

Correspondence.

WM. FORSTER IN AMERICA.*

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

It has been my privilege to read with rare pleasure the memoirs of Mr. Forster, published in London during the present year, in two octavo volumes. A member of the Society of Friends, intimately associated with the Gurneys, father and son, Elizabeth Fry and Joseph Sturge, at a most interesting period in the movements for moral reform in Great Britain, his biography is full of interesting facts. But the chief charm of the work is the wonderful love of Christ displayed by the subject of this sketch, united with a meekness and humanity rarely witnessed.

In one of his letters he expresses the joy of his life in this language:— "Of all other things I love to be driven to the Saviour, and to have my need of Him brought home to my soul."

He made several visits to America, burdened with a care for souls. The first was during the agitation in the Society of Friends that prevailed previous to the schism under the leadership of Elias Hicks. In his journal, alluding to the growth of skepticism, he writes:— "The sorrows and trials which have been so largely my portion in entering into the depths and extent of that dark and skeptical spirit, so lamentably prevalent among Friends in America, have brought me more than ever to appreciate the kindness and love of our Heavenly Father in having caused the light of his external revelation to break forth upon us; and I think that Christ was never more precious to me, than since I have been so much in the way of those who call in question his glorious divinity and the efficacy of his mediatorial offices."

The condition of the American slave was the cause of much anxious thought, and in 1824 he wrote: "Almost from the first of my coming into America, I have wished to obtain a brief summary of all the laws in all the different States relating to slaves and free people of color. A few Friends in Philadelphia are now interested in the object, and I hope it will be accomplished, though it must be a work of considerable time, of no small labor, and probably of some expense. I know of nothing that would be so likely to rouse the feelings of the people of the Eastern and Middle States into action as having these statutes brought before them by such a compendium."

Later in the year, he wrote:—"The work I have had so long in view, a digest of the laws of the different States affecting slaves and free colored people, is in progress. A young man, an attorney in Philadelphia, the son of my friend David Stroud, of Stroudsborough, has it in hand; he is hearty in the cause. I argue great things from its publication."

He was not too sanguine, for although more than a generation has passed away since the compilation was begun, it remains a standard work for reference, and has furnished material for the use of Whittier, Hildreth, and Harriet Stowe. If space was allowed, it would be pleasant to note the interviews that this apostolic man had with the good men of the continent of Europe: such as Tholuck, Neander, Malan, Revel, and others; but in this communication I shall only add some account of his last visit to America.

In 1849, although sixty-five years of age, he visited the Sovereigns of Europe, and in person presented to them the Memorial of the English Friends on the wickedness of the African Slave Trade. At the yearly meeting of Friends in 1853, it was felt that the time had come for the presentation of the same address to the President of the United States and Governors of the several States. Although now nearly three score years and ten, the subject of our sketch was appointed one of the deputation to carry out the will of the meeting.

An account of these interviews with the public men of the United States in 1853 is full of interest to every American citizen, and when it is remembered that ten years after, the President of the United States issued a proclamation that led to the abolition of slavery in this country, the devout mind bows before Him "who doeth great things past finding out; yea, wonders without number."

On the first of October, 1853, President Pierce, was called upon, who received the deputation with great kindness, but took a discouraging view of the prospect of an early termination of slavery amongst us. "He recognized the concern of Friends as a religious one, and did not regard our coming as an interference."

Proceeding from Washington to Richmond, they found the Governor of Virginia was at his plantation in the western part of the State. Nothing discouraged, they slowly journeyed to the house of Joseph Johnson. He courteously received them, but soon gave them to understand that slavery is a subject on which the Virginians are extremely sensitive. He however condemned the African slave trade, but he was reminded that there was an internal slave trade in the United States. He then said that it would not do for the editor of a newspaper to print the address in Virginia or for a minister to announce it from the pulpit; for the dearest rights of the peo-

ple were bound up in the subject of slavery.

On the 18th of October, they called upon Lazarus W. Powell, then Governor of Kentucky.

A brother of Wm. Forster, also a member of the deputation, says:—

"He was mild and courteous. Like others, he agreed with us on the African slave trade; which caused us to remind him of the internal slave trade.

