive assailant—"Every animal employs the note, or cry, or howl, which is peculiar to its species; every man expresses himself in the dialect most congenial to his temper and inclination, the most familiar to the company in which ye has lived, and to the authors with whom he is conversant."

Throughout this session he had taken far less part than usual in its public business. A complaint on his chest hung upon him obstinately, and made him "fear that I shall do little more good. Alas, that I have not laboured more to make the best use of my faculties." "It is a stroke which I own I feel; not I hope with a rebellious but with a humbled will; yet I trust it may still please God to enable me to use my organs (and oh that it might be better in all ways) in His service, and for the benefit of my fellow-creatures." He was obliged therefore for the most part to confine his exertions in the House to his "own proper business," and to questions of a moral cast. As "a chamber counsel" he was still labouring diligently. Every year multiplied the private claimants on his time, and this year they abounded, from the tale of ordinary distress, and the throng of "breakfasters," to the "Duke of Kent who more than once called" on him "for two hours about his affairs, and why going abroad—hardly used." On some few great occasions he came forward, and always with effect; and at the end of the session he took an active part in the exertions which were made to provide relief for the pressing distresses of the times.

Lowestoft on the Suffolk coast was the scene of his summer retirement with his family. He had spent but a few weeks there and in its neighbourhood, when he was called suddenly away by the illness of a friend. "In how different a congregation," he writes to his family on the first Sunday he now spent at Bath, "have I been from that of Pakefield! It reminded me of the difference between the twelve poor

fishermen, (I did not till now recollect that yours are literally such,) who constituted the first assemblages of Christians, and the well-dressed and well-mannered meetings of the high and the literary, who used to congregate for their various purposes of devotion or instruction. Though I make it an invariable rule not to write letters on the Sunday, except in cases of necessity and charity, yet on the principle of charity I may send you a few friendly lines. I need not assure you that on this day you are all much in my thoughts. I hope you all feel grateful for being brought at once into so friendly an intimacy with so excellent a family as that at Earlham.* For my part I am still full of Earlham, or rather of its inhabitants. One of our great astronomers has stated it as probable that there may be stars whose light has been travelling to us from the creation, and has not yet reached our little planet; and thus some have accounted for new stars first observed by more recent astronomers. In this Earlham family a new constellation has broke upon us, for which you must invent a name as you are fond of star-gazing; and if it indicate a little monstrosity, (as they are apt to give the collections of stars the names of strange creatures, dragons, and bears, &c.) the various parts of which the Earlham assemblage† is made up, may justify some name indicative of queer combinations; only let it include also all that is to be esteemed, and loved, and respected too, and coveted."

Before he had spent many days at Bath he received a hasty summons to attend upon his sister, who had been suddenly attacked by dangerous sickness. It was a great shock to him. His other sisters had been so early taken from them, that there had been none to share or to divide the affection for each other, which had grown in them with their growth and years. Her affectionate admiration of her brother had been rarely equalled, and affection was never wasted upon him. He had parted with her a few weeks before at Cambridge, and rejoiced "to see her better than she had been for a long time past." He was therefore unprepared for such a blow, and set off immediately with a heavy heart for Sunning Hill. "On arriving I heard that my sister had died yesterday at four o'clock. Poor Stephen much affected! Liable

* Joseph John Gurney's.

† Amongst the "large party" at the dinner table he mentions the Bishop of Norwich, Col. B. and Lady Emily, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Hudson Gurney, &c.

to strong paroxysms, at other times calm and pretty cheerful. I prayed by my dear sister's body, and with the face uncovered. Its fixedness very awful. I sat all the evening engaging Stephen, while the coffin was adjusting below. How affecting all these things; how little does the immortal spirit regard it! Looking at night, till near two o'clock this morning, over my dear sister's letters—many to and from myself, when she and I first in earnest in religion."

"Our separation from each other just at this time," he writes to Lowestoft, "if it produces some pain, yet reminds us of the call we have for gratitude to the Father of mercies, who has so long spared us to each other. How can I but feel this, when our dear friend's solitary situation is so forcibly impressed on me! I indeed have lost a most affectionate sister, one, of whom I can truly say, that I believe there never was on earth a more tenderly attached, generous, and faithful friend to a brother, who, though I hope not insensible to her value, saw but little of her to maintain her affection, and of whom, alas, I could say much that might reasonably have abated the force and cooled the warmth of her attachment.

"How affecting it is to leave the person we have known all our lives, on whom we should have been afraid to let the wind blow too roughly, to leave her in the cold ground alone! This quite strikes my imagination always on such occasions. But there is another thing which has impressed itself in the present instance much more powerfully than in any other I ever remember, I mean in contemplating the face of our dead friend to observe the fixed immovableness of the features. Perhaps it struck me more in my sister's case because her countenance owed more of the effect it produced to the play of features than to their formation. I could not get rid of the effect produced on me by this stiff and cold fixedness for a long time. But oh it is the spirit, the inhabitant of the earthly tenement, not the tenement itself, which was the real object of our affection. How unspeakably valuable are the Christian doctrines and hopes in such circumstances as ours! We should not care much, if we believed that the object of our tender regard had gone a few days before us a journey we ourselves should travel; especially if we knew that the journey's end was to be a lasting abode of perfect happiness. Now blessed be God, this is after all not an illustration. It is the reality. The only drawback with me here is the consciousness that I have much to do for God, and the

self-reproach for not having done it. Yet here also I can cast myself on the sure mercies of my God and Saviour; and while I desire to do on each day the day's proper work, and to be more active and useful than I ever yet have been, still I can humbly hope that if I should be taken hence with my work unfulfilled, He who said 'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart,' will graciously forgive my sins; and that my all-merciful Saviour will take me to himself out of the same superabundant goodness, which I have ever experienced. For how true it is, (I am often driven to this,) 'Thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor Thy ways as our ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts!'

"I think I told you that my dear sister, when asked whether God comforted her and gave her peace, said, 'O yes, so much so, as quite to put me to shame when I consider what a sinner I am.' She then exclaimed—so like herself, 'I hope this is not cant;' adding, however, 'I am sure it is not all so.'"

After a few days he returned to Bath, and stayed in its neighbourhood until the 13th of November, when he set out by the London coach to join his family at Kensington Gore. "Arrived safely D. G. at half-past ten at Kensington Gore, after travelling above 700 miles without a single accident. The boys coming out immediately to me, and receiving me with humiliating kindness—God bless them!"

There had been no abatement of the storm which had been raised against the Registration Bill. It was taken up as a colonial question. A voluntary tax upon every hogshead of sugar which passed the Custom House, was raised by the West Indians to oppose the measure; and one and all clamoured loudly against its proposers. All this tumult of calumny passed over him almost unnoticed. At times indeed he nearly roused himself to make some reply, lest they should occupy the public mind, and prejudice his cause. But there is really no trace of any personal feeling in any of his entries.

It was not merely cheerfulness of temper, on which this calm was based, there was a deeper and more sure foundation for this high-minded peacefulness under perpetual provocation. "I get more and more to disrelish these brawlings, and to be less touchy as to my character. This I fear is chiefly from advancing years, and quiescence; something

from the decay of natural spirits, and some little I hope from the growing indifference to human estimation, and from an increased value for peace and love. But it is our clear duty to prevent our good being evil spoken of, when we can do this by a fair and calm defence; and I very greatly deplore my not having prepared an answer to Marryatt." His answer to one charge, that he had pledged himself not to interfere with the condition of the slaves, deserves to be recorded. "It is really true," he tells Mr. Stephen, "as I must one day state, (I grieve at my not having answered Marryatt in print; he very wisely never would enter into controversy on his legs,) that the condition of the West Indian slaves first drew my attention, and it was in the course of my inquiry, that I was led to Africa and the Abolition. As long ago as in 1781, the very first year of my being in parliament, and when I was not twenty-two years of age, I wrote a letter to James Gordon expressing my hopes that some time or other I might become the instrument of breaking, or at least easing, the yoke of these poor creatures."

The distresses of the country soon called him to his post; and leaving his family at Hastings, he was in town by the opening of parliament upon the 28th of January, and found the political horizon unusually dark. "We are here, (in the Secret Committee,)" he writes back to Hastings, "in the midst of accounts of plots, &c., but a gracious Providence, I trust, watches over us. Remember to pray in earnest against sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion." His time was now fully occupied. "I feel," he writes from the table of the Secret Committee room, "the effects of sitting up too late. But do not be uneasy, I am pretty well. Dear —— asks about our Committee, though he very properly checks himself. We are not to divulge; but thus much I may say, though do not let it be repeated out of doors, that the seizing of the ringleaders on Sunday last prevented bloodshed from the Spa Fields mob on Monday. Hunt seems a foolish, mischief-making fellow, but no conspirator, though the tool of worse and deeper villains. Cobbett is the most pernicious of all; but God will bless and keep us, I fear not; and it is highly gratifying that all the truly religious classes have nothing to do with the seditious proceedings. The blasphemous songs and papers of the seditious will disgust all who have any religion, or any decency."

So constant were at this time the calls on his attention that he assures Mr. Roberts, "you have perhaps supposed

that now I am no longer member for Yorkshire I have as much leisure as I can desire for my own enjoyment and the service of my friends. If such was your surmise, never I assure you were you more mistaken. I do not find the smallest diminution of the amount of my business, though there is some difference in its nature." Yet in the midst of all this occupation the flow of his kindly natural affections was as warm and free as if his mind was never burdened by a single thought of business. Some of its expressions in his correspondence with his family are peculiarly striking; and his letters though written often in "those edgings of time, which like the edgings of cloth or other substances are their least valuable part," are full of thought and manly tenderness. "Mr. R.'s last letter," he writes to Hastings at this time, "suggests to me some very painful fears that ——'s temper has been again ungoverned—dear, dear boy. Though writing at the Committee table with people all around me, I can scarce refrain from tears while I thus write about him. Oh that he would pray earnestly! How sure I am that he would then be blessed with grace, and be enabled to make our hearts leap for joy. Farewell—a thousand times God bless you all!"

This was the great aim of his parental watchfulness. "O if I could but see them give up their hearts to God," he says in another letter, "I think that I could cheerfully lay down my life." "Above all, my dearest ——," he writes to one of them on his tenth birth-day, "I am anxious to see in you decisive marks of this great change. I come again and again to look and see if it be indeed begun, just as a gardener walks up again and again to examine his fruit trees, and see if his peaches are set, and if they are swelling and becoming larger; finally, if they are becoming ripe and rosy. I would willingly walk barefoot from this place" (near London) "to Sandgate, to see a clear proof of it in my dear —— at the end of my journey." "May God bless you, and if it be His will, may we be long spared to each other. I am strongly impressed with a persuasion that this will much depend on the goings-on of our children; and as I have often said, let it be with us an argument for growing in grace, that in proportion as we do thus cultivate an interest, if I may so express it, in the court of Heaven, the more we shall insure our children's edification in answer to our earnest prayers."

Upon his busiest days he found time to write to them.

"Were it not," he tells one of his daughters, "that my eyes were so weak, and that, in such a state, writing by candle-light does not suit me, especially after a full day's work following a bad night, you would have received a good long letter instead of this sheetling. My last night's wakefulness arose in fact from my thinking on some subjects of deep interest, from which, though I made several efforts, I could not altogether withdraw my thoughts. My mind obeyed me indeed while I continued wide awake, but when I was dropping half asleep it started aside from the serious and composing train of ideas to which I had forced it up; and like a swerving horse chose to go its own way rather than mine. I like to direct my language as well as my thoughts and feeling towards you on a Saturday night, because it serves as a preparation for that more continued mental intercourse with you in which I allow myself on the Sunday. When I was a bachelor, and lived alone, I used to enliven the dulness of a solitary Sunday dinner by mustering my friends around me in idea, and considering how I could benefit any of them; and now how can there be a more suitable employment of a part of the Lord's day, than thus to call my absent children round me? And you, ——, and ——, will present yourselves to-morrow; and I shall pray that our great heavenly Shepherd will number you amongst the sheep of His pasture, and guide you at last into His fold above."

Many of these letters are highly indicative of his peculiar character of mind, from their cheerfulness subsiding into serious thought as affection stirred the deeper current of his feelings. Thus to one of his younger sons he writes from London.

"House of Commons.

"My dear ——,

I take advantage of a dull speech to come up-stairs and chat a little with my dear ——, though I heartily regret that I alone can be the speaker, for I should gladly hear my dear boy's voice and see his countenance. Yesterday was the first time of my going to Kensington Gore. I had no comfort there, but many qualms of emptiness when you were all away, and only vacant places to remind me of the want of you. I hope Mr. L. told you that I had tried to get your watch mended in time to go down to you by him, but in vain. A broken limb is not so easily repaired, especially

when it is required that the party shall *go* as he did before. I am sorry to hear that the substitute you have is liable to occasional headaches. I hope you will bear this in mind in your treatment of it, and not let it be stunned or stupified through carelessness.

My very dear boy, I received no little pleasure from the account which Mr. L. gave of you. I hope that while he is absent from his earthly father, my dear —— will look up the more earnestly to that heavenly Father, who watches over all that trust in Him. Try to bring on your brother in all good, ever remembering my advice not to be satisfied with not being unkind, but trying to be positively kind. Above all remember prayer is the great means of spiritual improvement, and guard as you would against a wild beast which was lying in a bush by which you were to pass, ready to spring on you —guard in like manner against wandering thoughts when you are at prayer, either by yourself or in the family. Nothing grieves the Spirit more than our willingly suffering our thoughts to wander, and fix themselves on any object which happens at the time to interest us. May God bless and keep you, my very dear boy. I think that my dear —— is greatly improved in bearing little crosses of inclination properly, and I do hope that God will hear my prayers for him, and will make him a comfort and support to my declining years. I have indulged the serious train of thought into which I naturally fall in writing to my children, and am ever, my dear ——,

Your most affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Nor was it for his children only that this tenderness of spirit had survived all the chilling influences of a long public life. His affection for his friends was in its degree as strong. "I am writing," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "at C.'s, with whom I am come to dine tête-à-tête. He sees no other company, dear fellow, so that it is a great pleasure to him I believe, and must be beneficial also, for me to sit with him as much as I can. You may be sure therefore, that I do my best in this way. It is a sad encroachment on my time; but I love him more and more, and value him not less. I must copy for you a short passage from Southey's last letter. 'I hope from your mention of C. that I was mistaken in representing him to be in a dangerous state of health. Yet when I saw him, I could not but fear that he was not long

to be a sojourner on earth. There is an expression in his countenance at times, which has more of heaven than of earth about it; something which is at once inexpressibly sweet and mournful, like the smile of a broken heart.' Do show this beautiful passage to Mr. Rolliston, who appeared to me to enter fully into C.'s character. Indeed let all see it, as the beautifully tender sentiment, exquisitely expressed, of a very superior man concerning my dear friend. Lord Bacon says, that we bear better to hear our friends abused, than our enemies well spoken of. But I am sure that the converse of this dictum of the great Bacon's holds true in my instance; for this eulogy on the expression of my dear friend's countenance has given me very great pleasure. I must break off. Farewell.—"

One other brief but touching instance shall be added from these crowded days.

"My dear Stephen,

You appeared to me to look unhappy last night, as if something was giving you pain either in body or mind. It will be a pleasure to me to hear that this was not so; or if it was, and I can help to remove it, let me try.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. Wilberforce."

The inquiries of the Secret Committee disclosed a fearful extent and degree of disaffection. "You and I agree," he wrote to Mr. Macaulay before he came to town, "in esteeming it to be the duty of every good subject to support government when he can. But then I own I feel that to draw on ourselves the ill-will, and worse than neutrality, of opposition on all West Indian questions, when we cannot have government as our friends, is to act in a way, which though it might become our duty if the ship were in danger of going down, is not to be expected from us unless in such critical circumstances. I have again and again been silent when I should have spoken against the democrats, and even oppositionists, more especially against party, but for the consciousness that I had to look to the opposition rather than to government, as our supporters in the Registry Bill and West Indian matters."

The unsettled aspect of the times now so far suspended these ordinary motives, that he prepared to take an active part in strengthening the hands of the executive.

A sharp and sudden fit of illness seized him the very day following the presentation of their Report by the Secret Committee, so serious as to hurry Mrs. Wilberforce to London on the summons of the friends who watched anxiously the inroads it was making on his feeble constitution; but after about three weeks, the cough, which was its worst symptom, yielded to medical treatment, and on the 11th of March he "thanked God that he was much better, but giving this week to annealing." His first attendance in the House was on the 18th, on the Lottery question. In moving its suppression, "Lyttleton argued too much like a man who is conscious that he is liable to be quizzed by his gay companions for talking of religion, morality, &c. Romilly as commonly was feeling, moral, and elevated. I had not arranged any order of thought, and I argued it too much on the ground of its effects, though not omitting higher considerations, but not enough introducing God's providence and will, (in the way wherein alone proper there,) and subjecting myself therefore to the answer Castlereagh gave, as if it were a question of feeling, not of right and wrong. How shocking does it seem to me on cool consideration, deliberately, for the sake of £500,000 per annum, to break God's laws and abjure his protection! Oh may he forgive us."

"Poor Sally More," says his Diary, May 19th, "died about a week ago, after long and extreme suffering; yet never impatient, but perfectly submissive and resigned—what a triumph of grace! All the world wild about Dr. Chalmers; he seems truly pious, simple, and unassuming. Sunday, 25th. Off early with Canning, Huskisson, and Lord Binning, to the Scotch Church, London Wall, to hear Dr. Chalmers. Vast crowds—Bobus Smith, Lord Elgin, Harrowby, &c. So pleased with him that I went again; getting in at a window with Lady D. over iron palisades on a bench. Chalmers most awful on carnal and spiritual man. Home tired, and satisfied that I had better not have gone for edification." "I was surprised to see how greatly Canning was affected; at times he quite melted into tears. I should have thought he had been too much hardened in debate to show such signs of feeling." "All London," he was soon after told in a very different circle from his own, "has heard of your climbing in at that window." With the healthful play of a vigorous mind, he entered readily into the joke. "I was surveying the breach with a cautious and inquiring eye, when Lady D.,

no shrimp you must observe, entered boldly before me, and proved that it was practicable."

Urging one of his children to steady application—"You cannot conceive," he says, "with what pleasure I look forward to the time when you will be able to engage in plans for the improvement and happiness of your fellow-creatures. I cannot but feel it as an honour, though except to a son I should not mention it, that when people have any scheme in view that is to do good they come to me as an ally in such a warfare against sin and misery." The very next day's Diary supplies an instance of these customary applications. "Cunninghame came in, and young Mr. W., with a charitable case of a foreigner and his family. I so much respect young W., a marine lieutenant giving up his half-pay for his father's support, and maintaining himself as a clerk in a warehouse, and yet busying himself for these poor people, that I could not help becoming answerable for the £20 he wanted for them, if I could not get it from the Distressed Foreigners' Institution."

The aspect of the times was again clouded over. "At Babington's, the window being open, we heard a shout, which we soon found was produced by Watson's acquittal. The Chief Justice Ellenborough summed up strongly against the prisoner, but it is said there was a jury-man who was decided to acquit. How ill-judged was it of government to suffer the trial to drag on so! Never surely was there a criminal convicted—never one who did not become popular—after having been the subject of a trial for six or seven days." The Secret Committee was now sitting, and he attended constantly at its deliberations, in vain endeavouring, on the 18th, "to get Ponsonby and Lord Milton to agree to the Report; they decidedly resolved not to do so;" and on the next day "altering the part respecting the employment of the secret informer." The Report was presented on the 20th, and on the 23d the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was proposed by government. Mr. Wilberforce reluctantly supported what he deemed an unavoidable severity. His freedom from all party spirit gave a weight to his decision, which was keenly felt by opposition. Sir Samuel Romilly directed all his powers of eloquence and reasoning to take off the effect of so unimpeachable a judgment; and another member in a different strain attacked him warmly on the third reading with an unworthy sarcasm aimed at his religious work. "The honourable and religious member," as

he addressed him amidst cries of order from all sides of the House, "could hardly vote for any measure more thoroughly opposed to vital Christianity." He was strongly tempted to retort on his opponent the obvious epithet suggested by his opening sarcasm; but with rare forbearance he repressed the impulse to render railing for railing.

"I shall take no notice," he began, "of what has been said concerning myself, though I claim no credit for my silence, for I am well convinced that there is not a man in the House who would not feel lowered by replying to such language as the honourable member has allowed himself to use." "How," he said turning round to the preceding speaker, "how can the honourable member talk thus of those religious principles on which the welfare of the community depends? I would fain believe that he desires as sincerely as I do myself to perpetuate to his country the blessings she enjoys. But if I could be base enough to seek the destruction of those institutions which we both profess to revere, I will tell him what instrument I would choose. I would take a man of great wealth, of patrician family, of personal popularity, ay, and of respectable talents, and I am satisfied that such a one, while he scattered abroad the firebrands of sedition under pretence that he went all lengths for the people, would in reality be the best agent in the malevolent purpose of destroying their liberties and happiness."

His Diary simply states, "B. forced me up in self-defence, and the House sided with me, though I forgot what I meant to say." "But never in my parliamentary life," says a member present, "did I hear a speech which carried its audience more completely with it, or was listened to with such breathless attention." "I cannot recall," says another, "the capital sentence with which he concluded; and the reporters, for I looked in the papers next morning, did no justice to its force. But I well remember the manner in which he worked up his supposition, and then brought it home to his opponent. You know B——'s manner when attacked, his head high, his body drawn up. His tall figure as he sat on the upper bench immediately behind was the higher of the two, even when Wilberforce stood up to speak. But when after speaking for a few minutes Wilberforce turned round to address him amidst the cheers of the House, he seemed like a pigmy in the grasp of a giant. I never saw such a display of moral superiority in my life."

Nothing can make his uniform forbearance more instruc-

tive than the knowledge that he at all times possessed this ready power of self-defence. "If there is any one," said Mr. Canning, "who understands thoroughly the tactics of debate, and knows exactly what will carry the House along with him, it certainly is my honourable friend the member for Bramber."

The first few weeks of the recess were spent by Mr. Wilberforce in clearing off the unavoidable accumulations of the session. They were busy and fatiguing days, and exposed to continual interruptions from the calls of charity, against which his doors were never closed. "July 21st. The birth-day of my two eldest children. I regretted that I was so hurried; I had little time to give to them, or to prayer for them. A poor woman called immediately after breakfast, just when I had meant to spend a quiet hour in devotion; but I called to mind Christ's example, and looked up to Him, hoping that I should please Him more by giving up my own plan and pursuing His—writing for her."

He was also writing to the Emperor of Russia, urging him to take such steps in the approaching Congress as should secure the execution of the Abolition compact.

To these employments was soon added a kind and constant attendance on the death-bed of a near connexion.

"How striking," he writes, "it is to see a tender-spirited young woman looking the last great enemy in the face, with as much calm resolution as was ever shown by any military hero in the field—with far more, indeed; for far more surely is required where all around tends to soften the mind, and give reason its full unruffled exercise, than when the drums, and trumpets, and artillery, and the bustle of war has excited all the passions. She has long been her mother's consolation and earthly support; but these services can be rendered by other friends, or even by confidential dependants. There are still higher services which so much-loved an object can alone render; weaning from this world and exercising faith, and patience, and child-like confidence and love. The effects of these will endure for ever; and the day will, I doubt not, arrive, when the mother shall see that her daughter was selected as the honoured instrument, after being her best and most assiduous friend in this world, of obtaining for her these still more excellent blessings. O my dear friend, the day is coming when it will be delightful to follow out all these now mysterious lines of Providence from the dark cloud in which they are at first

wrapped, into the full brightness of celestial glory. This thought was brought powerfully to my mind this morning, when observing that a passion-flower was about to open we stopped for about five minutes, and beheld the complete developement of the beauties and symmetry of the interior.

"May God bless you and yours, my dear friend. What a blessing is friendship! How true is the psalmist's exclamation, 'How good it is to dwell together in unity!' It is in short a heaven upon earth. May we realize it here, from its being the reflection from the better and less imperfect state of it beyond the mountains. Kindest remembrances to all common friends, and believe me ever,

Your affectionate and sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This was now become the ordinary temper of his mind. The morning clouds had passed away, and he walked in the fullest sunshine of "peace and joy in believing." His earlier Journals contain, as has been seen, records of hard struggles with "divers temptations;" but the power of the enemy had been long since rebuked; and after the most close and jealous self-examination he could humbly say, "I prefer spiritual to carnal pleasures, and never suffer any thing sensual to get the advantage over me deliberately. Am I guarded enough on the sudden?" He was still ever praying to be more fully "quickened, warmed, and purified;" and at times he complained "from what cause soever it is, my heart is invincibly dull. I have again and again gone to prayer, read, meditated, yet all in vain. Oh, how little can we do any thing without the quickening grace of God! I will go again to prayer and meditation. Blessed be God, His promises do not vary with our stupid insensibility to them. Surely God has always blessed me in all things, both great and small, in a degree almost unequalled, and never suffered me materially to fail when there has been an occasion for exertion."

But though occasionally harassed by such "dulness of heart," his ordinary spirit was far different. The full spring of love, and joy, and thankfulness was bursting forth into spontaneous expression in his conversation, his letters, and his Journal. All the natural objects round him had become the symbols of the presence and love of his heavenly Father, and like the opening of the passion-flower, suggested to him

some new motives for thankfulness and praise. "I was walking with him in his veranda," says a friend, "the year before, watching for the opening of a night-blowing cereus. As we stood by in eager expectation, it suddenly burst wide open before us. 'It reminds me,' said he, as we admired its beauty, 'of the dispensations of Divine Providence first breaking on the glorified eye, when they shall fully unfold to the view, and appear as beautiful as they are complete.'" "For myself," says one of his letters, (Aug. 28th,) when to his own family he unveiled his heart, "I can truly say, that scarcely any thing has at times given me more pleasure than the consciousness of living as it were in an atmosphere of love; and heaven itself has appeared delightful in that very character of being a place, in which not only every one would love his brethren, but in which every one would be assured that his brother loved *him*, and thus that all was mutual kindness and harmony, without one discordant jarring; all sweetness without the slightest acescency."

There was no obtrusive display of such emotions. True Christian joy is for the most part a secret as well as a serene thing. The full depth of his feelings was even hidden from his own family. "I am never affected to tears," he says more than once, "except when I am alone." A stranger might have noticed little else than that he was more uniformly cheerful than most men of his time of life. Closer observation showed a vein of Christian feeling mingling with and purifying the natural flow of a most happy temper; whilst those who lived most continually with him, could trace distinctly in his tempered sorrows, and sustained and almost child-like gladness of heart, the continual presence of that "peace which the world can neither give nor take away." The pages of his later Journal are full of bursts of joy and thankfulness; and with his children, and his chosen friends, his full heart welled out ever in the same blessed strains; he seemed too happy not to express his happiness; his "song was ever of the loving-kindness of the Lord." An occasional meeting at this time with some who had entered life with him, and were now drawing wearily to its close with spirits jaded and tempers worn in the service of pleasure or ambition, brought out strongly the proof of his better "choice." "This session," he says, "I met again Lord ——, whom I had known when we were both young,

but of whom I had lost sight for many years. He was just again returned to parliament, and we were locked up together in a committee room during a division. I saw that he felt awkward about speaking to me, and went therefore up to him. 'You and I, my Lord, were pretty well acquainted formerly.' 'Ah, Mr. Wilberforce,' he said cordially; and then added with a deep sigh, 'you and I are a great many years older now.' 'Yes, we are, and for my part I can truly say that I do not regret it.' 'Don't you,' he said, with an eager and almost incredulous voice, and a look of wondering dejection, which I never can forget." "You must allow that Mr. Wilberforce is cheerful," said some of his friends to one who had just spent a week in the same house with him, and who was fixing on religion the old charge of dulness. "Yes," she said in a tone intended to convey reproach, "and no wonder: I should be always cheerful too, if I could make myself as sure as he does that I was going to heaven."

Yet with all this constant cheerfulness there was a marvellous sobriety in his religion. His secret records of humiliation are aimed at specific faults, and do not waste themselves in generalities. "How sad," he says on one of these occasions, "that I am still molested by the love of human estimation; so that when a man whom I think of very mean intellect spoke disparagingly of me before others I felt vexed. What weakness! and all the time abhorring myself for it too; what a strange thing is the heart of man!" Again, "I love human estimation too well, though I trust I strive against it; and I have no temptation to seek dishonourable gain. Now how ready am I to condemn those who addict themselves to the latter! Yet am not I as criminal in loving the former, for it is the not loving God that is the vice? O Lord, purify me, and make me meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." Again he complains, "What over-valuation of human estimation do I find within me! And then also what self-complacent risings of mind will force themselves upwards, though against my judgment, which at the very moment condemns them, and yet my heart then claims credit for this condemnation! Oh the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart!"

The same sober judgment watched over his hours of unusual religious joy. "Let me put down," he says this month, "that I have had of late a greater degree of religious feeling

than usual. Is it an omen, as has once or twice shot across my imagination—a hint that my time for being called away draws nigh? Surely were it not for my dearest wife I could not regret it, humbly hoping, deeply unworthy as I am, that there is a propitiation for our sins, and that the mercies of God through Christ would not fail me. But oh let me check the emotions of indolence and of trying to have done with the turmoil of this vain world of perturbations, and give way to a more lively gratitude for the mercies of the Saviour, and a more active determination and consequent course of holy obedience and usefulness. Alas, alas, considering my opportunities, I have been a sadly unprofitable servant. Pardon me, O Lord; quicken, soften, warm, invigorate me, and enable me to rise from my torpor, and to imitate the example of holy Paul, doing this one thing, forgetting the things behind, and pressing forward towards the mark of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Alas, I fear I sadly neglect my duties to my children, and also to the poor, for though I serve the latter more abundantly than by individual visitation, when with the motive of Christ's speech, (Matt. xxv. 40,) I attend to whole classes and masses of them, yet individual visitation has its good also. O Lord, teach, guide, quicken me. Without Thee I can do nothing; with Thee all things. Lord, help, bless, and keep me. Amen."

