

PLEASE RETURN TO NEGLEMY HARTE, UCL.

JAMES ASHLEY.

I

BEING in my seventy-fifth year and blessed with a good memory I wish to write of events and recollections of my life which may interest all my children and their descendants.

I was born in Seven Bridge Lane - now called Market St. - Wrexham, North Wales, on March 5th, 1833. In 1896-7 I wrote several letters to the "Wrexham Advertiser" describing the town and many of its inhabitants in the forties, and in which I mentioned some small incidents in my early boyhood and the schools I attended. Having preserved these printed papers I will not further write of those days but rather will begin about the time I left school in July, 1846, going first as errand boy to Mr. Robert Thornely becoming afterwards his apprentice in Silk Hat Finishing on October 1st, 1847.

Before commencing from that period I wish to mention an event in my life at my very earliest memory. It was in 1838; I was little more than five years of age, but I clearly remember going from the home in Seven Bridge Lane to a new home in Lambpit St. I did not then know the cause of that change and the family trouble. My parents had been for some years in the bakery business, but for some cause they were in difficulty with the miller who supplied them with flour. My Father, at that time and ever afterwards, declared that he paid the account in

10, Colson Square, London, W.C.

the office at the mills, but as the receipts could not be produced a distress was put in the house and the furniture sold - at least so much as to meet the miller's claim. Why do I mention this? It is because I want to tell something of the history of the clock which I now hear ticking as it stands in the hall close to the room in which I am writing. It is a real "Grandfather Clock" purchased by my Mother's parents when they began housekeeping in or about 1784. My grandmother died in 1829, having been a widow nineteen years, and the clock came into possession of my Mother. When the trouble came in 1838 and the furniture was for sale the clock was bought by an exciseman who lived in the same lane, where in his kitchen I constantly saw it on my way to and from the National School.

After a few years, either through death or for some other cause, the exciseman's home was sold and this time the clock was bought by a dairyman near by. I then went to the dairy for milk and envied them the household god we longed to have. When I left school - the Congregational Day School in Chester St. - in July 1846, I, who was about Head Boy and in my last year was monitor - there were then no School Inspectors or Examinations - was awarded £7 or £8 from the Dr. Williams' Trust^{*}; it was money for my apprenticeship, if a premium was needed. For some cause this money was not paid by the Trustee until 1847 and it was not needed as an apprenticeship premium. At the time my parents received the money the home of the dairyman I have mentioned was to be sold by auction. At the sale there were for a time several bidders; then it came to a duel

* Dr. Daniel Williams was a native of the town or near neighbourhood; he largely endowed the Chapel and was the founder of Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square, London, W.C.

between my Mother and a furniture broker; at last Mother was the buyer and there was joy in the family when after an absence of about ten years, the clock was restored at a cost of £4. 15. 0.

For the reason I have given the clock was always spoken of in the home as my clock, and when my Mother died in 1870 and the home broken up - my Father then 70 years of age giving up business and going to live with my married sister - my brother and sisters pressed me to have the clock, which I am proud to possess. Although about 125 years old it is a perfect time-keeper.*

*NOTE:- I NOW HAVE THIS CLOCK IN MY HALL AT
HAYWARDS HEATH, FRED ASHLEY A GRANDCHILD.*

II

As I have already stated, my indenture was dated 1847, but it was not until October 1st. 1850 that I went to the plank and was put for six months under a practical man to teach me Silk Hat Finishing. For four years I had been in the retail shop and warehouse, serving customers, cutting up the plush of various qualities for the covers of hats and putting out the brimmings for lining and binding. We had a good retail trade, for in those days silk hats

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This was written in the latter part of 1907. In 1945 the clock was in the possession of Sir Percy Ashley, K.B.E., C.B., the writer's youngest son. It stood in the same position through all the war years, seemingly unaffected by the bombs, rockets and land mines which did so much damage in the neighbourhood and after a life of 160 years still keeping good time - P.A.

were much worn, even by the ordinary working man. About 17 men were employed in the different branches and 10 women as brimmers and crown sewers. We had a fairly large wholesale trade as Mr. Thornely travelled much in Wales seeking orders and using a horse and gig - there were then no railways. We also had purchasers in Ramsey, Douglas, Castletown and Peel in the Isle of Man, but our best customer was Mr. Samuel Thornely, at the corner of Carr's Lane, Birmingham, who was my employer's brother. At this period many Welsh women wore the famous conical hats; they were huge things about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep with very wide brims; we had a large trade in them, supplying nearly all the towns of North Wales.

After I had been at the plank about two years Mr. Thornely was in difficulties owing to railway speculation, and suddenly giving up the business to Mr. Edward Jones, who was foreman, he went with his family to live in the Isle of Man. With the consent of my father and myself and "in consideration of the sum of Five Shillings" paid by Mr. Jones to Mr. Thornely, I was transferred to the former to finish my apprenticeship. Very soon after this change the wholesale trade fell away considerably, as Mr. Jones did not travel seeking orders, but he at once commenced a ready-made clothing business, buying largely from a Bristol house, and added this to his retail hat and cap trade.

When I came out of my time in 1854 the prospect of earning my living by my trade was gloomy and I tried all I knew to find something away from the trade, but without success. In the early part

of 1856 I read of the marriage of Mr. Joseph Christy to a Miss Darby of Coalbrookdale, who was a relative of Mr. W. H. Darby of Brymbo Hall. Mr. Joseph Christy was one of the famous firm of hat manufacturers at London and Stockport. Just at this time we were rehearsing for "The Trial of John Barleycorn" which was to be given on the evenings of Easter Monday and Tuesday in the Music Hall, Wrexham. Mr. Bott, who was superintendent of the permanent way of the Great Western Railway for an area round Wrexham, was to take part in "The Trial" as a barrister, and I was to appear in two parts as a witness. I knew Mr. Bott had large dealings in iron with Mr. Darby, and both were leading temperance men. I had long wished to leave Wrexham, and felt it would help me if I could have a letter from Mr. Darby to Mr. Joseph Christy. At one of the rehearsals I stated my wish to Mr. Bott; he at once promised me a letter to Mr. Darby, and so it came about that on Good Friday I walked from Wrexham to Brymbo, three miles and a half, had an interview with Mr. Darby, and was given a letter from him to Messrs. Christy which I sent next day with my application.* A few days afterwards I was informed by Mr. Christy that the firm would find me employment and a plank would be reserved for me, so I could come at once. On Monday, the 4th May, 1856 I left Wrexham for the battle of life in

* According to the account given to me by my father's then only surviving sister ("Aunt Lila") on Sept. 23, 1917, Mr. John Morgan, who was also a superintendent of the Line or something of the kind and a prominent temperance worker, was so struck by Father's ability as an actor in "John Barleycorn" that when Father went to him to say goodbye he urged him to go with the Ministry and offered to help him through College. - W.J.A.

the great city, and as I left the house with my luggage in the omnibus I remember a neighbour, Maria Cittens, throwing an old shoe after me for luck.