"I understood him to say that their laws forbid the introduction of slaves from other States, and that they do not forbid the teaching of them to read or write, though but few are so taught. Some of the inhabitants are for the abolition of slavery, others against it."

On the 22d of November they obtained an interview with Sterling Price, Governor of Missouri.

"He said Great Britain had inflicted slavery on them. It was replied, when the American colonies threw off the yoke they could have terminated the system, but that we thought it well to look forward and not backward. * * * He spoke of some ministers of the Gospel who openly advocated slavery, and of the intelligence of his slaves. It was remarked the more the intellect was exercised the more galling the yoke of slavery is found to be."

The subject was calmly treated on both sides, and the deputation were quite surprised by receiving, some time after they had retired for the night, a letter returning their address, and stating that he was not satisfied with them and their views.

On the 8th of December, P. O. Hebert, Governor of Louisiana, was visited. When the deputation read the expression in their address, "The law allows nothing but hopeless, helpless, friendless misery," the Governor interposed, wishing to show how his own slaves could look for something better, and spoke of his own conduct in buying at a high price a slave of a family when sold at public auction on the death of his parent, and also of an open sale, where he had prevented the sale of a child under ten years of age.

"Some pains were taken," says Josiah Forster, "to convince him that it is principle spoken of in this paper, and that though he bought the slave, the law thus condemned him; and although Louisiana does not allow of the separation of children under ten years of age, other States do."

"I am ready to think he felt some convictions on hearing some home truths which he attempted to suppress; and that he was tried, what if I say irritated, and yet he was careful not to show it. He thought slavery must terminate when slaves are no longer of value, and that emancipation must come from the States themselves."

Four days after, the deputation were at Jackson, Mississippi, and visited Governor Henry S. Foote, who obtained the sobriquet of "Hangman," for his violent denunciation of abolitionists, while a member of Congress, and since the close of the rebellion known as a refugee from the traitors he incited to treason, and as an advocate of negro suffrage.

William Forster, in behalf of the deputation, explained the address. "He [Governor Foote] spoke in full terms of the Christian love of the address, and of the purity of the motive in which it was issued, but that we were mistaken, being ignorant of the real state of things amongst them. He then entered at some length into a representation of the happy state of the slaves, well-fed, well-clothed, well-cared for, taught the truths of the Gospel every week. He did not believe there was a happier peasantry anywhere on the earth. They would hold property and live as well as their owners. * * * We parted very friendly. As we went to the State House, we found, drawn up in front, sixteen men and boys, fifteen young women and girls standing under the railing, dressed in their best attire. We were told they were for sale, brought thither by a jobber from Virginia."

"The Governor said, had he the power, he would put an end to such sales."

The next visit was made to Henry W. Collier, Governor of Alabama.

"He said the address was an admirable paper, at the same time acknowledging that he held slaves himself, but would not sell them under any consideration whatever; they came to him as a patri- ot."

"He has one slave for whom he would not take twenty thousand dollars; he highly values him as a trustworthy servant and a truly religious man as he believes. The children of his slaves are taught to read with his own children, and go to a Sabbath-school. He has been a teacher in one himself. Had he to begin life again, it certainly should be without slaves. * * * On its being suggested to him what may be the condition of his slaves on his death, he said he had confidence in his wife if she survives, but it was a subject on which he often thought seriously, and so did many others."

The next person visited was the Governor of Georgia,—Herschel V. Johnson, since then a candidate for the Vice Presidency of the United States, an aid in rebellion against it, and at the time of writing this article, President of the Convention to restore to Georgia the privileges of the Union forfeited by revolt.

"He admitted the mildness of its character; but he thinks they can understand their own position far better than strangers can. He has studied the question carefully, as many others have

done and thinks slavery not a sin, nor contrary to the Divine law; that it was allowed by Christ, etc. He dwelt much on the happiness of the slaves, their kind treatment physically, and spoke of their clothing, their dwellings, and their religious instruction. * * * He said if let alone, slavery may end in time, and the negroes be settled in the western countries as Freedmen; but that, if immediately set at liberty, they would be lazy and depraved, and in a few generations relapse into idolatry."