It is well worth the inquiry by what system of self-treatment these happy fruits had been matured. They were not merely the results of a naturally cheerful temper leavened with religious feeling; they resulted from close and systematic discipline. He kept a most strict watch over his heart. He still recorded by a set of secret marks the results of frequent and close self-examination under a number of specific heads. He used every help he could devise for keeping always on his soul a sense of the nearness and the goodness of his God. "I used to have an expedient similar to the Jewish phylacteries, (Numb. xv. 38, 39,) in order to keep up the sense of God's presence. Let me try it again. I must have Him for my portion and the strength of my heart, or I should be miserable here as well as hereafter." Another custom from which he "found great benefit was putting down motives for humiliation, motives for thankfulness, and so on, which" he "carried about with" him, "and could look at during any moment of leisure." Such a paper, copied in part from one of earlier date, appears in a pocket-book of this year.

HUMILIATION, MEANS OF, AND TOPICS FOR.

"Consider—all my motives and just causes for gratitude; constant, fervent, self-denying gratitude; and then with this contrast my actual state—all my means and motives also to improvement and greater advance in the Christian character. That if all that really passes within were visible, all the workings of evil positive and negative, (especially if compared with my principles and lessons to others,) all my selfishness of feeling, and coldness of affection, too often towards those even whom I love and ought to love most, all my want of self-denial, all my self-indulgence, what shame would cover me! Yet that comparatively I care not for its being known to God. And is this because of His and Christ's mercy? Oh what baseness! My incurable, at least uncured, love of human approbation, and my self-complacency or pain when much granted or withheld, even when my judgment makes me abhor myself for it. (I trust I can say I do not allow this vicious feeling, but repress it with indignation and shame.) Oh were all that passes within in this instance to be seen fully, what shame should I feel! Realize this.—Look at various other Christians who have not enjoyed half my advantages or motives to growth in grace, yet how immeasurably they exceed me!" (Here many individuals are mentioned.)

"How little good have I done compared with what I might have done! What procrastination! Consider in detail how deficient in the duties of an M. P., father, master, friend, companion, brother. Resolutions broken. Intemperance often. How sinful this when taken in relation to motives to self-denial, from love to Christ—and to self-extinction, for me a vile ungrateful sinner! Oh shame, shame!

"Early advantages abused, and benefits often lost. What an (almost) hell of bad passions (despair absent) in my soul when a youth, from emulation, envy, hatred, jealousy, selfishness! (Yet, alas! justice to myself requires my adding how ill-treated here.) Time, talents, substance, &c. wasted, and shocking goings-on (Christianity considered): and after the revellings over, as egregious waste of faculties and means among the fellows; card-playing, &c. Consequent course of living almost without God in the world, till God's good providence checked and turned me, (oh miracle of mercy!) in 1785, through the Dean's instrumentality.

"But, alas! since I professed and tried to live to God,

sometimes only preserved from gross sin and shame by preventing grace. And, alas! even till now how little progress, how little of the Divine nature, how little spirituality either in heart or life, how little of a due adorning of the doctrine of God my Saviour! How much vanity and undue solicitude about human estimation! (Oh if transparent here!) Procrastination, inefficiency, self-indulgence, living below principles and rules. Contrast all this with my almost unequalled mercies and blessings. And remember God and Christ foreknow all thy ingratitude. N. B. All thy sins, great and small, are open to God's eye as at first, entire, and fresh, and unfaded, except as blotted out by Christ's blood.

"I find it one of the best means of gaining self-abhorrence, after such reflection as above delineated, to consider and press home what I should think and feel about another favoured in all respects as myself, who should be such in all particulars as I am in point of sins, negligences, weaknesses, neglect and misuse of talents, &c.; and then contrast my sins with my mercies, my service with my motives, my obligations with my coldness, the gratitude due with the evil returned. Alas! alas! God be merciful to me a sinner."

The friend, whose death-bed he was now cheering, "reading and praying with her daily," was upheld to the last by the same consolations. When her eyes had been closed in peace, he took his family to spend their summer holidays at Stansted, which had been kindly lent to him by his friend Lewis Way.

He spent a month at Stansted, "making an excursion for twenty-four hours to Huskisson's country house, where I was most kindly received." He delighted in receiving almost as much as giving such proofs of friendship; and with playful philosophy threw aside any of the little troubles it entailed. "Mr. Smith, the steward," are his Stansted Park reflections, "was all that could be desired—extremely obliging; in short, just representing his master. He, dear kind man, had endeavoured in every way to render me comfortable, had left me wine, and even china, plates, &c.; and the key of all his libraries, even of the sanctum sanctorum. We of course tried to do as little harm as possible. Though at first I thought we must have gone away on account of the housekeeper's bad temper, which sadly effervesced."

Haytian business now much engrossed him. His first

consent to enter into correspondence with Christophe led to an assurance, "that they would take any thing from him," and Christophe (by whom he had been entreated to sit for his picture, a request made the year before by Blucher) sent him in return the only portraits of himself and of his son which he had allowed to be taken. He was on his guard in opening this correspondence.

To avoid all misconstruction he "determined to show Lord Liverpool the Haytian letters. I think it best; he is a man of considerable religious principle, and surely the prospects dawning upon Hayti will prevent his yielding to the highly probable disposition of too many of the West Indians, to blast these opening buds of moral and social comfort and virtue." This was no exaggerated estimate of the interest of the cause. "Were I five-and-twenty," Sir Joseph Banks wrote to him asking for Haytian information, "as I was when I embarked with Captain Cook, I am very sure I should not lose a day in embarking for Hayti. To see a set of human beings emerging from slavery, and making most rapid strides towards the perfection of civilization, must I think be the most delightful of all food for contemplation."

Christophe was truly a great man. Born and educated as a slave, he had raised himself to absolute power, which he was most solicitous to use for the good of his countrymen. To educate his people, to substitute the English tongue for that of France, and the Reformed faith for that of Rome, were now his leading projects; and in them he sought for Mr. Wilberforce's aid and counsel. His letters every where abound in truly elevated plans. "He has requested me," Mr. Wilberforce tells Mr. Stephen, "to get for him seven schoolmasters, a tutor for his son, and seven different professors for a Royal College he desires to found. Amongst these are a classical professor, a medical, a surgical, a mathematical, and a pharmaceutical chemist." He entered warmly into Christophe's views. "Oh how I wish I was not too old, and you not too busy to go!" he writes to Mr. Macaulay. "It would be a noble undertaking to be sowing in such a soil the seeds of Christian and moral improvement, and to be laying also the foundation of all kinds of social and domestic institutions, habits, and manners." "It produces quite a youthful glow through my whole frame," he writes to Mr. Randolph in America, "to witness before I die in this and so many other instances, the streaks

of religious and moral light illuminating the horizon, and though now but the dawning of the day, cheering us with the hopes of their meridian glories." It was with this end especially that he undertook this new charge. "Christophe is not himself, I fear," he says, "governed by religious principles," but he was ready to admit and ever to uphold religion. "I have succeeded," he tells Mr. Hey, "in finding a physician, but I still want a surgeon, and much more a divine. Oh what would I give for a clergyman who should be just such as I could approve!"

He wrote at once to Mr. Simeon, to bespeak his assistance in this search.

"We have been," he tells one of his sons, "harder at work than ever, and still we are in the state in which the sea is after a great storm—a heavy swell—by no means at rest in the haven. For till we hear the ship has actually sailed, 'more last words' are continually occurring. And I find this Haytian connexion will by no means be an encouragement to indolence. But I trust it will be an occasion for doing much good, and I really look up to God with renewed thankfulness; I say renewed, for His having by His good providence drawn me to the Abolition business has always appeared to me to call for the most lively gratitude. Individuals who are not in parliament seldom have an opportunity of doing good to considerable numbers. Even while I was writing the sentence I became conscious of the falsehood of the position; witness Mrs. Hannah More, and all those who labour with the pen. Witness Dr. Jenner, and Sir Humphrey Davy, and all the good clergymen, which last class however I meant to except from the remark. But what various and extensive occasions of benefitting their fellow-creatures are presented to members of parliament in this highly-favoured country! And what thanks do I owe to God, for having led me from any subordinate line of official business into lines of service of extremely extensive usefulness, and less bitterly contentious, till Mr. Marryatt entered the field, than the walks of politics! In this Haytian instance, we are sowing the seeds of civilization and knowledge in a new society, which (may it please God) you may live to see exhibiting the new spectacle of a community of black men, of which the mass will be as well instructed as any nation upon earth. I will enclose you some returns of the state of the schools which I have just now received. Pray take care of them, and return them in three or four days, after showing them to any confi-

dential friends; but I think it is better to keep Hayti in the back ground, till it is able to stand on its legs in a firmer attitude.

"My dearest boy, remember my counsel. If you come into parliament, let me earnestly entreat you not to expend yourself in speechifying on questions of grand political or rather I mean party contention; but while you take part in the public and general discussions that are of real moment, for this is what I have commonly done, choose out for yourself some specific object, some line of usefulness. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with your subject, and you will not only be listened to with attention, but you will, please God, do great good. This is the mode in which I have often advised young men to proceed, but they seldom would be wise enough to follow my counsel, and hence you hear of many of them making one or two good speeches, and then all is over. This is really a sad waste of the means of prodigious usefulness which Providence has put into their power."

With such views opening on him, it was not unnatural that he should say, "never hardly did I feel so much interested as in finding proper people for Christophe, especially a tutor for his son." This was no easy task. When he first began the work he had received no remittances from Hayti. He cared little for this, as far as it regarded his own risk . . "if I should be a few hundred pounds out of pocket, the money might not be ill spent . . but" he scarcely knew what to promise others. Soon however he was intrusted with a considerable sum, which "proved Christophe to be in earnest;" and he was able to offer liberal terms to the professors. Still it was difficult to find any except men of broken fortunes, who would emigrate to Hayti. "It has often struck me," Mr. Stephen says to him, "that you and all who have thought on the subject without experience, have formed an inadequate conception of the sacrifice involved in a colonial residence. Rely on it that in general there are only two motives strong enough to keep any man or woman, without necessity, six months in the West Indies;—religious zeal, and auri sacra fames." At Hayti moreover all depended on Christophe's life and power. His demoralized and debased subjects must be coerced into morals and civilization; and his death, or a revolution, would risk the fortunes or the lives of these his stranger guests.

Patiently and perseveringly did Mr. Wilberforce struggle against all these difficulties, not only corresponding largely

with all quarters from which he might gather the assistance he required, but receiving both at "Kensington and Stansted the different applicants, that they might stay with me a few days, and enable me the better to take their dimensions." With all his overflowing kindness he was a shrewd observer of men's characters, and where he trusted to himself seldom imposed upon. Scarcely ever did a complaint escape from him in all this disagreeable service; and once only does he tell Mr. Stephen, "S., whose weakness and vanity are doing all the harm they can, has positively haunted us of late." So closely did he labour at the small French writing of this long correspondence, that his eyesight was permanently injured.

He had now returned into the neighbourhood of London, after spending a few days at Wood Hall Park, that he might get more undisturbed time to complete his Haytian letters. "I have been excessively busy of late, and in the line of duty. But my devotional time has been too much broken in upon; and this must not be. Much harassed by applications for recommendations to Hayti, by people of whom I know nothing." "Nov. 4th. W. set off for college. Talked much to him to-day; telling him the chief events of my early life. I could not sleep quietly for anxiety; yet dear —— means to give me pleasure. I fear he will be overborne from not forbearing to expose himself to temptation. I told him often the main matter was to put the guard in the right place. 6th. Heard for certain, what before reported, that Princess Charlotte died about five hours after the birth of a very fine, but still-born boy. She bore her long sufferings admirably. About ten days before, she had remarked, 'Certainly I am the happiest woman in the world, I have not a wish ungratified—surely this is too much to last.' The loss most deeply felt; their life had been truly exemplary—charitable, unostentatious kindness to all the poor around Claremont." "I must say," is the postscript of a letter sent on this day to Mr. Babington, "alas! for Claremont; yet surely this is an event which reasoning on Scripture principles we may easily comprehend, both in the probable meaning of personal mercy, and national, as well as domestic, punishment."

"I thought," his Diary continues, "in the night of writing a letter to the Prince Regent, hoping to find his heart accessible, and put down some notes for it: but this day scarcely spent so profitably as Sundays should be. Too little private prayer and communion with God aimed at. Oh remember thy high calling and the precious promises, 2 Cor. vi. at the

end, and 1 John iii. 1, 2, of fellowship with the Father and Christ, and Psalms lxiii. lxxxiv. xxxvi. O sursum corda." "Sent off," he says soon after, "a suitable letter with my Practical View to Prince of Coburgh. May God prosper it;" —and the notice of a "kind answer in which he promises to read it," is followed by the prayer, "May God bless to him the perusal of it."

The year 1818 was an important era in the West Indian struggle; for though no ameliorating measure was actually carried, the friends of Africa were led into new counsels, and assumed a new position. The opposition made to the Registration Act forced them to establish its necessity, by going into an examination of the actual state of the slave population; and these inquiries revealed at once such an amount of crime and cruelty, as proved that there was no cure for the evils of the system, short of its entire subversion. "Our grand object, and our universal language," says his private memoranda, "was and is, to produce by Abolition a disposition to breed instead of buying. This is the great vital principle which would work in every direction, and produce reform every where." This had been hitherto their only aim; but a fuller view of the secret iniquities of the colonial system, too surely convinced him that even this would not heal all its evils; and now therefore for the first time the word *emancipation* occurs amongst his secret counsels. Yet as another instance of the practical and cautious character of all his efforts, he thought not in emancipation of depriving the owners of West Indian properties of their present right to the labour of their slaves, but only of granting to the slave, such civil rights, as should bring him under the protection of just and equal laws, and make him a member of the commonwealth instead of the chattel of an absent master.

The fine shadings of these altering views, and their various colours as they pass into each other, cannot be so well exhibited as by free extracts from the private Diary in which they are recorded at the moment, mingled with the intervening objects which filled up his time.

"You can tell me," he writes to Mr. Grant, "how best, if at all, I can serve General Boyd, whose memorial I will enclose. Dr. Morse, of the United States, a warm friend of this country, and I hope, a pious, active man, has recommended to me this General Boyd, and his fellow-traveller, Mr. Storer, a tutor of one of their colleges; and I wish, if I

can, to show gratifying attention to Dr. M.'s recommendation. I am clear, that we ought to endeavour by personal and individual civilities to Americans, to cultivate the goodwill, and mitigate the prejudices and jealousy, of the people of that country. I trust true religion is increasing there."

"28th. I am still in no little embarrassment what course to pursue as to the West Indian question. The denunciations not only against those who are guilty of the positive acts of oppression, but against those who connive at its continuance, are so strong that I am truly uneasy at my having suffered so much time to pass away without having done any thing for relaxing the yoke of the most degrading and bitter bondage that ever ground down the human species. Yet valid objections have always occurred against every specific plan. Oh may I be directed right! I quite long to bring some measure forward. Lord, guide and strengthen, and warm me with true Christian love of Thee, and desire to benefit my fellow-creatures for His sake. 31st. Much impressed by Mr. Buxton's book on our prisons, and the account of Newgate reform. What lessons are taught by Mrs. Fry's success! I am still warmed by the account. Were I young, I should instantly give notice of the business, if no one else did.

"April 1st. Mr. Storer, and Everitt, Americans, breakfasted. Latter Greek professor in their Cambridge University."

"May 1st. Simons staying in the house officiated at family prayer—devotional, but not sufficiently practical; stating warmly the privileges and enjoyments, and in a degree the character of Christians, but none of those urgent admonitions and warnings, which Scripture contain, nor those exhortations to penitence. When clear from people, to Freemasons' Hall. Meeting of the friends of National Schools called together to replenish the treasury—Duke of York in the chair—Archbishop of Canterbury, York, and Bishop of London, and ten or twelve more. Lord Harrowby moved the first resolution, which given me to second. All circumstances considered . . my having been canvassed by the Archbishop himself, my being suspected, though falsely, of loose attachment to the Church because I do not hate Dissenters . . I gave £50,—more than I could well afford,—and doubled my annual subscription; but we are not to suffer our good to be evil spoken of."

"10th. Determined to come in again for Bramber, at

least for two years, under some strange circumstances. Thus Providence seems to fashion my ways, and if I should go entirely out of public life in two years, I hope to have previously sown the seeds and laid the foundation of the West Indian reform. I shall then, if I live, be sixty as much as most men's seventy. But my times, O Lord, are in Thy hand. Oh how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days! What cause have I to be thankful for kind friends! Lord Gambier most affectionate. Stephen most disinterested, and kind, and generous. Babington and Inglis, Charles Grant and Macaulay too, and Col. Barry truly friendly, frank, and kind. Surely no man ever had such undeserved mercies. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"17th. Trinity Sunday. Blessed be God, I felt to-day more sensibly than of late the power of divine things. Was it the present reward of not yielding to the impulse which I felt, but upon good grounds, to be longer in bed? I remembered Christ's rising long before day, and got up. Babington sent me a kind letter, warning me of H.'s excessive and vindictive rage, and intention to charge me with duplicity (I am sure I can say in the presence of God, none was intended) about the Bill for permitting the removal of gangs of slaves from the Bahamas to Guiana. Lord, undertake for me; let me not bring discredit on Thy holy faith. Thou hast the hearts of all under Thy power, O turn them favourably towards me. At least let me not discredit Thy cause. I will not think on this business until to-morrow: but to-day I may say, 'Lord, be Thou my surety for good.' How many are the passages in the Psalms which give comfort under the assaults of unreasonable and violent men! How strongly have I felt the double man within me to-day! I really despise and abhor myself for the rising of thoughts referring to human estimation; which nevertheless will rise even as to this very self-abhorrence, and so on ad infinitum. Oh what poor creatures we are! This should make us long for a purer heart and a better world."

He was now leaving the neighbourhood of London. "The quiet of this place," he says at Elmdon on the 17th of July, "is quite delightful after all our bustle. The colour of the ground is quite changed by yesterday's delightful rain." His spirit expanded amidst rural sights and sounds, and his heart overflowed with thankfulness to the Giver of all his mercies. He longed to teach all around him his own song of gratitude, and could scarcely bear its absence. "Most

kindly received," he says after visiting an early friend, "by T., and he lives most comfortably, to the full of that word—I might say splendidly; but it is grievous and very injurious to spend day after day enjoying every indulgence without the mention or apparent thought of the Giver of all good, and the Object of all hopes. Oh if a fellow-creature had given us every thing, how should we have talked of him! What exuberant overflowings of gratitude should we have witnessed! It is a delightful place, and a magnificent house. But I find it hurt my own mind: I felt less from the non-recognition of Christ the latter days than the first and second. Oh that I might more and more walk by faith habitually!" "Alas, poor G., from spending all his time in hunting and farming, is grown empty and stupid."

He was now halting at Elmdon on his way towards the Lakes. "There are two places," he had said in earlier life, "to which, if I ever marry, I will take my wife—to Barley Wood, and Westmoreland." But Westmoreland he had never yet found time to visit since his marriage; and even now, the fresh arrival of some Hayti parcels made him "grieve in secret over this lake expedition." Mr. Southey had endeavoured to engage for him a house at Keswick; and, though unsuccessful, enticed him onwards by letter. "I am very sorry that you are not in this delightful country during this delightful weather. We are enjoying a real honest, old-fashioned summer, such as summers were forty years ago, when I used to gather grapes from my grandmother's chamber window—warm weather for polemical writing; and yet little as such writing is to my taste, I have been employed in it for the last week. B., with his usual indiscretion, thought fit to attack me from the hustings. It was wholly unprovoked, as I had taken no part whatever in the election, and every thing which he said of me was untrue. So I am giving him such a castigation as he never had before, and which it is to be hoped may last him for his life." Ten days later he writes again. "The heat of the summer is checked, and we are enjoying sun and showers, with just such a temperature as makes exercise pleasant, and allows one to enjoy a little fire at night. I am as true to the hearth as a cricket or a favourite spaniel, and reckon it a privation when the weather is too hot for enjoying this indulgence."

Some continuous extracts from his Diary during this excursion, will show the natural working of his mind in a

time of relaxation. Leaving Elmdon on the 10th, he reached Seaforth House, near Liverpool, upon the 11th of August. "When we got upon the paved roads, our linch-pin twice came out, and our spring-straps broke. A kind Providence favoured us, that no accident. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"12th. Morning and evening prayers. How gratifying that we have some Christian merchants! Most kind treatment. Stayed at home for writing. Mr. J. remarkably pleasant—overflowing, and sparkling all the while. In the evening got into an argument about Dr. Johnson's religion. Mr. J. showed me afterwards Dr. Johnson's affecting farewell to Windham.—'May you and I find some humble place in the better world, where we may be admitted as penitent sinners. Farewell. God bless you for Christ's sake, my dear Windham.'

"In the night," he tells a friend to whom his heart was open, "a certain subject is apt to get the better of me and keep me awake; not so much from direct distress as from its being so interesting that it occupies the mind, and the effort of thought which is required for turning to another subject wakes me." These wakeful nights were a great drain upon his strength, but careful self-discipline had taught him the true Christian alchemy which can extract from all outward things the elements of gratitude and praise. "I am up late," says his Journal, "from having a very sleepless night, though blessed be God a very comfortable one—no pain and even no anxiety; my mind meditating gratitude to God for all his mercies, and thinking over passages of the Psalms." It was a striking sight on such a morning to contrast his "hunted" and languid frame with the full burst of thankfulness and joy, which seemed to flow most freely when the weakness of the body showed that it sprung from a spiritual and heavenly source.

"Sept. 2d. R. and S. off to see Keswick." They went longing to see Southey, but charged not to call upon him, "lest seeing lads of your age, should too painfully remind him of the son whom he has lost."

"5th. I took a two hours' walk by Rydale and Grasmere, and a good deal tired." It was not a little affecting to see him retracing with delight all his haunts of earlier days—another man in many things; his body bent and weakened, but his mind furnished and matured; his soul purer and well established after many struggles; but having passed

through all the bustling scenes of an unquiet life with the simplicity of early tastes and affections unimpaired, pointing out to his children every well-remembered beauty, and teaching by them golden precepts and a most eloquent example the secret of his own calm and happy temper. "Why should you not buy a house here," one of his children asked him, as they walked, "and then we would come here every year?" "I should enjoy it," was his answer, "as much as any one, my dear, but we must remember we are not sent into the world merely to admire prospects and enjoy scenery. We have nobler objects of pursuit. We are commanded to imitate Him, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It doubles my own enjoyment to see my dear children enjoy these scenes with me; and now and then when we need rest from severe labours, it may be permitted to us to luxuriate in such lovely spots, but it is to fit us for a return to duty; and we must bear in mind too that at present we are in a world which is in a measure under the wrath of God, and there is much mercy in every natural beauty that is left in it. We may be contented to wait for full enjoyment till we get above to that blessed place, where the desire of our gracious God to bless us shall meet with no obstruction, and His love shall have no check upon its full exercise."

Yet he tasted thankfully of present pleasures. "I do not often," he tells Mr. Stephen, "get out of the garden for any vagarious wanderings, but whenever I do extend my walk, as to-day, for instance, when I was seduced from pacing it upon the terrace with my reader at my side, and get among the rocks, and scale the mountains, I quite long to have you with me." "7th. Busy till one. Then on Winandermere. Dined in the boat, under the lee of the great island. Home late, a delightful evening. Yesterday evening charming. Walked out at night and saw the moon and a flood of light from Wordsworth's terrace. 20th. Fair at church-time, and I went to Grasmere, where —— read a common-place sermon at cantering or rather galloping pace; he preached last Sunday a sad trifling sermon on repairing Chester cathedral; and before that, one chiefly taken from Hall's on the Princess Charlotte, utterly unintelligible to the bulk of his hearers. He dined with us, and I was sorry to find he already knew Cooper's Practical Sermons. I hoped they would have approved themselves to him—but alas! In the afternoon I walked to two or three cottages, and talked on reli-

gion to the people." His fervent spirit could scarce be contained in the full sight of such a state of things. "Our population," Mr. Southey told him, "is in a deplorable state both as to law and gospel. The magistrates careless to the last degree; whilst the clergyman of —— has the comprehensive sin of omission to answer for. The next generation I trust will see fewer of these marrying and christening machines. The manners of the people have dreadfully worsened during his long sleep. Even within my remembrance there has been a great change."

During his short stay amongst the Lakes he did what he could to check this evil. He strove to rouse the slumbering energies of all whom he could reach or influence, and in all his scenery excursions visited the poor himself. He wrote

TO SAMUEL SMITH, ESQ. M. P. WOOD HALL PARK.

From "Muncaster Castle, Cumberland, Oct. 1, 1818.

"My dear Friend,

I should be strongly urged to take up my pen to write to you, were it only to satisfy the feelings which are daily produced in me as I revisit the various scenes of this delightful country, over which you and I rambled two-and-forty years ago. What reason, my dear friend, have we both to consider as addressed to ourselves the injunction of Holy Scripture, 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years!' but there the parallel ceases, for the passage goes on, 'through the wilderness,' whereas both to you and to me, (as you I doubt not are as ready to admit as I am) life has been any thing but a wilderness. In truth it has not been a country flowing with milk and honey only, but with every other benefit and enjoyment which the heart of man could wish for, and more than any would be presumptuous enough to request. You may conceive on reflection what interesting recollections are called forth in my breast, when I recall to mind the scenes we visited, the objects which then engaged our minds, the conversation which passed between us, (I am now within a very few miles of Wastdale Head, the valley in which we slept, or rather passed the night, in the same wooden crib after piercing through the Gorge of Borrodale,) and then when I proceed to review the long line of subsequent events, what do I see, but the continual bounty of the great Ordainer of all things? What reason have I to adopt the language of the psalmist, 'Surely

goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!' I cannot but add, Oh that my gratitude were more commensurate with the vast and unceasing kindness and long-suffering (for long-suffering also I must add) of my unwearied Benefactor! But how I am running on! I have abundantly proved the truth of the remark with which I opened, that I was stimulated to write to you by my feelings alone. Farewell, my dear friend, and believe me,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Another letter, dated the same day, is an instance of the various claims upon his thoughts which found him out at Muncaster as surely as in London.

"Muncaster Castle, Oct. 1, 1818.

"My dear Macaulay,

K——, a young man who was rakish and in distress, is now stopping in Madeira, on his way to the East Indies. He now professes to be penitent; praises Doddridge's Rise and Progress, &c. I hope all may be well, but dare not be too sanguine. Will you mention him, and forward the enclosed, to some pious man (Edwards I think is the name) resident in Madeira, who, if K. be really religiously impressed, may help to kindle the smoking flax.

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Spent the following week at Keswick—visited Southey, who very pleasing, light as a bird in body, and till the loss of his son, I hear his flow of spirits astonishing. He is a man of extraordinary method and punctuality; hence booksellers love to have to do with him. His library excellent; filled with curious Spanish and Portuguese manuscript volumes. He allots one time (before breakfast) to poetry, another to history, and so on. His History of Brazil is that to which he looks for fame. He is kind, hospitable, generous, virtuous, and I hope, religious, but too hasty in his judgments, and too rash in politics. Hence he would be a dangerous counsellor though an able defender."

"R. and S. got to Rydale on Thursday night, and are staying with the Wordsworths. I heard just before I went, that the daughters of a shopkeeper who had lately returned to Keswick with an acquired fortune had set up a Sunday

school. I called on them and gave them £2 for it, and encouraged them. The vicar would not join though they are churchwomen. I was much inclined to stay till Monday in order to see after the School on Sunday, but could not send for the two boys to us. I tried to urge —— to religious efforts for the town, but could not prevail on him; he pleaded want of time, no co-operators, &c. I long to settle there and try to do some good, though I see the difficulties great. On the 22d a Bible meeting is to be held, Richmond having written to the Dissenting minister—not well judged. It caused me much pain and self-reproach afterwards that I had not fixed to stay over Sunday. May God forgive me. O let us yield to the still small voice, and make doing religious good overbear at once all other considerations."

"Southey with us—much delighted with him." What Southey thought of him may be told in his own words. "I saw more of your father during his short residence in this country, than at any or all other times; and certainly I never saw any other man who seemed to enjoy such a perpetual serenity and sunshine of spirits. In conversing with him you felt assured that there was no guile in him; that if ever there was a good and happy man on earth, he was one; and that eminently blessed as he was with a benign and easy disposition, the crown of all his blessings was that inward and undisturbed peace which passeth all understanding.

"I recollect one circumstance during his visit to the Lakes, which shows the perfect reliance his servants had upon his good nature,—forbearance it might have been called in any other person, but in him it was no effort. The coachman came in to say that some provision concerning the horses had been neglected, and your father with a little start of surprise, replied, 'that indeed he had not thought of it.' 'No!' said the coachman, and 'since you have been in this country, you have all of you been so lake, and valley, and river, and mountain mad, that you have thought of nothing that you ought to have thought of.'"

His summer rambles and the expedition to the Lakes had not withdrawn the thoughts of Mr. Wilberforce from his Haytian and West Indian clients. Before he left the neighbourhood of London he was preparing to make an effort in their favour at the approaching Congress at Aix la Chapelle; and urged Mr. Stephen "to prepare something for Lord Castlereagh's perusal while yet in this country, to which we

may refer, and which may predispose him to the cause of Hayti."

