

1844

Testimonies Concerning Deceased Ministers: 1844

London Yearly Meeting

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TESTIMONIES
CONCERNING
DECEASED MINISTERS.

PRESENTED TO
THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,
HELD IN LONDON, 1844.

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A TESTIMONY

From the WESTERN MONTHLY MEETING of DEVONSHIRE, concerning SARAH ABBOTT, who died at Plymouth the 1st of 7th month, 1843, and was interred in Friends' Burial Ground there the 7th of the same, aged 84 years; a Minister about 49 years.

WHILST recording a few particulars of the life and last hours of a devoted servant of the Lord, and noticing the Christian virtues that adorned her character, it is not our intention to eulogize or exalt the creature, but to show forth the efficacy of that divine grace which brings salvation; that by her example, survivors may be animated to pursue the same blessed course, and enabled to reap the same reward of righteousness, peace, and joy, ascribing the honour and praise to Him alone to whom they are due.

The subject of this testimony, our much beloved and valued friend, Sarah Abbott, was the daughter of Isaac and Rachel Wilson, of Kendal, whose religious characters and services are well known in our Society. She was born there the 11th of the 6th month, 1759, and is described by an elderly Friend who remembers her when young, as being naturally of an amiable disposition, manifesting early a serious state of mind, and much interested in the spiritual and temporal welfare of those around her; visiting and

relieving the poor, particularly in sickness, and evincing that alacrity in doing whatever her hands found to do, which so remarkably characterised her in after life.

It does not appear that our deceased Friend has left any memoranda of her religious experiences, but she has frequently been heard to say, that "from early childhood she had mercifully known the drawings of the Father's love, through the Spirit of his beloved Son, our blessed Advocate and Mediator, and that she could testify to the all-sufficiency thereof, to sanctify and redeem, to strengthen and lead along, in the way of safety and of peace;" and having found the yoke of Christ easy, and his burden light, she was earnestly desirous that others might taste and see that the Lord is good. She expressed an humble opinion of herself, and observed, she could feelingly unite with the truth of the declaration, it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

It appears, by the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Kendal, that she was acknowledged a minister in the year 1794, and that whilst she was a member of it, she was frequently engaged in religious visits to the meetings and families of Friends in different parts of the kingdom, and occasionally had meetings with others not professing with us, in all which we believe her labours of love were highly acceptable.

On her marriage with our late dear friend, John Abbott, in the year 1806, she came to reside in Plymouth, and it may be truly said, that her example, both in a religious and social capacity, has been a blessing to many among us. The predominant feature of her mind was universal love—it was manifested in her daily walk through life, and was strikingly conspicuous in her ministry, qualifying her to impart counsel and encouragement to the rightly exercised,

consolation to the afflicted, and warning to the lukewarm and the transgressors.

During her residence at Plymouth, she was several times liberated with certificate from her Monthly Meeting, for religious services in various parts of the kingdom, and we believe these engagements tended to the edification of others and to her own peace. She was much interested in the right administration of our discipline, esteeming it essential to the good order and Christian character of the Society; and although considerate toward human infirmity, she saw the need that moral delinquency should be subjected to right judgment. Whilst confidently believing in the truth of our Christian principles, she was charitable in judging others who differed from her in religious profession, and evinced a due regard for the sincere of all denominations.

In the domestic circle, she was kind, affectionate, and considerate, and this extended to every branch of her household. Being naturally of a cheerful disposition, her society was both pleasant and instructive to young people, many of whom, connected with her own and her late husband's families, she had, at different periods of her life, taken under her immediate protection, to whom her warm affection, unceasing solicitude, and truly parental kindness, greatly and deservedly endeared her.

She was an example of Christian disinterestedness in the ordinary affairs of life. She sympathized deeply with the poor in their distresses, and was a liberal benefactor to them and to institutions for their benefit, experiencing, we doubt not, the truth of our Lord's declaration, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

About the seventy-second year of her age, she met with an injury from a fall, which occasioned lameness the remainder of her life. This was peculiarly trying to one of her active habits, but it was borne with exemplary patience and resignation, under the belief, that "all things

work together for good to them that love God." Notwithstanding this infirmity, she was diligent in the attendance of our meetings, although it subjected her to great personal inconvenience and suffering, regarding it as a *peculiar privilege*, and believing that many sustained great loss from the neglect of it.

With advancing years her bodily strength gradually declined, but she was favoured to retain her mental faculties with great clearness. About five years previous to the close of her life, she had an illness, apparently near unto death, during which she was mercifully preserved in patience, uttering many impressive observations. On one occasion, after much bodily suffering, having obtained some hours of refreshing sleep, her lively sense of gratitude was expressed in these words of elevated thanksgiving: "Adoration unto Him who is above all knowledge and beyond all praise;—magnified be his name who has so helped me this night." Another time, being asked by one of her daughters if she did not feel the everlasting arms underneath, she replied, "*Yes*:—I have remembered the language, 'He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.'" A remark being made as to the desirableness of being able to say "Thy will be done," she responded, "It has been my desire:—Not my will, but thine be done, O God!" Another time she said, "I am not anxious about getting better, but desire to leave every care to the Judge of all—my great concern is, that love may prevail over all." Being for a short time supported in bed, she broke forth in a strain of devotional fervour ever memorable to those around her, "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God. The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; yes, this is his assured language. Trust in the Lord at all times, and no disappointment will attend. I have no anxiety, but if it please Infinite Wisdom to sustain me a little longer in this dark valley, all is safe.

The good Shepherd has been with me all my life long." On the words in Revelations being repeated to her, "Worthy is the Lamb," she instantly, in a sweet and powerful voice, continued the context, "that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," for evermore.