III

I was met at Paddington by an engineering friend of my brother and taking a 'bus went with my luggage to 35, Gracechurch Street, Christy's City house, and then went home with my companion for the night. Early next morning he went with me to Christy's manufactory and though I was "shopped in tissue" - a trade term - I had to see the secretary of the Trade Society, and produce my indentures of seven years earlier, before I could be admitted a member. Being satisfied he gave me an "Asking Ticket" and sent out for the "Short Turn"; I gave the latter my ticket and he went to ask the foreman if he could shop a Finisher. He soon returned telling me I was shopped and took me to the foreman for my "Pad of work", consisting of 6 "bodies" and the silk for me to finish. I was then led into the workshop and took possession of my plank, and my "Short Turn" found a place on the kiln for my irons. He had then finished his duty to me, but as he seemed a very respectable man I asked him if he could recommend a lodging; he took me to Henry Morris who worked in the same shop and I agreed to become his lodger. It was strange that when next day I mentioned that I came from Wrexham my landlady, who was about 68; told me that she was born in Wrexham but left there when she was seven years old: she described the long flight

of steps which led from near her mother's house into the Churchyard and other things which made it certain that she remembered the old town clearly.

I did not begin work on the Tuesday as I wanted to see the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, the work of Sir Joseph Paxton for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and removed from Hyde Park about 1853. My friend and I both enjoyed our visit but before going there we went into Westminster Hall and were shown by a guide through the Court of Queen's Bench, Lord Campbell then presiding, and also the Court of Common Pleas and the Court of Exchequer. These Courts were on the right as one entered Westminster Hall and were in use until the New Law Courts were built in the Strand.

I went to work on the Wednesday morning and found I had to pay 5 shillings as "Maiden Garnish" as it was my first shop after joining the Society. There were 28 men working in this "battery"; they each paid 2d. to the Garnish, and the total 9s. 8d. was spent on beer to wish me prosperity. I was invited to partake. I had then been an abstainer for five years and without putting Total Abstinence on too high a pedestal I have ever been thankful for the stand I made that day in refusing to take the beer. Daily afterwards I saw the curse the drinking customs were to the men around me; if I had followed their course there would have been no possibility of uplifting. If my work had not "served turn" and I had been discharged for incompetence my fellow workmen would have given another 2d. each as "treatings off" and I should have been asked to drink.

I thought this a very wrong custom and after a few months I was able to carry a resolution that any man put "off" should have the 2d. each of his fellows gave as a "Dry Garnish". For several months my work went on in the factory uneventfully.

IV

A short time before the Treaty of Peace after the Crimean War was signed, and a few days after that there were illuminations to celebrate the event and I witnessed the fireworks in Hyde Park and the Green Park: on that day business in London was suspended. I was in Hyde Park to see the Foot Guards on their return from the Crimea; from their busbies and clothing it was evident what a rough time they had had in the previous winter.

At this time C. H. Spurgeon had gained immense popularity in London by his preaching. In 1853 he had been invited to "supply" at New Park Street Chapel, near the Southwark Bridge Road for a few Sundays. The Chapel was large, with, however only a small attendance. Before the last of the five Sundays for which he had been engaged he was invited by the deacons to continue for six months. The congregation had so greatly increased that in April 1854 he was unanimously invited by a church meeting to become pastor and on the 28th April he accepted the invitation, being then still only in his 20th year (born June 19, 1834). The congregation soon became so great that in the spring of 1855 the chapel was closed for enlargement,

the Sunday services being held at Exeter Hall in the Strand. When the chapel was re-opened it proved to be still far too small and it was decided to have the morning services only at Park Street and continue the evening services at Exeter Hall.

That was the position when I came to London. On my first Sunday, 10th May, 1856 I went to hear the famous preacher and was enquiring the way of two gentlemen when they said they were going also. I walked with them and from that day there grew up a close friendship with them. One was a Mr. Woodhouse who for some years was a foreman of Airds, the great building contractors. Among other work he superintended the building of forts at Gravesend, and there was in daily contact with Charles Gordon, afterwards General Gordon, who was supervising the work for the Government. On one of our visits to Mr. Woodhouse we had Will with us as a small boy, and Gordon carried him a little about the forts.*

I continued to attend the services, and soon found it was important that I should have a seatholder's ticket to be certain of getting in; these tickets were available until 5 minutes before the service began, the doors being then opened to the general public. In about August of this same year the owners of Exeter Hall decided it was not right that one denomination should have the exclusive use of the buildings on Sunday evenings, and so gave notice to Mr. Spurgeon and his deacons.

* After February, 1865, when Gordon was appointed Commanding Royal Engineer at Gravesend - W.J.A.

At this time "Juliens Concerts" at the Surrey Gardens were a great attraction and a huge hall had been erected with three galleries all round except at the Orchestra end. As the Gardens were not open on Sundays it was decided to rent the hall for Sunday evening services, and on the 19th October I went to the first service there.