The refusal to acknowledge Christophe's independence produced consequences most injurious to Hayti. There was no measure which was urged more constantly by Mr. Wilberforce in all his intercourse with Christophe, than that he should reduce his army. "I fear lest his own troops should leave him; and I long to wean him from his hankering after the conquest of the Haytian republic." But until his independence was acknowledged, he must maintain his troops to guard against a French invasion; and though this necessity led, as Mr. Wilberforce too truly prophesied, to his ultimate destruction, "he defended his measures in so masterly a manner, that no crowned head in Europe could send forth a letter more creditable either to the understanding or principles of its author."

His own share meanwhile in these counsels was often full of perplexity. His correspondence with Christophe and his ministers was sufficiently laborious; and the general superintendence of the emigrants to Hayti, was sure to cause him disappointment and annoyance. Parties must be chosen from all ranks of life—professors for the royal college, physicians and divines, governesses for the royal daughters, tutors for his sons, down to ordinary teachers of a common school, and "two ploughmen and their ploughs and families." They went into a land where the whole tone of society was utterly demoralized, and vice in no degree disgraceful; and though he inquired most cautiously, scrutinized most closely, and chose at last the best who offered, numbers of these could not stand the trial. The professors quarrelled with each other; some by open vices disgraced the cause they were designed to further; some were carried off by dissoluteness and disease; whilst the few who laboured faithfully found their hands weakened in their single striving against the multitude of evil-doers, and added often, by their desponding letters, to the common burden of this most oppressive correspondence. Still he went on with his labours cheerfully and never fainted in them, so long as the opportunity of service lasted.

When his family party had broken up at Rydale, he had been compelled to travel in a different direction from the rest; and on the 24th of October he wrote to Mrs. Wilberforce from Cambridge—"I thank God I am arrived at this place in safety, making up near 350 miles which I have tra-

velled, full 100 of them at night, without a single accident. How grateful ought I to be for this protecting providence of a gracious God! And I just now recollect in a most natural connexion, that to-morrow, the 25th of October, is the anniversary of the day on which I experienced that notable escape from being drowned in the Avon, when we lodged at Bath Easton. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I forget the year; do tell it me if you remember, by a mother's calendar."

"Sunday. Lest I should not be able to write in the evening, I take up my pen now, (three-quarters past two) though I shall to-day write but little, having had very little time to myself this morning before church. My heart would be very sad, but for the blessed prospects that are opened to the eye of faith—even the faith of an unworthy sinner. I hope it will be the effect of these earthly sufferings to wean me from this world, and fix my affections and desires more on that better state, where sorrow and sighing will have fled away. However I will not open any chapter of grievances this day, and I am ready to burn what I have written, on account of its being in any other strain than that of thankfulness. Oh what cause for gratitude have I: no man surely so great, at least very few! My spirits are not in themselves so cheerful as they used to be, but it is one of my many mercies that they are so good as they are. I suppose the mental sky of every one has its 'dim passing cloud that just tempers the ray.' Stephen comes here to-day. Dear fellow; his kindness, like that of the Dean, is as lively as if it were ever so short an effort, and as persevering as if it were ever so parsimoniously exerted. No man could ever have more cause for thankfulness to the Giver of all good for the many kind friends He has vouchsafed me. Farewell. Commending you to the best blessings of God,

I am ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the 24th of December he was again at Kensington, surrounded by his scattered family: and the new year opens with some striking resolutions of devoted service, in his usual tone of deep humility. "It is with a heavy heart that I look forward to the meeting; so many friends absent, and so many objects of pursuit, and I so unequal to them; yet had I duly used my powers I could do much. O Lord, do Thou quicken and guide me. I have resolved to dine out scarcely at all during this season."

"Jan. 15th. What is it to have our views spiritual when we are in our closets, unless we also retain and carry about with us the sense of invisible things, and the desire to please our unseen, but present Saviour, looking up to Him for grace and strength! O Lord, enable me thus to live, and may I practise self-examination more constantly, that I may watch myself in this important particular."

His daily occupations differed so little from those of the preceding spring, that the copious transcripts of his Diary at that time will render needless any but a few of the most interesting extracts of the present season. Some of these throw a strong light upon his character. "I thank you for your truly friendly conduct," is his answer to a friend who had transmitted to him the censures of another on his conduct, "and I beg you to join my dear and excellent brother-in-law in helping me to correct my own infirmities; as you have so often kindly borne with them. For this end the first step will always be to tell me of my faults, and I trust I can truly say I shall love you the better for so doing, and even if I do not think you right I shall be sure that your motive was friendly. You must also flap me and rouse and aid my decaying memory. Poor dear Babington! I miss him often in this way."

These were not idle words. In presenting on the 9th of February a petition from the Quakers against the severe enactments of our penal code, he expressed his deep regret for the loss of that great man who had made this subject his especial study. This warm and feeling language drew on him a remonstrance for having termed Sir Samuel Romilly "a great and good man." "Had a truly honest and Christian-like letter from Mr. Poynder," is the humble entry of his Diary, "to which I replied I trust in the same strain, on my eulogium on Sir Samuel Romilly. Perhaps I went too far, though the newspaper made me say more than I did. But, alas, I well know how often I am led away into saying what I never meant! How can I but add the above," he continues, "when I am fresh from the House of Commons, where most unaccountably, except from my not having at all meditated before-hand what I should say, I am told, and I fear justly, notwithstanding some opposite assurances, that I was extremely harsh against Castlereagh. How strange this! I really have a personal regard for him, have always wished, and do now wish him well, and did not in the least mean to be severe, especially against *him*. He had no interest in pre

venting the inquiry. However, may God forgive me, and enable me to act in a way more agreeable to my Christian character of peace, and love, and meekness. I am truly and deeply hurt by the consciousness, though quite relieved by a few friendly words which passed between Castlereagh and me in going out of the House."

Though he would not undertake the conduct of this cause,* his Diary will show that he gave to it what time he could. "March 2d. House. Mackintosh on Capital Punishments. He spoke admirably. I very middling. 4th. With Lord Lansdown to Rush, to talk over Slave Trade being made piracy by England first . . United States to follow our example . . or to propose our doing it conjointly. He, as I anticipated, clearly preferred the former. Canistered,† and to House."

"April 2d. Saw various characters in the morning. Then to Committee on Criminal Law. Then to Grattan's about three—Plunket, Newport, Tierney, Abercrombie, Brougham, Mackintosh, &c. We agreed about Roman Catholic Motion —then to a meeting of the Berbice Commissioners."

"May 2d. Sunday morning, Gerard Noel—evening, Mr. Matthias from Dublin, a most striking preacher. Lady O. and M., and an infant schoolmaster dined—the Barrys with us. Alas! I quite shrink from the week ‡ that is before me. Well, God has graciously supported me hitherto, and still let me trust in Him. I know not what to make of this hurrying residence; my continuance here claims my most serious consideration."

It was from the prominent part always allotted him on these occasions that he so greatly shrunk. No man ever attended them with a simpler or more fervent spirit, or entered therefore with more feeling into all their true excellence. "There really is in such a scene," he writes to a friend, "a moral sublimity, which, if duly estimated, would be worthy of the tongues of angels; and indeed, I doubt not, they who are declared by our blessed Lord to sympathize with the poorest, repenting, earthly sinner, do participate in the joy and thankfulness which are called forth in our Christian assemblies, in hearing of the general diffusion of the word of God, and of the labours, and sufferings, and blessed be God the

* Revision of Penal Laws.

† Another entry may serve as a comment upon this expression. "Eat cold meat from canister; as good a dinner as can be desired."

‡ Anniversaries of Religious Societies.

triumphs also, of those zealous missionaries who are devoting their lives in distant lands to the service of their Divine Master."

Never perhaps was his eloquence more winning than when on these subjects it flowed fresh from his full heart—and many a stranger to the ordinary excitements of the town returned at the week's end into the country nerved by it afresh for his path of solitary labour. "I shall never forget," says one who thus heard him, "the effect of a short speech of his upon my own mind. He was alluding to some natural difficulties which had impeded the success of missions, which ought not to discourage us; for nature seemed often, as well as man, to fight against St. Paul. He was not merely 'scourged with rods,' but 'thrice he suffered shipwreck.' The tone, the manner, the voice in which he brought out this simple thought was so overpowering, that I went home with it ringing in my ears for days."

The bustling week to which he was looking forward began upon the 3d of May, with "Breakfasted Dr. Hamilton (Irish) Owen, Mons. Kieffer from Paris, Mons. De Solles, (stating the friendly disposition of the present French government to our Bible Society,) and to Methodist Mission Society, where a full meeting—afterwards Church Missionary House—eat cold meat—and House—Catholic Question.

"4th. Church Missionary anniversary. Dear Lord Gambier in the chair, and closed with a hymn after opening with a prayer. I spoke warmly, and so pretty well. Mr. Matthias from Dublin very good. Delightful meeting. Lodgings and writing, when I recollected Lottery Resolutions. Hurried down to the House, and found Van, concluding his defence of Lotteries against Lyttleton, who I heard had spoken long and ably. I drawing up Canning, the debate became lively and warm. Poor Canning—how grievous it is to hear him so unjust to his own real kindness of heart, as to attempt to turn into ridicule the story of distress told by Buxton with great effect!

"5th. Several breakfasters. Bible Society anniversary Charles Shore spoke with fascinating tenderness. I was called on suddenly, but D. G. did pretty well. Then cold meat—and Downing Street. Then House.

"11th. Naval and Military Bible meeting. House. Lord Camden's generous gift to the public, and Tierney acknowledged it very handsomely. It is a sad proof of the low moral tone of the world, that people in general say,

'More fool he.' Then Bill for protecting the New Zealanders and Otaheitans."

"15th. British and Foreign School Society. Duke of Kent in the chair. Oh how glad I am that the tenth meeting is this day over! The consumption of time is really too great." "Would it had been my favoured lot," writes Hannah More, "to hear one of twelve speeches in ten days." The wonder is how with his feeble health he stood such constant fatigue. A house crowded with "inmates" . . their number swelled every morning by a tide of "breakfasters" . . then a throng of "callers"—a crowded meeting at which he made often a long, always an animated speech—then a budget of letters to be read and answered—his only rest or food a "canistered" dinner; and then the House, where he sat long, and sometimes spoke again, not getting home till "all were gone to bed." It is not a little striking, to turn to some of his letters to his children, written in the midst of such a life as this; often at hurried intervals when waiting for an audience at an office, or some such scrap of time; ("for I always take the raw material with me to such places, and work it up into the manufactured article as opportunity permits;") but showing even in their fair and legible characters how much he consulted the feelings of those to whom he wrote. A sample or two of this correspondence, maintained once a week at least with each of his absent children, will best show his tone of mind.

"My dear———,*

I stop at a friend's house in London solely to write to you a few lines; sincerely concerned at my having been so engrossed by a host of callers, as not to secure a single quarter of an hour secure from interruption to converse by pen and ink with my very dear absent child. Yet as when you were a little boy I used to delight in taking a passing kiss of you, so now it is quite gratifying to exchange a salutation with you on paper, though but for a minute or two. The sight of my hand-writing will call forth in my dear affectionate —— all those images of parental and family tenderness, with which the Almighty permits us to be refreshed, when children and parents are far separated from each other. You have a heavenly Father too, my dearest boy, who loves you dearly, and who has promised He will never leave you nor forsake you, if you will but devote yourself

* Aged 13.

to His service in His appointed way. O my dearest boy, pray in earnest; guard against formality in prayer. Endeavour to place yourself as it were in the presence of God when you call upon Him. Again and again, may God bless and preserve you, and grant you His Holy Spirit, and a disposition to deny yourself. But I must break off; somebody has been talking to me almost all the time I have been writing, so if there are mistakes excuse them; and believe me ever,

Yours most affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

TO THE SAME.

"My dearest ——,

The last letter from home communicated to you the death of one young friend, my present letter will convey the account of an event still less to be expected; that of the death of poor B. Poor young man, he sadly disappointed all his real friends, not only by failing in his studies, but also I fear by a licentious course of conduct. Suddenly he was thrown on a bed of sickness. Mercifully God gave him some days for repentance, and we are not without hope he may have found mercy, for he was very penitent. But, alas! dependence on a death-bed repentance, is a sad dependence indeed! O my dear boy, may you remember your Creator in the days of your youth; then whether you live or die, all will be well. Farewell, my very dear ——, I am sadly hurried, but I would not omit writing to you to-day.

I am ever your affectionate father.

W. WILBERFORCE."

TO THE SAME.

"My dearest ——,

I have not either time or eyesight to-day sufficient to send you what from its size, may deserve the name of a letter; but a letterling it may be called, and you know the old passage, Inest sua gratia parvis—a maxim which from my not being myself of extravagantly large dimensions, I may be supposed to consider a very reasonable proposition. I am glad to find (and it is quite a drop of balm in my heart when I hear of my dear boy's going on well) that you are setting to work doggedly, as Dr. Johnson used to term it; but I like neither

the word nor the idea. I hope my dear boy will act from a higher principle than one which I have seen in a poor animal in a team, when the *taste* of the wagoner's whip has made him resolutely set all his muscular force in action, and pull up a steep as if determined to master it. But my dearest —— will be prompted by a nobler set of motives; by a desire of pleasing God and showing his gratitude to his Saviour, and not grieving the Holy Spirit; of giving pleasure to a father and mother who are watching over his progress with tender solicitude. I have been looking over some old papers till my heart is not a little affected. How year passes away after year, and first one person is snatched away and then another! Little did I expect I should outlive so many much more robust, and many of them younger than myself. But to persons of your age as well as mine, the lesson is read, 'Be thou also ready.' And then, my dearest boy, we shall never part, if we have made our calling and election sure; we shall never again be in the storm, but remain for ever in the enjoyment of the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. I remembered that you would receive this on a Sunday, and therefore permitted myself to fall into a serious strain. Indeed I am always tempted to sing in this key when I am addressing one of my absent children, because loving them so dearly I am naturally drawn into the discussion of those topics in which their best interests are concerned. Above all things, my dear ——, attend to your private devotions. Beware of wandering thoughts. If you do but pray in earnest, I am *sure* all will be well. May God bless and preserve you. Poor —— has suffered grievously from the bite of a gnat; her arm from the shoulder to the finger has been greatly inflamed, but D. G. she is now getting better. I remember Dr. Clarke says, the Russian soldiers often die from the bites of the gnats in the country bordering on the Crimea; and yet it used to be said, that 'You flay a Muscovite to make him feel.' God bless you, my dearest ——.

Ever your affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He closed the labours of the session by moving on the 7th an address to the Regent on the suppression of the Slave Trade, by which he hoped to quicken the exertions of our government, and produce some effect on France.

At the Deanery at Wells, where he stayed, some time dur-

ing an excursion made in the recess of Parliament, his attention was much occupied by the affairs of Hayti. "I understand that the C.s have resolved to go there, and I own I am glad of it. It absolves me from all responsibility, while it obtains for Hayti the services of people, who I hope may be useful, though I dare not in conscience rely on the morality of persons in whom I have no reason to believe there is a deep principle of religion, when they are going into a country where vice is not discreditable. But, my dear Stephen, I cannot tell you how deeply I feel the not having taken more pains to promote the religious and moral improvement of that interesting people. In this instance, as, alas, in so many others, I find myself at once comforted by the blessed assurances of pardon from God, who delighteth in mercy through the atonement and intercession of our great Mediator and Advocate, while I am at the same time supplied with the most powerful of all motives, gratitude and generous shame, to exert myself with augmented earnestness for the time to come. I wish beyond measure you could help me in getting some schoolmistresses, and also some missionaries, though the latter must be men of uncommon prudence and moderation.

"We stay here D. V. till Monday se'nnight, and then I believe shall fix for a week or so at Malvern. Oh how I wish I could yet do any good before I am called away! Of the uncertainty of life we have just now had a fresh instance in the death of Mrs. Patty More. Never was there a more generous, benevolent creature, more self denying to herself, or kind to others; and her natural tempers, blessed be God, were sanctified by just views of religion, or rather by that Divine Spirit which produced and confirmed them." "Patty sat up with me," he says in his Diary, "till near twelve, talking over Hannah's first introduction to a London life, and I, not she, broke off the conference; I never saw her more animated. About eight in the morning when I came out of my bed-room I found Hannah at the door—'Have you not heard Patty is dying? They called me to her in great alarm,' at which from the ghastliness of her appearance I could not wonder. About two or three hours after our parting for the night, she had been taken ill." She lingered for about a week.

His various wanderings are pleasantly retraced in a letter to another friend. "My summer, which began late, has been

spent almost entirely with various friends;—the Noels, at my old haunt of Barham Court, near to which you once endured the labours, if not the dangers of war (on Cox Heath); —my valuable old friend, Mrs. Hannah More, whom we the rather visited, because we deemed it but too probable that if we should not see her this summer we might never see her alive in another; and such is the uncertainty of life, that we witnessed the death-bed, and nearly the actual departure, of her younger and stronger sister—then we spent a few days at the romantic and beautiful seat, Blaize Castle, of my friend Mr. Harford; and afterwards a fortnight with the Bishop of Gloucester, whom I heartily wish you could hear and see both in his public ministrations and in his private life; he is really what a bishop should be—for humility, industry, zeal with sobriety, hospitality, and above all for love in all its kinds and directions, he is really a bright specimen; and the veneration and affection that are felt for him by all who know him, even by those who do not entirely concur with him in religious principles, are seen beaming from every countenance, and sparkling in every eye. He practically remembers the motto of old Archbishop Usher's seal ring—Væ mihi si non evangelizavero. On the week-days he visits different country parishes, whence the income of his deanery is derived, and collects round him as crowded congregations as are usually found in a well-frequented church. Then we were seduced into spending near a fortnight at Malvern, having visited it with the intention of merely a twenty-four hours' cursory survey. For the recovery of an invalid, or for the means of enabling an old man to toddle up the mountains (not quite Himalayans) without fatigue or even effort, it is by far the first of all English elysiums. Then we spent a little time with Mrs. W.'s widowed mother, whence I paid a second short visit to a sweet lady friend to meet, by his and her urgent desire, the Duke of Gloucester for a few days en ami, (must I not be an inch or two taller for the distinction?")

All his letters were now tinged by one subject. Much popular disturbance had occurred in the manufacturing districts. "Let me beg you," he asks a friend at Sheffield, "when you write to give me all the information you can concerning the state of mind of your lower orders, and particularly whether the religious part of your community has in these trying times been acting worthy of its high calling. I declare my great-

est cause of difference with the democrats, is their laying, and causing the people to lay, so great a stress on the concerns of this world, as to occupy their whole minds and hearts, and to leave a few scanty and lukewarm thoughts for the heavenly treasure. * * It really provokes me to a degree of indignation greater I fear than Christianity warrants, to look forward to what may happen to this highly favoured country from our internal divisions. Party, party is our bane. I feel I think much as Lord Falkland did when he used to stalk about his tent and exclaim, Peace, Peace."

The worst feature of the disaffected was their zeal against the Christian faith. "What your Lordship and I saw," he reminds Lord Milton, "amongst the papers of the Secret Committee, gave me but too much reason to fear that the enemies of our political constitution were also enemies to our religion." "Heretofore they inveighed against the inequality of property, and used every artifice to alienate the people from the constitution of their country. But now they are sapping the foundations of the social edifice more effectually by attacking Christianity. The high and noble may be restrained by honour; but religion only is the law of the multitude."

In this spirit he entered the House on the first day of the session; and then, on the 26th, when he "spoke with effect though without premeditation," he maintained forcibly the cause of order. He arraigned the irreligious spirit of this new morality, proved that the bar of the House of Commons was the most improper place for an inquiry into the behaviour of the magistrates, and turning upon those who showed some inclination to reap a factious triumph from the sufferings of their country—"Can there be one man here," he asked, "who does not from his heart lament these transactions? If there be, it must be one who has learned to look to civil war and slaughter for the regeneration of the country, and to regard the overthrow of our religion and our laws as the means of accomplishing their end."

Throughout the stormy session which succeeded, his language was the same. He esteemed "the situation of the country very critical, and though" he "had no small reason to complain of some members of administration," he "thought it" his "duty to come forward in support of the several measures which were proposed for the preservation of the public peace."

"We are in a state of almost combustion," he complains

amidst nightly contentions, " which does not suit me as well as it did thirty years ago—

'Calidus juventà,
Consule Planco.' "

In the hot fit
Of youth and Pitt.

Yet his own mind was quiet in the storm. The next day's Diary affords a glimpse of those deep waters which no political tempests could disturb. " Walked from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the 119th Psalm, in great comfort." His learning this whole psalm by heart in all his London bustle, is a striking instance of the care with which he studied the Holy Scripture; and in spite of his complaints, his memory could not have been materially injured, since he could (even with the help of a technical artifice which he now frequently employed) acquire and retain perfectly this long and unconnected passage. To return to the Diary.

" Dec. 14th. Not a minute alone to-day. Money with me during dressing. Then Mr. Scott about the Wool Tax. Then African Institution—Duke of Gloucester there, and Lord Lansdown. Then House—Lord John Russell's motion. He spoke pleasingly—Lord Normanby seconded with more talent, though Romeo-like. Alas! I get no time to myself. To-night Arms Seizing Bill; doubtful what course to pursue, as to whether one or two justices, and by night as well as day; decided for former, on ground of publicity, and the clause requiring time being given, and that in 1812 the same power was given and no abuse followed. O Lord, enable me to decide aright. Blessed be God, I serve a Master who takes the will for the deed. "

" Several press me strongly to bring forward a committee to inquire into and relieve the distresses of the lower orders. I am much puzzled about it. Sir W. De Crespigny's motion to refer Owen's plan to a committee. I forced to speak against it on the Christian ground.

" 17th. Found Owen of Lanark truly placable and good-humoured; he said Vansittart and I right in voting against him." He was no advocate for " a system of morals or instruction not founded on religion." " They would exclude," he complains of such instructors, " religion from life, and substitute knowledge in its stead." " It is only by educating our people in Christian principles, that we can hope to advance in strength, greatness, and happiness. By their ef-

ficacy alone can we escape the operation of those causes, which have assimilated other states to the human frame in its infancy, manhood, and decay. But the religion of those states was founded on false principles. They went on from stage to stage of intellectual improvement, emerging from ignorance to knowledge, till the light of day beamed upon the fabric, and betrayed the rotten imposition upon which it was built. The pillar of our greatness is raised upon that basis of all intellectual and moral improvement, the Christian religion."

The year 1820 opened with an unexpected calm. The restrictive Acts of the preceding session, and the clearing of the commercial gloom, quieted the angry spirit of that stormy period. A busy session seemed to be at hand; when the unexpected death of George III. suspended public business, and dissolved the parliament. Mr. Wilberforce's spring passed in its usual employments, marked only by two domestic features; the marriage of his eldest son, and the lingering and fatal illness of his early friend, Dean Milner, of Carlisle. He came to Kensington Gore, to attend as usual on the Board of Longitude; and after five weeks of suffering illness, breathed his last upon the 1st of April.

Many were the hours he gave to soothing the sick-bed of his friend. Though his life had been spent so much in public, he was no stranger to such scenes; and never was the genuine tenderness which filled his heart more beautifully shown than in these unwitnessed charities. More than one touching instance may be quoted from the private memoranda of a friend, who was at this time a frequent inmate in his family. At the close of one of his days of hurry, perhaps after the stormy contests of the House of Commons, "between twelve and one o'clock he heard that his daughter, who was ill, could get no sleep. Coming into her room, he took her hand, and, kneeling down by the bed, spoke of the tender shepherd carrying the weak and lame in his bosom to warm and cherish them. Then he applied this to our blessed Saviour; spoke of His tenderness and love; how He would feel for His dear suffering child, and conduct her all the way she had to go, until He took her from this scene of trial and sorrow to a world where sorrow and sighing shall flee away—'a beautiful personification, indicating their haste to leave the mansions of the blessed.' In this spirit he prayed with her, and never left the bed until her spirit was visibly soothed and supported."

One other extract shall be given. On the 24th of May

he "went down to Paul's Cray, honest Simons's, where a great party at his school fête. Gerard Noel gave us a beautiful sermon. Lord and Lady Jocelyn, Charles Noel, Lady E. Whitbread, and various friends." He was all sunshine at such times, from principle as well as habit. "It is a fault to be silent; every one is bound to present his contribution to the common stock of conversation and enjoyment;" and wherever the group was the most crowded and attentive, he was sure to be found its centre. From all this he stole away, and "asked me" (to quote from the same memoranda) "to walk with him down the village. It was to visit a poor woman, of whom he had heard as in a deep decline. He found out the sick-room, and sat down by the bed, and began to speak to her of the love of God, which should dwell in his children's hearts. 'Ask yourself then, do *you* love him. We know how love to our fellow-creatures acts; how it makes us try to please them, bear for their sakes unpleasant or unkind things, pain or hard words, with patience. Now does your love to God act in this way? Do you bear patiently what he sends you *because* he sends it? It is no proof of love to God to do what pleases us, to come for instance, as I have done to-day, to see all those dear children in the society of friends I love. But if you submit to your illness, and give up your will to God's will; if you seek to listen to His voice in this affliction, if you are patient under your sufferings, and gentle to those about you, this will indeed be a proof of love to God. And then think of the happy consequence. He will come and abide with you, and bring such peace and joy into your heart, as none else can bestow. The Comforter will come and dwell with you; not pay you a short visit as I am now paying to my friends here, but dwell with you, and never leave you. Now this is the joy I wish for you.' And then he knelt down, and asked of God to comfort and support her, and after all her sufferings bring her to a world of peace and joy, where the former things shall have passed away. 'It is delightful to me,' he said as we returned, 'to visit such a bed of sickness, to be able to take one ray of joy from the full sunshine of the social circle, to gild her sick-room. It has been one of the happiest days I ever spent.'"

"Went," he says, on the 26th of April, "to Freemasons' Tavern Committee-room, and afterwards to the Hall on the Duke of Kent's Statue proposal. I seconded the first resolution—kept there latish. I am much pressed to attend the London Missionary Society, but I cannot do it. Last year

I was at eight or nine of these public meetings in as many days, but I must not this year." He attended four or five, and was the charm of each one where he took a part; doing, according to his own account "pretty well, and every body very kind to me." "But oh how humbled am I to find still in myself solicitude about human estimation! Yet I strive against it, and despise myself for it. O Lord, help me." No one perhaps was ever freer from this fault; but his rigid scrutiny detected in himself the smallest rising of the tempers he condemned. "I should like you," Mr. Stephen said to him when he was once depreciating himself,* "to write a life of yourself, and I would write another; and it would be curious to see the different renderings which would be given to the self-same facts." "To one of these meetings," says the friend, whose memoranda have before been quoted, "I went with him, and arrived before the room began to fill. He walked round, looking at the portraits which hung around the walls, and his spirits seemed unusually depressed; after a time, he burst forth into expressions of his grief and self-abasement, at his remembrance of some scenes of revelling, in which, though never given to excess, he had joined in early life within that very room—'To what a different use, thank God, are we now about to put it!'"

The arrival of the Queen soon introduced a new and fearful excitement amidst the subsiding waves of civil strife.

During the anxious debates which followed, he was far from idle. He sent his son with an earnest letter to the King, in which he entreated him to restore the Queen's name to the Liturgy, "suggesting the ferment which would be occasioned; that the country would be in a fury, and perhaps the soldiers might take the Queen's part."

In the stirring and anxious scenes that followed, he took an active part, and notwithstanding the "fears he has been very profligate" which he enters on his Journal, he deprecated the disgraceful consequences which would result from the Parliamentary inquiry into her conduct, and though he well knew the extreme odium and misconstruction to which his course exposed him in "the hope of averting a great evil," he laboured assiduously to mediate between the two parties.

* The occasion is too good to be omitted. "I was so small of stature when a youth," was his account, "that Milner put me on a table to read to the boys." Mr. Stephen interrupted him, "Why, Wilberforce, Milner himself has told me that it was that your elocution might be a model to the school."

In the midst of the contumely to which the measures he proposed rendered him liable, "I ought to be thankful," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "that I have lately felt a comfortable consciousness that I am in the hands of God. The 71st Psalm, which I learned by heart lately, has been a real comfort to me. Cobbett has been publishing a very clever letter to me, full, as you may suppose, of falsehood and mischief. Well! remember good old Luther, in worse times, when assailed by enemies who could burn as well as write."

He reasons on this passing odium as calmly as if it had attacked some one else. "I am doubtful about moving an Address on the Slave Trade. I greatly doubt the wisdom of bringing on these questions now, because the public mind is engrossed with the Queen's business, and because I am unpopular out of doors, though not in the House. What a lesson it is to a man not to set his heart on low popularity, when after forty years' disinterested public service I am believed to be a perfect rascal! Oh what a comfort it is to have to fly for refuge to a God of unchangeable truth and love!"

During a prolonged separation from his family, who were at the sea side, "I think," he writes to them, "it is good for the mind to feel a little solitary. It more impresses on me the true character of life, which has been to me too uniformly comfortable. Indeed I can say, 'My cup runneth over.' What a beautiful expression!—the passage struck me yesterday, when meditating over the 23d Psalm in the garden."

On the 25th of July, the House of Commons adjourned for a month; and on the 28th he was preparing for his summer's flight. His route to Weymouth took him to the house of an early friend, whose guest he had not been for many years. "So here is William Wilberforce going to visit Henry Bankes," his companion overheard him murmur to himself as he drove up to Kingston Hall, "and they are the only two of the old set of whom so much can be said."

His residence at Weymouth was soon interrupted by the threatening aspect of affairs. "The accounts from London are most alarming." In this crisis his interference was requested by men of various parties. Lord John Russell led the way by a letter in the Times of August 5th, "which can hardly fail," says the editor, "to propitiate Mr. Wilberforce, so beneficent is the office which it assigns to him; so

flattering, and we will add so just, the tribute both to his virtues and his power."