The illness which terminated the life of our beloved friend was only of ten days' continuance, during which, from the oppression of disease, she was incapable of much conversation of any kind, yet at intervals, not a few precious and consoling expressions fell from her lips, evincing that her soul reposed in peaceful humble confidence in her God and Saviour, whether for life or death, being enabled to commit all into the Divine hand, to cast herself in the full assurance of faith upon Him who she thankfully acknowledged had helped her even from early youth. Gratitude for present mercies seemed to be the covering of her spirit, and solicitude for the spiritual and temporal welfare of her household, continued prominent even in this state of weakness. To one of her young relations who kindly attended her, she said with much fervour, "My dear, seek the Lord and his strength; seek his face evermore;" and clasping her hands, repeated, "seek his face evermore." During much of the last night of her life, those who had the privilege of being with her were impressed with the persuasion, that whilst the redeemed spirit yet lingered here, something of a foretaste of the heavenly joy on which she was about to enter, was already granted her. That universal love which had distinguished her character and conduct through life, was still conspicuous as she approached the immediate presence of Him who is love itself. On being asked whether she had any particular message to her friends, she answered, "Love to all," adding with affectionate emphasis, "most sincerely, I wish none may be lost." Not many hours preceding the close, she uttered the vocal tribute, "Render

unto the Lord thanksgiving and praise," and remarked, in evident allusion to the prospect of dissolution, "His own appointed time is best, I hope my head will be kept above the waters," which was indeed graciously realized, and we doubt not she was found among the number of those servants, who, when their Lord cometh are found watching, with their loins girded about, and their lamps burning; that to her, death is swallowed up in victory, and that she has entered into the joy of her Lord.

Signed on behalf of our Meeting aforesaid, held at Plymouth the 1st of 11th month, 1843.

A TESTIMONY

*From HARDSHAW WEST MONTHLY MEETING, concerning
ELIZABETH ROBSON, deceased.*

THIS, our beloved friend, the youngest daughter of Isaac and Elizabeth Stephenson of Bridlington Quay, in Yorkshire, was born there on the 25th of the 6th month, 1771. Of her early religious impressions we have but few particulars, but there is reason to believe that when very young her mind was preciousy favoured with the visitations of Divine love. On one occasion, whilst but a child, her parents being absent from home, her youngest brother was much distressed at being left without them; observing this, and participating in the same feeling, she knelt down and fervently implored the Divine preservation, which had a calming influence upon their tender minds.

After the decease of her parents, she resided with her brother, Isaac Stephenson, at Stockton-on-Tees, until the year 1796, when she was united in marriage with our friend, Thomas Robson, then of Darlington, a union which they were permitted to enjoy for the space of nearly forty-seven years.

For several years she had to pass through many spiritual exercises and conflicts of mind, a preparation, no doubt, for that service to which she was afterwards called. As the work of Divine grace progressed in her own soul, her interest in the eternal welfare of her fellow-professors increased also, and she was at times constrained to give expression to her feelings in meetings for discipline. In the year 1808 she was

made willing, in a Meeting for Worship, to express her desire "that those who were qualified for service in the church might come forward in their ranks in righteousness." After this act of dedication, she told her husband that her mind felt "clothed with the garment of praise." Being faithful in the little, she became ruler over more; yet she was deeply solicitous that, in so solemn an engagement, she might be preserved from moving without the renewed putting forth of the Heavenly Shepherd.

In the year 1810, she was recorded as an acknowledged minister, and in the following year removed with her husband and family to Sunderland, within the compass of Newcastle Monthly Meeting. From a very early period, after this time, she was for several years largely engaged in religious service in many parts of England, and in 1813, in company with her brother, Isaac Stephenson, she visited Ireland. Of one of the services on this journey, she thus writes: "We have had about one hundred and twenty family-sittings at Cork; the cup which hath been handed to us hath been mixed, both bitter and sweet, but without the former we cannot expect to enjoy the latter, so that I desire to be thankful for both." She also visited the Scilly Islands, and had extensive labour amongst the miners and sea-faring men in Cornwall, Northumberland, and Durham, amongst whom, it is believed, that seals to her ministry remain to this day.

In the year 1816, she was deeply exercised under a belief that it was required of her to visit some parts of the continent of Europe, and in company with Elizabeth Fry, (daughter of William Storrs Fry,) she entered upon this arduous engagement, in which they were joined by William Allen and his wife. After travelling through part of the Netherlands, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, this little company was brought into much affliction at Geneva, by the illness of Charlotte Allen, whose decease soon after-

wards took place in that city. This was to Elizabeth Robson and her companion a distressing and discouraging circumstance; but their friend, William Allen, in the midst of his own affliction, was made instrumental to their help, and encouraged them to proceed with their religious engagement, remarking, that "we ought not to dispute in the dark what we have seen in the light." Upon leaving Nismes, whilst on this journey, she thus wrote: "Soon after we set off, I felt my mind drawn into silence, and such a flow of peace filled my heart for a considerable time as I have seldom experienced, in which I rejoiced, and a song of praise was raised in my soul for the many favours extended in divers ways to me, a poor unworthy creature." In the certificate from the Friends at Minden, this visit is recorded in the following terms: "By their ministry, received of the Lord, both in meetings and in families, they have enlivened, watered, watched, and strengthened the seed of the kingdom of God, so that we have cause to be humbly thankful to the Great Father for this extension of his favour."

During the five following years she was much engaged in religious service, having in that period visited Scotland, the Orkney Islands, the southern counties of England, and some parts of Wales, also Ireland a second time.

In the year 1821, she removed with her husband and family to Liverpool, and thus became a member of this Monthly Meeting. Respecting this change of residence she remarks, "I soon found an extensive field of labour opened for me, not only among Friends, but also among the people generally." Many public meetings were soon afterwards held in Liverpool and its vicinity, and in other parts of Lancashire. The sweet peace and cheerful composure which usually attended her at the conclusion of these engagements evinced, as she frequently remarked, that she had not expended her own strength, and that

He whom she was endeavouring faithfully to serve, was a good and gracious Master.

With that dedication which marked her services, she continued to labour diligently amongst Friends and others in various parts of this nation, until the year 1824, when she entered upon a visit to the continent of North America. This engagement occupied four years, during which she had many deep baptisms and conflicts to endure. These were greatly increased by having to contend against the unsound principles so mournfully prevalent there at that time ; herein she had often to encounter much opposition, yet she was enabled, in the spirit of meekness, unflinchingly to uphold our belief in the divinity and atonement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Referring to this engagement she remarks, " Thus, after many perils by sea and land, and amongst false brethren, I was permitted, through adorable goodness, to reach my own dear home, and to meet my beloved husband and children in sweet peace, to our humble rejoicing ; everlasting praise be ascribed to the Lord for his care and protection to one of the least of his flock."