It was a lovely evening. All the approaches were crowded, seat holders going through a separate entrance; I had a seat in the area. The Hall was packed, and for a time there was much commotion, but the moment the preacher came into the pulpit, accompanied by a deacon who always sat with him, there was calm. It was an impressive sight and the singing not to be forgotten, although there was no musical instrument of any kind. All went well until Mr. Spurgeon was engaged in prayer, when suddenly a cry of "Fire!" was raised. Then there was a scene beyond description. On my right hand side in the area there were about twelve windows opening as doors and used when people were going out to the ornamental water on which there were on week days representations of the storming of Sevastopol and the like; in the terrible excitement people took up chairs and smashed the windows. There was no sign of fire, and I kept my seat. Mr. Spurgeon gave out a hymn and tried to get order, not knowing that in one corner of the building where people had rushed from the three galleries and met on the staircase from the lower gallery the pressure had been so great that the banisters gave way. Many people fell on the stone floor and seven lives were lost; twenty-eight persons were badly injured and taken to hospital. The Superintendent of police on duty sent a

message to Mr. Spurgeon who fainted and was carried to the cloakroom. In the panic someone took my hat and gloves, but there were others to select from, as in the rush many articles of clothing were torn off people in the crowd.

A month later the services were renewed at the Surrey Gardens, but the Sunday mornings instead of evenings. A little later, early in 1857, there came the most important day in my life. I have stated that I had a seatholder's ticket; I was always in good time for the Sunday morning and sat on the orchestra. One Sunday from some cause I was late, the doors had been opened to the public and the Hall was packed. I rushed all over the place trying to find a seat: at last on the upper gallery I found a vacant one next to the "Pearl of Great Price" who in the next year became my dearly loved wife. When in 1908 I reach - if spared - the close of my 75th year we shall also celebrate our Golden Wedding.* With confidence I can appeal to our sons and daughters as to the constant happiness of home.

In the summer of 1857 news was received of the Indian Mutiny and of the atrocities committed by the sepoy at Cawnpore, Lucknow, Delhi and many other places, and the Government appointed a day of national Humiliation and Prayer. The Crystal Palace could not be opened for pleasure on that day - October 7, 1857 - and the directors invited

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They did celebrate it. Jane Ashley (nee Short) was born on the 13th June 1840, and was therefore about seven years younger than her husband. James Ashley died in February, 1911; Jane survived him until 1924 - P.A.

Mr. Spurgeon to preach there. He consented and nearly 24000 persons paid for admission. Mother and I were present; as I had been asked to take part in the collection for the Indian Mutiny we were in our places fully an hour before the service at 12 o'clock. The transepts, orchestra and galleries were crowded and when we sang the 100th Psalm the effect was overwhelming. The text was: "Hear ye the Rod and who hath appointed it". The collection exceeded £700, the directors of the Company giving £200.

Mr. Spurgeon's congregation continued to occupy the Music Hall in the Surrey Gardens for just over three years until December, 1859 when the Company decided to open the Gardens and Hall on Sunday afternoons by means of "Refreshment Tickets". Mr. Spurgeon and the deacons decided that if that were done they would no longer use the Hall for Sunday services. The owners of Exeter Hall had not been very successful in letting that Hall on Sundays and were glad to let again to Mr. Spurgeon, and the services continued there until the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in March, 1861. It was opened free of debt, on land bought from the Fishmongers Company, and was larger than any building we had previously occupied; the official statement was: "It is 175 feet long, 81 feet wide and 62 feet high; there are seats for 5,500 and 500 more can be accommodated without crowding".

For many years the building was always crowded for both Sunday services, the evening one especially, with large numbers unable to obtain admission. We had sittings from the first and when we left London and went to live at Ewell in Surrey, I had been a seatholder

for 39 years, from 1856. It was in the Surrey Gardens that we both saw Dr. Livingstone early in 1858; when, many years after, his body was brought by his faithful servant from Africa and placed for a few days in the rooms of the Royal Geographical Society in Savile Row. I saw his funeral procession leave there for Westminster and also saw my countryman H. M. Stanley, whom I had previously seen at the Tabernacle. Years afterwards I frequently saw and heard Dr. Moffat, Livingstone's father-in-law, who ended his days in a country cottage in Kent and though over 80 years of age often came from that cottage to the Tabernacle.

(From some time in 1859, apparently, the writer had been first a teacher and then Superintendent of Butler's Place Ragged School, Bermondsey.)

In 1860 we established at our Ragged School, then in Russell St. Dockhead, Sunday morning breakfast meetings. They were held at 7 o'clock and the tickets were 6d. each. They were held on one Sunday in each month and were well attended, chiefly by teachers from surrounding Sunday Schools. A subject for discussion was chosen by vote at the previous meeting. There would be an interesting discussion for about an hour and a half, and the meeting closed in time for teachers to reach their various schools and classes. The breakfasts were supplied by a contractor from Hackney who brought all things necessary on the Saturday evening. With him I counted the number at breakfast and paid 5d. for each, thus allowing 1d. each for printing tickets, notice papers, etc.; but as a good many tickets were sold to people who intended being present, but on Sunday morning couldn't leave their beds, we found at the close of the year we had a good surplus for Ragged School Funds.

V

In January, 1857 I was offered by Christy's Manager the position of foreman of the finishers at Stockport. The salary was small but I promised to accept it and was to see two members of the firm on a Monday. But on the Sunday I reconsidered the matter and decided not to leave London, telling the governors so next day. A few weeks later I was asked to take up another line of work, which was to see that the crowns of the hats were perfect before papering them up for customers. I was paid 33 shillings a week, the hours being from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and there was no Saturday early closing. For this work I was in the midst of the Shapers and able to see their operations. I had not been taught shaping but when in Wrexham the wholesale trade was given up and our two shapers left I had done my best in that branch. When I saw the London men at work I felt confident I could "Serve Turn" and after a little pecuniary arrangement with the foreman of the department I became a Shaper.

From the time I commenced as a Shaper my prospects improved, but for some time slowly. In the Autumn of ¹⁸⁶⁰1860 the stiffened felt hat (bowler) came into use for the first time; large quantities were made by our firm at Stockport and hundreds of grosses sent to Bermondsey St. to be shaped and trimmed. They were paid for at the same rate as silk hats, 5s. 6d. per dozen. In the spring of 1861 came my opportunity and by working very long hours I was able to do well. I went to business at 6 a.m. and continued until 9 and sometimes 10 o'clock at night and frequently earned from £4.10. 0. to £4.15. 0. a week -

only once did I exceed £5. That was in the week before Whitsun and on the Saturday I went with Grandma and Uncle Jabez* to visit Oldlands Common (Gloucestershire), my wife's native place. My wife and Will, who was then 16 months old, went in June to Wrexham for the summer months and business was so good that year that I could not get away for my holiday and to bring them home until October.