This step he thought most ill-advised from reasons which he thus imparts to Mr. Buxton. "You must ere now have seen Lord John Russell's curious publication. I own I am concerned to see the letter, because it sadly obstructs the course of proceeding I had before meditated. It would have been very different if he had in private communicated to me his ideas."

"I do not quite despair of getting the business put off," he tells Mr. Stephen, "though it must be said, that Lord John's letter is a sad obstacle in the way, and one which may perhaps be insuperable." . . "My project was to urge the King to go to the House of Lords, and declare he gives up his own wishes to the gratifying of his people." . . "But how could he hope that I should prevail on the King to accept my mediation, as that of a neutral man, when publicly called upon to come forward by one of the strongest partisans of the opposition ?"

"I am divided between the fear on the one hand of neglecting some measure, which by the blessing of God might be the means of arresting our progress into that abyss to which we seem gradually but too surely advancing, and on the other of appearing conceitedly to think of myself more highly than I ought to think, and of thereby injuring the interests of religion. My situation would be very painful if religious principles I hope in part, but still more natural temper and habit, had not lessened the sensibility of my feelings on all terrestrial things. Yet to be told before all the world, that on me and my conduct depends the fate of the empire, is enough to make a man anxious."

The day before this letter reached him, he had "decided that it may be well to be on the spot when the Queen's business is going to begin, that if any opening should present itself, it may be embraced. I go up to try if I can prevent the inquiry. Yet I feel deeply the evil, that so bad a woman as I fear she is should carry the victory by sheer impudence, (if she is guilty,) and assume the part of a person deeply injured. Oh the corrupted currents of this world ! Oh for that better world, where there shall be no shuffling."

"Pray for me," he writes back from London to his family, "that I may be enlightened and strengthened for the duties of this important and critical season. Hitherto God has wonderfully supported and blessed me ; oh how much be-

yond my deserts! It will be a comfort to me to know that you all who are, as it were, on the top of the mountain, withdrawn from and above the storm, are thus interceding for me who am scuffling in the vale below."

But matters were too far advanced for any beneficial interference, and he returned after a time to Weymouth, where he was still followed by pressing applications that he should demand an audience of the King, or recommend conciliation to the Queen. One ardent friend, with more zeal than discretion, sent down a messenger "to fetch me up express, and meet him at Salt Hill to have an audience of the King. I positively refused. He had summoned S. and Lord H. from Hastings, who both came; he himself went to the cottage and conferred with General Thornton, and sent in to the King that he expected me. The King sent a very proper answer: That if he had conferred with me, it must be on some political business, and that he never talked on political subjects with any but his ministers."

Seeing therefore no present opening for usefulness, he remained with his family at Weymouth and at Bath, watching from a distance the advancing trial.

Here a new blow distressed him greatly. On the 9th of December he heard from unquestionable information of the sudden death of Christophe; and with Christophe he well knew all the plans for the improvement of the Haytians, which had cost him so much time and labour, must fall to the ground. "I cannot mention Hayti," he says a few days later, "without interposing a word or two concerning this same *tyrant*, as now that he is fallen it seems to be the fashion to call Christophe. If he did deserve that name it is then compatible with the warmest desire in a sovereign for the improvement and happiness of his people; and I must also add that all the authentic accounts I ever heard of him have led me to believe that he was really a great man, with but few infirmities. Nevertheless I am not much surprised at what has taken place, for I must confess that the yoke of government might probably press heavily upon his people, and that he might carry on his whole system, both in introducing improvements and in reforming morals, with too much rigour. Again, the military discipline which he enforced, and the great army which he maintained, were necessary to resist the expected invasion from France; and I fear that all kings are apt to be too fond of arms and reviews —of course except the King of Great Britain."

"I regret," he said at this time to a friend, "that I did not more press Christian principles upon poor Christophe, and instruct him in the knowledge of a Saviour; yet I was afraid of losing my influence with him by going too far. I sent him books, and said what I thought I could, but I have been uneasy since; I know not that a day has passed that I have not prayed for him. He has only been charged, as far as I know, with two faults; one, an overstrict enforcement of justice; the other, his being avaricious, and heaping together much money in his capital. But this was for the purpose of buying gunpowder from the Americans, in case France should attack him. He sent me over £6000 to pay schoolmasters, &c.; and I remember his giving a man, whose conduct he approved, 1000 dollars, quite spontaneously. He was a great man, intent on the improvement of his people, but he furnishes a striking instance of the truth, that by too earnestly pursuing a good object you directly defeat it."

As the meeting of the House approached the political horizon became darker. Mr. Wilberforce returned to London with a heavy heart. "Pray for us," he said when he left his family, who for his daughter's health still stayed at Bath; "pray for us who are about to attend parliament, and shall soon be in the heat of the battle." "I wish I had any thing to call me away to-morrow from the House of Commons. The question before us is a most perplexing one: a choice of evils. But how little these parliamentary affairs will interest me when I look death in the face—except having kept a clear conscience!"

On the 26th he "found the question changed by the motion of Lord A. Hamilton, from restoring the Queen's name to the Liturgy, to blaming the leaving it out. Not one in fifty but thought it wrong, and still more foolish, to leave the name out, yet a large majority voted for the previous question. That night I meant to vote for restoring her name, but was forced to go home by illness, though had the division come on a few days before, I should have voted against it, on the ground of the Queen's outrageously contumacious conduct. It is almost rebellious." This concession he thought due to the religious feelings of the great bulk of the middle classes. He found that not only the political Dissenters, but even the Wesleyan Methodists prayed for the Queen by name, and "would not allow that she was prayed for at all, in the words, 'for all the royal

family.'" For himself, he had never viewed the omission as involving any religious question, sharing the sentiment expressed by Dr. Parr: "In the words, 'all the royal family,' I include the Queen." But to perpetuate the notion that it was designed to deprive her of the benefit of the people's prayers, was, he thought, so paramount an evil, that on the 13th of February he supported Mr. John Smith's motion for the restoration of her name.

"This exclusion," he maintained, "is a most unhappy circumstance, because it has been the means of introducing a political feeling into the Church. Every religious man has hitherto consoled himself with the reflection, that there is at least one day in the week, when he may forget all his low and vulgar cares, and dismiss from his mind the animosities which disturb the course of human life. On that day the elements of discord ought to be at rest, and every recollection which creates disunion or excites a jarring sentiment should be, if possible, avoided. But at present this unhappy subject is brought under public notice every Sunday, and the wound which might otherwise be healed is kept in a state of constant irritation. Nothing can more tend than such a state of things to bring into discredit an ecclesiastical system sealed with the blood of martyrs, and from which the Dissenters themselves have derived all the advantages which they enjoy."

"It grieved me more than it ought," he wrote next day, "to differ from many dear friends, but I really could not in conscience forbear to support the motion." "Yet there are those even whom I love, who, if they will not look at me with altered countenance, will yet feel real grief of heart; and I perhaps, even to weakness, feel full as much pain from the consciousness of grieving them. But we must not suffer such considerations to affect our conduct, or even to bias our judgment. Yet it is one of the views in which a better world often presents itself to my mind's eye, and cheers my heart by the prospect, that then there will be no errors, no room for misconstruction, but all will at once recognize the kind intentions of others, and live in the clear and full light of unclouded love and confidence. Oh how trivial will then appear to have been many of those questions which we now contest so warmly!"

His domestic character was truly remarkable. It was not merely that the tenderness of his earliest affections was unchilled by a bustling public life, but that there was a careful

thoughtfulness as to the effect of little things upon his children's characters which seemed almost incompatible with his incessant occupations. This was now more observable when his sons were growing into manhood. For them he chose, as he had done for himself, (a far severer trial of his principles,) with no eye to personal ambition. His great wish was to see them useful clergymen, and leaving to themselves entirely the choice of their profession, he watched the little openings of domestic life to give to their minds the bias he desired.

The result was what he wished. Of his four sons, who came of a stock which for twenty-six recorded generations appears not to have produced one clergyman, he lived to see two in Holy Orders, and a third preparing for the ministry. His letters to them are full of the same spirit.

TO A SON AT ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"Saturday, March 10.

"My dear ——,

* * * * * *

"But you have perhaps been expecting to hear from me in answer to your question. I cannot object to your plan of retiring to read, but I hope you will be very careful whom you select for your companions. Believe me on the credit of my long experience, that though Christians who wish to maintain the spiritual life in vigour and efficiency, (fervent, ζεοντες, in spirit, serving the Lord,) may without injury mix and associate with worldly people for the transaction of business; yet they cannot for recreation, still less for intimate friendship and society. With the deep interest I feel for your eternal concerns, (oh how contemptible does all else appear in comparison!) I cannot but enforce on you this most important truth."

His state of health at this time gave many indications that his parliamentary services must terminate ere long. Several successive attacks of illness made it impossible or dangerous for him to attend the House, and delayed his intended inquiry into the West India system to another year. "I scarcely dare tell you," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce, "that at one time, thinking I was not likely to be able to speak before Easter, I was actually meditating the cutting and running system without delay; when I recovered, so as to al-

low me the hope of doing two or three important matters before my departure."

His secret thoughts on his recovery are full of gratitude to God. "What cause have I for thankfulness, that even when ill I scarcely ever experience pain, or distress of body or mind! But then I learn, or rather I re-learn, from this attack, two important practical truths: when I become ever so little incapable of quiet continued reflection I can only gaze at known truths, and look up with aspirations of humble thankfulness to the will of my unwearied and long-suffering Benefactor."

Never surely was family religion seen in more attractive colours, than in his house. "I only wish," said a college friend who had been visiting two of his sons, "that those who abuse your father's principles could come down here and see how he lives." It was a goodly sight. The cheerful play of a most happy temper, which more than sixty years had only mellowed, gladdened all his domestic intercourse. The family meetings were enlivened by his conversation—gay, easy, and natural, yet abounding in manifold instruction, drawn from books, from life, and from reflection. Though his step was less elastic than of old, he took his part in out-of-door occupations; climbing the neighbouring downs with the walking parties, pacing in the shade of the tall trees, or gilding with the old man's smiles the innocent cheerfulness of younger pastimes.

In the leisure of the country to which he this year retired, he meditated literary works of an extensive kind, and hoped to realize the wish of Mr. Babington, "that the evening of your days should shed a mild lustre on your contemporaries and on posterity, harmonizing with the great and important labours of your earlier years." "My whole life of late has been consumed by letters, and by other business which leaves no trace behind. I must endeavour to redeem the time for some useful work. Though the complaint in my eyes has for some years prevented my acquiring knowledge, or even keeping up what I had acquired, yet I hope that I might be able to compose both a religious and a political work, which would not be without value. May God bless to me this scene of quiet."

The execution of these plans was continually hindered by his public occupations. The West India cause exacted all his time. He was at once obliged to begin writing "letters

to two members of the American Congress and to the Emperor of Russia."

One heavy trial alone clouded all this summer. His eldest daughter still continued in a state which gave him much uneasiness.

As the year advanced her small remaining strength was manifestly sinking, and on the 30th of December she breathed her last at Mr. Stephen's house, whither she had been removed some weeks before, for better medical attendance.

"I have been employed," he tells Mr. Wrangham, "for a long period in attending the sick, and at length the dying bed of a justly beloved grown-up daughter. But the pain of our late trial has been abundantly mitigated by the assured persuasions that she is gone to a better world. It would have been delightful even to those who were not so personally interested in the scene as ourselves, to have witnessed the composure with which, in the prospect of speedy dissolution, our dear child, naturally of a very timid spirit, was able to pray that her parents might be supported under the privation they were about to suffer." I shall never forget the tenderness, and faith, and love, and devotion with which, having desired all others to withdraw, she poured forth her last audible prayer for herself and us." "Sustained by a humble hope of the mercies of God through her Redeemer and Intercessor, she was enabled to bear her sufferings with patience and resignation, and to preserve a composure which even surprised herself. On the very morning of the last day of her life she had desired a favourite female attendant to ask her physician, whether or not there was any hope of her recovery, 'but if not,' she added, 'all is well.' She expired at last like a person falling asleep—scarcely a groan, and not the least struggle. I am almost bound in gratitude to the Giver of all good to call in my friends to rejoice with me over such an instance of Divine goodness, and the consciousness of our dear child's being safe is a cordial of inestimable efficacy."

To Mr. Babington he opens still more freely all the feelings of his heart in the review of this affecting scene. "There was none of that exultation and holy joy which are sometimes manifested by dying Christians. But I know not that my judgment does not rest with more solid confidence on her humble composure and consciousness of her own unworthiness, with an affectionate casting of herself on her Re-

deemer and Intercessor. The day before she expired, she sent all out but her mother and me, and concluded some declarations of her humble hope in the mercies of God through Christ with a beautiful prayer addressed to her Saviour. And she had remarked to her mother that she never had before understood the meaning and value of Christ's intercession. My dear friend, I must stop—you are a father."

On the day of his daughter's funeral he was kept at home by the extreme coldness of the weather, and when the band of mourners had set out he went into his solitary chamber to commune with his God. "I went and saw the coffin. How vain the plumes, &c. when the occasion is considered, and the real state of humiliation to which the body is reduced! I must elsewhere note down the mercies and loving-kindnesses of our God and Saviour in this dispensation; above all, the exceeding goodness of giving us grounds for an assured persuasion that all is well with her; that she is gone to glory. When I look back on my past life, and review it, comparing especially the numerous, almost innumerable, instances of God's kindness to me with my unworthy returns, I am overwhelmed, and can with truth adopt the language of the Publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. Every one knows, or may know, his own sins, the criminality of which varies according to his opportunities of improvement, obligations and motives to obedience, advantages and means of grace, favours and loving-kindnesses, pardons and mercies. It is the exceeding goodness of God to me, and the almost unequalled advantages I have enjoyed, which so fill me with humiliation and shame. My days appear few when I look back, but they have been any thing but evil. My blessings have been of every kind, and of long continuance; my being made the instrument of bringing forward the Abolition; my helping powerfully the cause of Christianity in India; my never having been discredited, but being always supported on all public occasions. There would be no end of the enumeration, were I to put down all the mercies of God. My escape from drowning by a sudden suggestion of Providence. My never having been disgraced for refusing to fight a duel. Then all my domestic blessings. Marrying as late as 36, yet finding one of the most affectionate of wives. Six children, all of them attached to me beyond measure. And though we have lost dear Barbara, yet in the main, few men ever had such cause for thankfulness on account of the love of their children towards them. Then my social blessings. No man

ever had so many kind friends; they quite overwhelm me with their goodness, and show the wisdom there has been in my cultivating my friendships with men of my own rank, and remaining quietly in it, instead of trying to rise in life myself, or to make friends among men of rank; above all, the wisdom of selecting religious men for friends. The great and noble now all treat me with respect, because they see I am independent of them, and some I believe feel real attachment to me. Then my having faculties sufficient to make me respectable—a natural faculty of public speaking—though the complaint in my eyes sadly hinders me in acquiring knowledge, and in writing. Then, almost above all, my having been rendered the instrument of much spiritual good by my work on Christianity. How many, many have communicated to me that it was the means of their turning to God! Then all this continued so long, and in spite of all my provocations. These it would be wrong to put down, but my heart knows and feels them, and I trust ever will. And it is a great mercy that God has enabled me to maintain a fair, consistent, external course, so that I never have brought disgrace on my Christian profession. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"And now, Lord, let me devote myself more solemnly and more resolutely to Thee, desiring more than I ever yet have done to dedicate my faculties to Thy glory and service."

On the 4th of January Mr. Wilberforce returned with his diminished family to Marden Park; a lease of which he had purchased; where his recent loss, as well as his decreasing powers of body, tended to detain him.

But though his bodily strength was visibly impaired, the fire of his spirit was unquenched, and he longed to be still active in his Master's work. "I am sometimes," he told his friends, "quite grieved at the idea of my probably not being able to do a little good yet before I quit the stage; and the 71st Psalm is strongly impressed upon me, especially the verse, 'Forsake me not when I am old and gray-headed.' Yet perhaps this is in part only another form of selfishness; and the better feeling that which prompts me to acquiesce entirely in the disposal of God. If my chief object be that His will be done, what signifies it whether it be by me or not? He can raise up instruments at will, and I may be serving Him more acceptably by cheerfully retiring and giving place to younger and more active men."

One more effort closed his long parliamentary career. Its

three last years were spent in giving to the struggle against Slavery that first impulse, which before he left the scene had secured Emancipation throughout all the British colonies.

At Marden Park his family and friends were gathered round him, and he was reading, conversing, writing letters, and composing with all his usual diligence and vigour. He was soon deep in various books. "Ran over Cain—what diabolical wickedness! Looked into Swift's Letters—what a thoroughly irreligious mind—no trace of Sunday to be found in his journals, or Letters to his most intimate friends." "I am going on with Thomas Scott's life in dressing. What a truly great man old Scott was; acting for so many years on the highest principles, not only above money, but above vain-glory, or any other of the idols of men! I always valued him, but now that his character is viewed more distinctly, he really appears to have been a Christian hero. I never saw a book which I should recommend so strongly to the constant study of a minister." "The grand point for imitation, and may we both attend to it," he writes to his eldest son, "is his *integrity*. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. No consideration of interest, gratification, or credit could make him swerve consciously a hair's breadth from the line of duty. This, depend on it, is the best of all signs. I have often remarked that it has always ended eminently well with those in whom it has been visible. Such a one was Lord Teignmouth. I know no one quality which I always recognize with such heartfelt pleasure in any persons whom I love." Lighter reading occupied the fragments of the evening. "Scott's new poem, Halidon Hill—very beautiful. I have been running over the Fortunes of Nigel, the best, I mean the most moral in its tendency, of any of Walter Scott's stories which I have heard, illustrating the ways of Providence, the character of men of the world, and their unfeeling selfishness."

In the midst of these wholesome domestic occupations he was startled by the news of Lord Londonderry's death. "I am shocked by it," he tells Mr. Stephen. "How strange is it, that though professing to live under the continual recollection of the uncertainty of life, yet when such an event as this takes place, we are as much astonished as if we had expected the man to be as sure of good old age as of his actual existence!"

The particulars of this tragical event had not yet transpired, but the next day supplied more distinct intelligence. "August 14th. S. brought a report from Croydon that poor Londonderry had destroyed himself. I could not believe it. The Courier however and several letters too clearly confirmed it. He was certainly deranged—the effect probably of continued wear and tear of mind. But the strong impression of my mind is, that it is the effect of the non-observance of the Sunday, both as abstracting from politics, from the constant recurrence of the same reflections, and as correcting the false views of worldly things, and bringing them down to their true diminutiveness." "All the time that I have been writing," he concludes a letter this day to Mr. Stephen, "poor Castlereagh has been in my mind. I never was so shocked by any incident. He really was the last man in the world who appeared likely to be carried away into the commission of such an act! So cool, so self-possessed. It is very curious to hear the newspapers speaking of incessant application to business, forgetting that by the weekly admission of a day of rest, which our Maker has graciously enjoined, our faculties would be preserved from the effects of this constant strain. I am strongly impressed by the recollection of your endeavour to prevail on the lawyers to give up Sunday consultations, in which poor Romilly would not concur. If he had suffered his mind to enjoy such occasional remissions, it is highly probable the strings would never have snapped as they did, from over-tension. Alas! alas! poor fellow! I did not think I should feel for him so very deeply."

Though now in comparative repose, he watched anxiously over the progress of his cause, and was sometimes engaged in consultations with the other Abolition leaders; sometimes for whole days in "preparing a most important communication for Lord Bathurst," or in corresponding with the other members of administration. He received "a satisfactory reply from Lord Liverpool," of whom he had demanded "as the head of the government," that the plenipotentiary of Great Britain at the approaching Congress might be "instructed by the Cabinet," to make the Abolition a point of leading moment. And "if I could prevail on them to instruct our naval officers to take the slave ships of France, I would engage not only to defend the measure in the House of Commons, but to take it on myself as of my own advising."

He wrote at this time, and sent through William Allen to Verona, a letter to the Emperor Alexander, seriously urging him to exert himself. "He does not I hope believe that we are satisfied with him on Abolition grounds. My letter, though civil in terms, was frank in matter, and it plainly intimated that we should have no favourable opinion of his religious or moral character if he did not honestly exert his powers in our behalf."

He had left home in the middle of September, and travelling from house to house, visited many of his friends, each of whom in turn delighted to gather round him their own circle of acquaintance, whilst in addition to these claims of society, a tide of letters overtook him at each halt. Here was no room for idleness. "I thank you most sincerely for your visit," he heard from Mr. Buxton, with whom the series had commenced, "I shall disappoint myself if I do not gather solid benefit from it. I believe I told you how much surprised I was at your industry." His progress led him on to many of his earlier haunts; Elmdon, Rothley Temple, Yoxall Lodge, and Apley, "the house of an honest Tory," were all visited in turn; and many interesting notices are scattered through his Diary. "C. knew Canning well at Eton; he never played at any games with the other boys; quite a man, fond of acting, decent, and moral. Dr. Parr violent against him in public company; says, 'I know the interior of the man, and despise and abhor him.'"

From Cromer Hall he paid Felbrigg a visit, and in its library turned over with great interest many of the books which were "full of Windham's marks." "Windham's mind," he said, "was in the last degree copious, the soil was so fertile, scratch where you pleased, up came white clover. He had many of the true characteristics of a hero, but he had one great fault as a statesman, he hated the popular side of any question." His companion quoted Pope—

> "So much they hate the crowd, that if the throng
> Go right by chance, they purposely go wrong."

"It was exactly so," he replied, "and I had a melancholy proof of it in the instance of the Slave Trade. When the Abolition had but few friends, he was all on our side, but as the nation drew towards us, he retreated, and at last on the division in 1807, he was one of the sixteen who voted against us."

"Whilst at S. sat three-quarters of an hour with Robert Hall, who quite himself. He eulogized highly Scott's life, and old Scott himself; especially a sermon he heard from him in Robinson's pulpit from 2 Pet. iii. 'Knowing I must soon put off this tabernacle as the Lord hath showed me." 'it was a sermon,' he exclaimed repeatedly in a most animated way, 'quite above all criticism.'" "L. off to Birmingham to hear Hall preach to-morrow; I should have liked it, but thought it wrong. In attending public worship we are not to be edified by talent, but by the Holy Spirit, and therefore we ought to look beyond the human agent."

Various incidents in this excursion had revived more than one acquaintance which time had almost obliterated. "The Duke of ——— called on me, and sat for almost three hours. He and I came into life about the same time, though we have seldom met since. Oh what thanks do I owe to a gracious Providence which provided me with such parents, and guided me through such paths as I have trodden!" In two other instances this revival of acquaintance led to a correspondence of unusual interest. One letter was to his college friend Dr. Frewen. "It is always with a sort of melancholy pleasure, that I address an old friend after a long period has elapsed without personal intercourse. The mind naturally casts a backward glance over the retrospect, and in the experience of all there has been some loss or another which renders the review affecting. These emotions have been this very day called forth by breakfasting with our old friend Carr, whom I had seen but once for above thirty years, and now I am writing to another old friend in very nearly similar circumstances." Dr. Frewen's answer alluded to some coldness which he imagined had grown up between them, ("of which I was quite unconscious,") and led him to take a full and interesting review of his life since the time of their early intercourse.

"Elmdon House, near Coventry, Dec. 6, 1822.

"My dear Sir,

Not a single day has passed since I received your interesting letter, in which I have not wished, I may rather say longed, to answer it. I really am impatient to state to you some, for it would take far more eyesight than I can spare to state all, of the sentiments and feelings you have called forth. But let me begin by expressing that strong confirmation your letter gives to my favourite doctrine, and I must do

myself the justice to say practice, when we have to deal with any one of whom we are disposed to think at all favourably, of frankly stating every matter of complaint we conceive ourselves to have against him, instead of suffering it to settle on its lees, if I may use the expression, and acquire augmented strength and colour by being kept within our own bosoms. It is really true, that I was not aware of having exhibited any coldness towards you in my behaviour, and also that I have utterly forgot, if ever I knew, the circumstance in your behaviour toward me, to which you refer, as having originated in a mistake, and from which I am sorry to hear you suffered real pain.

I am pressed for time and have been so much in the same situation ever since I got your letter that I have not been able to reflect upon it, or by calling up the recollection of long-past incidents to bring before me, if possible, the circumstances to which you allude. You therefore have my first thoughts, though I have had your letter for some days in my possession.

Various are the emotions which the retrospect of my life is calculated to produce in me; but those of thankfulness for the wholly undeserved, and yet multiplied mercies and bounties of God are, I hope, uppermost. You cannot but remember, what I can never review but with humiliation and shame, the course I ran at college, and during the three or four first years of my parliamentary life which immediately succeeded it. Yet in justice to myself it is only fair to state, that at least as much pains had been taken by my nearest relatives and guardians to make me dissipated and vain, and though they did not mean it, vicious also, as are commonly used to counteract these dispositions; and forgive me, my dear sir, if opening my heart to you with frankness, and trusting to your considering my letter as written in confidence of your secrecy, I add that even at college most of those very men who ought to have used both authority and influence (and of the latter at least I was susceptible) to root out these propensities, and to implant better, rather confirmed than abated them. I must do both you and Cookson the justice to exempt you in a good degree from this charge, though to be honest with you not entirely. For would not the golden rule have prompted you to use towards me the language of a friend, if not of a father? (My natural father I lost when eight years old, and my grandfather and uncle soon after I went to Cambridge.) Ought

you not to have urged me to look forward, and even on principles of sound human wisdom, much more on Christian principles, to consider what must be the issue of the course of life I was pursuing, and of the choice I was making of associates and friends? That though while my youthful spirits should remain I might continue an entertaining companion, yet that I should ere long bitterly lament that I had suffered the years and circumstances which supplied opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge, and even still more for cultivating and strengthening the intellectual powers, to pass away wholly unimproved? Ought you not to have reminded me of the great account I had to render of the talents committed to my stewardship, and to have enforced on me the base ingratitude, to say nothing of the guilt, of making such an unworthy return to the Giver of all good for all the uncommon blessings which had been lavished on me with such exceeding prodigality? (I allude to my having been born in England in the eighteenth century, and not when a man of my weakly body would have been useless and contemptible if he had not been exposed in his infancy, to my having a handsome fortune, my being born in the middle rank of life, and my having, I hope, a fair proportion of natural talent, and a cheerful and not an anxious temper, one of the greatest comforts in life; but there would be no end to the enumeration. I may fill up the line with, &c. &c. &c.) You did not spend night after night at cards with me, but did you suggest to me the fate of the unprofitable servant?

All this went on, with grief and shame I say it, till by degrees I came to myself; *for to no one can the phrase be more justly applicable.* This began in the summer and autumn of 1785, and was carrying on in the winter of 1785-6, and in the following spring, when blessed, for ever blessed be God, I adopted those principles, to which, though I am but too well aware very imperfectly, I have ever since made it the great business of my life to conform my character, I should rather say my dispositions, and tempers, and conduct. Of course I then took a survey of the past and the future. Providence had placed me in a situation which I must say I still think one of the most honourable that any man can possess—that of member for Yorkshire. How was I to proceed? My religion taught me the duty of devoting all my faculties and powers as a debt of gratitude to my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, as well as of reasonable

service to my Creator, Preserver, and continual Benefactor. And I was to labour more abundantly than the men of the world, who looked only to gain or to glory for their recompense. For 'what do ye more than others,' was our Saviour's language to his disciples. You know but too well how sadly empty I then was; how utterly destitute of the habits no less than of the knowledge I ought to have possessed. My business therefore manifestly was, to employ as diligently as I could in study as much as possible of my recesses from parliament; and as I knew I could do far less in any house of my own, for many years I quartered myself for nearly all the time parliament was not sitting with different friends, who suffered me to breakfast in my own room, and live as much as I pleased the life of a student. Once I was with Cookson; (poor fellow, it is with a sigh that I write his name: he and his wife both gone and I left;) and ever after with Gisborne in Staffordshire, and Babington in Leicestershire. Thus I went on until I married in 1797.

I have gone into this narrative because you are concerned in it. You will see at once that having no house of my own, except that either in or near London, from which I attended the House of Commons, I could not ask any of my old friends to come about me under my own roof—otherwise remembering our old habits of social intercourse, I think it is most probable I should have endeavoured to renew them—yet while I am writing, a new idea has suggested itself. I do not recollect having sent you a book of a religious nature which I published in 1797, just before my marriage; if not, I gave you reason to complain of me for failing in the performance of an act of friendship; for in truth, one of the chief objects I had in view in writing and publishing that work, was to explain to my friends the causes of the change which they witnessed in my 'goings-on,' (to use a coarse but expressive phrase,) and the principles which I could not but earnestly wish and pray that all whom I valued and loved should also embrace. Now if I did not send it to you, I really believe the omission must have arisen from forgetfulness. But it was an unfriendly omission, and I beg your pardon for it, and will repair the fault. I grant, however, that though the interest I took in the well-being of my old friends was even greater than it had been before the change I have been speaking of, yet that from natural and obvious causes, we were not likely to be

such agreeable intimates to each other as heretofore. There was no longer the 'eadem velle' and 'eadem nolle' in the same degree, and therefore we were likely to retain full as strong a desire to SERVE such friends as formerly, but not to have the same pleasure in each other's society. But as you and I have never to my knowledge been in the same place, we never have had opportunities of seeing much of each other. Thus, my dear sir, I have explained myself to you without reserve, and before I conclude let me say a few words concerning that same publication which I trust you will still do me the favour to accept and peruse.