In 1831, accompanied by her husband, she again visited some parts of the continent of Europe, holding meetings with those under our name, and with serious persons of other denominations in Germany, Switzerland, and the South of France. From the year 1832 to 1837, she continued to be diligently engaged in the discharge of various religious services ; and in the year 1838, accompanied by her beloved husband, she embarked a second time for America, in which country she laboured abundantly, much to the comfort and edification of Friends. She also held numerous meetings with the inhabitants, both white and coloured, in many parts, not only where Friends are settled, but in other districts of the United States, remote from any of their meetings. We find the following memorandum written during the course

of this journey: "The pure seed of life seems to lie very low in many places, and much obscured by an earthly mind and a spirit of ease; and sometimes, after feeling entirely divested of all sense of good, when there seemed to be nothing but death to be experienced, I have found that by keeping my eye directed to my gracious Master, a little light has arisen out of the darkness, like a little spring of life, which, by attending to it, has increased, and strength has been afforded and matter supplied to advocate the precious cause of truth; and in the fresh opening close doctrine has been handed forth in gospel authority, in love, and without fear of giving offence, the slavish fear of man being taken away. After such seasons of great exercise, sweet peace has been my portion, and my spirit at times has bowed in reverent thankfulness to my heavenly Father, in that He is pleased to make use of so unworthy a creature, and desires have been renewed that I might be increasingly prepared for his most blessed work and service." She returned from this extensive field of labour in the year 1842, in the possession of that peace and comfort which abundantly compensated for all her labours, and for which her heart was often filled with gratitude to her gracious Lord.

She regarded this as an evening sacrifice, and with the exception of paying a visit to the families of Friends in her own Monthly Meeting, a visit to Friends in Scotland, and attending the Yearly Meeting in London, she spent the short remainder of her life in the quiet enjoyment of home, to which she had naturally a peculiar attachment. This, however, did not prevent her from being again made willing to forego her domestic comforts for the service of her Divine Master, and at the Monthly Meeting, held on the 30th of the 11th month, 1843, she acquainted her friends that she apprehended it was required of her to visit Friends of the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex, intimating, at the same time, her sense of the diminution of her bodily powers, but desiring

that her little remaining strength might be spent in the service of her Lord. She was cordially liberated for this work, but on the following day, whilst making preparations for the journey, she was seized with an attack of paralysis, which suddenly reduced her to a state of helplessness, and nearly deprived her of the power of speech. Under these circumstances, almost precluded from any expression, and awakening but at distant intervals to a transient state of consciousness, the patient endurance of her affliction, the calmness and serene repose which rested upon her countenance, and the precious feeling attending, furnished abundant evidence that all was peace within.

In this state she continued until the 11th of the 12th month, when her purified spirit, freed from the shackles of mortality, was permitted, we reverently trust, through the mercy and mediation of our holy Redeemer, to join the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

She died in the seventy-third year of her age, having been a minister about thirty-six years. Her remains were interred in Friends' burying-ground at Liverpool, on the 17th of the 12th month, 1843, on which occasion a large and solemn meeting was held, and many testimonies were borne to the power and efficacy of that grace by which she had become what she was.

Our dear friend deeply felt the need of renewed baptisms preparatory to any public service in the cause of her Divine Master, and it was only to those most intimate with her that what she experienced on these occasions was known, she being concerned to observe the injunction, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret."

She was largely gifted for religious service, sound and

scriptural in doctrine, firmly upholding the religious testimonies more peculiar to our Society, and never shrinking from the faithful declaration of them. She was often led to unfold and explain the important doctrines of the Gospel, her illustrations of which were strikingly appropriate, and we believe that to many her Gospel labours were blessed. In expostulating with the careless, the lukewarm, the worldly-minded, or the rebellious, she was earnest and persuasive. In religious meetings, with those not of our own Society, she was eminently qualified, and in her private labours in the families of friends, (a service in which she was often engaged during the whole of her course as a minister,) she was frequently led to exhort them to simplicity and moderation in all things, setting forth the safety of such a state, and how greatly it tends to relieve the mind from undue anxiety and unnecessary burdens.

In the diligent occupation of her time our dear friend was a striking example, being always careful, when not called into public religious service, that it should be constantly and usefully employed. In her private walk she was careful to observe that simplicity and moderation which she was often engaged to recommend to others, and she was much beloved for her humility and meekness. She deeply felt for, and sympathized with, those in affliction, whether of body or mind, and amongst the many outward trials which it was her own lot from time to time to endure, she was preserved in much patience and resignation, and favoured to maintain great equanimity and cheerfulness.

In her dedicated course has been fulfilled that declaration of Holy Writ, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Given forth by the said Meeting, held at Liverpool, this 28th day of the 3rd month, 1844.

A TESTIMONY

Of GRACECHURCH-STREET MONTHLY MEETING, LONDON,
concerning WILLIAM ALLEN, deceased.

“Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”

It having pleased the great Head of the church to remove from amongst us, this our beloved friend, we feel it incumbent upon us to give forth a testimony concerning him ; not from any desire to eulogize the instrument, but to magnify that grace by which he was, through a long course of years, enabled to stand amongst us, as an upright pillar in the spiritual building.

He was the son of Job and Margaret Allen, of Spitalfields, London, and was born in the 8th mo., 1770. His pious parents early directed his mind to take heed to the convictions of the Spirit of Truth. Their instructions and tender restraint were especially blessed to him, and he often, through life, acknowledged with filial affection and gratitude, the benefit he had derived from the watchful care of his beloved mother, to whose comfort, in her declining years, he felt it a privilege to minister.

Through yielding to the tendering influence of Divine love, his heart became deeply impressed with the truth and excellence of those principles in which he was educated. Although of a lively disposition, and subjected to many of the temptations incident to natural genius, he was, in a remarkable manner, preserved in humility and in a concern to seek,

in preference to all other things, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." His inclination for scientific pursuits led him to quit the business into which his father had introduced him, and to enter a chemical establishment at Plough Court, Lombard Street. Here his talents, united with habits of active industry, rendered him so useful that he soon became an important assistant, and ultimately a principal in the concern.