In the 23d of December they arrived at Columbia, South Carolina, and called upon Governor John L. Manning.

"He soon told them that he was one of the largest slave-owners in the State. He is a communicant of the Episcopal Church; his slaves are catechised every evening, and receive religious instruction every first day. * * *

"We assured him that we had passed along very carefully, avoiding to speak of our errand. He expressed his satisfaction at this, saying he did not believe twenty men in the State would have listened to us as he had done. From his remarks, we inferred that he feared insurrection, if publicity were given to our errand. We told him that our business was with the Governors, not with the slaves."

The last visit made to a Governor by William Forster, was on the twenty-eighth of December, 1853.

At Nashville, the deputation called upon Andrew Johnson, then Governor of Tennessee.

"He gave them to understand that he does not entertain ultra views on the subject, and freely allowed the address to be read. He seemed to listen with calm, unmoved attention; with that self-command and fixed determination of purpose, that unmoved countenance which has seemed to me to mark the American character of independence. * * * He holds four slaves whom he purchased for domestic servants. He says there are many colored people in the town who attend places of worship, and have the opportunity to learn to read and write, but the general condition of education in the State is low."

At a ferry-house on the Holston river, kept by a worthy Cumberland Presbyterian, and about twelve miles from Knoxville, the aged man of God who had been the spokesman for the deputation, became so sick that he could not leave.

The kindness of the family, the prescriptions of physicians, the tender watchings of the few like precious faith were of no avail. Day after day he grew weaker in the body, but his soul was filled with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Towards his last, he dictated a beautiful letter to his wife beyond the seas, the lovely sister of Sir Fowell Burton, in which he alludes to his only son, William, now a member of Parliament, whose wife is Jane, the daughter of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, where Tom Hughes, and other friends of America, recently elected to Parliament, went to school.

The concluding sentences of the letter are all that can be given.

"Of course you will be sure that William and Jane should hear all that is heard about me, if it can be so."

"Dearest child, I know how tender he would have been; but I do not know that I could have wished him to witness my sufferings and weakness. * * * * * "And now farewell to you all around. The Lord bless thee my dearest, and support and give thee quietness and hope for the sake of his dear Son our Saviour."

When one of the deputation seated by his bedside read from the Pilgrim's Progress of Hopeful, calling out to Christian beginning to sink: "Be of good cheer, my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good," he raised his hands with a sweet, joyous smile, saying, "Read that again."

Before dawn, on January 27th, 1854, his soul departed, and a few hours afterward two small boats were seen on the swollen Holston river, one containing the kind landlord of the ferry, and all that was mortal of William Forster, the other containing his brother Joseph, and another member of the deputation.

With great difficulty, they, at length, effected a landing on the field of a planter, overflowed by the roaring waters, and from thence they wended their way to a small settlement of Friends in Blount County, on a stream which flows into the Holston.

In the grave-yard around their humble meeting house, was buried the man of lowly spirit, who, unassuming, had stood in the presence of Emperor, King and Prince, in the Old, and Governor, Senator and President in the New World, and told the truth relative to the horrors of slavery, plainly and yet lovingly.

The usage of Friends admits of no monumental pile in their grave yards, but there are Christian men and ministers in now free Tennessee, that will live to recall his name and emulate his example.

Over that very region where his body is now crumbling, there has been during the last four years, the continual tramping of armies. The valley of the Holston has resounded, with the roars of artillery, the volleys of musketry, and the clatter of cavalry.

Brother has fought against brother, and many bones lie unburied, bleaching in the sun; but the smoke and dust of civil war has never subsided, and in that valley, and every other valley of the land there remains no place for a slave. The mission of William Forster has been accomplished in a way he never dreamed of.

That which he thought would occupy generations, a wonder-working Providence brought to pass in ten years after his spirit ascended to Heaven.

The English Friends were taken by surprise with the suddenness of the passage of the act of 1834, abolishing slavery in the British Colonies.