It is not from any idea of its literary merit that I entreat you to peruse it. I am quite aware that it is much too diffuse and even tautologous. But I am more and more convinced by subsequent experience, that the character and practices which are recommended in it, are such as the New Testament prescribes to us, and such as alone will bring peace at the last. You will at once however see, that my main object was to endeavour to convince my friends that the mere outward profession of Christian principles could not be all that was required, when such strong figures were used and expressive explanations given to describe the dispositions and affections which were to be formed in us here, in order to qualify us for a better world hereafter.

As to the other points to which I drew your attention in my former letter, I can say but a very few words on them. It is very natural that I should not have formed a very correct idea of your political sentiments, considering our not having exchanged a word on the subject for between thirty and forty years. I am myself decidedly convinced that PARTY is one of the chief evils which in politics we have now reason to regret. This it is, which in the opinion of many well meaning (though I do not think them rightly judging) men, renders governing by influence necessary; so that it has become a settled contest, whoever is minister, between crown influence on one side and systematic opposition on the other. Of course I do not mean to condemn all co-operation of like-minded men, and I know that if I were to have made such an acknowledgment in a public assembly, the ready reply would be, Why what is that but party? It is certainly one of the innumerable cases in which the fault is in the abuse, in the excess of the thing, not in its nature.

As to Parliamentary Reform, it would require more eyesight than I can spare to put on paper what I think on that

head. But I doubt not you would concur with me in opinion that the bribery, of all sorts and forms, and the drunkenness, which attend our present system, are those evils which call by far the loudest for reform. I verily believe, and have long believed, the constituent body to be more corrupt than the representative.

My dear sir, I must say farewell. May every blessing attend you and yours."

Mr. Buxton to whom he entrusted the lead in the House of Commons in the great question of emancipation, having written to him in terms of high eulogium on the industry which marked the employment of his time during a few days they spent together, he replied as follows:

TO T. F. BUXTON, ESQ.

"You intimated a high sense of my industry. Alas! my dear friend, truly is it said in Holy Writ, 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' You little know how I reproach myself for not having expended wisely and economically the many more years of health than from my bodily frame I could reasonably have expected to be employed on earth in my Master's business. I do not mean that I actually waste much time! for, honestly speaking, I am conscious that I do not; but I am sadly chargeable with the fault of not expending my time with judgment.

But alas, my dear friend, my want of industry is most exhibited, (to the Searcher of hearts, at least,) in my not duly availing myself of all opportunities of forming and strengthening the habit prescribed by the apostle, 'Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him.' We all are apt to forget that the great object of our lives should be to acquire that new nature which is to qualify us to live in heaven, or, in Scriptural language, is to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Now this new state is produced, blessed be God, in various ways, and we are never cultivating it more efficiently than when, under the influence of right motives, we are doing good to our fellow-creatures, especially if our active services are attended with self-denial. But the formation of the right temper and character is the main thing still. God can effect His own purposes by His own agents as He will. 'They also serve who only stand and wait;' and indeed

they often are proceeding in the same great work of cultivating and strengthening the right dispositions and tempers —humility, submission, patience, love, peace, joy, child-like affiance, far more prosperously than those who to the view of their fellow Christians may be abounding in all the works of faith and labours of love. Let this, my friend, be your grand work and mine, and to this end let our industry be mainly directed. One thing is needful.

Now a gracious Providence has kindly allotted to us the far easier as well as pleasanter line of active service, and let me assure you in a parenthesis, that I have often rejoiced of late years in thinking of my having you for an associate and successor, as indeed I told you. Now, my dear B., my remorse is sometimes very great, from my consciousness that we have not been duly active in endeavouring to put an end to that system of cruel bondage, which for two centuries has prevailed in our West Indian colonies; and my idea is, that a little before parliament meets, three or four of us should have a secret cabinet council, wherein we should deliberate and decide what course to pursue. I can scarcely say what pain it would give me, were I to be unable before I go hence to declare my sentiments and feelings on this head."

But no council of war was needful to decide that the first step in this attempt must be taken by himself, and that the subject must be introduced to parliament and to the nation by the long acknowledged patron of the negro race. His friends urged him therefore "to record and publish his opinions as to the state of the negro slaves, the duty of improving it, and of gradually emancipating them. Indeed my conscience reproaches me," he says, "with having too long suffered this horrible evil to go on. We must now call on all good men throughout the kingdom to join us in abolishing this wicked system, and striving to render the degraded race by degrees a free peasantry. Oh may God bless our attempt."

Early in March his Appeal was published. He then speaks of himself as "busy for the first time on" his "Slavery Abolition work. My pamphlet is well liked, thank God." No address was ever better qualified to produce that mighty effect which followed its publication. Its kindness and forbearance towards individuals, rendered its earnest expostulations irresistible. The fervour of the

writer's natural manner was so happily tempered by Christian candour, and by the wisdom of age, that no heart could be closed when he spoke, "suavitate illâ, quâ perfunderet animos, not quâ perfringeret." Its perusal, a West Indian proprietor told him, "has so affected me, that should it cost me my whole property, I surrender it willingly, that my poor negroes may be brought not only to the liberty of Europeans, but especially to the liberty of Christians."

But the nation was slow to be persuaded of the cruel and debasing nature of a system which it had so long maintained, and which was linked with innumerable private interests. Mr. Wilberforce had learned too much in his thirty-five years' apprenticeship in African controversy, to expect the chains of slavery to crumble under a single blow.

In his present measures he was but following up his former steps. He had attacked the Slave Trade as a monstrous evil in itself, while he hoped that its suppression would lead at once to an improved treatment of the race of slaves. He had waited patiently for this result; perfecting the work of Abolition by international negotiation, and guarding against smuggled importation by registering the slaves. But he waited fruitlessly; whilst the working of the registry showed beyond all doubt, that the negroes (elsewhere amongst the most prolific of the human race) were melting away under the driving system by a sure and rapid diminution. Self-interest therefore was not a sufficient corrective of the system, and delay was impossible. The time was at length come, when he must demand that from parliament, to which he had hoped that gradual improvements would have imperceptibly led on the planters.

But these peculiar services were often interrupted by his increasing infirmities. "My lungs," he says, (April 15th,) "are affected, and my voice weak; so I am forced to keep the house, though yesterday Canning's explanation about the Spanish negotiations. To-night the motion against Plunket, when, above all the House, it would have become me to move the previous question. I greatly regret that I could not go, but I must accustom myself to be willing to retire. Even a pagan could say, solve senescentem, &c. A Christian, considering himself the servant of God, does his Master's business so long as He signifies His will by action and no less by retiring. I hope I have been acting on this principle (applying 'he must increase, but I must

decrease') to other and younger men. And oh may I be enabled to walk by faith, not sight; and then all will be clear and easy, and not unpleasant." "How cheering is the consideration that all events are under the guidance of infinite wisdom and goodness, and that we are hastening to a world of secure peace and joy!"

The foundation of this graceful and easy retirement from the foremost place which he had so long filled, was laid in the deep Christian humility which gave its tone to the following letter.

TO J. S. HARFORD, ESQ.

"House of Commons, April 25.

"My dear Friend,

Do not measure by the tardiness of my reply the force of the feelings excited by your last friendly note. The most interesting part I shall like to talk to you upon. O my friend, you struck a string which vibrates in my heart in full unison. When I review all my past life, and consider ever since it has been my general intention to live to the glory of God, and in obedience to His laws, what have been my obligations, and what ought to be the amount and the effects of my gratitude, what my means and opportunities of usefulness, what the scantiness of my performances, and with what alloy my motives have been debased; alas, alas, my friend, I have no peace, no rest, but in the assurances of pardon and acceptance to penitent believers in Christ Jesus; and I adopt the language of the Publican, with the declarations of mercy and grace held out to the contrite and broken-hearted. What a blessed truth it is, that it is our duty to be confident in the undeserved bounty and overflowing loving-kindness of our heavenly Father! Farewell.

Ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the 15th of May, Mr. Buxton, to whom he had now committed the leading place in this great work, "began his Slavery motion about half-past five. He moved a resolution declaring Slavery repugnant to Christianity and the constitution. Canning replied, and moved resolutions proclaiming reform of the system, and specifying driving, punishment of females, Sunday work, and market. It was an awkward situation, but I could not learn what our friends thought, and I

never got up so utterly unprepared, but D. G. I believe I hit the point. We certainly could not have divided well. The debate dragged on till one and more."

For the remainder of the session, which he spent chiefly in town, his bodily strength was taxed to the utmost, and his breakfast table—crowded sometimes by "a consultation on our Slave cause," sometimes by most variously assorted guests, "reminded him of the old bustle of a Kensington Gore breakfast."

Even at the most busy times his sons were receiving from him the most affectionate and thoughtful letters.

TO —— ——.*

"London, June 14, 1823.

"My very dear ——,

I scarcely need assure you, that however much I am occupied, I am never intentionally long without taking up my pen to write to you. There can be no business so important to me as the well-being of my children. But not seldom I am cheated out of my time; as I am at this moment. The Archbishop of Dublin was to breakfast with me, and I desired Mr. Wilson to come a little before, that I might introduce them to each other, in conformity with a principle on which I have acted for many years, and which I recommend to you early in life, that of bringing together all men who are like-minded, and may one day combine and concert for the public good.

Never omit any opportunity, my dear ——, of getting acquainted with any good or useful man. More perhaps depends on the selection of acquaintance than on any other circumstance of life. Acquaintance are the raw material, from which are manufactured friends, husbands, wives. I wish it may please God that you may have some good ones to choose from on your first settling at Oxford. T—— seems a very pleasing young man, but I own I covet a much higher praise for my sons; and oh that I could have reason to believe they were steadily and sturdily setting themselves to act on that beautiful description of the true Christian's character which we had two or three mornings ago in our family service, 'among whom ye shine as lights in the world!' O my dearest ——, what would I give to see you a φωστηρ εν τω κοσμω. The idea has brought tears into my eyes and al-

* Aged 18.

most disqualified me from going on with my letter. My dearest ——, aim high; do not be contented with being hopeful; strive to be a Christian in the highest sense of that term. How little do you know to what services Providence may call you! If, when I was at your age, any one had pointed to me and said, That youth in a few years will be member for the first county in England, it would have been deemed the speech of a madman. But I can truly say I would as much rather see you a Buchanan, as eternity is beyond any given portion of time in the estimate of a reasonable being.

But my time and eyesight are expended, and though I seem as full of matter as ever, I must stop—not, however, without assuring you how earnestly I shall pray for you tomorrow, (inter sylvas Mardeni,) that you 'may be strengthened with might in the inner man.'

The young men of our day are in no danger of being called to the encounter of fire and sword—to burning at the stake; but then the consequence of this absolution, is their not being prepared for that milder form of persecution which they may be called on to face. But all may be done through prayer —almighty prayer, I am ready to say; and why not? For that it is almighty, is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth. Oh then pray, pray, pray, my dearest ——; but then remember to estimate your state on self-examination not by your prayers, but by what you find to be the effects of them on your character, tempers, and life. But this opens a wide prospect, and I must stop. Most reluctantly, farewell.

Ever most affectionately yours,
W. Wilberforce."

The conclusion of this letter is a picture of the tone of his religion; fruitful in the liveliest affections, but tested unceasingly by its more substantial fruits. "I should wish to know," he said after hearing of a happy death, "the man's previous character; for such expressions of confidence in the Saviour are not satisfactory to me unless they are accompanied by other marks of practical religion."

Having given up his tenancy of Marden Park, Mr. Wilberforce was now looking out for some summer quarters, at which to fix his family. No Diary of the next few months was found amongst his papers; but his correspondence will supply the blank, and enable us to trace his steps. Shortly be-

fore leaving London he thus mentions to a son the place upon which he had decided for the gathering of the family.

"Brompton, July 29, 1823.

"My very dear ——,

Your disappointment at the arrangement which prevented your paying us a pop-visit can scarcely have been greater than ours; but it is a great pleasure to me to think that we shall meet D. V. ere long, and spend some time together. It will then be your duty to take plenty of air and exercise; and in selecting Barmouth for our quarters I was principally decided by the consideration that the place would tend to render the duty a greater pleasure to you all. Barmouth, I understand, is very near the most ferocious and untamed of all the Welsh mountain-lions, though Snowdon may take the lead a little in mere bulk."

On his road to Barmouth he wrote to one who had shared his excursion to the Lakes, and who had been the most intimate friend of his eldest daughter.

"July 30.

"My dear ——,

Any one whom I love at all, I seem to love better in a land of mountains; and I understand that of all the Welsh lions, Cader Idris, beside the roots of which Barmouth is situated, if not the most respectable in size, is the wildest and most untameable in his properties. Yet certain recollections will chasten the vivid colouring of this glowing prospect, and though with a melancholy now become not unpleasing, because so enriched and animated by hope, will a little sadden the gayety of the scene. Fancy would paint for itself a renewal of the expedition in which I rode by your side in scaling the heights of Skiddaw, or in which Southey skipped as light and elastic as a bird from stone to stone in tracking his path through Brothersdale, near Wyburn Water. There was a chapel and a school—not that school tyrannized over by that Queen Elizabeth of schoolmistresses at whose nod the terrified children trembled in Langdale. How naturally we are drawn into retracing our steps when we look back with interest on the road we travelled!

I have lately been hearing the first hundred pages of Southey's Peninsular War, in which he gives you a bird's eye view of the French principles, and character, and con-

duct under Buonaparte ; and they have rekindled in me that warmth of gratitude, which I own I think is far too little felt by my countrymen, even by the considerate and serious of them, towards the great Disposer of all things for having delivered us from the imminent danger to which we were exposed, if not of becoming the prey of that ferocious and unprincipled tyrant, yet of having our country the seat of warfare, with all the unspeakable and almost innumerable evils and miseries which we must in that case have endured, though we had been ultimately victorious. One of Buonaparte's generals, in the true spirit of his school, (Augereau, I think,) is said to have declared in speaking of this very subject, 'Let me land with 100,000 men in England, and I do not say I will keep possession of the country for France, but this I say, that the country shall be brought into such a state, that no Englishman shall be able to live in it with comfort for a hundred years to come.

What a fiend-like spirit! to contemplate with savage joy the pains of his inflicting, which should be felt by generations yet unborn. The mind that could cherish such a sentiment must indeed be enmity itself against God, whose nature and whose name is love. O, my dear friend, what emotions are called forth by the very mention of that infinitely glorious and gracious Being, the sum of all perfection, who condescends to grant us even here a measure of His Spirit and nature, and of whom we are told that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Oh may we verify our title to that blessed distinction, by our practical observation of the apostle's declaration, that every one that hath this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure. May we be enabled to prosecute our endeavours after this blessed state with more unceasing and strenuous vigour, and may we have reason hereafter to look back with mutual thankfulness towards each other on account of our having been mutually useful to each other in this greatest of all lines of service. Believe me to be

Ever very affectionately yours,

W. Wilberforce."

From this retirement he watched with intense interest the progress of his cause. "I am expecting tidings of the reception given in the West Indies to the account of the parliamentary proceedings, and more especially of Mr. Canning's proposals." "My heart and head are full of West Indian

matters." "I wish that I could be as easy about insurrections as you and Stephen. That they would not happen if the people on the spot really apprehended them, and would take reasonable means of guarding against them, I verily believe, but rebus sic stantibus, I have ever been, I own, and still am, afraid on that head. Yet what can we do but act as cautiously as justice and humanity will allow?"

After his return from Barmouth, during his attendance on Parliament, he was in the utmost danger from an attack of inflammation of the lungs. His perfect patience, and the bursts of love and thankfulness which were ever breaking forth throughout this season of restlessness and languor, can never be forgotten by those who watched with the deepest anxiety beside the sick-bed of such a father. He was continually repeating what shortly before he had observed to Mr. Stephen; "No man has been more favoured than I, for even when I am ill my complaints occasion little suffering." Beckoning to him one of his sons when he was scarce able to speak, he whispered, "At this moment I have your face before me when I left you at school in Leicestershire."

To Mr. Babington, who had expressed his pleasure at witnessing the great affection borne him by his family, he wrote in reply—"No physician can devise, and no money can purchase, such a cordial restorative to a sick man. And then how exceedingly favourable are these domestic blessings to a state of heart pleasing to God!" "How much have I seen some characters improved, even independently of all religious principles, by the softening and stimulating power which He has graciously imparted to these strong affections."

It would indeed be strange if it had been otherwise. He was beloved in general society; but if he sparkled there, he shone at home. None but his own family could fully know the warmth of his heart, or the unequalled sweetness of his temper. With the strictest truth they can affirm, that never in the most unguarded moments of domestic privacy did they see obscured, in word or action, the full sunshine of his kindliest affections.

> "His every deed and word that he did say
> Was like enchantment, which through both the eyes,
> And both the ears, did steal the heart away."

The last entry of his Diary before he was confined wholly

to his bed, was, "Poor Smith the missionary died in prison at Demerara! The day of reckoning will come;"—and the first public business he attempted, after leaving his sick room, was, (June 1st,) "Preparing for Smith the missionary's business. I was at the House the first time for eight weeks or more. Brougham made a capital speech, by Mackintosh well termed impregnable. I doubt not he will be great in reply. Mackintosh's own was most beautiful, his mind teemed with ideas." The decision was postponed till the 11th, on which occasion he spoke at large.

"The West Indians," he said, "abhor alike the end we have in view, and the means by which we hope to reach it. They frankly avow that from the emancipation of their slaves they look for inevitable ruin; whilst all their prejudices are revolted by each of our remedial measures. If they agreed with us as to our grand object, we might hope to lessen by degrees their aversion to our several steps; or were those measures singly acceptable to them, we might hope gradually and almost insensibly to lead them to our end. But what can we hope, when they abhor alike both means and end? It is with reluctance and pain I come forward, but I esteem it my bounden duty to protest against the policy on which we are now acting. 'Liberavi animam meam.' May it please God to disappoint my expectations, and to render the result more favourable than I anticipate."

These prophetic words were the last which he uttered in the House of Commons. Ten days later he set off, after attending a meeting held in honour of James Watt, for Lord Gambier's seat at Iver; and on the road was seized with a new attack of illness. When he reached Lord Gambier's, he was "but just able to be helped up-stairs to bed," where he lay in an alarming state for almost a month. This second attack left him in so shattered a condition, as to enforce upon him the necessity of absolute repose, and as soon as he could move with safety he took possession of a small house bordering on Uxbridge Common.

Here he lived in entire seclusion, though by no means in idleness. "We have been living very quietly; never visiting, scarcely receiving a single visiter. Often we have a little family reading in the evenings after tea, (Robertson's America,) which I should always like, if it did not compel me to write my letters in the morning, when I wish to be employed in more solid work. Oh that God would enable me to execute my long-formed purpose of writing another

religious book. I have also a wish to write something political; my own life, and Pitt's too, coming into the discussion."

One important question occupied his thoughts all through the autumn. His strength had been visibly impaired by the severe attacks of the spring and summer; and he was strongly recommended to retire from public life. He could not bring himself at once to acquiesce in this decision. "The idea of retiring and not endeavouring to bear" his "testimony once more in support of truth and righteousness," he found "very painful." This was not from any restless wish to be in action. "There was no particular," he had three years before this time declared to Dr. Chalmers, "in which his estimate of things had been more corrected than in his judgment of the comparative usefulness of different individuals. To express my sentiments briefly I may say that I more and more enter into the spirit of that beautiful sonnet of Milton's on his blindness, ending

> 'Who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best—
> They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

This quietness of mind was increased by his habitual reference of all that concerned himself to the leading of God's providence. In the course of this autumn, an arrangement was suggested to him by the friendly zeal of Sir John Sinclair, which would have removed him to the calmer atmosphere of the Upper House. "To your friendly suggestion," was his remarkable reply, "respecting changing the field of my parliamentary labours, I must say a word or two, premising that I do not intend to continue in public life longer than the present parliament. I will not deny that there have been periods in my life, when on worldly principles the attainment of a permanent, easy, and quiet seat in the legislature, would have been a pretty strong temptation to me. But, I thank God, I was strengthened against yielding to it. For (understand me rightly) as I had done nothing to make it naturally come to me, I must have endeavoured to go to it; and this would have been carving for myself, if I may use the expression, much more than a Christian ought to do."

His reluctance to retire sprung from deep humility. It was not so much that he wished to do more, as that he regretted he had done so little.

To Mr. Harford he writes: "When I consider that my

public life is nearly expired, and when I review the many years I have been in it, I am filled with the deepest compunction, from the consciousness of my having made so poor a use of the talents committed to my stewardship. The heart knows its own bitterness. We alone know ourselves, the opportunities we have enjoyed, and the comparative use we have made of them. But it is only to your friendly ear that I breathe out my secret sorrows. I might be supposed by others to be fishing for a compliment. Well, it is an unspeakable consolation that we serve a gracious Master, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." This was no passing feeling. A year later he wrote to Mr. Gurney.

TO J. J. GURNEY.

"Oct. 24, 1825.

"My dear Friend,

My eyes are indifferent, and were they ever so strong I should wear them out, were I to attempt to give expression to the sentiments and feelings with which my bosom is overcharged. Let us rejoice and bless God that we live in a land in which we are able to exert our faculties in mitigating the sufferings, redressing the wrongs, and above all, promoting the best interests of our fellow-creatures. I sometimes fear we are not sufficiently thankful for this most gratifying and honourable distinction; and perhaps I feel this the more strongly, because in the private ear of a Christian friend I will whisper, that though I should not speak truly if I were to charge my parliamentary life with sins of commission, (for I can call God to witness, so far as I can recollect, that I always spoke and voted according to the dictates of my conscience, for the public and not for my own private interest,) yet I am but too conscious of numerous and great sins of omission, many opportunities of doing good either not at all or very inadequately improved. Particularly, from an early period of my parliamentary life, I intended to propose a bill for greatly lessening the number of oaths, and once I carried on a previous inquiry, and had a committee formed for the purpose. But, alas! alas! I have been forced to retire from public life re infectâ, though I must say that several times I had reason to believe that some other members, chiefly official men, would take the measure off my hands, and I always preferred employing others on such oc-

casions, that I might not be said to be trying to monopolize. But my friends deceived me. Believe me to be ever, my dear friend,

Yours very affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Thoroughly had he imbibed the spirit of the precept, which bids us "when we have done all, say we are unprofitable servants," who after forty years of such service could see only his omissions. More indeed he might have effected if his habits had been strictly regular and business-like; but it would have been at a great sacrifice of incidental good. His daily trayfull of letters, which in 1806 so alarmed his colleague Mr. Fawkes, that he exclaimed on seeing it, "If this is to be member for Yorkshire the sooner I am rid of it the better," consumed many of his best hours; but they were given up to "Christian courtesy," and "the relief of individual distress." He might have closed his doors against the tide of interruptions which flowed in upon him day by day; but if he had, many a friendless sufferer would have "cried unto the Lord against him." He gave way therefore to these interruptions upon principle. "It appears to me," he said in the review of his political life, "that public men in this country should consider it one of the duties imposed on them by Providence, to receive and inquire into the case of distressed persons, who from finding them interested for suffering individuals, or classes of mankind, are naturally led to apply to them for the redress of their own grievances, or the supply of their own wants."

On this principle he strictly acted, and by a multitude of daily charities, as much as by his public conduct, "urged on the lingering progress of the human mind."

"I was with him once," says Lord Clarendon, "when he was preparing to make an important motion in the House of Commons. While he was most deeply engaged, a poor man called, I think his name was Simkins, who was in danger of being imprisoned for a small debt. He could find no one to be bound for him. Wilberforce did not like to become his surety without inquiry; it was contrary to a rule which he had made; but nothing could induce him to send the man away. 'His goods,' said he, 'will be sold, and the poor fellow will be totally ruined.' I believe, at last, he paid the debt himself; but I remember well the interruption which it

gave to his business, which he would not resume till the case was provided for."

This was a sample of his life; and if he now looked back on many plans of usefulness which he had left unaccomplished, it was not because his time had been passed in ease or self-indulgence, but because he had never learned to "stop his ears at the cry of the poor."

To a son at college, he announced in the following letter his determination.

"Near Uxbridge, Feb. 1.

"My dear ——,

I should not like you to hear from common rumour that I have decided to retire from public life, and therefore, though much pressed for time, I announce to you this to me important, and what from the affectionate concern my very dear —— takes in all that belongs to me, will be to him very interesting intelligence. It is to me almost like a change of nature to quit parliamentary life, all the particulars of which have been formed into habits during a course of almost forty-six years. But after mature reflection, the good I was likely to do in the House of Commons appeared to be outweighed by the probable danger to my life, and the consequent loss of any good I might yet do in a private station, either to my own family, or to a still wider circle. And it should be borne in mind, that in this comparison, all that may be done in private life was to be balanced, not against the effect of the labours of even a single session, but that of the occasional attendance to which alone my medical adviser would accede.

What cause have I for thankfulness, that in withdrawing from the political circle, I retire into the bosom of a family whose affectionate assiduities would be sufficient to cheer the lowest state of poverty and depression, while I have all around me that can administer to my comfort, or rather enjoyment, in the evening of life! Praise the Lord, O my soul. Indeed I hope I am in some degree, though not sufficiently, grateful for all these blessings. No one perhaps has such cause as myself to adopt the psalmist's declaration, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' Good night my dear ——. Our friends the Babingtons are staying with us, which leaves me less time for writing even than I have eyesight. I know I shall be much pressed to-morrow, so I have taken up a very bad pen to-

night. May God bless you—the constant wish, as in a few minutes it will be the prayer, of

Your most affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His place as a mere orator was still amongst the very first. When he spoke indeed on the common subjects of political dispute the effects of age were in a degree visible; but, to the very last, when he lighted on a thoroughly congenial subject, he broke out into those strains which made Sir Samuel Romilly esteem him "the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons," and which had long before led Pitt himself to say repeatedly, "Of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence." Mr. Morritt seems to have formed a very accurate conception both of his ordinary powers of speaking, and of that measure of decay which they at last exhibited. "I find," he says, "that I have recorded my own general opinion of his oratory and parliamentary exertions, in terms which, though intended only to commemorate for my own future reflection the more recent impression they made, I extract from their privacy in my drawer, that you may be more sure of their being my genuine and impartial judgment.

"Wilberforce held a high and conspicuous place in oratory, even at a time when English eloquence rivalled whatever we read of in Athens or in Rome. His voice itself was beautiful; deep, clear, articulate, and flexible. I think his greatest premeditated efforts were made for the Abolition of the Trade in Slaves, and in supporting some of the measures brought forward by Pitt, for the more effectual suppression of revolutionary machinations, but he often rose unprepared in mixed debate, on the impulse of the moment, and seldom sat down without having struck into that higher tone of general reasoning and vivid illustration, which left on his hearers the impression of power beyond what the occasion had called forth. He was of course unequal, and I have often heard him confess that he never rose without embarrassment, and always felt for a while that he was languid and speaking feebly, though he warmed as he went on. I have heard the late Mr. Windham express the same discontent with himself, both probably from the high standard of excellence at which they aimed. I always felt, and have often heard it remarked by others, that in all his speeches, long or short, there was generally at least from five to ten

minutes of brilliance, which even the best orator in the House might have envied.

"His own unaffected principles of humility, and his equally sincere estimate of the judgment and good intentions of others, which became in advancing life more and more predominant, influenced both his line of oratory, and his reasoning when not in the House of Commons. He gradually left off the keener weapons of ridicule and sarcasm, however well applied and justly aimed; but with the candour that gave what he thought due weight to an adversary's argument, he sometimes (as it seemed to me) with undue diffidence neglected or hesitated to enforce his own. Sometimes also, as on the questions involving peace or war, the wishes of his heart were at variance with the conclusions of his understanding, and 'resolutions of great pith and moment,'

'Were sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

"I have more than once remonstrated with him for giving us in his speech the deliberation which passed in his own mind, instead of the result to which it led him, thus furnishing his opponents with better weapons than their own arsenal could supply. Of course this led to many an imputation of inconsistency from those who loved him not, which those who knew him not received; but the real difference was between the manly decision of his conduct, and his unfeigned distrust and diffidence of his own opinions."

But if his powers of oratory had been in some measure impaired by age, the authority of character had only ripened with his years. He had been long a standing proof of the fallacy of the assertion, that without connexion with a party, no man can attain political importance; and the "moral compulsion" which he exercised continually strengthened. Here he was sure of his conclusions, and neither in word or deed was there any doubt or indecision. "It is the fashion to speak of Wilberforce," said one of the heads of the Colonial Office, whom in his later years he had been compelled to weary with his demands of justice for his clients, "as a gentle, yielding character, but I can only say that he is the most obstinate, impracticable fellow with whom I ever had to do." A friend met him once returning from an audience with one of the ministers, with whom he had remonstrated on an improper appointment—the nomination of a man of notoriously immoral character to a responsible

office abroad. "I conceived," he said, "that the honour of the country was involved, and therefore I plainly told him my mind, and that he would have to answer hereafter for his choice, but he was so angry that I thought he would have knocked me down."

Such a man could not bid farewell to public life without much observation from his fellows, and without being followed into his retirement by the sincere regret of multitudes.

To two of his sons who had requested him to send them his last frank, he wrote on the same day.