In the year 1796 he was united in marriage to Mary Hamilton. The domestic happiness which he enjoyed in this connexion was of short duration; for in less than eleven months she was removed by death, soon after the birth of a daughter. Whilst the tide of sorrow was ready to overwhelm him, the Lord was mercifully near to sustain, and he was enabled to believe that this afflictive dispensation was permitted in love. In the depth of his distress he writes, "The billows were checked, and a portion of heavenly serenity spread itself over my mind."

As he advanced in life, he was much occupied with the executive part of an increasing business, and in the prosecution of various studies connected with it; yet amidst his numerous avocations, he was a bright example in the diligent attendance of his own week-day meeting, and was careful also to set apart a portion of each day for private religious retirement, a practice from which he derived strength and comfort to the latest period of his life. The following memorandum written about this time, evinces his watchful care lest temporal concerns should obstruct a full dedication of heart to the Lord. "Oh! saith my soul, may I never love anything more than Him, but be favoured to keep everything in subordination, yea, under my feet. Oh! that I may be wholly devoted to Him and his cause, being careful for nothing, but how to fill up my duty from time to time."

Being occupied in the pursuit of many benevolent and

scientific objects, he was brought into contact with persons who filled important and conspicuous positions in the world. He was many years engaged as a public lecturer on chemistry, &c.; and he availed himself of the opportunity thus afforded, to impress upon his audience the great truths of revealed religion, and was careful to manifest, by an undeviating adherence to the simplicity of his holy profession, that his chief concern was to prove himself a humble and self-denying disciple of the Lord Jesus. The following memorandums, made after commencing a course of lectures in the 1st mo., 1804, evince the exercise of his mind on this subject: "I hope I have been hitherto favoured to act consistently in my public situation at the Royal Institution. May I be preserved, and never give up my principles for the applause of the world." At a later date, in allusion to this engagement, he says, "Some comfort in reflecting that I have endeavoured to behave consistently with the profession I am making; so continue to help, dear Lord, and graciously preserve me from bringing reproach on thy great cause."

After his marriage with Charlotte Hanbury in 1806, he divided his time between Plough Court and Stoke Newington, the latter place eventually becoming his usual residence. He was appointed by our Monthly Meeting to the station of elder in 1813, having for nine years acceptably filled the office of overseer. He was seriously impressed with a sense of the responsibility incurred in these important stations, and whilst watching over the flock, he was careful to enter into frequent and close self-examination; this is instructively shown by the following remarks, dated 9th mo., 1817: "For some days past I have been humbled under a sense of my own weaknesses and imperfections. Wash me, and make me clean, has been my prayer. The religion of Jesus requires purity of heart. It is not enough that the outward conduct be irreproachable,

or even applauded by men. The thoughts of our hearts ought continually to be acceptable to Him who sees in secret." Under date of the same month he says, "How I long to experience more and more of the cleansing sanctifying power of the dear Redeemer," and, in contemplating, at the same time, the infinite purity of the Divine Being, and the corruptions of his own heart, he deeply felt the absolute necessity of a Mediator.

In the year 1816 our dear friend and his wife accompanied two women Friends who were liberated for religious service on the continent of Europe. After visiting the Friends of Pymont and Minden, they were proceeding to the South of France, when William Allen was brought into deep affliction by the loss of his wife, who died near Geneva, after an illness of about three weeks. In this proving season the eternal God was his refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms, and in the depth of his anguish he uttered the language, "Thy will, O Lord, be done."

In the following year, by appointment of the Meeting for Sufferings, he accompanied two women Friends from America on a visit to the South of France. In the review of this journey he expresses his reverent thankfulness for the mercies vouchsafed, and adds, "I distinctly felt the reward of peace for this little act of faith and dedication."

His mind was often brought into deep exercise under an apprehension that it would be required of him to bear a public testimony to the goodness of his gracious Master, and some of his remarks about this time show the progress of the work of preparation.

1817, 5th mo. 5th. "Of this week I must record with thankfulness, that however unworthy of Divine regard, it has been mercifully manifested. My faith has been greatly strengthened, and I have been enabled to offer up

all that may be called for. It is only however in the day of the Lord's power, that his people are a willing people."

5th mo. 17th. "At the invitation of E. J. Fry, I saw the female prisoners at Newgate. The plan of this dear friend seems to me to be sanctioned from above. I ventured to address them at parting, and when I got back to Newington had peace in it. What a favour!"

5th mo. 25th. "The Meeting for Worship on 6th day, was uncommonly solemn and confirming. I thought I could have kneeled down and given thanks at the conclusion, but was afraid that I was not sufficiently purified."

In the year 1818, under a solemn sense of the awfulness of the engagement, our dear friend, at length yielding to the constraining power of heavenly love, spoke as a minister in our religious assemblies. In the course of the same year, and with the concurrence of his Monthly Meeting, he united with his beloved friend Stephen Grellet, now of Burlington, North America, in extensive service on the continent of Europe. During this journey, which occupied about eighteen months, he was indefatigable in his exertions on behalf of the poor, the ignorant, and the oppressed; and in several instances his labours were signally owned by the Divine blessing. They visited the little company professing with Friends in Norway, from thence, proceeding by Stockholm, and through Finland, to Petersburg. Much of their service in that city and elsewhere, consisted in diffusing a knowledge of our Christian principles amongst persons of piety and influence, and these opportunities were often eminently owned by Him who had put them forth, so that our dear friend observes, "We may indeed say 'It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes.'" When visiting some of the large military schools of Russia, he saw with much concern that the reading lessons were extracted from the works of infidel writers. Feeling the importance of remedying this evil, he forcibly pointed out to some of the leading

pious characters in Petersburg, the excellent opportunity which these schools afforded for disseminating a knowledge of Christian truth by the introduction of portions of Holy Scripture. His suggestions met with warm encouragement ; he was solicited to prepare a selection from the sacred volume, and, assisted by some of his friends, he compiled the Scripture lessons which have ever since been in use in those schools, and have become extensively circulated in most of the countries of Europe, as well as in South Africa. At the close of the day on which this work was commenced, he remarks in his journal, "I think that I never felt more peace or Divine support in any plan or engagement than I did this evening." After leaving Petersburg, they proceeded through some of the large towns of Russia to the German colonies near the banks of the Dnieper, thence to Constantinople, Smyrna, Greece, and the Ionian Islands, finding, from place to place, a field of service open before them. After a detention at Zante, in consequence of a serious and protracted illness, he returned home through Italy, Switzerland, and France. On the review of this journey he thus writes : " My mind was calm and peaceful, though humbled in the feeling of my weakness and numerous imperfections. I am abundantly convinced that in my own strength, as a rational creature, I can do nothing to promote the dear Master's work ; but I have faith to believe that through his Spirit strengthening me, I can do all that He requires of me."