Some of the Shapers had done so well on felt-shaping that the firm asked and pressed for a reduction of the rate to 3s. 6d. per dozen, and as we had no powerful trade union we had to accept. By this time my work had found such favour with two of the governors who were often at the counter with the foreman to examine the goods that work was sent out to me in abundance. So when the change in prices came I had in hand 28 dozen and for these I received the 5s. 6d. per dozen.

The year 1862 opened very cheerfully. By this time I had come right to the front and was selected by Mr. George and Mr. Alfred Christy to shape the hats for their own wear. I also shaped many of the hats for the show case at the International Exhibition where, however, we did not show for competition as Mr. George Christy was one of the judges. From about this time I also shaped all the military and naval cocked-hats made by the firm and also the hats worn by coachmen and footmen on state occasions; even later, when at Bond St., I had to go down to Bermondsey St. at all times when this kind of headgear was being made. My earnings continued much the same, and my hours as long,

* Jane Ashley's mother and brother.

as in 1861; I had become so expert in the work that I did not much feel the lowering of prices. And now came another change. In April 1862 I was asked to be evening master at the Butler Place Ragged School for four evenings a week from 7.15 to 9 o'clock at a salary of £20 a year, and I accepted. It lessened my evening hours in the hat workshop, but I still continued the early morning movement. I began teaching at once.

In July of this year (1862) my two sisters came to visit us. We were then living on Branford Terrace, Spa Road, Bermondsey: at the back of the house there was a large field full of mangel-wurzel and the larks honoured us with their company and song. There was for a long distance country used for market gardens but now covered by thousands of houses. Among other places we visited with my sisters was Madame Tussauds. It was a terribly warm evening and when we came out we had an omnibus from Baker St. to the Bank. There being room only for the ladies inside I was outside with a young fellow from Oldlands Common. There came a violent storm, I was soon wet to the skin and in a few days was alarmingly ill - I had pneumonia. I cannot forget the goodness of Aunt Susan* in assisting Mother** in nursing me. As soon as I could venture, with the doctor's consent, I went to my Mother at Wrexham for nursing. I was there for five

* Mrs. Edwin Short, wife of Jane Ashley's second brother - P.A.

** From this point onward "Mother" always means Jane Ashley, the writer's wife - P.A.

weeks and then my brother returned with me in order to visit the Exhibition of that year, and other places. In October we sent for my Mother to visit us before the Exhibition closed. I omitted to say that earlier in the year we had invited my Father: and on the Whit Monday he, Jane, and I, Uncle Edwin and Aunt Susan had been to the Exhibition and in the evening my Father and I heard the great tenor Sims Reeves at Exeter Hall.

VI

At work I was making good progress; 1865 began very hopefully and on the 21st January came a change - I was asked to go as Shaper to Bond St.* I had heard something of it a few days before, and had made up my wages book for 1864. I found that with my £20 at the Ragged School my income had been £166. When Mr. Alfred Christy asked me to go to Bond St. I told him that the firm would not pay me, as a day worker, what I had been earning for three years with piece-work and the Ragged School - He offered to give me £3 a week - a much larger amount than the firm had ever before paid to a Shaper. I met him by arrangement at Bond St. and in the presence of Mr. Scott, the manager I was promised a "permanent shop" at £3 a week. He told the manager that I was to have an annual holiday of 10 days, and, as I was not a man who would be going into public houses and talking

* Scott's, the hatter's shop still at the corner of Bond St. and Piccadilly was a subsidiary of Christy's - P.A.

about the firm's business I was to have a holiday at any other time I asked for one. No one was to know about my wages, the "governor" paying them himself every month when he came on Mondays for the week's takings in the shop I letting him have a note on the day it was due. My hours were from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and there was no difference on Saturday until some years later when the closing time was made 5 o'clock and as I was four miles from home I made a special effort to get there by 6 o'clock to have tea with the children whom I had not much other chance of seeing in their waking moments except on Sundays. For three years I had been master at the Ragged School for four nights a week; now I resigned and nominated as my successor a young man with some years a Sunday School Teacher. He was a dissenter, but after a rather sharp conflict with the Rector of St. John's who wanted to appoint the Parish Scripture Reader, my nominee was accepted and proved an efficient teacher till the school was closed a few years later.

From 1857 to 1865 I was many times in the Strangers' Gallery in the House of Commons: I had special means of access to it, as our firm made all the Police hats for London, my foreman knew all the Police Superintendents and a note to the one on duty at the House of Commons got me easily into the Strangers' Gallery. There I had the pleasure of hearing more than once Lord Palmerston, who was Premier in 1857, Lord John Russell, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli and Mr. John Bright - I thought Bright the best. Mother and I often hear J. B. Gough, the

temperance advocate, who had wonderful power as an orator. I saw more than once Lord Palmerston going on horseback to Parliament Square, escorted by a pad groom. On the 7th March, 1863 we saw the Prince of Wales's reception at the Bricklayers Arms Station in the Old Kent Road when he brought Princess Alexandra from Denmark, and we also wandered about the West End to see the illuminations on the wedding day, the 10th March. In the summer of 1864 I saw Garibaldi when he visited England. He was drawn in an open carriage at a slow pace from Nine Elms Station, Vauxhall, to Stafford House, the residence of the Duke of Sutherland. The hero wore the Red Shirt, and a soft felt hat, and there was immense excitement. In the following year, 1865, on the Saturday after the news was received of Abraham Lincoln's assassination I went to a meeting of sympathy at St. James's Hall. About two years before I had heard Henry Ward Beecher, the famous American preacher speak at Exeter Hall on the war then raging in the United States.

For some years, until 1870, it was the "common round", Lila, Fred, Alice, Louisa and Walter had been added to our family. Will had spent all the summers in Wales, either going with his Mother or someone coming for him: I also always spent my holidays. On the 21st February, 1870, I had news of my Mother's illness and I went at once to Wrexham. She died on the 25th February, Will's 10th birthday. I stayed in Wrexham for the funeral and the breaking up of the old home - an event I have already mentioned when writing about the Grandfather clock.