TO ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, ESQ. AND SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, ESQ. ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"My dear boys,

When Charles the First was on the very point of exchanging, as I trust, a temporal for an eternal crown, he was forced to be short, so he said but one word—and now I have but a moment in which to use my pen, and therefore, my dear boys, I also will adopt his language, and add as he did, REMEMBER.—You can fill up the chasm. I will only add, that with constant wishes and prayers for your usefulness, comfort, and honour here, and for glory, honour, and immortality for you hereafter, I remain,

Ever your most affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

One more extract in a higher tone will complete the exhibition of his feelings. After speaking in glowing language of the "full harvest" younger men might live to see, from "the good seed now sowing in this highly-favoured land and its dependencies, let me check," he continues, "this random sally of the imagination; and for you, though much younger than me, as well as for myself, let me recollect that we may humbly hope through the infinite mercies of our God and Saviour, to behold all the joys and glories that I have been anticipating for the generations to come, but to behold them from a higher elevation, and through a purer medium. We are not told that Moses was to experience after death any thing different from mankind in general; and we know that he took part in the events of this lower world, and on the mount of transfiguration talked with Christ concerning his death which he was to undergo at Jerusalem. And I love, my dear friend, to dwell on this idea, that after our depar-

ture from the scene of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall witness the developement of the plans we may have formed for the benefit of our fellow-creatures; the growth and fruitage of the good principles we have implanted and cultivated in our children; and above all, the fulfilment of the prayers we have poured forth for them, in the large effusions on them of that heavenly grace, which above all things we have implored as their portion. It is almost, I fear, to touch too tender a string, but there is one within my breast also, which vibrates in exact unison with yours; and may I add, that I cannot doubt our own dear children are now taking a tender interest in all that concerns the real happiness of those parents, the value of whose Christian instruction, and prayers, and tears, they are in a situation to estimate more justly, and therefore to feel for them a more lively gratitude, than while they were our fellow-travellers through this transitory world. I must no longer trespass on my slender stock of eyesight, but say, farewell."

When Mr. Wilberforce quitted parliament he determined to withdraw from London altogether. His temporary retirement near Uxbridge was exchanged, therefore, for a freehold residence at Highwood Hill, a pleasant spot, just "beyond the disk of the metropolis." "We have bought a house about ten miles north of London," he tells Mr. Gisborne. "I shall be a little Zemindar there; 140 acres of land, cottages, of my own, &c."

His feelings when purchasing this place are expressed in his comments on the habits of a friend. "How rational is his mode of life! Domestic charities sweetening and cheering the defilements of worldly affairs. I partake in his longing for repose; and oh may I be enabled more and more to walk during the years which may yet remain for me in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." "Oh may I only walk with God during my closing years, and then where is of little consequence."

His new purchase was not yet ready for the reception of his family, and he spent the spring of 1825 in the quiet of his Uxbridge cottage, and rejoiced to find more time than heretofore for miscellaneous reading.

Many of his friends were now again his guests, and the notice of these visits in which he delighted, occupies a large share of his Diary. "March 24th. Inglis and two Thorntons came in the evening—stayed all next day. Inglis extremely entertaining, and most kind. Not out of my dressing-room

when they went, but Inglis chatted with me, and the girls shook hands. Sir Stamford and Lady Raffles, and Dr. Morrison the Chinese scholar, came between one and two—Lord Gambier called, and we had an entertaining confabulation. Ward dined, and we had a very interesting evening. Good Morrison strongly censuring the lukewarmness of Christians, which prevents their devoting themselves to God's service, as missionaries for China. His plan that persons should become ministers of Chinese, and then settle on the borders. The Chinese a reading people; and he thinks by degrees you would introduce your knowledge and religion. Dear —— seems touched; may God direct him. Singular criminal law of the Battas, by which persons committing great crimes are sentenced to be eat up alive; the injured party having the first choice—the ear claimed and eat, &c., until the mass fall on. The coup de grace, except in strong cases, given early. When Sir Stamford contended against the practice, the people urged, 'what defence can we have for our morals?' April 18th. I fear that I am wasting my precious time, and the night is coming fast with me. Oh may I strive to be ever abounding in the work of the Lord. May He enable me to commence some useful work. 30th. When breakfast was just over my attached old friend Creyke came over in a chaise and announced his staying till four. To so kind a friend I owe much more than the sacrifice of a single day. Made the time less a blank by getting him to read with me W. Whitmore's speech on the Corn Laws. Evening Mr. and Mrs. North, and Leslie Forster, and Buxton, and Calthorpe, arrived. Much talk. May 20th. Butterworth dropped in with Professor Tholuck from Berlin."

"Hearing Macaulay's Abstract of the Papers laid before Parliament about the Slaves; a most useful work. How he shames me! Yet my eyes could not perform it, or any thing that requires eyesight. Too much time taken, and interest too, in Walter Scott's Heart of Mid Lothian. Yet I only hear it in afternoon and evening. Much the best of his novels that I have heard. Jeanie Deans a truly Christian character, and beautiful, as far as it goes. Yet I have been tempted to bestow some eyesight and time upon it, which should have been better employed." Never scarcely did he lay down these fascinating volumes without repeating his complaint "that they should have so little moral or religious object. They remind me of a giant spending his strength in cracking nuts. I would rather go to render up my account

at the last day, carrying up with me 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' than bearing the load of all those volumes, full as they are of genius."

With these are mingled other entries full of pregnant intimations of his state of mind. "Butterworth breakfasted; full of matter and good works—all activity; God bless him! Dear Simons in full feather, but too wild, and in prayer too familiar. Saw a delightful letter from Bishop Heber—200 native converts, and he never saw meeker Christians, or of more intense and touching piety." An ardent love for the Liturgy grew manifestly with his years. He breaks out this winter in a letter to a friend, into a warm expression of his "delight in the principles of our various formularies. Though they are sometimes unconsciously possessed and used, and their nature and qualities often misconceived, and at times calumniated; yet in circumstances of depression and desolation their sanative excellence displays itself like some rich unguent that had been frozen and torpid; they begin to emit their healing fragrance, and to supply an antidote to the poison, that would otherwise consume the vitals."

Leaving Bath in December he spent a few days with Mr. Harford at Blaize Castle; and here "he slid," says his host, "insensibly into continuous descriptions of parliamentary scenes with which he had been connected.

'When Lord Londonderry was in his ordinary mood, he was very tiresome, so slow and heavy, his sentences only half formed, his matter so confined, like what is said of the French army in the Moscow retreat when horse, foot, and carriages of all sorts were huddled together, helter-skelter; yet when he was thoroughly warmed and excited, he was often very fine, very statesman-like, and seemed to rise quite into another man."

'Our general impression of Sheridan was, that he came to the House with his flashes prepared and ready to be let off. He avoided encountering Pitt in unforeseen debating, but when forced to it usually came off well.'

'Fox was often truly wonderful. He would begin at full tear, and roll on for hours together without tiring either himself or us.'

'Pitt talked a great deal among his friends. Fox in general society was quiet and unassuming. Sheridan was a jolly companion, and told good stories, but has been overrated as a wit by Moore.'

'Fox was truly amiable in private life, and great allowance ought to be made for him: his father was a profligate politician, and allowed him as much money to gamble with as ever he wished.'

"I asked him if he remembered the miser Elwes in the House of Commons? 'Perfectly; and that question reminds me of a curious incident which one day befell that strange being. In my younger days we often went to the House in full dress, on nights, for example, when we were any of us going to the opera. Bankes, on an occasion of this kind, was seated next Elwes, who was leaning his head forward just at the moment when Bankes rose hastily to leave his seat, and the hilt of his sword happening to come in contact with the miser's wig, which he had probably picked off some scare-crow, it was unconsciously borne away by Bankes, who walked in his stately way down the House, followed by Elwes full of anxiety to regain his treasure. The House was in a roar of merriment, and for a moment Bankes looked about him wondering exceedingly what had happened. The explanation was truly amusing, when he became conscious of the sword-hilt which he had acquired.'

"As we were one day talking of devotional poetry, 'Dr. Johnson,' said he, 'has passed a very sweeping condemnation on it, and has given his opinion, that success in this species of composition is next to impossible. And the reason which he gives for it is, that all poetry implies exaggeration, but the objects of religion are so great in themselves, as to be incapable of augmentation. One would think however that religion ought to be the very region of poetry. It relates to subjects which, above all others, agitate the hopes and fears of mankind; it embodies every thing that can melt by its tenderness, or elevate by its sublimity; and it has a natural tendency to call forth in the highest degree, feelings of gratitude and thankfulness for inestimable mercies. His prejudice, poor man, appears to me to resolve itself into the same cause, which prevented his deriving comfort from the cultivation of religion. The view which he took of Christianity acted on his fears, it inspired him with terror, it led him to superstition, but it did not animate his affections, and therefore it neither duly influenced his conduct, nor imparted comfort to his feelings.'

"We were talking of the levity and gayety of heart of the French, even under the severest misfortunes. This drew forth an anecdote, which had been related to him by Mr.

Pitt. 'Shortly after the tragical death of Marie Antoinette, M. Perigord, an emigrant of some consequence, who had made Mr. Pitt's acquaintance at Versailles, took refuge in England, and on coming to London went to pay his respects in Downing Street. The conversation naturally turned upon the bloody scenes of the French Revolution; on their fatal consequences to social order; and in particular on the barbarity with which the unfortunate Queen had been treated. The Frenchman's feelings were quite overcome, and he exclaimed amidst violent sobbing, "Ah Monsieur Pitt, la pauvre Reine! la pauvre Reine!" These words had scarcely been uttered, when he jumped up as if a new idea suddenly possessed him, and looking towards a little dog which came with him, he exclaimed, "Cependant, Monsieur Pitt, il faut vous faire voir mon petit chien danser." Then pulling a small kit out of his pocket, he began dancing about the room to the sound of his little instrument, and calling to the dog, "Fanchon, Fanchon, dansez, dansez," the little animal instantly obeyed, and they cut such capers together that the minister's gravity was quite overcome, and he burst into a loud laugh, hardly knowing whether he was most amused or astonished.'"

The "love of ease" never tainted his old age. He had entered private life with the remark, "A man need not be idle because he ceases to be loquacious." "Alas!" he complains at the beginning of the new year, "life is stealing away. It ought to shock me to think how all are at work endeavouring to promote the poor slaves' well-being. But all my friends advised retiring. Well, let me at least try to act in the spirit of that verse of this evening's family reading, 'Be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord.'"

He now occupied until the spring a house at Beckenham, which had been lent him by a friend, where he enjoyed much of that retirement which he so long had coveted. "Few callers here. I have my time more to myself than I can expect almost any where." "May I especially strive against that fatal trifling away part of the closing hour at night. Let me employ an hour in spiritual exercises, prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, and other serious books, as Lives, &c."

Here his rarer intercourse with society was under the same rules as when he moved in the full stream of London life. "Mr. and Mrs. W. came in the evening. How little did I improve the opportunity, though indeed I know not

what could be done, but to show civility, and that I had no horns or tail!"

Through the Christmas holidays his family all gathered round him; and with them and visits from his friends in London, his time was fully occupied. His thoughts too turned watchfully to the progress of the cause with which his life had been identified; and he was often busy with his pen in guiding the decisions of its chief conductors. "Macaulay giving me useful intelligence. We differing about Female Anti-Slavery Associations. Babington with me, grounding it on St. Paul. I own I cannot relish the plan. All private exertions for such an object become their character, but for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions—these appear to me proceedings unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture. And though we should limit the interference of our ladies to the cause of justice and humanity, I fear its tendency would be to mix them in all the multiform warfare of political life."

On the 15th of June he took possession of his house at Highwood Hill, with the characteristic entry—"Late when got home, and had a too hasty prayer for first settlement in a new house—all in confusion." He was now here only for a week, and then went on into Suffolk.

"26th. Dined at Samuel Hoare's at Hampstead, with Dr. and Mrs. Lushington, and William Allen, who still goes on doing good. Miss Joanna Baillie came in the evening—so like the Doctor, as quite to affect me. Dr. Lushington acting a most important part in changing the condition of the coloured class through the whole West Indies, by contending against the oppression exercised towards Lecesne and D'Escoffery. Oh what a glorious thing it is for a man to be a member of a free country! He and Miss Baillie were asked if they believed in a particular Providence. 'Yes,' they replied, 'on great occasions.' As unphilosophical as unscriptural—must not the smallest links be as necessary for maintaining the continuity, as the greatest? Great and little belong to our littleness, but there is no great and little to God."

The chief feature of 1827, was a progress which he made after an interval of almost twenty years through his native county.

Many of his letters are coloured more or less by the tone of thought excited by the death of Lord Liverpool and Mr.

Canning. "Whatever span of life may yet be left to us," he said to Hannah More, "may we both be using our remaining days in preparation for the last. My friends are daily dropping around me. The companions of my youth, then far stronger and more healthy than I was, are worn out, while I still remain." And to Mr. Babington he says, "When you last wrote to me, you were under the influence of a feeling that has of late been often called into exercise with me also; that which is excited by seeing our old friends dropping off one after another while we are left behind.

'Hæc data pœna diu viventibus, ut renovata
Semper clade domus, multisque in luctibus, inque
Perpetuo mærore et nigra veste senescant.'

But how different are the emotions with which we may regard the deaths of our friends from those of the heathen poet! And it is one of the indirect rewards of such religious principles and habits as lead us to select our friends from the excellent ones of the earth, that we are not compelled to seek for comfort by forgetting the companions of our choice that are taken from us, but may follow them in our thoughts and sympathies into that paradise into which we trust they have been received, and may hope at no distant period to see them once more."

Something too of the same tone, blended touchingly with the liveliest affections, may be traced in a letter to a son on the continent.

"York, July 22, Sunday, at Mr. Gray's,
a true Christian and old friend.

"My very dear ——,

It fills my heart with thankfulness, to be assured that my dear children are on this day withdrawn from worldly occupations. I fancy to myself my dear, my very dear ——, (for dear at home becomes very dear abroad,) calling up before his mind's eye the images of absent friends, and I am encouraged by a better feeling than vanity, to cherish the hope that your old father has a place among them. Even were it a common day, (a week-day as it is termed,) writing to you at such a distance, when the thought that perhaps even at the very time in which I am addressing you, you may be no more, the thoughts and feelings of my heart would naturally be of a serious colour; and when in relation to all my friends

present or absent, my mind on this day is conversant with their highest interests, it must be peculiarly so in communicating with a very dear child who is perhaps a thousand miles off, and of whom I have not heard for several weeks. Whilst thinking of your geographical track, if I may so term it, I am led to the idea of your spiritual track—your *track home*, as it is phrased on the globes in the line that describes the voyages of our great circumnavigators. My mind has been the rather drawn to this reflection by yesterday's having been the birth-day of our beloved and, I confidently hope, sainted Barbara—already joined by our sweet little grandchild. There is something very affecting to my mind in this way of considering life, as a voyage in which 'track out' and 'track home' designate its opposite periods of youth and old age. Oh what cause have I for gratitude in the blessed influences of the Divine Spirit which has directed your course, and kept you from the rocks on which many, alas! make shipwreck! And He will still I trust watch over, and guide, and guard you even unto the end; and if it be consistent with the Divine will may I be spared to see you engaged in that most dignified of all services, that of superintending the best interests of your fellow-creatures, and guiding and guarding them through this dangerous world to the haven of everlasting happiness and peace, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. May God bless you. I am ever

Your most affectionate father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He returned to Highwood in the height of the "Indian summer." The next morning was "delightful, dewy like autumn, but the sun full out and warm as summer." This was a very picture of his state of mind, with some of the dews of autumn, but still brightened by a noon-day sun. He had not yet become familiar with his Highwood residence, and his return to it not unnaturally weighed somewhat on his spirits. "It is so long since I was here, that I really feel a stranger in my own house. I have had little leisure lately for reading, or rather for hearing, my life has been spent in chatteration, and I feel strangely awkward in returning to my ordinary duties. My spirits quite sink at the idea of being here when my boys leave me. Oh how I long for a quiet lodging any where, where I might live as a collegian, having every thing found for me, and I only trying to do a little good with what poor powers are left me, and

to work out my own salvation! Oh let me not distrust that mercy of God which has never failed me. I want to allot a day to devotional exercises."

These were not his habitual feelings; they were the diapason tones of a mind of infinite compass; but for the most part his latter years were eminently bright and cheerful. Never indeed was he more evidently happy than in that calm old age on which he entered with the elasticity of youth, and the simplicity of childhood. Gay, busy, social, and affable, tender without softness, and witty without sting, he was still the delight of old and young; and whether he was joining in the "animated talk amongst the young hands," or discoursing with his remaining equals, it was in the busiest and happiest groups that he was always to be found. His days at Highwood were very regularly spent. He rose soon after seven, spent the first hour and a half in his closet; then dressed, hearing his reader for three quarters of an hour, and by half-past nine met his household for family worship; always a great thing in his esteem. At this he read a portion of the Scriptures, generally of the New Testament, in course, and explained and enforced it, often with a natural and glowing eloquence, always with affectionate earnestness, and an extraordinary knowledge of God's word.

After family prayers, which occupied about half an hour, he never failed to sally forth for a few minutes

"To take the air and hear the thrushes sing."

He enjoyed this stroll exceedingly. "A delightful morning. Walked out and saw the most abundant dew-drops sparkling in the sunbeams on the gazon. How it calls forth the devotional feelings in the morning when the mind is vacant from worldly business, to see all nature pour forth, as it were, its song of praise to the great Creator and Preserver of all things! I love to repeat Psalms civ. ciii. cxlv. &c. at such a season."

His habits had long since been formed to a late hour of breakfast. During his public life his early hours alone were undisturbed, and he still thought that meeting late tended to prolong in others the time of morning prayer and meditation. Breakfast was still prolonged and animated by his unwearied powers of conversation, and when congenial friends were gathered round him, their discussions lasted

sometimes till noon. From the breakfast-room he went till post time to his study, where he was commonly employed long about his letters. If they were finished he turned to some other business, never enduring to be idle all the day. "H. is a man," he says after a wholly interrupted morning, "for whom I feel unfeigned esteem and regard, but it quite molests me to talk for a whole morning. Nothing done, and no accession of intellect." Soon after his retirement he was invited as an idle man to an amateur concert. "What!" he exclaimed, "music in a morning? Why it would be as bad as dram-drinking." Yet his love for music was as strong as ever. This very year he speaks of himself as "quite overpowered by the Hallelujah Chorus in the Messiah, a flood of tears ensued, and the impression on my mind remained through the day." But a long-continued conscientious use of time had stamped its value deeply on his mind. He was planning in this leisure season some further employment of his pen; a work on the Epistles of St. Paul, especially. "I have read Whateley's Essays on Scripture Difficulties. That on St. Paul's Epistles exactly my own thoughts twenty years ago, and often about to be published." Weak health and his infirmity of sight still defeated his intention, and neither this work nor an additional chapter to that on Christianity, in which he wished to address the old, were ever actually completed for the press.

About three o'clock, when the post was gone, he sallied forth into the garden, humming often to himself, in the gladness of his heart, some favourite tune, alone, or in the company of some few friends, or with his reader. Here he would pace up and down some sheltered sunny walk, rejoicing especially in one which had been formed for him by a son, and was called ever after, with some hint of affection, by his name.

"The picture which the dead leave on the minds of their survivors," says Mr. Gurney, "is not always lively or distinct. Although we may have fondly loved them, and may hallow the memory of their good qualities, we cannot always summon their image before us; but I venture to express my conviction, that no one who has been accustomed to observe Wilberforce will ever find the slightest difficulty in picturing him on the tablet of the mind. Who that knew him, can fail to recall the rapid movements of his somewhat diminutive form, the illumination of his expressive counte-

nance, and the nimble finger with which he used to seize on every little object which happened to adorn or diversify his path? Much less can we forget his vivacious wit—so playful, yet so harmless; the glow of his affections; the urbanity of his manners; and the wondrous celerity with which he was ever wont to turn from one bright thought to another. Above all, however, his friends will never cease to remember that peculiar sunshine which he threw over a company by the influence of a mind perpetually tuned to love and praise. I am ready to think there could be no greater luxury than that of roaming with him in solitude over green fields and gardens, and drawing out of his treasury things new and old."

This was most true of his hour of daily exercise. Who that ever joined him in it cannot see him as he walked round his garden at Highwood? Now in animated and even playful conversation, and then drawing from his copious pockets (to contain Dalrymple's State Papers was their standard measure) some favourite volume or other; a Psalter, a Horace, a Shakspeare, or Cowper, and reading, and reciting, or "refreshing" passages; and then catching at long-stored flower-leaves as the wind blew them from the pages, or standing before a favourite gum cistus to repair the loss. Then he would point out the harmony of the tints, the beauty of the pencilling, the perfection of the colouring, and run up all into those ascriptions of praise to the Almighty which were ever welling forth from his grateful heart. He loved flowers with all the simple delight of childhood. He would hover from bed to bed over his favourites; and when he came in, even from his shortest walk, deposited a few that he had gathered, safely in his room before he joined the breakfast table. Often would he say as he enjoyed their fragrance, "How good is God to us! What should we think of a friend who had furnished us with a magnificent house and all we needed, and then coming in to see that all had been provided according to his wishes, should be hurt to find that no scents had been placed in the rooms? Yet so has God dealt with us. Surely flowers are the smiles of His goodness."

He stayed out till near dinner, which was never after five, and early in the evening lay down for an hour and a half. He would then rise for a new term of existence, and sparkle through a long evening to the astonishment of those who

expected, at his time of life, to see his mind and spirits flag, even if his strength was not exhausted. The whole evening was seldom spent in conversation, for he had commonly some book in "family reading" which was a text for multiplied digressions full of incident and illustration. His own hand has drawn a picture of these rational and happy evenings.

"I did not put down my pen," he concludes a letter, after annexing as the date "Friday night, forty minutes after eleven," "till the announcement of dinner rendered it necessary. After dinner I lay down, and through the kind care of my friends was suffered to sleep, as too commonly it happens, for an hour and three quarters." I then came down, and after a little business heard the young Macaulays read passages from one of those numerous Annuals which the wealth and animation of the present day supplies for interesting the faculties without labour or effort. We went to prayers, and after about half an hour, surely well spent, we returned to the common room and renewed our reading, which I just now stopped, finding how late it was, and being in the singularly favoured circumstances of an old fellow, who is allowed to say 'Come or go, do this or do that,' without the appearance of fretfulness. Then —— by saying, 'Surely you will not think of finishing your letter at so late an hour,' reminded me that it was still on the stocks, and was to be launched into the post stream to-morrow morning. I owe however so much respect to her reasonable remonstrances, as to endeavour to abridge all that I might have added if I had taken up my pen in more favourable circumstances.

One word of what we have been reading—an article in one of the Annuals on Gibbon and Madame de Stael, and latterly also on Voltaire. You remember, I doubt not, the last sentence in Gibbon's Autobiography; I have engaged my young friend to write under it Dr. Watts's beautiful hymn, ending with the line—'Foretells a bright rising again.' This is one of the 'Hymns for Children,' but surely it is for the children of God, for the heirs of glory; and when you compare it either in point of good sense, or imagination, or sterling value, or sustaining hope, with the considerations and objects which feed the fancy, or exercise the understanding or affections, of the most celebrated men who have engaged the attention or called forth the eulogiums of the lite-

rati of the last century, you are irresistibly forced to exclaim in the spirit of my grand favourite,

'O happy Hymnist, O unhappy bard!'

Farewell, my dear ——.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

As the evening wore away his thoughts took commonly this colour. After prayers as he walked up and down the room, he would have read to him missionary accounts, and journals of what was done by foreign Christians. This was his usual Sunday evening reading. "It is the most deeply interesting of all subjects, to observe how the contest is going on between light and darkness, what different spots of this rebellious province are being brought into subjection to their rightful Sovereign."

His love of books was still extreme. Though he could read little continuously he would pick out the pith of most works by a rapid glancing through the pages, and in every house he visited, he knew commonly within two days the full amount of its literary stores. His great complaint against his feeble eyesight was that it prevented his maintaining an accurate acquaintance with the great writers of antiquity. There were few modern works which he did not either thus run through, or have read to him, except "mere novels;" and his short criticisms show how little the acuteness of his mind was blunted. "Reading Lawrie Todd, but disliked and left it off—a stupidly told story—attempt at delineations of character very indifferently executed—no touches of nature or marked discriminations. Hearing Hallam's Constitutional History of England in Quarterly. Southey a bitter critic, and works him with great acuteness and force." "Hearing Lord Orford's Memoirs of George the Second's reign—very bitter, and prejudices great, yet accounts curious." "Scott's novels useful as the works of a master in general nature, and illustrative of the realities of past life. Looked at Pelham—most flippant, wicked, unfeeling delineations of life—to read such scenes without being shocked must be injurious. I am sorry —— read it. For very shame I would not have it read to me." "We finished Sir Jonah Barrington's Autobiography. A true picture of a thorough man of the world, who professing to believe in Christianity, shows throughout his whole life not one single reference in

thought or feeling, word or deed, to any Scriptural principle or precept. On the other hand, Scripture says, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God.'"

In such occupations as these he would go on till very late; for from long use in parliament "the midnight hour was his zenith, and like the beautiful cereus with all her petals expanded, he was then in full bloom."* This was especially the case when old and valued friends had gathered round him. Old age had scarcely lessened his relish for society, but it had drawn still closer the bonds of his affection for his early friends. "As I grow older," he told Mr. Gisborne, "I find myself growing more attached to such of the companions of my youth as are still left to me; and they are, I need not say, still more valued, when they are such as we may humbly hope we shall meet again in a better world." "When I was a younger man I was tempted to make intellectual conversation my all in all; but now I can truly say, that I prefer the society of the simplest person who fears God, to the best company of a contrary kind." This happy preference was the result of early watchfulness. After receiving a "very clever and entertaining man" many years before, "I must record the truth," he says, "I seldom have found myself more unspiritual, more indisposed to prayer, than after my party had left me. I could not somehow raise my mind to heavenly objects, alas, and so it has been partly this morning also. Is it that the society of an able worldly man is hereby indicated to be unsafe to me? I had a sort of struggle about inviting him, as if intimating the wish to be acquainted with an irreligious man, was showing too great a deference for talent. Is it as a punishment that I have since felt so cold and wandering in my mind? I would not be nervous and superstitious, but I ought to watch and keep my heart with all diligence. O let me deal honestly with myself. Let me give up, however entertaining, even however instructive, whatever it seems the intimation of God that I should relinquish. O Lord, cause me to be so full of love, and zeal, and grateful loyalty, and child-like affection for my Saviour, that I may love them that love Thee; and may I thus become more in my tempers and frames of mind an inhabitant of heaven."

In great measure had this prayer been answered. "Do invite —— to come and see you," was the request this year of some of his family, naming one of the first men of the age

* Mr. Gurney's sketch.

for intellectual powers. He made no answer at the moment, but said afterwards in private, "I am sorry not to do what you wish, but so false and hollow as I think the man, I could have no comfort in his company. Only think what truth is; it is the very principle of gravitation in the moral world." Yet there was nothing of austerity about him. The playfulness of his good-tempered humour would often gild even serious remarks.

It is not a little interesting to trace the impression he now made on those who stayed with him at Highwood. "I remember," says the present Bishop of Calcutta, "his walking with me up and down his drawing-room some time beyond midnight; his figure is now in my mind, his benevolent eye, his kind, considerate manner of speaking, his reverence for Scripture, his address, the pauses he made in his walk when he had any thing emphatic to say. I recollect one sentiment was, that the passages so frequent in Scripture, importing the unwillingness of the Almighty that the sinner should perish, the invitations addressed to him to return, the remonstrances with him on his unbelief, &c. must be interpreted strictly and literally, or they would appear to be a mockery of man's misery, and to involve the most fearful imputations on the Divine character. Evasions of the force of such passages were, he thought, highly injurious, and went to sap the whole evidence and bearing of the Christian revelation.

"He had a delicate yet penetrating and microscopic insight into character. Observations minute, accurate, graphical, and often with a tinge of humour, dropped from him in conversation, and when quiet in his family he would imitate the voice and manner of the person he was describing (generally some public man) in a way to provoke profuse merriment. Then he would check himself and throw in some kind remark. His charity indeed in judging of others, is a trait in his Christian character, which forces itself on my recollection. Of his benevolence I need not speak; but his kind construction of doubtful actions, his charitable language towards those from whom he most widely differed, his thorough forgetfulness of little affronts, were fruits of that general benevolence which continually appeared. The nearer you observed him the more the habit of his mind appeared obviously to be modest and lowly. He was in as little measure as possible elated by the love and esteem of almost the whole civilized world, which long before his death had been

fixed upon him. It required some management to draw him out in conversation, and therefore some of those who saw him only once, might go away disappointed. But if he was lighted up, and in a small circle, where he was entirely at his ease, his powers of conversation were prodigious; a natural eloquence was poured out, strokes of gentle playfulness and satire fell on all sides, and the company were soon absorbed in admiration. It commonly took only one visit to gain over the most prejudiced stranger."

The following letter is an instance of this kind. Its writer came to Highwood Hill prejudiced against him by some who had maligned his character. After spending two days at the house, she wrote to a sister.

"Highwood Hill, April 12, 1828.

"You would hardly believe, my dear sister, that I find it much more difficult to write from this quiet country place, than from London. Yet I have thought of you more than ever, and how have I wished for you here, where there is so much that would interest and charm you! It is now past twelve, yet I am sitting up to finish what I began this morning; in no one moment before have I been able to do so, and I write after such a fatiguing day, that I feel as if all my powers of expressing myself were gone. Indeed I think I have been in a delirium all the time that I have stayed here, from the excitement of being happier than for a long time past. Yet my happiness cannot be complained of, as it has consisted so much in watching the admirable conduct and feelings, and listening to the excellent conversation, which appears to bring religion more near to the heart, and the heart more near to God.