Soon after his return, he says, " I seem to have repeated evidence that the Lord is calling me to public service, but I am often much afraid, and desire never to speak in his name but when He is graciously pleased to furnish the power." His communications being much to the comfort and edification of his friends, he was recorded as an approved minister in the 5th mo. 1820. He observes that this placed him in an awful situation, and adds, " May the great Preserver of men be near to sustain and support under every trial, and to

prevent me from doing anything which might tend to injure his great and good cause."

In the year 1822, our dear friend again visited the Continent of Europe. He went forth, as he remarks, in simple faith, not being able to see far before him, but as he was careful to follow the leadings of his Divine Master, the path of duty became clear, and he was made an instrument of great usefulness to his fellow-creatures. At Vienna and Verona he was the means of diffusing widely amongst persons connected with the principal governments of Europe, a knowledge of the iniquities of the African slave-trade; he also pleaded the cause of the oppressed Greeks, for whom he obtained some important privileges, and that of the persecuted Waldenses of Piedmont, who, in consequence of his exertions, gained increased liberty of conscience. After some religious service amongst this people, and also in Switzerland, Germany, and France, he was favoured to return home in safety; and in a review of the mercies received, he says, "deeply humbled in thankfulness that my dear Master had preserved those who were dearest to me, and brought me back to them in the possession of his sweet peace."

In the several relations of domestic and social life, his character shone with peculiar brightness, and was calculated to attract those around him to that blessed principle of truth, which, in no common degree, guided him in his daily walk through life. He cherished a lively interest in the comfort of all, whatever might be their station, who were placed within the sphere of his immediate influence; and, with a self-sacrificing kindness, he sought to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare. His ear was at all times open to the call of human suffering; and he was ever ready to use personal exertion, and to distribute freely of his substance, for the relief of the necessitous.

In the year 1823 he was again introduced into the depths of sorrow, by the decease of his tenderly beloved and only

child ; yet he was remarkably sustained by an Almighty Power, and when his spirit was ready to faint within him, he was enabled to say, " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." This sore bereavement was not permitted to check the flowing of that stream of Divine love, which embraced in its course the whole family of man. In the school of affliction he was stimulated to greater diligence in the occupation of the talents committed to his trust. Various and important were the objects for which, from early life, he felt himself called upon actively to use them. One of the most prominent of these was the religious and liberal education of our youth, many of whom shared the privilege of his fatherly and disinterested efforts to promote their improvement. His exertions in the important work of early instruction were, however, not limited to our own society, but extended to the children of the poor of every clime, and of every colour ; and, in order to spread universally the blessings of an education based on sound Christian principles, he became one of the founders of the British and Foreign School Society, an institution to which he conscientiously devoted much of his energies to the close of his active life. He was an early and zealous advocate for the promotion of universal peace, and was deeply affected by the sufferings of the enslaved Africans ; labouring for upwards of fifty years to promote their liberation from cruel bondage. He was frequently concerned to impress on the minds of persons employed in the administration of government, the great principles of righteousness and mercy, in reference to such as had transgressed the laws of their country. The circulation of the Holy Scriptures throughout the world, was an object which lay near his heart ; he was also instrumental in the wide distribution of religious publications, particularly such as tended to spread a knowledge of the principles of our Christian profession ; having found by experience that in their practical

working, they are eminently calculated to promote "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

He was often acceptably engaged in religious service in England, both by appointments of the Yearly Meeting, and with certificates from this Monthly Meeting, and was several times in Ireland, where he once paid a general visit.

In 1827 he was united in marriage to Grizell Birkbeck, whom he survived. In the years 1832 and 1833 he again joined his beloved friend Stephen Grellet in an extensive journey on the continent of Europe. They visited some places in Holland, several of the states of Germany, and parts of Hungary, France, and Spain. Some of the meetings for worship were very memorable seasons, the effects of which have since been feelingly acknowledged. Though the public profession of the religion of Spain did not admit of this line of service there, yet they found many opportunities of spreading the truth. They obtained access to the public institutions by means of a special permission from the Government, and when they had finished their labours at Madrid, they stated the result of their observations in a memorial to the king, which he cordially received.

In the year 1840 our beloved friend, although sensible of the infirmities of advanced age, felt drawn, in the love of the Gospel, once more to visit, as he expressed it, the brethren in some parts of the European continent; and he informed our Monthly Meeting that he had a prospect of travelling with his dear sister in the truth, Elizabeth Joseph Fry, who was liberated for a similar service. His concern was feelingly united with, and with his companion, and her brother Samuel Gurney, he proceeded through Belgium and Holland to Germany. They visited the Friends at Minden and Pyrmont, and thence went on to Hanover, and various places in Prussia, labouring diligently in the work to which they felt themselves called. Meet-

ings for worship were appointed at their request in Brussels, Amsterdam, Hanover, Berlin, and Dusseldorf, all of which were numerous attended, and, as well as those held in smaller places, were, in a remarkable degree, times of solemnity and edification. In reference to some of them our dear friend remarks, "The blessed power of truth reigned over all." He returned to England to attend the Yearly Meeting, and was afterwards enabled to perform the remaining service which he believed was required of him in France, Germany, and Switzerland. Respecting this journey, he says, "The tribute of thanksgiving and praise was, from time to time, offered to Him to whom alone is the glory." It was not only by visits to the various countries of Europe that he sought to promote the best interests of man; he maintained also an extensive correspondence with religious persons, through the instrumentality of some of whom he was enabled to minister to the temporal and spiritual wants of many.