By this time Christy's thought they were paying me too high a wage, and asked me to agree to a reduction of 10s. a week. I could not see Mr. Alfred Christy who had made the Bond St. agreement with me, but I had an interview with Mr. George Christy. I told him I thought I had been badly treated in view of the promise made when I first went to Bond St., but would make a suggestion; it was that instead of my wages of £12 being paid every fourth Monday I should be paid on the 17th day of each month - which date it then was - so giving up £12 per year; and that arrangement he agreed to.

In September mother and I and three of the children spent our holiday in Wrexham, staying with my sister and her husband, Tom Evans;* we had a good time, and left for home on Monday, Oct. 4th. On the Friday Tom met with a railway accident near Chester; he died on the 17th, and I went down to the funeral.

We had now decided to make some changes as to schools for our elder children. Will had only gone at intervals to a private school, "Lila" (Eliza) was also at a private school, and Fred at the British School. We were then living, and had been for three years, at 113 Abbey St., and the three Schools were not more than 200 yards away. We had heard excellent reports of the Wesleyan Schools attached to Southwark Chapel, about fifteen minutes walk from home. When I got to Bond St. at 9 o'clock in the morning and had the news of the accident at Chester I went home to tell Mother; she was not yet back from the Wesleyan Schools to which she had taken the children who were all three admitted.

A few days later there was some excitement. In some of the hat-making shops there had been trouble with the "Hatters Fair Trade Society"; our Society, which had been confined to Christy's was making headway and we had captured Jay's, in Southwark Bridge Road, well reported for being a good shop and paying full trade prices. A few of our men went there and I received an offer from the head of the firm to go as Shaper. I had an interview with him at his residence near Peckham, and was invited to have a whiskey, which remains undrunk, anyhow by me. I asked if the sums I had been told his Shapers could earn were correct; he asked me to try to arrange to meet him at the factory on the following Wednesday night when I could see the wages books for the past three years. When I left him I decided to go to see Mr. Alfred Christy before making up my mind. I knew he was to open the post at 35, Gracechurch St. on the Monday morning and I went there. He was angry, to say the least. I told him that if he had not broken his promise to me on going to Bond St. I should not have listened to any suggestion to leave. After a scolding and a bit of a storm I went to Bond St.; he followed and after conversation with the manager I was called in and told that if I were willing I should be put back to the former arrangement of £12 every fourth Monday and an agreement would be drawn up for two years. In due course this was done and the agreement witnessed. A few days later I was sent in a hansom cab to the firm's solicitor in Birchen Lane, City, as the firm thought of taking action against Jays for tempting me away from them. The first question the solicitor asked me was if I had the letter

written to me by Jays. I said I had destroyed it, and the matter ended. At this time there were 16 Shapers at Bermondsey St., any one of whom would have been glad to go to Bond St. for much less wage. In the 5 years I had been there I had shaped at least three-quarters of all the hats sold there, so I suppose the firm were satisfied with my work as there had never been any complaint.

VII

So things went on. The Wesleyan School was satisfactory, but we had long heard most favourable reports of St. Olave's Grammar School, and with a Father and Mother's pride we thought Will would do well there if he had the opportunity. We had five children (Walter had died on Dec. 21, 1871) and we also had my father to think about. For years a woman had come one day a week to assist in the washing; Mother said "I can do that in future; Will shall go to the Grammar School", and so at the commencement of term in January, 1872 she went with him to the School, he being then 12 years old. At each of the three yearly examinations which followed he had a class prize, and on the 25th February, 1875, on his 15th birthday, he came home with the good news that he had been awarded a £10 scholarship. Up to then the examinations for Scholarships had been held in February, but now there was a change and they were held early in July, and Will gained a £15 scholarship. (During these years he gained a number of prizes in the Scripture examinations held by the London Auxiliaries of the Sunday School Union). In the early

months of 1876 Dr. Maguire, Rector of St. Olaves, Southwark, gave 10 lectures in the Parish Church on the Thirty-Nine Articles, and it was announced that there would be an examination and prizes awarded. There were many students. At the close of the course the examination was held at the London Bridge Hotel and it was announced that on the first Monday in May the result would be made known at the Cannon St. Hotel and the prizes given. I left Bond St. early, going first to a meeting of the Liberation Society* at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which began at 6 o'clock in order to hear Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who presided; it was just about the time he was first elected member for Birmingham. After hearing his opening speech I went by bus to Cannon St., where there was a crowded meeting in the large hall. The first prize (£10) was gained by a Professor at the Wesleyan College, Richmond: Will got the second prize (£5) which he lovingly gave to his mother, and there was joy in the home. On the 12th day of the next month our son, Percy Walter Llewellyn, was born.

Two months later the Welsh National Eisteddfod was held at Wrexham. Among the prizes offered was one of £15 and a Gold Medal for an Essay on "The Early British Church": Will had decided to compete and worked hard collecting material at the Guildhall Library, where I had sometimes gone to him on my way home from Bond St. The Essay was sent in under the name "Caractacus". At the close of school term he went as usual to Wrexham, but told no one there about it. Mother and I went, with Percy, then eight weeks old, to Wrexham, and were at the meeting in the great pavilion, holding 8000 persons - it was crowded when the result was announced. - (The examiners

* The "Society for the Liberation of Church from State" - P.A.

reported that they had reduced the essays submitted to two, one by "Caractacus" and the other by "Melior". They commended the first as a well-arranged presentment of the facts, but finally decided to award the prize to "Melior", who proved to be the Vicar of Bangor, Carnarvonshire (and Rural Dean)) - . As Will was only 16 we thought this as good as a win, and my younger sister gave him a prize in honour of the event. In 1875 Will had been placed twenty-third in the general list of the Oxford Local Examination (Junior); in 1876 he gained a good place in the Senior Oxford Local, and 1877, his last Oxford Local Examination he was placed first in all England in History and Literature and fourth in the General List. In each year he gained a Prize which was presented at Burlington House, then occupied by London University.