"I can perfectly believe that those who have not seen Mr. Wilberforce in his own house, among his own family, and who have heard all the stories that have been told of him, may not give credit to the sincerity and purity of his intentions, but no one could see him as I have done without being charmed. I wish I could send you something of what I have heard in the beautifully simple explanations that he gives every day of a chapter that he reads from the Testament. Then if you could hear him reading, as he does, the poems in the 'Christian year!' I shall have much to tell you at some future time, of sentiments and ideas of his, all so beautiful, and so true, and so indulgent, for I think nothing more striking in him than that spirit of general benevolence which

governs all that he says; joined to the extreme beauty of his voice, it does indeed make him appear 'to love whatever he speaks of.' Then he seems so thoroughly pleased to hear any anecdote in praise of any person who is talked about, and so ready to make allowance in others for the faults that he has not a taint of himself. Oh he is a dear, good, admirable old man! I have been praying that I may be enabled to imitate whatever is imitable in this excellent being; his talents and attractions are not to be acquired, but is it not a cheering reflection that such principles as his may be gained by all?"

One occupation of his time at Highwood is too characteristic to be omitted. Assistance to young men of promise had always been with him a favourite charity, and the inclination had been strengthened by the evident harvest he had sometimes reaped. To have been one of the first who assisted Kirke White would have been reward enough; but he had seen two others, who owed all to him, fill with credit different judicial stations; and at this very time the highest honours of one of our Universities were obtained by two young men, for whose education he had in like manner assisted to provide. But now that he had time, he gave more than merely money; he made his house the home of one or two youths, the expense of whose education he defrayed; all their holidays were spent with him; and hours of his own time were profusely given to training and furnishing their minds. Nor were the poor forgotten; they were invited to join in his family worship on the Sunday evening, and sought out often in their cottages for instruction and relief.

When he first came to look at Highwood, he was "most struck by its distance from church—three miles;" and it was only on hearing that "a new chapel was probable;" that he entered on the purchase. Three years had passed, and the hope of a chapel seemed further off than ever: he resolved therefore to avail himself of the new Church Building Acts, and erect one on Highwood Hill if he could obtain the sanction of the Commissioners.

But this good work was not to be completed without opposition and contention, in the midst of which he eminently manifested in private, as he had long done in public life, the meekness of true Christian wisdom under calumny and falsehood.

This most Christian undertaking involved him in cares and

anxieties, subjected him to calumnies and drew him into controversies which embittered the remainder of his life, and it was not until a few days after his death, that the chapel which he erected, at an expense of £4000, was opened for the worship of Almighty God.

Whilst this annoying business was in progress, his faith in God was proved by another trial. Though his style of living had always been below his income, he had never accumulated money. He had retrenched his expenses to give and not to save; and he had given largely and constantly. "You probably know," was an incidental testimony to his unseen charity, from a distant relation soon after his decease, "that it was very much owing to him that I was enabled during a very long period of years to live in an independent manner; and his tenderness and feeling in conferring obligations was such that they raised, not mortified, the objects of them. Whenever I alluded to the subject his usual reply was to this effect, 'Had our circumstances been changed, you would have acted towards me as I have done towards you.' To two others of my family his liberality laid the foundation of present usefulness, and I trust of future blessedness."

He had always therefore lived up to his income.

> "He feared not once himself to be in need,
> Nor cared to hoard for those whom he did breed:
> The grace of God he laid up still in store,
> Which as a stock he left unto his seed."

"I never intended to do more," he told his eldest son, "than not exceed my income, Providence having placed me in a situation, in which my charities of various kinds were necessarily large. But believe me there is a special blessing on being liberal to the poor, and on the family of those who have been so; and I doubt not my children will fare better even in this world, for real happiness, than if I had been saving £20,000 or £30,000 of what has been given away."

He had felt therefore some inconvenience from "reducing his rents, which were never high, full 37 per cent.," at a time when his family were most expensive to him. His property had been further lessened by his raising a considerable capital in order to embark his eldest son, whose health appeared unequal to the practice of the law, in a large farming speculation, "to be actually managed" as he thought "by ——," a man in whose principles and practical ac-

quaintance with the business, he at that time entertained the highest confidence. The event did not confirm his expectations; and in the very month when Mr. Williams's pamphlet appeared, he found that to secure the remainder of his fortune, he must submit to the immediate and very heavy loss of nearly all the capital which had been invested in the business, and retrench greatly on his usual style of living. Yet he was still as free from care as ever, and his "solitary walk with the psalmist," was two days after the full discovery of his loss. Amongst many gratifying instances of his unbroken cheerfulness, an interesting sample may be found in his renewed intercourse with Sir James Mackintosh, whom he now met frequently at Battersea Rise. "Mackintosh came in," he says, "and sat most kindly chatting with me during my dinner—what a paragon of a companion he is; quite unequalled!" "We are spending a little time at this to me deeply interesting place. I always visit the funeral urn—H. T. Jan. 16th, 1815—M. T. Oct. 12th, 1815. Sir James Mackintosh and his family now live in one of the houses which are built upon the ground which Henry (Thornton) sold on the side opposite to that of C. Grant's house. He has been sitting chattering to the girls and myself for above an hour; and this extraordinary man spends, they tell me, much of his time in the circulating library room, at the end of the Common, and chats with the utmost freedom to all the passengers in the Clapham stage as he goes and comes from London. It is really to be regretted that he should thus throw away time so valuable. But he is at every body's service, and his conversation is always rich and sparkling."

Mackintosh's own account of this intercourse is peculiarly happy. "Do you remember Madame de Maintenon's exclamation, 'Oh the misery of having to amuse an old King, qui n'est pas amusable!' Now if I were called upon to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say he was the most 'amusable' man I ever met with in my life. Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit on one that does not. I never saw any one who touched life at so many points; and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state. When he was in the House of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of any man there. There was all the charm of youth about him. And he is quite as remarkable in this bright evening of his days as when I saw him in his glory many years ago."

"His mind," says a deeper observer,* "was of a highly discursive character; and it was often extremely amusing to observe how, while pursuing any particular subject, he was caught by some bright idea which flashed across his path, and carried him off (for a time at least) in a wholly different direction. This peculiarity belonged to his genius, and was a means of multiplying the instruction which his conversation afforded. But the volubility of his intellect was balanced by the stability and faithfulness of his moral qualities. When the happiness of man and the glory of God were in his view, he was for ever recurring to his point, and in spite of all his episodes of thought, was an assiduous, persevering, and undaunted labourer."

And such he still continued, when any great cause woke up his former fires. "Retired as he was from public life," says Mr. Gurney, "and greatly enfeebled in his health, he no longer found his place in the van of the army, or in the heat of the battle; but both by speaking and writing he repeatedly bore his public testimony in favour of the great principles of the Abolitionists; and his warm encouragements and wise counsels were always ready to stimulate and direct the efforts of his friends."

But the sketch of this vigorous and cheerful mind would be exceedingly imperfect, if no hint were given of the hidden springs by which its freshness was maintained. A merely cheerful age is a melancholy sight to thoughtful men. "It quite lowers my spirits," was his own declaration at the conclusion of a visit, "to see people past seventy, so little apparently estranging themselves from worldly objects; it is most painful to me not to be able to converse with them on religion." His own cheerfulness rested on a surer basis. He was often thoughtfully retracing all "the way by which the Lord his God had led him." "How striking is the change of fifty years—then Samuel Smith and I travelled as bachelors, and now he has a house full of descendants; and I also have five children and a grandchild living, besides a daughter and sweet little grandson gone, I humbly trust, to a better world. Praise the Lord, O my soul. My dear, and I trust imparadised, child's birthday."

This same tone of thought may be traced in his letters to those with whom he was most intimate. "It is one of my frequent subjects of gratitude and praise, though not as

* Joseph John Gurney.

frequently as it ought to be, that in the kind providence of God I was born an Englishman. Go through the whole earth and enumerate every part of it, and you will find nothing like our own country. An Englishman too in this period of our country's existence, and in the middle station of life, &c. &c. &c. We do not, I am sure *I* do not, live sufficiently under the constant influence of this spirit of thankfulness; and I believe there is not any one, who has at all observed the dealings of Providence in his own instance with any thing like a due measure of attention, who will not have seen many, many particulars in which he has been deeply indebted to the preventing or directing grace of God. It was the reproach, and among the chief causes of the condemnation of the pagan world, scanty as was the light they enjoyed compared with the brightness of our meridian day, that they 'were not thankful.' And still more the people of God were threatened with being cast off if they should not serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. How much more then should our hearts overflow with continual gratitude! I doubt not the want of this blessed disposition will constitute one of the leading articles in the condemnation of the unholy; and I have found rustics, as unassailable as a tortoise in every other quarter, feeling their weak and indefensible state in this point, when I have put it to themselves whether they have been in any due degree grateful to the God who gave them all their present blessings, and who gave His only Son to die for them, and to the Saviour, who for their sakes endured the unknown agonies of His bitter passion and cruel death."

"The main fault of the present day," he now repeatedly declared, "is the making knowledge and intellectual advancement the great object of pursuit, instead of that moral improvement by which we may be fitted for a higher and better state. Much mystery overhangs the one, and time with an oblivious touch effaces the little we do attain of science; but blessed is he who attains some lineaments of the moral image of God, for they shall see Him as He is, and then shall know even as they now are known." This conviction made him still watchful to redeem the time. "This evening," he says, Feb. 15th, "I expounded on the Epistle, 'So run that ye may obtain, &c. lest I should be a cast-away.' The second lesson this very evening is 1 Cor. ii., in which St. Paul relates his labour and sufferings. And could pains be required by

HIM? O then, my soul, strive—to him that overcometh only, the promise is assured." "My future state should now be my grand, indeed comparatively speaking, my sole concern, God's kind providence has granted to me a residue of life after its business is over. I know I must be near death, perhaps very near it. I believe that on the state in which death finds me, will depend my eternal condition; and even though my state may now be such as to produce an humble hope that I am safe, yet by a wise improvement of my time, I may augment my eternal happiness, besides enjoying delightful communion with God in the interval. Let me then make the improvement of my soul the first grand business of my life, attending also to the good of others, if possible both by my pen, and conversation, and social intercourse."

In this spirit he continued still his rules of abstinence and self-denial, saying on Ash Wednesday, "We attend too little to these days;" and often secretly observing his fasting regulations—"disused pleasant food—Daniel. Entire fasting does not suit my constitution, but I attend to the principle." Often also did he now give up his days to more continuous devotion, employing thus especially his own and his children's birth-days, and noting in his Diary. "I had an interview of two hours and a quarter before dinner of unspeakable value. Why not secure many similar seasons? At my time of life what so proper or so likely to make me useful to others as thus walking with God?" It was not in vain that he thus watched and laboured. Through his later years he walked, in an eminent degree, with God, and was literally kept in perfect peace through every trial. Those who lived with him and marked his unmixed cheerfulness could scarcely believe that he felt as much on relinquishing in 1831 his house at Highwood, as a letter written at the time implies.

"Highwood, March 16.

"My dear ——,

I wished that you should receive from myself rather than from the tongue of rumour, tidings which sooner or later were sure to be conveyed to you, and which I know would give you pain. The loss incurred has been so heavy as to compel me to descend from my present level, and greatly to diminish my establishment. But I am bound to recognize in this dispensation the gracious mitigation of the severity of the stroke. It was not suffered to take place till all my children were educated, and nearly all of them placed out

in one way or another; and by the delay, Mrs. Wilberforce and I are supplied with a delightful asylum under the roofs of two of our own children. And what better could we desire? A kind Providence has enabled me with truth to adopt the declaration of David, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. And now, when the cup presented to me has some bitter ingredients, yet surely no draught can be deemed distasteful which comes from such a hand, and contains such grateful infusions as those of social intercourse and the sweet endearments of filial gratitude and affection. What I shall most miss will be my books and my garden, though I own I do feel a little the not (for I know not how long if ever) being able to ask my friends to take a dinner or a bed with me, under my own roof. And as even the great apostle did not think the 'having no certain dwelling place,' associated with his other far greater sufferings, unworthy of mention, so I may feel this also to be some, though I grant not a great evil, to one who has so many kind friends who will be happy to receive him."

His sure confidence was still in God. "He will not suffer me to be disgraced in my old age. What gives me repose in all things, is the thought of their being his appointment. I doubt not that the same God who has in mercy ordered so many events for so long a course of time, will never fail to overrule all things both for my family and myself." And on recovering from a temporary illness, "I can scarce understand," he said, "why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that a man can be as happy without a fortune as with one."

It should be mentioned to the credit of our times, that by no less than six persons, one of them a West Indian, such private offers were now made to Mr. Wilberforce as would have at once restored his fortune. It was from no false pride that he declined entirely these friendly propositions, thinking it became his Christian character rather to adapt his habits to his present income. Towards his chapel at Mill Hill alone he consented to receive the assistance of his friends; and no less happy in receiving than in showing kindness, he carried always in his pocket and delighted to produce a well-worn list of their several contributions.

His leaving Highwood was soon followed by a trial of a different nature, the death of his surviving daughter. "Blessed be God," he says, during her illness, "we have every

reason to be thankful for the state of mind we witness in her: a holy, calm, humble reliance on her Saviour, enables her to enter the dark valley with Christian hope, leaning as it were on her Redeemer's arm, and supported and cheered by the blessed promises of His gospel. We are in the hands of our heavenly Father, and I am sure no one has hitherto had such reason as myself to say that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days."

Now was seen the fruit of the high degree in which he had learned to "walk by faith rather than by sight." "I have often heard," he says, "that sailors on a voyage will drink 'friends astern' till they are half way over, then 'friends ahead.' With me it has been 'friends ahead' this long time." It was not by the slow process of reasoning, that he learned to regard this as a short separation, he at once felt that they should not long be parted. And he soon describes himself, "as enjoying as much peace and social comfort, as any ought to expect in this stormy world."

"I forget whether I sent you any particulars of the closing scene," he writes to Mr. Babington. "They were such as to call forth from our dear friend Sargent declarations of satisfaction and thankfulness, which will be sources of comfort and joy to Mrs. Wilberforce and myself as long as we live. The Monday after she was taken away we removed to St. Boniface, which we had taken in the hope of its conducing to her recovery. It is certainly one of the most delightful of all possible retirements. The most romantic scenery, sheltered from every cold wind, and abounding in the most delightful walks, both sea and inland. There the Sargents; my S. and his wife, and little toddler and prattler; my H. and ourselves, passed a delightful fortnight. Really it was an oasis in the wilderness."

When Mr. Wilberforce left Highwood Hill, he intended to divide the year between the houses of his second and third sons. The latter already had a home fit for his reception in the Isle of Wight; and the former soon possessed one in the neighbourhood of Maidstone. "You will join me I am sure," he tells more than one amongst his friends, "in being thankful as well as rejoicing in my being able to inform you that Lord Brougham has given to my second son, (or rather I may say to me,) quite spontaneously and very handsomely, the living of East Farleigh. The parsonage is very little above a mile distant from Barham Court, and there must be many pleasant circumstances in being so near the residence,

library, park, &c. of an old friend, of such dimensions. This event comes in such a way as strongly to confirm the persuasion that it is an indication of the favour of God; and I cannot but recognize a providential hand in Lord Brougham's being prompted to make the appointment just when we were in want of such a settlement and residence; though Lord Brougham knew nothing of the matter, and was quite unconsciously the instrument of granting us our wish."

Here and in the Isle of Wight, to the great joy of those he visited, his remaining years were spent. Personal reasons forbid the veil being lifted from his life as heretofore, and all the feelings shown with which his warm heart overflowed, now that he had become the parishioner and guest of his sons. But a few extracts from his Diary and letters will give the outline of his holy and peaceful age.

"We have now been here," he writes from one of his parsonage houses, "for about six weeks. How can I but rejoice rather than lament at a pecuniary loss, which has produced such a result as that of bringing us to dwell under the roofs of our dear children, and witness their enjoyment of a large share of domestic comforts, and their conscientious discharge of the duties of the most important of all professions."

"We are passing our time here very agreeably; indeed we might well use a much stronger term; for we should be void of all feeling if the warmest emotions of gratitude were not called forth in us, towards the gracious Ordainer of all things, for granting us, in the evening of life, after the tossings of the ocean of this world, such a quiet and comfortable haven. Here too we have the delightful spectacle of those whom we love most, enjoying a large measure of human life's sweetest enjoyments, combined with the diligent discharge of its most important duties. And then that lovely baby! What a manifest benevolence there is in the Almighty's having rendered young children so eminently attractive, considering the degree in which their very existence must depend on the disposition of those around them, to bear with their little infirmities, sustain their weakness, and supply their wants. How little could I expect to complete my seventy-second year! Yet it is on this day completed, and I am suffering no pain, and my complaints those which are salutary without producing great bodily suffering, like the kind suggestions of a friend tenderly watching over me, and endeavouring to obtain for me the benefits, without

my feeling the evils commonly attendant on providential visitations. Really the loss of fortune has been delayed till it brings with it some positive comforts, without producing inconvenience or vexation; my children's education having been completed, and my parliamentary life quite finished. The necessity too of quitting my own house has not taken place till I am supplied with a choice of residences; quite an embarras des richesses in the habitation line. O pray for me, my dear ——, that my return of gratitude and service may be more commensurate with the rich stock of blessings which the Almighty has poured out upon me."

His overflowing gratitude to God was the chief feature of his later years. Every thing became with him a cause for thanksgiving. When some of the infirmities of years began to press upon him, "what thanks do I owe to God," was his reflection, "that my declining strength appears likely not to be attended with painful diseases, but rather to lessen gradually and by moderate degrees! How good a friend God is to me! When I have any complaint it is always so mitigated and softened as to give me scarcely any pain. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I have had a feverish night, or rather a dreamy and disturbed one, but no headache or pain, D. G. What thanks do I owe to my gracious and heavenly Father!"

The details of his life at his parsonage residences were much what they had been of late at Highwood, except that greater quietness gave him more time for reading, and for those habits of devotional retirement which manifestly grew with his increasing years; in which he found the Psalms and St. Paul's Epistles becoming more and more dear to him. He was still read to whilst he dressed; and after thus hearing Sharon Turner's Sacred History, he notes in his pocket-book the importance of "meditating more on God as the Creator and Governor of the universe. Eighty millions of fixed stars, each as large at least as our sun. Combine the considerations hence arising with the madness and guilt of sin as setting up our will against that of God. Combine with it Christ's unspeakable mercy and love, and that of God in Christ."

This subject he had been accustomed to notice in his family exhortations. "The discoveries of astronomy," he said, "instead of having an opposite effect, warm my heart. I think of eighty millions of stars in our nebula, and of two thousand nebulæ, and I feel elevated and thankful to bear

part in this magnificent creation, to be the child of Him who is the Governor of these boundless dominions." These thoughts often passed into meditations upon the moral attributes of God. "Retire into thy closet," is one of the last entries in his pocket-book, "and there let contemplation indulge her flights and expatiate." "I find unspeakable pleasure," he tells a friend, "in the declarations so often reiterated in the Word of God of the unvarying truth of the Supreme Being. To me there is something inexpressibly sublime in the assurance, that throughout the whole immeasurable extent of the all but infinite empire of God truth always extends, and like a master-key unlocks and opens all the mysterious wisdom, and goodness, and mercy of the Divine dispensations."

His early walk, and his mid-day employments remained unaltered; and in the afternoon he still took as heretofore, considerable exercise; pacing at East Farleigh, during the winter, up and down a "sheltered, sunny, gravel walk;" and in the summer, climbing with delight at Brighstone to the top of the chalk downs, or of an intermediate terrace, or walking along upon the unfrequented shore.

His evenings were as bright as ever, and though his power of retaining new impressions was greatly impaired, the colours of his earlier recollections seemed scarcely to fade.

Low as was his estimate of all that he had actually done, it was easy to see, by the judgments which he formed of others, how much he now rejoiced in his earlier choice of objects and pursuits. "Much struck to-day," says his Diary, "with T. as the successful lawyer at his best. How little has he been (I fear) preparing for another world! His father was an artisan; what will it signify in a little time whether he had remained on that level or risen as he has?" "Thank God," was his common exclamation after parting with those who had drawn prizes in the lottery of worldly scenes; "Thank God that I was led into a different path." "How much rather," he said to one of his sons as he drove by the splendid house of one whom he had always thought rapacious—"how much rather would I be living as I am on the wreck of my fortune, than have fattened as he has done upon the public!"

Never did any one see in him the least touch of regret for that which he had given up. "When a man chooses the rewards of virtue," he said with some little indignation, after

hearing such complaints, "he should remember, that to resign the pleasures of vice is part of his bargain."

But that which was of all things most worthy of remark in his review of his past life, was his unfeigned humility. To himself he appeared "a sadly unprofitable servant," and needed constantly "the soothing consideration that we serve a gracious Master, who will take the will for the deed. Thou *didst* well (even the phraseology is indicative) that it was in thy heart." Any direct allusion to his services was met by some natural disclaimer, "that we each knew our own faults," and that he was deeply conscious of "neglected opportunities of service;" just as a friendly preface to his work on Christianity drew from him the remark, "Such things ought never to be published till a man is dead."

He had always detested flattery. Mr. Gisborne never saw in him so much display of temper as when, being addressed with servility by a person who wished for his favourable influence with Mr. Pitt, he threw the letter on the ground, with the exclamation, "How much rather would I have the man spit in my face!" This beautiful simplicity survived all the unfavourable influences of his life; and the old man whose name was a familiar word in every mouth, whose country parsonage was visited almost like a shrine, and who was told by Rammohun Roy, that when "he left the East, one of his chief wishes was to see Mr. Wilberforce," was still altogether lowly in his own sight, and could say with natural simplicity when treated in a place of public concourse with some marks of courtesy, "How very civil they were to me; they made way for me, and treated me as if I were some great man!"

Almost the only growing mark of age was a still increasing love of that rest to which he was drawing nearer. "The grasshopper had become a burden to him," and he declined to settle a dispute which had been referred to him, with the excuse, "My spirits are now quite unequal to these unpleasant contentions." With the same feeling he replied, when pressed to take a part in an election contest, "I have retired and must be silent and neutral." When he looked out into the world from his retirement, it was in the faithful spirit of one who though not unacquainted with its storms, was more deeply learned in the secret of a quiet confidence in God. "I have felt my mind and spirits less affected than perhaps they ought to have been by the various clouds that are now gathering around us with such appalling blackness.

Yet I trust that I may calmly, though humbly, resign myself to the gracious disposal of that great Being, who, I am sure, has mercifully poured out on me such unnumbered blessings, and so allayed with mitigating kindness the few trials to which I have been subjected, as to give me cause to look up to Him and address Him as my heavenly Father. For my own part, I quite rejoice in being out of all the bustle and turmoil of political life."

He now never met a friend of earlier days, whose principles were different from his own, (and such he took great pains to see,) without following up their intercourse with a long and friendly letter on their most important interests, pressing mainly on them, that it was not yet too late for them to make the better choice. "This is what they need," he repeated often; "they get to think that they are in for it, and that though they have chosen ill it is too late to alter. I well remember going to my old friend Lord —— in his last illness. I had spoken to him fully on religious matters many years before, and he had seemed to pay no attention to me. I heard that he was taken ill, and called upon him. When I had sat some time chatting with him, but without alluding to religious matters, another friend came in and asked, 'How are you to-day?' 'Why,' was his reply, 'as well as I can be with Wilberforce sitting there, and telling me that I am going to hell.'" The conversation which had thus sunk into his mind had been affectionate and open. "I never can believe," he had said, "some parts of the Scripture." "How can you expect," was the reply, "to be able to believe, when you only turn your mind to the difficulties of the subject?" But what had made his friend read this language in his looks, was very much that sense of hopelessness which he was most desirous to correct. "At all events," said another at the close of such a conversation, "if you are right it is now too late for me to alter. I am in for it." "No," he answered earnestly, "my dear P., it is not too late, only attend to these things and you will find it true, 'him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

To such calls as these he was still alive, but from all common business he withdrew as much as possible; and could not "leave the quiet of his country retirement even for the most friendly asylum, without his spirits failing him," and praying, "that in proportion as" he "grew unfit for the bustle of life," he "might become more and more harmonized

with the sentiments and dispositions of a better world." His need of its waters still carried him to Bath, and he paid a few short visits to his oldest and most valued friends.

Though he had two years before "resolved never more to speak in public," he was induced, upon the 12th of April, 1833, to propose at a meeting in the town of Maidstone, a petition against slavery. His own signature was put to this petition, and with all his earlier spirit, he would not allow the appointment of delegates, a measure commonly adopted, but inconsistent he maintained with the spirit of the constitution. It was an affecting sight to see the old man who had been so long the champion of this cause come forth once more from his retirement, and with an unquenched spirit, though with a weakened voice and failing body, maintain for the last time the cause of truth and justice.

There was now no question about immediate emancipation; but the principle of compensation was disputed, and on this his judgment and his voice were clear. Ten years before he had proposed to Mr. Canning that a fund should be formed for indemnifying those who should be proved in fact to suffer by a change in the West Indian system; but to admit the principle of previous compensation for expected injury was only to postpone for ever all improvements of the system. Against this therefore he all along contended, even whilst he maintained that Great Britain "owed smart money" for her former encouragement of the Slave Trade. He hailed therefore with joy the proposal to atone for these offences by the grant of twenty millions; and in this his last speech at once declared, "I say, and say honestly and fearlessly, that the same Being who commands us to love mercy, says also, Do justice, and therefore I have no objection to grant the colonists the relief that may be due to them for any real injuries, which they may ultimately prove themselves to have sustained. But it must be after an impartial investigation of the merits of each case by a fair and competent tribunal. I have no objection either, to make every possible sacrifice which may be necessary to secure the complete accomplishment of the object which we have in view; but let not the inquiry into this matter be made a plea for perpetuating wrongs for which no pecuniary offers can compensate."

And now the time was come, when his dust was to return to the earth, and his spirit to God who gave it. On the 20th of April he left East Farleigh, and after a short visit

to the Isle of Wight, arrived at Bath on the 17th of May. The waters, to which in great measure he owed the prolongation of his life till his 74th year, would help, it was hoped, to throw off the effects of the influenza, from which he had suffered greatly upon leaving Kent. But here his strength visibly declined, and it was soon seen, that if his life was spared, it would be but for a season of weakness and suffering. During two months which he spent there, he suffered much from pain and languor; and though he displayed the most unvarying patience, yet the excellent bust executed at this time by Joseph, shows, beautiful as it is, that his outward tenement was fast hastening to decay. But while all around him were full of thought about himself, his own anxiety was altogether for two of his daughters-in-law: for, a month only before his removal, two grandsons were born to inherit the name of William Wilberforce,

"Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt."

This event is the last recorded in a pocket-book which he always carried with him. Other of his thoughts may be traced in its pages, by a set of references to the "closing scene of several memorable men."

All his thoughts and conversation now savoured of the better world to which he was drawing near. At this time he was consulted by a young friend who was doubtful what profession to choose, but inclined towards the army or navy. "Think particularly," he said, "whether you are choosing for time only, or for eternity. For of course a sensible man will wish to choose that which will be best on the long run. And then it is just as much part of the consideration what will be best for me between my thousandth and two thousandth year as between my twentieth and thirtieth. It is curious how our estimate of time is altered by its being removed to a distance. Ask how long did Moses live before Christ. If a man says 1300 years, and you correct him, 1500: poh! why be so accurate? Within 200 years will do. But how immense 200 years *now* seem!"

Meanwhile the calmness with which he was preparing to close his own career is apparent from the following letter.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD CALTHORPE.

(Private.)

"Bath, June 27, 1833.

"My dear Calthorpe,

You have been very kindly liberal about franks, and I really feel your kindness, and did not mean you should be called on so largely. To confess the truth to you, as really, and not merely in name, a friend, I will state that three or four days ago I thought I was breaking up rapidly as well as seriously. There has been I think an amendment subsequently, which leads me to believe that my decline is proceeding less rapidly than I had supposed, though not less seriously. There has been a general disposition in the system to the deposition of water, and this sluggishness of the absorbents is a very common mode in which they whose constitutions are rather feeble, and who are favoured with a gradual exit, actually decay. I thought you would like to know this, and therefore would not keep it from you.

I hear with real pleasure that your dear sister is well, and that dear Lady Charlotte is about to afford another security against the extinction of the Calthorpe name. My dear friend, may God bless and prosper you, especially in the most important particulars. Oh what cause for thankfulness have you for having been called to the knowledge and feeling of salvation through the Redeemer! May you grow in grace more and more. Give my affectionate remembrances to Lady Charlotte, and Frederick, also to Miss Calthorpe when you next write, and be assured I am

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

The cover I enclose is to spare the finances of a widow with six or seven children, and a very slender pecuniary provision. It is to introduce her to some acquaintances at the place where she has fixed for a time."

It had always been his feeling that the most fitting state for the last hours of life, was one free alike from excitement and from terror; in which while the mind was conscious of the awful nature of the approaching change, it could yet resign itself to its reconciled, all-merciful Father, with the humility as well as the confidence of a child. He often mentioned it as a proof of great wisdom, that while the younger believer is described by Bunyan in his Pilgrim's

Progress as passing easily through the stream of death, a less buoyant hope and a deeper flood is represented as the portion of the aged Christian. "It is the peculiarity," he said, "of the Christian religion, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions."

But his own mind was as remarkable for its thankfulness and peace as for its humility. His youngest son, who was with him at this period, recorded at the moment various memoranda of his state of feeling. "Saturday, July 6th, he was taken ill, quite suddenly, while sitting at dinner. I ran for a medical man, and before I returned he was got to bed. He was suffering much from giddiness and sickness, but his words to me were, 'I have been thinking of the great mercy of God in trying me with illness of this kind, which, though very distressing, is scarcely to be called pain, rather than with severe suffering, which my bodily constitution could hardly bear.' When his medical attendant came, 'Thank God,' he said, 'I am not losing my faculties.' 'Yes, but you could not easily go through a problem in arithmetic or geometry.' 'I think I could go through the Asses' Bridge,' he replied. 'Let me see;' and began, correcting himself if he omitted any thing. Of course his attendant stopped him.