The weightiness of our dear friend's spirit was felt in our religious assemblies; he reverently waited for Divine help, and was careful not to utter words without the fresh putting forth of the good Shepherd. His engagements in the ministry were peculiarly attended with the unction of heavenly love; they were marked by great simplicity, and by a fervent desire that all might be attracted to the fountain of life, and be made experimental partakers of that refreshing which comes from the presence of the Lord. He was often led to dwell upon the spiritual nature of true worship, and of that "baptism which now saveth;" and he was frequently concerned to bear testimony to the infinite value of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, dwelling on the redemption that was thereby purchased for fallen man, and on the consolation to be derived from the application of this doctrine. The preservation of the youth amongst us, and their establishment in the truth as it is in Jesus, were especially the objects

of his fervent concern ; and he frequently and affectionately exhorted them to attend to the monitions of the Holy Spirit, and to yield obedience to all that was manifested to be consistent with the Divine will.

He was a man of prayer, and in his private retirements, often poured forth his spirit in earnest supplications at the Throne of grace. So great was his sense of the awfulness of publicly calling on the name of the Lord, in the congregations of the people, that when he ventured on this solemn engagement he manifested much holy fear and brokenness of spirit, and a baptizing power was often sensibly felt to accompany the offering.

In the latter years of his life he passed a considerable portion of his time at his residence near the village of Lindfield, in Sussex, where he had established schools of industry, and pursued many plans for improving the condition of the labouring population. During his stay at this place, in the autumn of 1842, he had a serious illness, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered : his mental faculties had lost their vigour, and he was under the necessity of withdrawing from many of those avocations, in which he had been long and usefully engaged. But under this trial he gratefully recognized the care of his gracious Lord, and in a letter to a friend, dated 17th of 10th mo., he says, " I believe this illness is sent in mercy to me, to wean me more and more from all things below, and to make me look more steadily to the end of time." He was, however, permitted so far to recover as to be able to return to Stoke Newington, and generally to unite with his friends in their religious meetings, a privilege which he greatly prized. He was still sometimes engaged in the ministry with weight and clearness, and his spirit was, in a remarkable degree, clothed with love. Under an humbling sense of his own unworthiness, he was frequently led to speak with gratitude of his hopes of mercy, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ his Saviour. Though

at times under much depression from the sinking of nature, he said those feelings were only bodily, and that he felt no condemnation. The calm sweetness of his spirit did indeed testify that his mind was stayed on God. He had for some time expressed his belief that his day's work was nearly done, but he could not say he had a wish as to whether his time here were longer or shorter. Thus prepared, with his loins girded about and his light burning, he peacefully waited for the summons of his Lord. Only the day previous to his last seizure, which was during his stay at Lindfield, he observed how particularly comfortable he had been for the last few days.

In the course of this illness, which was nearly of eleven weeks' continuance, he was remarkably preserved in patience, and though in the great prostration of the bodily powers the mental also participated, yet his religious sensibility was lively, and his love flowed towards all around him as well as to his absent friends. In sending a message to one of them, he said, "Tell him, though I cannot now do much for the cause, I dearly love those who love the cause." The Scriptures were frequently read to him at his own request, as well as other religious books, and on these occasions he evinced great tenderness of spirit. When hearing with interest an account of some of our early Friends, he remarked, that he often felt comforted in the hope of being one day united to all those worthies *for ever*; he afterwards added with tears, "O! how often I think with comfort of those gracious words of the Saviour, 'That they may be with me, where I am;'" and, in alluding to the passage, "I in them, and thou in me," he said, it was a precious thing to be one in Christ. He desired that some young persons, in whom he felt much interest, might be told that he had been sustained in this illness beyond what he could have expected, that "nothing but a sense of the Lord's presence could support at such a time," but,

he added, "The Lord never will forsake those who trust in Him—He never will." He said it was a trying time, but all must come to it; flesh and heart failed, but he again repeated his assurance that the Lord never would forsake those who trusted in Him. When sending another message of affection to an absent friend, he remarked, that there was no happiness but in the path of duty. His mind, when capable of reflection, seemed steadily turned towards heavenly things, and short ejaculations of "O Lord! dear Lord!" continued, when nature was almost exhausted. In the near approach of dissolution his appearance indicated a heavenly serenity: his hands were raised in the attitude of prayer, and then tranquilly rested on his bosom as the redeemed spirit was gently released from its earthly tenement. At that solemn period a holy calm pervaded the chamber, and the consoling belief was granted that through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus he had entered into the joy of his Lord.

He died at Lindfield, on the 30th of 12mo. 1843, and his remains were interred on the 6th of 1st mo. 1844, at Stoke Newington, after a large and solemn meeting held on the occasion. He was seventy-three years of age, a minister about twenty-five years.

Signed in and on behalf of Gracechurch Street Monthly Meeting, held at White Hart Court, the 6th of the 3rd month, 1844.

A TESTIMONY

From TOTTENHAM MONTHLY MEETING, concerning MARIA Fox, who died at Tottenham on the 15th of the 1st month, 1844, and was buried there on the 23rd of the same, being nearly 51 years of age, and a Minister upwards of 20 years.

IN reviewing the life and character of this our beloved departed friend, we desire to bear our testimony to the sufficiency of Divine grace, by which she was what she was ; to set forth the dealings of the Lord with his servant, and the efficacy of that power which sustained her, whilst passing through the valley of the shadow of death.