The address of their yearly meeting was to this effect:—

"It might be truly said to have been hastened in the Lord's time. Such were the singular Providences brought to bear upon the public feeling, and upon the Legislature, that none could point to the result as arising from their individual efforts, and the less so was affixed sealed upon the Christian mind, that the Lord ruleth among the children of men."

Thirty years have passed since these words were written, and God has surprised the world again, and American slavery is abolished.

In the language of our late President: "The nation's condition is not what either party, or any man, devised or expected. GOD ALONE CAN CLAIM IT."

MARIA TERRA.

WHY THE MINISTER DID SO AT THE INQUIRY-MEETING.

When Mary came down from her mother's room she found the following note from the minister's wife, awaiting her perusal:—

MY DEAR MARY:—I am in great need of help, which I know you will gladly render. Will you do us the favor to come in to-morrow, and let me tell you all my little troubles. In haste, very affectionately,

EMMA BURTON.

Bright and early the next morning, our impulsive but efficient Mary entered the "sitting-room" at the parsonage, when Mrs. Burton gave her a hearty but blushing welcome. The remains of a very frugal breakfast were yet upon the table, and Mrs. Burton, looking very pale and care-worn, stood over the cooking-stove, holding on one arm a moaning baby just breaking out with the measles, while with the other hand she prepared some farina for little Ella, who was just recovering from the same disease.

With a cheerful alacrity, which put Mrs. Burton quite at her ease, Mary offered her assistance in the domestic department, which Mrs. Burton, however, declined with thanks, adding, "But if I may, I will venture to ask your kind assistance about the sewing. In the upper drawer there you will find what is most needed."

Mary, who was an adept with the needle, went smiling to the drawer, where she found a pair of stout black pants; about two-thirds made, and another pair of old broad cloth, with a complicated rent in the knee, which was partially mended, and left with the needle in the work, as if hastily relinquished for some more imperative duty. Mary took the torn pants without remark and sat down by the window to mend them, with some guilty misgivings as she thought of the inquiry-meeting.

A long pause ensued, during which Mary darned and reflected, and Mrs. Burton grew anxious at the silence, which she finally broke by saying:—"I trust, indeed, Mary, you will not be hurt or offended at my freedom; it cost me a greater struggle than it ought to cost you, but I feel that a sinful pride has led me too long to conceal our pecuniary trials. You must pardon me."

Mrs. Burton's voice grew inarticulate with emotion. "I thank you for sending for me," cried Mary, "and am more than glad in any way to serve you. Yet, while I am honored, I am humiliated by your confidence, for, indeed, I do not deserve it. I—" Mary in her turn paused for lack of voice.

"I am sure you deserve all our confidence," said Mrs. Burton, quite reassured. "I wish I had begged your ready aid in sewing before we came to such straits; for I must tell you that we are in straits. We have been obliged to economize this year in every possible way; you see we have moved the kitchen stove in here to save fuel; we have excluded tea, coffee, sugar, butter, everything but bare essentials from our table; have ceased to hire any domestic service, even washing; or to buy a cent's worth of anything not indispensable. I did hope, that having done all this, there would be something left for Mr. Burton's clothing, but it was impossible for us to afford even a single new garment. Six weeks ago my brother gave the materials for those pants in the drawer, which I at once cut out and commenced, having ripped up an old pair for a pattern. I economized every moment of time, rose early, sat up late, and ate the bread of carefulness, that I might finish them; but before the great deed was done, the children came down with the measles, and it was simply impossible for me to sew any more. The newly awakened religious interest demanded all Mr. Burton's energies, and though he often entreated to share the burdens of sickness, I never consented. Meantime, the 'best pants,' from due necessity, were taken for every day. It has often made my eyes fill with tears, to see Mr. Burton, whose nature is all above such petty thoughts, so careful of these only pants, especially of the knees which were getting thin. I notice that when he knelt, he turned away the thin places, lest they should break with pressure, and knew that only the tenderest regard for me, in my multiplied cares and labors, could have induced such a thought. He dreaded to see me trying to finish the 'new ones.'" Here Mary,

who-meantime had finished the mending, turned her chair so as effectually to hide from Mrs. Burton her fast-flowing tears.