"About eight o'clock, on being asked how he felt, he said, 'What cause have I for thankfulness! I have been all day almost as comfortable as if I had been pretty well. I have slept a good deal, and I have so many people who are kind to me. I am sure I feel deeply my servants' attention.'

"Alluding to a remedy which was provided for some present discomfort, he burst out repeatedly into exclamations on the goodness of God in these little things, providing means to remedy the various inconveniences of sickness. To this subject he several times recurred, with the remark, 'How ungrateful men are in not seeing the hand of God in all their comforts! I am sure it greatly adds to our enjoyment to trace His hand in them.'

"Soon after he said, 'What is that text, 'He hath hid pride from man?' I was thinking how God had taught him the folly of pride, because the most beautiful and delicate woman, and the proudest man, of the highest birth and station, who was never approached but with deference and formality, is exposed to exactly the same infirmities of this body of our humiliation that I am.' He was repeating mentally the 51st Psalm, and asked me to look what came next after the

eleventh verse, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.' I read, 'Oh give me the comfort of Thy help again.' 'It is very odd, I thought it had been 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.' Do look what it is in the Bible Version.' I found it as he said. 'What a very remarkable passage! It seems like an anticipation of the privileges of the new dispensation.'

"He spoke much of the delight which he had in the affection and care of his wife and children. 'Think what I should have done had I been left; as one hears of people quarrelling and separating. 'In sickness and in health' was the burden, and well has it been kept.' (Here she came in.) 'I was just praising you.'

"Generally, I should say, that except in his remark about pride, there was hardly a word he uttered that was not a bursting forth of praise. 'What cause it is for thankfulness,' he exclaimed, 'that I never suffer from headache!'

"Half-past eight, Sunday morning. 'Remember, my dear H.,' he said, 'that it is Sunday morning, and all our times here are very short. I am sure the manner of my dismissal, as far as it has yet gone, has been most gracious. I have not had so much time here for reading Scripture as I wish, but I rejoice at having laid in a knowledge of it when I was stronger. I hope you always take care of that. From our familiarity with it, we do not feel about the Scripture at all as we should do, if we were to hear for the first time that there was a communication from God to man.

'Think of our Saviour coming down from heaven, and, when one feels what a *little* pain is, submitting to all that he endured; having the nails roughly driven through his hands. To be sure the thought of our Saviour's sufferings is so amazing, so astonishing, I am quite overwhelmed. Next to the horrible driving of the nails, I have thought most of His being given over to the insults of the Roman soldiery, when one thinks what brutal fellows they were. His sufferings were not alleviated as mine are by the kindness of those about Him.

'I have been thinking of that delightful text, which has often comforted me, 'Be careful for nothing, &c.' (He went on as far as 'The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.') 'To be sure,' (he spoke with his voice faltering with emotion,) 'it is the same Almighty power which enables Him to watch over all the world, every crea-

ture, beast, bird, or insect, and to attend to all the concerns of every individual.'

"Four o'clock. Dinner time. 'I am a poor creature to-day,' he said. 'I cannot help thinking if some of the people who saw me swaggering away on the hustings at York could see me now, how much they would think me changed. What a mercy to think that these things do not come by chance, but are the arrangements of infinite wisdom!

'When I think how many poor people are suffering, without the luxuries that I possess, and the kind friends I have about me, I am quite ashamed of my comforts.'

"Five o'clock. 'I cannot help thinking there was some mistake about my medicine; but it does not matter. There is nothing sinful in it.'

"Toussaint Louverture was mentioned in the evening. 'I sent word,' he said, 'to Sir Walter Scott that he had not at all done justice to that part of his History, (of Buonaparte,) and he replied, that if I would point any thing out to him, he would willingly alter it. I wanted dear Stephen to do it, but he did not. I am very sorry for it, but it must be known sooner or later. To be sure to make a treaty of amity and friendship with a man, and then have him and his family seized and sent on shipboard, and finally to the chateau of Joux. . . . And then a veil is drawn over it. None knows what happened. What a story there will be there, when this world shall give up its dead! It was something like the case of the Duc D'Enghien, but worse.'

"Eleven, p. m. 'I feel more comfortable than I have done for I know not how long. Never had a man such cause for thankfulness as I have, and above all, that I have so many, many kind friends to do every thing for me. My own son, and my own wife. I am quite ashamed of my comforts, when I think of Him who had not where to lay His head.'

"Tuesday, four o'clock. Reading some of Cecil's remarks. 'Nothing can be more opposite than that spirit of the present day, which shows itself for instance in the pride of literature, to the spirit of Christianity. Compare this bold, independent, daring spirit, with the beatitudes. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek.' Nothing surely can be so contrary to what ought to be the spirit of a creature who feels in himself the seeds of corruption.

'Mrs. Hannah More told me that towards the end of Johnson's life, if he was asked how he was, he would an-

swer, 'rather better, I thank my God through Jesus Christ.' And so to whatever he was asked.'

A friend who happened to be passing through Bath, two days afterwards, (July 11th,) paid him a visit which he thus describes. "When I arrived at the house on the South Parade which he then occupied, I found that he had been suffering severely from a bilious attack; and his lady, whose attentions to him were most tender and unremitting, appeared to be in low spirits on his account. Still there then appeared no reason to apprehend the near approach of death.

"I was introduced to an apartment up-stairs, where I found the veteran Christian reclining on a sofa, with his feet wrapped in flannel; and his countenance bespeaking increased age since I had last seen him, as well as much delicacy. He received me with the warmest marks of affection, and seemed to be delighted by the unexpected arrival of an old friend. I had scarcely taken my seat beside him before . . . it seemed given me to remind him of the words of the psalmist; 'Although ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;' and I freely spoke to him of the good and glorious things, which, as I believed, assuredly awaited him in the kingdom of rest and peace. In the mean time the illuminated expression of his furrowed countenance, with his clasped and uplifted hands, were indicative of profound devotion and holy joy.

"Soon afterwards he unfolded his own experience to me in a highly interesting manner. He told me that the text on which he was then most prone to dwell, and from which he was deriving peculiar comfort, was a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians; 'Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' While his frail nature was shaking, and his mortal tabernacle seemed ready to be dissolved, this 'peace of God' was his blessed and abundant portion.

"The mention of this text immediately called forth one of his bright ideas, and led to a display, as in days of old, of his peculiar versatility of mind. 'How admirable,' said he, 'are the harmony and variety of St. Paul's smaller Epistles!—You might well have given an argument upon it in your little

work on evidence. The Epistle to the Galatians contains a noble exhibition of doctrine. That to the Colossians is a union of doctrine and precept, showing their mutual connexion and dependence; that to the Ephesians, is seraphic; that to the Philippians, is all love.'

'With regard to myself,' he added, 'I have nothing whatsoever to urge, but the poor Publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' These words were expressed with peculiar feeling and emphasis, and have since called to my remembrance his own definition of the word mercy—'kindness to those that deserve punishment.' What a lesson may we derive from such an example! It may awfully remind us of the apostle's question—'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?'"*

The predominance of these feelings may be seen in a remark which he made to his son a few days afterwards, speaking of his dangerous attack the week before, "You must all join with me," he said, "in praying that the short remainder of my life may be spent in gaining that spirituality of mind which will fit me for heaven. And there I hope to meet all of you."

After he had spent two months at Bath, it was thought advisable that he should consult Dr. Chambers, from whose skill he had derived great benefit in 1824. He set out therefore towards London, though with no expectation on his own part of recovering. "There is no one now," he said, "that I can be useful to, but we should always be trying to follow, in every respect, God's indicated will." His purpose was to spend a few days at a house which was lent him by his cousin, Mrs. Lucy Smith, of whose kindness he readily availed himself, observing, that it was his "test of having a regard for a person when he liked to receive favours from them. One likes to confer them upon every one, but only to receive them from real friends. I am sure I used always to think, as soon as I went out of my house, which of my friends there was to whom I could lend it. It was such a pleasure to think, when I could not enjoy it myself, that they did." He commenced his journey on the 17th of July, and on the 19th arrived in Cadogan Place, Sloane Street.

Thus was he again carried along the road, which forty-five years before he had traversed in apparently a dying state,

* Familiar Sketch, by Joseph John Gurney. His son has recorded the last remark as "The Epistle to the Philippians is social and domestic."

and his mind seemed to travel back through the long space which had intervened. "How differently time appears," he said to his son while they halted at an inn, "when you look at it in the life of an individual, and in the general mass! Now I seem to have gone through such a number of various scenes, and such a lapse of time, and yet when you come to compare it with any great period of time—fifty years—think how little fifty years seems: why it is 3000 years since the Psalms, which I delight in, were written. By the way, (turning to his servant,) I have not my Psalter this morning. Do you know where it is?"

The day after he reached town, he expressed himself as "very anxious to dedicate the short remainder of time God might yet allot him, to the cultivation of union with Christ, and to the acquiring more of His spirit. My private prayers," he said, "are much the same as those in the family, pardon and grace. To-night [Saturday] particularly with regard to the week past."

"Perhaps I have been wrong in not praying more with others. But I never felt that I could open my heart with perfect freedom and sincerity, and the idea of doing otherwise in praying to Almighty God. . . Now I own many good men use expressions which I cannot use; for instance, about their own corruption. I HOPE no man on earth has a stronger sense of sinfulness and unworthiness before God than I. But they speak as if they did not feel the wish to do the will of God, and I am sure I cannot say that. Now S. in his prayers often uses expressions of that kind, which quite amaze me in a man so sincere as he is."

When he reached London parliament was still sitting, and many of his friends flocked around him. "What cause it is for thankfulness," he said, "that God has always disposed people to treat me so kindly, and with such attention! Popularity is certainly a dangerous thing;"—[then after a pause;]—"the antidote is chiefly in the feeling one has; how very differently they would regard me, if they knew me really!" A friend who at this time came in asked, "Well! how are you?" "I am like a clock which is almost run down." On the Monday after his arrival, he received a visit from a party of children. After they were gone, he said, "What a delightful thing it is to think how many inhabitants are being trained up there for heaven! For when the means of grace are used, one does see, I think, that God so very greatly, one may say universally, blesses them."

His public conduct had not prevented him from keeping up a friendly connexion with many West Indians; who gave full credit to his sincerity. One of his last visiters was a member of a great West Indian family; and to his son's remark that this circumstance produced no effect upon his feelings—"Oh when we really believe a man to be serving God," he answered, "I delight in trampling on all these little points. Some one said, 'I trample on impossibilities.' I do not quite say that; but all these little distinctions are overwhelmed, annihilated, in the case of a person with whom I trust, (speaking with deep seriousness,) for my own sake, I may meet hereafter."

"How thankful should I be," was his remark to a friend who now came in, "that I am not lying in severe pain, as so many are! Certainly, not to be able to move about is a great privation to me; but then I have so many comforts, and above all, such kind friends—and to that you contribute."

"At this time," says another member of his family, "I arrived in London to see him, and was much struck by the signs of his approaching end. His usual activity was totally suspended by a painful local disorder, which prevented him from walking. The morning of Friday (July 26th) was pleasant, and I assisted before his breakfast to carry him in a chair to the steps in front of the house, that he might enjoy the air for a few moments. Here he presented a most striking appearance, looking forth with calm delight upon trees and grass, the freshness and vigour of which contrasted with his own decay. It was nearly his last view of God's works in this their lower manifestation. 'The doors' were soon to 'be shut in the streets, and those that look out of the windows to be darkened.'

"His manner at this time was more than usually affectionate, and he received with great cheerfulness the visits of many old associates, from whom he had long been separated. The last words which I heard from him related to one of these, whose religious opinions he had for many years lamented. 'How truly amiable he is, yet I can never see him without the deepest pain!' On Friday afternoon I left him with the intention of preparing to receive him, on the following Tuesday, not knowing that before that time he was to be a 'partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.'"

It was altogether a striking combination of circumstances that he should have come to London at that time—to die. The Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was read for the second

time in the House of Commons on the Friday night, and the last public information he received was, that his country was willing to redeem itself from the national disgrace at any sacrifice. "Thank God," said he, "that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the Abolition of Slavery." His state of health had latterly induced many of his friends to express their hope that he might be allowed to witness the consummation of the fifty years' struggle, and might then retire in peace; and so strong was this presentiment, that one of them speaks of writing to take leave of him so soon as the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was known to be in progress. That this anticipation should be so exactly realized, added signal interest to an event, which in the course of nature might be shortly expected.

Not less remarkable was it that London, which of late he had seldom visited, and where he purposed to remain but a day or two, should be the place of his departure. Yet had it been otherwise, his funeral could hardly have presented the circumstances, which made it the fit termination of such a life. The concurrence of two such incidents seemed providentially designed to fix public attention on his closing scene, that so the aged Christian might be marked out by the public voice, as the man whom his country "delighted to honour."

On the evening of Friday, however, he seemed so much better, that there was every reason to suppose he would be able to leave town on the Tuesday. His youngest son has again recorded some of his remarks. "A review in the Quarterly was read to him, (Rush's Residence,) which spoke of the Duke of Wellington's ability in council. 'Most true,' he said. 'I suppose you have never seen them, but when the Duke of Wellington commanded in Spain, and his brother the Marquis Wellesley was sent to conduct the negotiation, the papers containing the despatches of the two brothers were printed by parliament, and I remember thinking, that I had never seen any thing at all equal to them in talent. I remember hearing too, that of all the persons who gave evidence about Finance, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Harrowby knew most of the subject.'

"Some of his concluding remarks this evening were on the number of friends by whom he was surrounded. 'I do declare,' he said, 'that the delight I have in feeling that there are a few people whose hearts are really attached to me, is

the very highest I have in this world. And as far as the present state is concerned, what more could any man wish at the close of life, than to be attended by his own children, and his own wife, and all treating him with such uniform kindness and affection?' "

His son concludes his notes this evening. "On the whole, what appears to me characteristic in his state of mind is chiefly this: there seems to be little anticipation, though he is strongly impressed with a feeling that he is near his end; much nearer than from what his physician says I trust is the case. He speaks very little as if looking forward to future happiness; but he seems more like a person in the actual enjoyment of heaven within: he hardly speaks of any one subject except to express his sense of thankfulness, and what cause he feels for gratitude. This is the case even in speaking of the things which try him most. Thus, talking of his being kept from exercise, 'What cause for thankfulness have I that I am not lying in pain, and in a suffering posture, as so many people are! Certainly it is a great privation to me from my habits not to be able to walk about, and to lie still so much as I do, but then how many there are who are lying in severe pain!' And then he will break out into some passionate expression of thankfulness."

"The next morning* his amendment seemed to continue. To an old servant who drew him out in a wheel-chair, he talked with more than usual animation, and the fervency with which he offered up the family prayer was particularly noticed. But in the evening his weakness returned in a most distressing manner, and the next day he experienced a succession of fainting fits, to which he had been for two years subject, which were followed by much suffering, and which for a time suspended his powers of recollection. His physician pronounced that if he survived this attack it would be to suffer much pain, and probably also with an impaired understanding. During an interval in the evening of Sunday, 'I am in a very distressed state,' he said, alluding apparently to his bodily condition. 'Yes,' it was answered, 'but you have your feet on the Rock.' 'I do not venture,' he replied, 'to speak so positively; but I hope I have.' And after this expression of his humble trust, with but one groan, he entered into that world where pain and doubt are for

* July 27.

ever at an end. He died at three o'clock in the morning of Monday, July 29th, aged 73 years and 11 months.

Mr. Wilberforce had chosen for the place of his interment, in accordance with a promise made to his brother-in-law, Mr. Stephen, a vault at Stoke Newington, where his sister and his daughter had been buried. A direction to this effect was given in his will, a circumstance however not actually ascertained till after the funeral. But his family had no hesitation in acceding to a request made by the Lord Chancellor and nearly forty other Peers, that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey with public honours. Still they thought it fitting to avoid all such parade as was inconsistent with the situation of a private gentleman. It was his characteristic distinction that, without quitting the rank in which Providence had placed him, he had cast on it a lustre peculiarly his own. Nothing therefore could be more appropriate, than that the Bishops of the Church, the Princes of the Blood, the great warrior of the age, the King's chief servants, and the highest legal functionaries—whatever England had most renowned for talent and greatness—should assemble as they did around his unpretending bier. His simple name was its noblest decoration.

When his funeral reached Westminster Abbey on Saturday, Aug. 5th, the procession was joined by the members then attending the two Houses of parliament. Public business was suspended; the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord Chancellor, one Prince of the Blood, with others of the highest rank, took their place as pall-bearers beside the bier. It was followed by his sons, his relations, and immediate friends. The Prebendary then in residence, one of his few surviving college friends, met it at the Minster gate with the Church's funeral office; and whilst the vaulted roof gave back the anthem his body was laid in the north transept, close to the tombs of Pitt, Fox, and Canning.

It is impossible to conclude this history without observing the striking testimony which it bears to that inspired dictate: "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come." If ever any man drew a prosperous lot in this life, he did so, who has been here described. Yet his Christian faith was from first to last his talisman of happiness. Without it the buoyancy of his youthful spirits led to a frivolous waste of life, not more culpable than unsatisfying. With it came lofty conceptions, —an energy which triumphed over sickness and languor,

the coldness of friends and the violence of enemies,—a calmness not to be provoked,—a perseverance which repulse could not baffle. To these virtues was owing the happiness of his active days. Through the power of the same sustaining principle, his affection towards his fellow creatures was not dulled by the intercourse of life, nor his sweetness of temper impaired by the irritability of age. A firm trust in God, an undeviating submission to His will, an overflowing thankfulness,—these maintained in him to the last that cheerfulness which this world could neither give nor take away. They poured even upon his earthly pilgrimage the anticipated radiance of that brighter region, to which he has now doubtless been admitted. For "THE PATH OF THE JUST IS LIKE THE SHINING LIGHT, WHICH SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY."

THE END.

# APPENDIX.

*The following Memoranda dictated by Mr. Wilberforce, were found among his papers.*

More private.

It would indicate a strange insensibility to the ways of a gracious Providence, if I were to suffer the circumstance of my having Dr. Milner for my fellow-traveller to pass without observation. Wishing for an intelligent and agreeable companion, I requested my friend, Dr. Burgh of York, to accompany me, a man of whom it is difficult for me to speak with moderation, full as my memory must ever be of marks of a kindness that could scarcely be exceeded, and of a disposition always to forget himself, and to be ready to conform to his friend's wishes. A fund of knowledge of various kinds, great cheerfulness of temper, and liveliness of fancy, rendered him a delightful companion. But he had qualities also of a higher order—an entire conviction of the truth of revelation; a considerable acquaintance with ecclesiastical history; just principles of religion; and as affectionate a heart as ever warmed a human bosom; with a continual promptitude to engage in every office of benevolence: but the habit of associating with companions, and living for the most part in society which, whatever might be the opinion assented to by the understanding, exhibited no traces of spirituality in its ordinary conversation, had induced a habit of abstaining from all religious topics in his common intercourse, and even an appearance of levity which would have prevented his being known, except by those who were extremely intimate with him, or rather by those who being themselves also religious were likely to draw forth his secret thoughts and feelings, to have any more reflection than that average measure for which we are to give people credit, whose only visible attention to religion consists in their going to church on a Sunday. A gracious Providence prepared him, I doubt not, by a long illness for that change which he was to experience much sooner than could have been anticipated from the uncommon strength of his constitution, and the temperance of his habits; but had he been my fellow-traveller I should never

have benefited by him in the most important of all concerns; indeed I am persuaded that we neither of us should ever have touched on the subject of religion except in the most superficial and cursory way.

To my surprise Dr. Burgh declined accepting my proposal, and I next invited Dr. Milner to accompany me, chiefly prompted by his acknowledged talents and acquirements, and by my experience of his cheerfulness, good nature, and powers of social entertainment. It was the more important to me to secure such a fellow-traveller, because we were to have a tête-à-tête in my carriage; the ladies of my party travelling with their maids in a coach. It is somewhat curious, that, as I learned accidentally long afterwards, my grandfather had declared that in after-life I should go abroad with Isaac Milner as my tutor. I am bound to confess that I was not influenced to select Dr. Milner by any idea of his having religion more at heart than the bulk of our Cambridge society; and in fact, though his religious opinions were the same as his brother's, yet they were then far from having that influence over his heart and manners which they subsequently possessed; though it is due to him to declare that his conduct was always what is called correct and free from every taint of vice, and he had a warmth of benevolence which rendered him always ready to every good work. I must go further; had I known at first what his opinions were, it would have decided me against making him the offer: so true is it that a gracious hand leads us in ways that we know not, and blesses us not only without, but even against, our own plans and inclinations.

The recollections which I had of what I had heard and seen when I lived under my uncle's roof, had left in my mind a prejudice against their kind of religion as enthusiastic and carrying matters to excess; and it was with no small surprise I found on conversing with my friend on the subject of religion, that his principles and views were the same with those of the clergymen who were called Methodistical: this led to renewed discussions, and Milner (never backward in avowing his opinions, or entering into religious conversation) justified his principles by referring to the word of God. This led to our reading the Scriptures together, and by degrees I imbibed his sentiments; though I must confess with shame, that they long remained merely as opinions assented to by my understanding, but not influencing my heart. At length, however, I began to be impressed with a sense of the weighty truths, which were more or less the continual subjects of our conversation. I began to think what folly it was, nay, what madness, to continue month after month, nay, day after day, in a state in which a sudden call out of the world, which I was conscious might happen at any moment, would consign me to never-ending misery, while at the very same time I was firmly convinced from assenting to the great truths taught us in the New Testament, that the offers of the gospel were universal and free, in short that happiness, eternal happiness, was at my option.

As soon as I reflected seriously upon these subjects, the deep

guilt and black ingratitude of my past life forced itself upon me in the strongest colours. I condemned myself for having wasted my precious time, and opportunities, and talents; and for several months I continued to feel the deepest convictions of my own sinfulness, rendered only the more intense by the unspeakable mercies of our God and Saviour declared to us in the offers and promises of the gospel. These however by degrees produced in me something of a settled peace of conscience. I devoted myself for whatever might be the term of my future life, to the service of my God and Saviour, and, with many infirmities and deficiencies, through His help I continue until this day.

Conscious of my having sadly wasted my time and neglected my opportunities of improvement, I began to consider how I might best redeem whatever of life might remain to me. Parliamentary business both of a public and private nature (for wherever any landed, commercial, or manufacturing interest was in question, the county of York was interested) found me full employment for my time during the sitting of the House. I therefore considered how to employ my recess to the most advantage. Accordingly so soon as parliament was prorogued, I commonly settled myself, except for occasional residence at Buxton or Bath when my health required it, in the house of some intimate friend, chiefly at Mr. Gisborne's and Mr. Babington's, who kindly also received my mother and sister, where I was allowed the entire command of my own time, and was very little incommoded by country hospitalities. I breakfasted in my own room, dined with the family, and resumed my studies in the evening, joining the family party when I took my little supper half an hour or an hour before bed-time.

This may be a proper time for mentioning the uncommon kindness and liberality which I experienced from my constituents. In former times the county members displayed their equipages annually at the races, and constituted a part of the grand jury at the summer assizes; the latter indeed I should have been glad to attend but for the unseemly festivities which commonly take place at that period; I was not however wanted; the number of gentlemen of large fortune in the county was far more than sufficient to constitute a most respectable grand jury both at the spring and summer assizes. I could not consistently with my principles frequent the theatre and ball-room, and I knew that I should give offence by staying away were I actually at York; but no discontent was ever expressed at my not presenting myself to the county on these occasions. My friends appeared tacitly to admit my claim to the command of my own time during the recess, satisfied with my attending to their and the public interest during the session of Parliament. In fact no man I believe was ever more punctual in his attendance on the House of Commons than myself. I was always in my place on the first day of the session, and I do not remember having been ever absent on the last, excepting once when I was drawn into the country a day or two before the prorogation by the illness of some of my family; occasionally also I was present at the county meet-

ings, and when there I always took an active part in their proceedings.

That gracious Providence which all my life long has directed my course with mercy and goodness, and which in so many instances known only to myself has called forth my wonder and gratitude, was signally manifested in the first formation of my parliamentary connexion with the county of York, and in its unintermitted and long continuance. Had the change in my religious principles taken place a year sooner, humanly speaking I never could have become member for Yorkshire. The means I took, and the exertions I made, in pursuing that object, were such as I could not have used after my religious change; I should not have thought it right to carve for myself so freely, if I may use the phrase, (to shape my course for myself so confidently,) nor should I have adopted the methods by which I ingratiated myself in the good-will of some of my chief supporters; neither after my having adopted the principles I now hold, could I have conformed to the practices by which alone any man would be elected for any of the places in which I had any natural influence or connexion . . . .

My having been member for Hull gave me the opportunity of making myself known as a public man; it led to my formation of political connexions, and to my cultivation of the art of public speaking—all of which were among the means that prepared the way for my representing the county.

All circumstances considered . . my mercantile origin, my want of connexion or acquaintance with any of the nobility or gentry of Yorkshire . . my being elected for that great county appears to me upon the retrospect to have been so utterly improbable that I cannot but wonder—and in truth I ascribe it to a providential intimation—that the idea of my obtaining that high honour suggested itself to my imagination and in fact fixed itself within my mind. I mentioned it as a possible event to one or two private friends, but not to Mr. Pitt or any of my political connexions; yet entertaining this idea, I carefully prepared myself for the public debate that was soon to follow in the face of the whole county, and both at the public meeting and in the subsequent discussions which took place in the miscellaneous body of Mr. Pitt's supporters, it was this idea which regulated the line as well as animated the spirit of my exertions.

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*His own conduct. Without date or title.*

I CANNOT deny that from associating with men of the world, and hearing their principles, and calculations, and prospects, the ideas of aggrandizement would sometimes present themselves to my mind, and court my adoption. Various gentlemen were raised to the Upper

House, whom the partiality we feel where we ourselves are in question, might excuse my considering as having no better pretensions than myself to such an elevation: and besides the solid advantages of a permanent seat in the legislature, the securing of which involved the possessor in no expense or trouble, the Upper House appeared from various considerations to afford a more favourable field for bringing forward religious and moral improvements; the neglect of which, I had almost said the entire forgetfulness of them, has long appeared to me to be the grand defect of all our modern statesmen (for the last century). How different in this respect are they, though blessed with the light of Christianity, from the great legislators of antiquity, in whom the conservation or improvement of the national morals was always the primary object of their care! My fortune too was greater than that of some of those who were raised to the peerage; and at that time I thought it far the most probable that I should never enter into married life. But a little reflection beat down at once all such worldly appetencies. Since there could be no possible plea of a public nature, my exaltation would appear, and truly appear, to arise solely from my own request, and therefore would not merely have exhibited the show, but the reality, of my carving for myself, (if I may so express myself,) of being the artificer of my own fortune; whereas the true Christian, deeming it to be his duty to pursue the course that will be most agreeable to the will of God, endeavours to discover the path of duty from the indications of the Divine will to be collected from the passing events and circumstances, considered in combination with his own qualifications and dispositions: his grand inquiry continuing always the same, how he may best promote the glory of God, and secure his own salvation and that of those whose interests are consigned by Providence to his care.

Independently however of all religious considerations, it appeared to me that no little injury had been done to the credit and character of the House of Commons by the numerous peerages that were granted to men who had no public claims to such a distinction, and whose circumstances clearly manifested that borough or parliamentary interest was the basis of their elevation: hence the inference formerly to be drawn from the support of Commoners of large landed property, that the ministers who enjoyed it enjoyed also the esteem and confidence of the public, was no longer to be drawn; nor were such men entitled to more credit for the independence and purity of their political support than the representatives of the most ordinary boroughs. Various were the instances of country gentlemen of family and fortune, who appeared for a time to be honouring government by their support, sometimes in opposition to their family habits or political connexions, when at length out came the Gazette, proclaiming the explanation of their conduct, or at least bringing it into doubt with those who were disposed to suspect the purity of politicians. An example therefore appeared to me to be required of a contrary kind, nor could it be exhibited more properly than in the instance of one who having been some

time member for the greatest county in England, and being also the personal intimate of the Prime Minister, might be supposed likely to have been able, if he had made the endeavour, to succeed in obtaining the object of his wishes. Nor could the world, always sufficiently acute in discerning the faults and infirmities of those who profess to have more respect than ordinary for religion, have failed to notice the inconsistency of eagerness for worldly aggrandizement in one, whose principles ought to have moderated his desire of earthly distinctions, and to have rendered him even jealous of an advancement which would be likely to augment his temptations, and thereby increase the danger of his making shipwreck of his faith.

If such were my conclusions in the circumstances in which I was then placed, how much have they been strengthened since I have been blessed with a family! No one who forms his opinions from the word of God can doubt, that in proportion to a man's rank and fortune the difficulty of his progress in the narrow road and his ultimate admission into heaven is augmented; and no Christian can possibly doubt its being a parent's first duty to promote his children's spiritual advancement and everlasting happiness; but were the comfort in this life only, the object in view, no one at my time of life who has contemplated life with an observant eye, and who has looked into the interior of family life, can entertain a doubt that the probability of passing through the world with comfort, and of forming such connexions as may be most likely to ensure the enjoyment of domestic and social happiness, is far greater in the instance of persons of the rank of private gentlemen, than of that of noblemen who are naturally led to associate with people of their own rank—the sons being led to make fortune their primary object in the forming of matrimonial connexions that they may be able to maintain their stations in society. As for the daughters, private gentlemen of moderate fortunes, and clergymen, and even still more mercantile men, have few opportunities of cultivating an intimacy with them, and are afraid of venturing upon a connexion for life with partners whose opinions and habits have been formed on a scale disproportionate to the resources of people of moderate fortunes.

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