Maria Fox was the daughter of Benjamin and Tabitha Middleton, of Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire ; friends who honouring God in their lives, were honoured of Him, and whose circumspect example, and Christian care and counsel, were eminently blessed to their beloved daughter. They exercised a wise care in the choice of her associates, and enjoined plainness of language and attire as a constituent part of gospel simplicity ; filial obedience, strengthened by filial love, led her to yield ready submission to their wishes ; and these restraints, which at that period were sometimes felt to be irksome, afterwards obtained the assent of her matured judgment. Our dear friend was early accustomed to useful domestic employment, and trained in habits of order and industry. She was of an amiable disposition, and possessed much natural vivacity, an

ardent mind, and a warm imagination, pursuing whatever she engaged in with great earnestness and perseverance. Her judicious and watchful parents provided her with suitable reading, and other means of acquiring useful knowledge, and she diligently and profitably availed herself of these advantages. She delighted in contemplating and studying the works of creative wisdom, with a heart warmed with love and gratitude to their almighty Author; but she felt that such pursuits do not satisfy the wants of an immortal soul. In reference to this interesting period of her life, it is instructive to observe, how, in deep humiliation of soul, she delineates her earlier days in the following review of the first forty years of her life.

1833, 3rd mo., 30th.—“This day, being my birth-day, could not fail to bring with it many serious reflections. The charge of Moses to the assembled tribes of Israel, when he recounted to them the mighty acts of God, has been much in my mind. ‘Remember all the way by which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.’ O my soul! thou art, indeed, especially called upon to consider and to admire, with humble and adoring gratitude, the way by which thou hast been led; the difficulties, the temptations, the deliverances, and, above all, the multiplied and abounding mercies thou hast experienced.

“In the ten years of childhood I enjoyed the tender care of pious parents, whose unremitting endeavour it was to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to introduce them early to an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and by wise and judicious culture, to prepare the soil of the heart for the operations of the heavenly Husbandman. Being of a high spirit and volatile temper, my disposition rendered restraint as needful as it was irksome, and often brought my tenderly affectionate parents into deep anxiety on my account. Many and fervent were their prayers, I doubt not, that I might be

brought under the regulating influence of the Holy Spirit, and be led to see the beauty of the truth as it is in Jesus ; and these, their petitions, I have often since considered as the richest inheritance they could bequeath to their children. Very early was my heart made sensible of the love of God, and strong desires were at times raised in my soul to become one of his children. But notwithstanding these good impressions, and my love of the Holy Scriptures, which I read much and with great delight, the next ten years were, for the most part, years of inconsideration and levity. In the course of them we were deprived of our excellent mother, whose example was peculiarly instructive, and her counsels prudent, judicious, and affectionate. My thoughts often recur, with bitter anguish, to the few years which immediately followed her death, when I might have afforded so much solace to my tender and deeply-sorrowing father, had but my heart been duly subjected to the restraining power of the cross of Christ : and O ! what cause have I to adore the preventing grace which saved my feet from the path of destruction, at a time when my own folly and inconsideration would have made me an easy prey of our soul's enemy ; then, perhaps, were those prayers of my beloved parents, which had for so many years been offered up, permitted to descend on their unworthy child, in the blessing of that God who heareth and answereth prayer, and who in his tender mercy was pleased to follow me with the reproofs of instruction.

“The ten years subsequent to this were years of chastisement and discipline, variously administered. Our inestimable father was taken from us, under circumstances which, even now, move every feeling within me, when they are vividly brought to remembrance. After his redeemed spirit had joined its beloved companion in the world of rest and purity, a series of trials, some of my own procuring, for want of prayerful dependence

on an Almighty Saviour; some, more directly in the course of providential dispensation, were made the means of humbling and softening, in some degree, my hard, obdurate heart. I was brought to feel my own sinfulness, helplessness, and misery, and to cry, I humbly trust in sincerity of soul, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner;’ to lie prostrate at the feet of Jesus, my compassionate Saviour, and in a precious feeling of resignation to his will, to beg that he would do with me whatsoever seemed good in his sight. Then was the love of Christ felt to be a constraining principle, and after many deep conflicts of spirit, I was made to bow before the Lord, and brought to a willingness to testify to others what He had done for my soul. In our Quarterly Meeting at Poole, a few days after the completion of my thirtieth year, I first spoke in the character of a minister. The sweet peace I was permitted to enjoy for a short time afterwards, no language can describe; a sense of the pardoning love of God, in Christ Jesus my Lord, seemed to swallow up my spirit, and leave nothing to disturb the soul’s repose on his infinite, everlasting mercy. ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.’

“And now what shall I say of the last ten years? What a record would they present of the faithfulness of God, of the tender care and matchless mercy of my covenant Lord and Saviour, and of my own ingratitude, unfaithfulness, and negligence! My cup has, indeed, been made to overflow with blessings. To me belongeth only blushing and confusion of face, but I trust I may acknowledge, with reverent gratitude, that to these temporal mercies my heavenly Father, in his abounding goodness, has been pleased to superadd somewhat of the blessings of the heaven above, to show me more clearly the sinfulness and depravity of my own heart, and to give me stronger and fuller views

of the glory of that gospel, which is the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth:' here then let me set up an Ebenezer, and say, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' Whether days or years may be added to the fleeting span of life, is known only to Him who seeth the end from the beginning: wonderful in counsel and excellent in working, He doeth all things well: to this only wise God, our Saviour, I desire to commit myself and those dearest to me."

Soon after the death of her mother, the health of our dear friend became very delicate, and continued so with some variation through the remainder of her life. In the apprehension that a change of residence might prove beneficial, she removed, in the year 1821, with her only and beloved sister, Hannah Middleton, to Southampton. Here, as elsewhere, her benevolent heart was often brought to feel deeply for the poor and the afflicted, and she was actively engaged in efforts to alleviate their sufferings, and to improve their moral condition. In 1825 she was acknowledged as a minister, and in the following year, in company with her sister, and her valued relative, Ann Alexander, she visited some parts of Holland and Germany, as well as the Friends of Pyrmont and Minden, and was afterwards engaged in further religious service.

In the 5th month, 1827, she was united in marriage to our dear friend, Samuel Fox, then residing at Wellington, in Somersetshire, and to him she became a most tenderly attached and faithful companion, and to her beloved children, a very affectionate and ever watchful mother. During her residence in the West of England, she visited several parts of the nation, with the full concurrence of her friends at home, and to the comfort and edification of those amongst whom she travelled.