About this time there appeared in the "Daily News" an advertisement for a clerk wanted as French correspondent in a City House, applications to be addressed in the first instance to the Post Office, Bunhill Row, Old Street, City. To our surprise we found on enquiry that the clerk was wanted at the Stick and Cane Factory of Henry Howell and Co., 180 Old Street: Will's two uncles, George and Edwin Short, were then in the business, the one as traveller, the other as buyer. Mr. Jonathan Howell, then Chief Clerk*, showed Will some correspondence, but we did not then come to any agreement. On our way home I called at the Grammar School and was advised by the

* Later Mr. Jonathan Howell and the two Uncles became heads of the firm.

Rev. Andrew Johnson and Mr. Butler, second master, not to take my son from school, the Head Master saying "There is no honour the School can give he is not capable to gain". I followed their advice.

VIII

And now what about my own position at Bond St.? I have stated above that in November, 1870 I entered into a two-years agreement; when that expired there was, after a delay of many weeks, another agreement for two years signed in the spring of 1873. When that expired there was an anxious time. A new partner had come into the firm, very keen on introducing there a shaping machine which was practically ruining the hand shapers. Actually it was never a success and after about twelve years of effort it was given up. No other firm tried it; it was too costly in operation and the results were not so satisfactory as with hand-shaping. In March, 1876 Mr. Alfred Christy retired from the firm, the notice appearing in the London Gazette on the 18th. It was privately said he did not willingly give up but was worried out by the new partner. On Monday morning, March 23rd at 6 o'clock at his country house at Cudham, Kent, he shot himself. Before the news had reached Bond St. I was sent for by the manager and told that the firm was determined to reduce my wages by 10s. a week; and I felt it useless to resist. My wages were paid monthly as usual. On March 3rd, 1877, when the manager paid me he said my services were no longer required, and on the 31st March I left Bond St. after being there 12 years and 1 week.

I was deeply convinced, and had been for many years that there is a divinity that shapes our ends; Mother and I sought for guidance and hope, and were helped in ways beyond our understanding. I went back to Bermondsey St.; the trial was great; in face of the shaping machine my earnings were reduced by more than one-half of what they had been for about eighteen years. But we were led to believe that Will should remain at the Grammar School and in July he was awarded the highest scholarship of £30. We were not without some small savings, in a building society, I was in a good Benefit Society, and had also - in 1865 - insured my life for £100. In 1874 we had left Abbey St. and gone to 120 Alscot Rd. Lila then went to Monnow Rd. Board School, followed in due course by Alice and Louie; there was no room there for boys so Fred went to Rolls Rd. School. In 1876 Fred gained the First Prize in his standard in a Scripture Examination - a prize of a bible from a fund given by Sir Francis Peek - and received it at the Crystal Palace from the hands of Mr. W. E. Forster, who had carried the Education Act of 1870 through Parliament. In the bible Mr. Smith, the head master at Rolls Road had written that it was the First Prize with over 1000 candidates. In 1877 and 1878 Fred again won similar prizes: that in the latter year taking the form of a Cruden's concordance. In October, 1877 Will went to Oxford to compete for the Brackenbury Modern History Scholarship at Balliol, but was not successful.

And so we were spared to reach the most eventful year, 1878. About March there was an examination for the Marshall Scholarship

of £50 a year for four years, founded by a certain Marshall who had been born in St. Saviour's Parish, Southwark. It was open to (1) boys born in the Parish of St. Saviour and educated at St. Saviour's Grammar School; (2) boys born in St. Olave's Parish and educated at St. Olave's Grammar School; (3) boys born anywhere and educated at St. Saviour's, and (4) boys born anywhere and educated at St. Olave's - the preference being in that order. Will was in the fourth lot..... he was awarded the scholarship. It was in May that the result was made known, and as I walked home to dinner and was at the corner of Bermondsey St. and Abbey St. I met Will running to meet me with the glad news; which he had already taken to his mother. There was joy in the home. In July the school examinations were held and we were most anxious as to what might happen. It was known that for (the leaving Scholarship) it would be a close thing between Will and one other. We knew the morning on which the result was to be made known at St. Olave's, and on going to school Will had said "If there's good news I will meet you when coming to dinner". I was excited, knowing how much depended on the award. I had walked a good way on my journey home without meeting Will and my heart sank within me, when suddenly he came into Grange Rd. with the glad news that the Governors had given both him and (his competitor) Exhibitions of £60 a year for four years. Hallelujah!

About this time Will was anxious to be specially coached, in view of another attempt at the Brackenbury Scholarship. He told us that T.F. Tout, (his senior by a few years at St. Olave's and later

Professor at Manchester University) would give him 19 hours for (a special fee of) £5. Mother and I talked over the matter and felt that, as my own mother would have said, we must not "spoil the ship for a hap'orth of tar"; so it was arranged and to the coach's surprise we sent the fee in advance. That week my earnings were 9 shillings and 8d. In August I was on a sick bed, and again went to Wrexham to recuperate. Through the changes at business it was most difficult for me to find the means for Will's Oxford outfit and other heavy expenses, exceeding by far anything we had expected, and here I must express gratitude to my brother and two sisters who loaned Will the money, which in a few years he thankfully repaid.

In October he went into residence at Oxford and tried to enter Balliol, but was not successful. Mr. and Mrs. Oxford were with us when this news came at a late hour and leaving Mrs. Oxford to comfort Mother, Mr. Oxford went with me to the Central Office in the Borough to send a cheering wire to Will. He then entered at St. Edmund Hall. A few weeks later he gained the Brackenbury History Scholarship and so to our delight became "Scholar of Balliol".

As he was now the happy possessor of £210 a year for 4 years, our minds were easy, and Mother and I wish to record his great goodness to us, by at once offering to pay our rent of £36. 0. 0. a year, which promise he most faithfully kept, and much more in future years. In 1879, his first year at Balliol, he gained the College Shakespeare prize, I think it was £15, awarded partly in money and partly in books. On Whitmonday 1879 Mother and I were invited to spend the day at

Balliol, looking at many of the Colleges and College gardens. The next year I met my sister Eliza at Oxford on Whitmonday, she had been Will's guest since Saturday. In the following year, Mother and I were again in Oxford.

Our heart's desire was that Fred might go to St. Clave's School, but it was utterly impossible, and with that fond and loving nature Mother's Fred has ever shown, he said he would go to business, going first to the warehouse of a Mr. Evans in the City, and after about a year into the business of his Uncles at 180, Old Street, City.