"Last evening," continued Mrs. Burton, "came the long pending catastrophe. Mr. Burton got a slip on the ice, causing a complex fracture of the knee (of pants) 'in a very good time,' so he playfully told me, 'when there were no witnesses; and when I can don the 'second best' as well as not, for a quiet day in the study, thus giving you a chance to make the rent invisible with your nice darning.'" Thus I sent for you, dear Mary,—knowing your good-will, and your skill, and your having had the measles—because the new pants must now be finished."

Here Mary, dashing away her tears, jumped up with the energy of a firm and righteous purpose, set a warm flat-iron upon the now invisible rent, and taking the pants upon her arm, said to Mrs. Burton, "May I go to the study? I desire some conversation with Mr. Burton, and I will take the pants with me, if you please."

The scene confessional can be imagined. Mary was penitent. Mr. Burton was magnanimous, so they were soon at peace.

"Then you now think I was justified in having regard for my pants when I knelt?" said Mr. Burton, very seriously, yet with a twinkle of genial humor in his dark eyes.

"Certainly, sir," replied Mary, very gravely, "it was only noble in you; but it was outrageous in this people to subject their minister to such necessities. Why are we blind to the fact that the seven hundred dollars, which barely sufficed before the war, can now only half supply your wants? I believe my father is as blind as the rest, but his eyes must be opened, and the eyes of all this people to do you justice."

"God grant it," said Mr. Burton, fervently, "I desire it even more for their sake than for my own."

Mary went home after this interview, taking the new pants to finish on her sewing machine. They were sent home completed at noon, and with them a large covered basket, containing a bountiful supply of cooked and uncooked provisions, with sundry delicacies for the sick and convalescent children, over whom Mary watched that night with mother-like tenderness.

A week later, Mary sought a private interview with her father. Mr. Morton had been for many years a professor of religion, but "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of richness" had choked the word and he had become unfruitful. A salutary pang wrung his heart as his only child told him, with evident effort, of her new found hope in Christ, and her single purpose to make His service her life-work. Mr. Morton replied, with emotion, that he was grateful for this great and unmerited blessing.

"Dear father," cried Mary, eagerly, "if you are thankful for these spiritual blessings, let me beg you, to manifest your gratitude in a substantial manner to our minister, to whom, under God, we owe them."

Mary proceeded to enlighten her father as to the pecuniary state of things at the parsonage, and the result of the conversation was, that Mr. Morton surprised everybody by attending the parish-meeting soon after, and moved that the minister's salary be doubled, as a simple act of justice in making it equivalent to what it was at his settlement. Mr. Morton expressed the wish, in any case, to double his former annual subscription of one hundred dollars. The motion was unanimously carried, with the amendment that the salary be paid quarterly in advance. Never did minister's family receive a more joyful "surprise" than did the Burton's that evening, when the parish treasurer laid \$350 before the wondering pastor, as the first quarterly payment for the coming year.

From that day the work of grace progressed with new power, for He is ever faithful who has said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." HERBERT NEWBURY.

NOAH'S ENDURING FAITH.

There is one lesson from the life of Noah which is valuable in these times. It is that which comes from his waiting. One most remarkable effect which faith, the substance of hope and the evidence better than sight, had upon him, was to give him endurance. He turned from the questionings of disbelief, the conclusions of reason, the disheartening of long waiting, to the promise. He was in no wise staggered by any positive philosophy, and though there were doubtless plenty who could show by the immutability of self-evolved laws, and from the fact that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, he was no antediluvian Comtian. And that faith which had received the Divine message as true, clung to it as worthy to be trusted. It was a conviction not only unshaken, but founded deep below the level of all disturbing influences.