In the year 1838, Maria Fox became a member of this Monthly Meeting, and we have a testimony to bear to

the soundness and the authority of her ministry. It was a gift bestowed by the great Head of the church, and she was concerned faithfully to occupy it to his honour. She was repeatedly absent from us in the service of the Gospel, and being careful to wait for the puttings forth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, she was given to feel the safety and the blessedness of moving in simple dependence upon Him. For the poor and the destitute, for the oppressed and the afflicted, for the very outcasts of society,—for those who were living as without God in the world, her soul was oftentimes exercised before the Lord : and in this village and neighbourhood, as well as in other parts, when travelling in the work of the ministry, her labours were especially directed to such as these.

It was her concern in her daily walk to carry out the principles of the Gospel in the performance of the various duties of life. The natural cheerfulness of her disposition, and her uniform kindness and sympathy endeared her to the friends of this meeting. Her general character was unobtrusive and retiring : but those powers of conversation which, in early life, when the heart was full of the vivacity of youth, had rendered her an interesting companion, continued to be conspicuous; corrected, as they were, by age and experience, and regulated by the fear of God and the power of true religion. She knew how to sympathize with her dear children in their trials and temptations, entering with interest into their pursuits and recreations, and in her general intercourse with young people, she had the talent of combining innocent pleasure, with religious instruction and mental culture.

Whilst her heart was enlarged in charity to all, she was, from mature conviction, firmly attached to the principles and doctrines of our religious Society, believing them to be in strict accordance with the New Testament. With powers of quick perception and a comprehensive mind, she

was concerned that every part of divine truth might be received with reverent thanksgiving. She had no relish for writings of a controversial character, believing their tendency to be often injurious, and that they are not the source from whence ministers of the Gospel are to derive their instruction: but being diligent in the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in meditating upon them, and waiting before the Lord for the enlightening influence of his Spirit, they were unfolded to her understanding, to her comfort and edification.

Our beloved friend felt the preciousness of that redemption which comes through the Lord Jesus Christ; she loved Him because He first loved her, and gave Himself for her, and under the expansive influence of this love, strong were her desires that others might love Him also. She was often brought into a state of great self-abasement; she knew she had nothing but what she had received, and felt altogether unworthy to be employed in the service of her Lord; but receiving the religion of Christ as full of consolation to the true believer, she did not indulge in gloom or distrust; on the contrary, it was her endeavour to hope continually, and in everything to give thanks.

Her last journey in the service of the Gospel was into Scotland, and some of the northern counties, in company with her beloved husband. She returned home in the 9th month last, and was seldom absent from our meetings afterwards. During this period her communications in the ministry and vocal petitions at the throne of grace were not unfrequent, and were attended with peculiar brightness and power. In the persuasive constraining love of the Gospel, she was enabled to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to set before us a view of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and the necessity of preparation for that which is to come. She was then in possession of more than a usual share of health, and of that cheerful yet chastened enjoyment

of life, of which a Christian may lawfully partake, until the sudden commencement of her last illness, a hemorrhage from the lungs, on the 15th of the 12th month last.

On the first attack of the disorder she was perfectly tranquil, saying, "I am very calm: I feel that I am in my heavenly Father's hands." Some days subsequently, after a similar occasion of great exhaustion, our dear friend said, in a very faint voice, "My heavenly Father knows all; and his will is a perfect will: sometimes I think that in his great mercy he will raise me up—in degree, and at other times it seems as if the frail tabernacle would give way." On her medical attendant remarking that he believed many hearts were lifted up in prayer for her restoration, if it were right in the Divine sight, she replied, "Rather let them desire for me, that I may be enabled to say fully and entirely, 'Not my will, but thine, O Lord, be done!'"

During the whole of her illness, her mind was sustained in patience, humility, and sweetness. She delighted in hearing or repeating short portions of Holy Scripture, or of favourite hymns, and was frequently engaged in vocal prayer and thanksgiving to her heavenly Father, whose tender love and compassion were so evident throughout this season of trial, and were so often acknowledged by her, saying at one time, "I am sweetly folded in my Saviour's arms;" and at another, "My comforts are very great, they flow as a river; all is peace, and rest, and joy." Her illness was not attended with much bodily pain, but she often suffered from weakness and difficulty of breathing. On one occasion, after recovering from a severe fit of coughing, our dear friend said, in a very emphatic manner, "'Peace, be still! and there was a great calm.' The winds and the waves rage till He speaks the word, but no longer." At another time she said, "I want not only to *think* that my will is resigned, but to *know* it." She several times during her illness repeated the words, "'I am the Lord

that healeth thee ; ' this word seems given me might after night, ' I am the Lord that healeth thee.' " On its being remarked, " There is no limit to his power or his love," she rejoined, " Nor to his compassions, they fail not ! "

The peaceful repose of her soul in her God and Saviour was appropriately and beautifully described in the following language of the Psalmist, which she often repeated, " I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep : for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." On one occasion, before settling for the night, she said, " And now, O Lord, thou keeper of Israel, thou guide and guardian of thy people, to thee we commend our souls." On awaking in the course of the same night, she said, " We sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to our taste." At another time she said, " We are having a balmy night, He giveth his people a song in the night ; " adding afterwards, " songs of deliverance, songs of gratitude, songs of praise, and songs of thanksgiving." Two days before her decease, after being relieved from an attack of pain which lasted several hours, she repeated these lines,

" When first thou didst thy all commit,
To him upon the mercy-seat,
He gave thee warrant from that hour,
To trust his wisdom, love, and power."

In the course of 2nd-day, the 15th of the 1st month, it was evident to those who were watching her, that the last moment was approaching. It would be impossible to convey an idea of the sweetness of her manner and countenance. When much exhausted, she said

" Jesus is my living bread,
He supports my fainting head."

A short time before her departure, on her husband's asking her whether she was comfortable, she answered, with marked emphasis, " Yes, *thoroughly*." When the power

of articulation was nearly gone, he said to her, "My dearest knows her Saviour loves her;" to which she distinctly replied, "Yes; and I am reposing in his love." Soon after, her spirit gently and peacefully quitted its earthly tabernacle, to enter, we reverently believe, into the joy of her Lord.

Given forth by our Monthly Meeting, held at Tottenham, the 7th of the 3rd month, 1844.

THE END.

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