1881 brought the Balliol Scholar's Final exam. in the Honours School of History in which he obtained a First Class, and once more there was joy in the home. As he had taken his final exam. in his third year at Oxford there was still the advantage of 1 year of his scholarship. He had spent part of one vacation in Germany and at Gottingen he first met Mr. Sydney Ball. He at once began to take pupils at Oxford. In 1882 he gained the Lothian Prize for an essay, which on the recommendation of Professor Stubbs was published by Macmillans. We were present in the Sheldonian the year the Lothian Prize was gained, and were introduced to Professor Stubbs, afterwards Bishop of Chester and later of Oxford. That summer Will went to Dresden for many weeks, to help perfect his German, and from the works there sent his Mother some Dresden ware. In 1883 he was candidate for a History Fellowship at All Souls, but although he was known to be first in the Exams, for class reasons was not elected. In 1883 he was candidate for a Fellowship at Pembroke College was placed "Proxime", the successful candidate being Mr. Tout, a much older man and his private tutor.

That year he was also candidate for History Professorship at Cardiff, there were many applications; he was one of two invited to Cardiff but was not elected, the other candidate being by some 6 years the older man. A few months later he tried for the History Professorship at Bangor, the chance was lost because Professor Reichel who was elected Principal also took the History Chair. In the autumn of that year he went to Southport for 3 months, giving lectures on the Stuart period for the Oxford Extension. In 1834 it was known he was best man in the examination for Fellowship at St. John's, again for class reasons he was not elected. In 1834 he continued at Oxford taking private pupils and assisting in College exams at Balliol. In December, as Mother was busy getting Percy ready for school, there came letter and cheque from Will, saying he was going for a fortnight to Bournemouth, asking Mother to take Percy to Waterloo, give him in charge of the guard, and he would meet him at Basingstoke. Percy was only 3½ years old when he was taken by the elder brother for this delightful holiday. They both returned on Christmas Eve and the next day we went to Uncle Edwin's at Clapton, we staying but Will leaving us on the 26th for the home of Mr. Joseph King's father and going one evening to the home of Dr. Newman Hall to hear him lecture on his recent travels in Palestine.

IX

And thus we enter, amid pleasures and anxieties, 1835. On the morning of 7th of February, I was at business when I received a wire, with the glad news that on that morning Will had been elected Fellow and Tutor at Lincoln College and stating that he would be home about 2 o'clock.

I at once went home to tell his Mother, who was already on her knees cleaning the sitting-room, and so was quite ready to say "Thank God for that", when I told her the cheerful news. Will came at time stated, returning to Oxford that night, I going with him to Paddington. The election had to be ratified on the 7th of March, which was done, and as he did not take up residence as Tutor at Lincoln until October he decided to spend several weeks in Italy and the South of France. He came home on Saturday, on Sunday the 8th I went with him to Ludgate Hill Station where he booked for Milan. This success was too much for me after the long time of anxiety and on Saturday morning March 28th I was too unwell to go to business. The doctor was sent for and rapidly I became alarmingly ill, on the Monday he urged us to send for Will, who was then at San Remo. I was suffering with pneumonia, fortunately there was by Thursday a change for the better, and the telegram sent to him on the Monday did not find him. Friday was Good Friday, the 3rd of April, Uncle Edwin and Aunt Susan came to visit me early in the day. Mr. and Mrs. Oxford were at the window in my bedroom in the afternoon, when they saw my sister, Lila, drive up in a hansom, having come specially to assist in my nursing, and that is the way I have been cared for these many years. On Monday, May 2nd, I was able to travel to Wales, Mother could not leave home just then but my old friend, Mr. Simon Jones, who had come to London for Baptist Missionary meetings, delayed for a few days his return home, taking care of me and getting a welcome cup of tea on the journey. I was in Wales 5 weeks, and driven about much on and around the Welsh hills and was soon strong again. Will returned

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from the Continent and very soon was elected Lecturer at Corpus Christi and then went to Westgate, where Mother, Percy and I had a good time, and others of our children, Percy going ^{later} to stay with Will at Lowestoft. By this time my business had improved by close attention and working long hours; aided by the help and devotion of Fred and Lila, things were cheerful and bright in our roomy home. As Will's guests Mother and I spent the Whitsunday of 1886 in Oxford, he taking rooms for us in New Inn Hall St. On his way to breakfast with us he met Mr. York Powell who asked him to write "Edward the Third and his Wars", he consented and on Mother's birthday 1887 she received the book in which is written "Jane Ashley, from the author, Whitsunday 1887, in memory of Whitsunday 1886".

I think it was about this time we met at breakfast one morning at Lincoln Mr. Maurice Hill, and Mr. Sydney Ball, going the following morning to St. John's College to breakfast with Sydney Ball. We had heard Revd. Samuel Barnett preach the University Sermon on Whitsunday, and were invited to lunch with him and Mrs. Barnett, in the house of Canon Freemantle, which he had placed at their disposal, and where they met a large gathering, who were interested in the Toynbee Settlement, Whitechapel. Will had long been on terms of close friendship with Mr. Maurice Hill, and visited his home, that of his Father - Mr. George Birkbeck Hill. In the first week of August 1886 we were delighted to have a letter from Will telling us of his engagement to Margaret, Dr. Hill's eldest daughter. 20 years have passed, since I wrote as well as I could find words, to express our feelings of pleasure to our intended daughter, and now, from our inmost hearts, we say, God Bless her.

Joys, like sorrows, were more than my strength could stand, in that month I was very ill, and again went to Wrexham, Margaret with Will, meeting the train at Oxford, and I was introduced to Margaret, they had brought with them, some little comforts for my journey, and thick overcoat and rug, so that I could be warm in my drives in Wales.

A few days later, Will went to Dunster with a pupil, giving Percy another holiday, this time amid the beautiful scenery of Devonshire. My stay in Wales restored me to perfect health, and in September, through the elder brother's generous love, Percy entered St. Olave's school, being 10 years, and 3 months old. In the summer of 1887 Will invited me to stay with him in Berkshire, at the Camden Arms, Uffingham. It was a splendid holiday, and we walked each day long distances, about the "Vale of White Horse", and Scott's mystic blacksmith's camp, and saw the famous Blowing Stone. We returned to our Hotel, each day in time to dine, and it was in one of our walks, going through a village, and entering the open Church, we found that a hive of bees had swarmed just over the Communion Table.