There are few things we need more than the faith which engenders just this endurance. We are impatient. We strike the flinty rock and expect to see it fly in pieces at one blow. In the ardor of first love, we go forth thinking ourselves mighty as the archangel Michael, to do battle with the hosts of wickedness. We believe that we have

but to speak, and man must hear; but to begin, and speedily reach the end. But we slowly learn the hardness of evil hearts. The conviction dawns on us that we are fighting against principalities and powers. This conviction is daily increased, and at last courage, once apparently inexhaustible, wanes away, difficulties are magnified, our weary hands hang idle and we give up all endeavor. How long have we ever endured? Here was one who lived for God four hundred and eighty years, bearing up bravely against the corruption and crime and violence of a world; standing alone without sympathy or help or godly companionship. And when, when by a heavenly revelation, he had a definite work set before him, toiled on in spite of jeer and scoff and ridicule and opposition, building the great ship. How does such endurance compare with that which we have thought was perseverance? The days were as long then as now, and the years were as slow to move; and through their process the patriarch toiled on ten, twenty, a hundred times as long as we are willing to wait and work.

In his case, as in ours, and continually through history, is seen the method of God's dealings. He waited and tried Noah for nearly five hundred years before he gave any definite hope to him that the wicked world should be righteous. And then having revealed His purpose, He waited a hundred and twenty years longer, and bade Noah wait and work on in the midst of evil.

Thus God perfects the saints. We often, in our short-sightedness, murmur against the plan, but it bears good fruit. For instance, we seek the Divine blessing in prayer. We speak words of affectionate entreaty and earnest exhortation, and look for speedy results. This is wise. We go abroad and look over the field and search for the signs of growth; we find none and are discouraged. This is not wise. If we cannot wait, we have not faith. If we cannot endure, we belong not to the noble company of the faithful.

This is in accordance with God's plan of development in nature. Ten thousand years went by while the rocks over which we tread were being laid in order. While day and night and the rolling seasons pass, the little tender stalk puts forth its single leaf and its frail branch and grows with widening girth and deeper-reaching root, till on Lebanon the giant cedar matches its strength against the fiercest storm and conquers. What force is there in all nature that does its work on the instant, except those which, like the swift lightning, are powers of destruction?

God works thus deliberately with us. Our bodies slowly unfold. More than half the average life is spent in growth from infancy toward maturity.

But above all is this evident in our moral development. The soul is ever growing; and the long life of the most aged seems to him who studies his soul's capacities like a few evil days, as a dream when one awaketh.

The same discipline of delay is evident from the whole of the sacred record; and counted by the brief span of our lives, and still more by the narrower limit of our impatience, how interminable do these centuries appear in which God withheld the end from Patriarch and chosen People. Yet as in their revolution God's great purpose has always been developed, how weak seems that restlessness which changes its fickle purpose if it cannot see the end of its desires in a few days!

These dealings of the Divine Providence are for the development of character. The zeal which flashes up and dies away is like a fire of stubble. There is a sudden blaze and smoke, then a smouldering heap, with here and there a wandering spark and then all is cold. But the long enduring purpose is like the heat of the fierce furnace, drawing the iron from the tough rock, or heating white-hot the great shaft whose well-compacted strength is to bear without yielding the weight of ponderous wheels. One may be quickly kindled, but as speedily dies. The other endures. One is the impatience of man, earnest it may be, but irresolute; the other the endurance of the living faith which obtains the good report. I. R.

TEMPTATION AND SUFFERING.

Temptation, according to Luther, is one of the ingredients which go to make a minister. I have before me two stones, which are in imitation of precious stones. They are perfectly alike in color; they are both of the same water, clear, pure and clean. Yet there is a marked difference between them as to their lustre and brilliancy. One is a dazzling brightness, while the other is dull, so that the eye passes over it and derives no pleasure from the sight. What can be the reason for such a difference? It is this: the one is cut in a few facets, the other has ten times as many. These facets are produced by a violent operation; it is required to cut, smooth, and polish. Had the stones been endued with life, so as to have been capable of feeling what they underwent, the one which had received eighty facets would have thought itself very unhappy, and would have envied the other, which, having but eight, had undergone but a tenth part of its sufferings. Nevertheless, the operation being over, it is done forever. The difference between the two stones always remains strongly marked. That which has suffered but little is entirely eclipsed by the other, which alone is held in estimation and attracts attention.—Oberlin's Memoirs.

PRAYER is the path that God made, on which man travels back to him.

*Memoirs of William Forster, edited by Benjamin Seebohm. Two vols., 8vo. London: Alfred W. Bennett, 1865.