My Father died this year on April 25th aged 86 and 9 months, born July 22nd 1800. Grandfather Short died October 25th 1886, aged 80.

It had been arranged that the marriage of Will and Margaret should take place in October 1888. But in June he was elected to the Chair of Political Science and Economics, at the University of Toronto, and the wedding was fixed for July 2nd for the very especial reason that his work in Toronto began in October. He went to Herne Bay, where many of us visited him. It was a lovely morning when we all left London for the

marriage; before we reached Oxford the rain fell in torrents and continued to do so until 5 o' clock. We drove to Lincoln College, and after some refreshments, to George Street Congregational Church where the ceremony was conducted by Dr. Fairbairn, and then to lunch at Dr. Hill's 3, The Crescent, Banbury Road, where we had the pleasure of meeting all Margaret's Brothers and Sister. The first time we met Mrs. Hill was in Staple Inn, where we had tea with Mr. Maurice Hill, and Mr. Wadsworth.

The happy pair left for the Lakes, and we returned home, and to our surprise found Aunt Eliza (in a friend's,) at Alscot Rd. waiting our return; she had that day travelled from Gresford.

As Will had to take up his duties at Toronto 1st week in October, Dr. Fairbairn kindly placed his house at Will and Margaret's disposal until they sailed. On their return from Cumberland they called on Bishop Stubbs at Chester, then to Wrexham and so to Oxford and we spent a few days with them at Banbury Rd. for final farewell. And so they went to Canada and were most kindly welcomed by Sir Daniel Wilson the President of the University.

X

Now we enter 1889, but it is so full of events I must not much enlarge, for obvious reasons. In the early part of February I was at home for two weeks sick and when I returned to business, I found that the Hatters Fair Trade Union had made an offer to take to their Society, the whole of Christy's Society, the chief reason being, that they had prepared a new price list, and before presenting it to the Employers, wished to get every

Journeyman in Great Britain in the Union. But I found, that, fearing the power of Christy's Firm the trade had drawn up two price lists, the one specially for Christy's being rather lower prices than the one for other Firms. I felt this was not right, and so on that account - believing it unjust to other Masters - I declined to join the movement, and with about a dozen men we refused to go out on strike when ordered to do so by the Trade. We had reason to know our action was taking effect, so we came out, and that night at a General Meeting held in the Surrey Chapel School Rooms Blackfriars Rd., it was unanimously resolved to have one price list for the whole of the Employers. It was in the midst of the busy season and the Employers all gave way, accepted the price list and all returned to work. The difference in prices were great in all branches of the Trade. I will just mention my own case. Before the strike, 3 dozen hats had been booked out to me, at 4/9 per dozen. I had not been able to touch them, so when I left work, they were fetched back into the warehouse; when all was settled, and work resumed, the same 3 dozen hats were rebooked to me at the new scale 8/- per dozen, or 24/- for 3 dozen instead of 14/3 under the old price. I had been in the habit of going early to work and working late, but now, the Trade forbade work beginning before 8 o'clock, and it must end at 6 o'clock. The contribution per week was 2/2, but it was thought that as soon as the busy season was over the masters would by some means resist this new Price list so it was resolved at a General Meeting that for the next 6 weeks, no matter how small a man's earnings, he must pay 2/2 contribution, but for every shilling earned over 20/- he must pay 2d. thus getting a strong fund to aid in any fight which may follow. On March the

15th, my first full week, my earnings were £3.15.3., this being 55 shillings over the 20/- I had to gladly pay 55 two pences and the ordinary 2/2: my trade contribution that week being 11/4, but my earnings had been about 27/- more than usual, with fewer hours.

Shall I write about events in the dear home? I was received with mirth and chaffed about my wealth - Alice and Louie came and sat on my knees and Mother said, "Father, be generous to the girls", so I just gave them 2/6 each. The following day the 16th they had been out shopping in view of their Sunday School Anniversary of the 24th, and there was much joy in the kitchen. Fred called me from the front parlour, where I was writing and asked me to join the family circle which I was glad to do. On Sunday Louie was at School and Service and on her tract district. On Tuesday I was dressing and heard her go downstairs for hot water, on returning, she went to the piano for a few minutes, there was a silence, and as I was going downstairs I met her, when Mother told me she had violent pains in the head, and she had advised her to go and lie on our bed for a time, it being the larger room. I went to business; at 12.30 I was fetched by a special messenger, when I reached home there was Mother, Alice, and the Doctor; Louie had been taken to the dear Heavenly Father. "As thy day so shall thy strength be": in our time of need we were divinely helped. Louie had always enjoyed perfect health, it was needful for a post mortem, we decided all should be done in the home. The next day I wrote to Sir Daniel Wilson enclosing a letter for Will, as we were most anxious about Margaret. Alice, was at once taken care of by Mrs. Webb of Butlers Wharf, Horsleydown. Until after the funeral, the Sunday School Anniversary was

postponed until November, and instead thereof there was a Memorial Service for dear Louie. Alice alone was with Mother in the home when Louie became alarmingly ill; she had long been in very feeble health, a few years before she was in Wales, and having a drive, when overtaken by heavy rain and not able to shelter got very wet which resulted in rheumatic fever and weak heart. She ran to Grange Rd. for the Doctor, but the strain was so great, she was very ill and preparations were made for her going with Mother to Hastings, as soon as the Doctor would consent. On the last Sunday morning in April 1889, just as I was leaving home for the Tabernacle there was received a wire from Dr. Hill informing us of the birth of our first Granddaughter and good news of Margaret, we were all pleased, Mother scoffing at me as "Grandfather", and in her vanity said I ought to ask C.H.S. to announce the fact from the pulpit. About a week later, the invalid was taken to Hastings, the weather was lovely, and in letters received each day we read how delighted she was with the Laburnum, Lilac, Chestnut and other things she saw on the West Hill when taken in a Bath Chair to the sea-front from which she gave leaflets to passers by. On the 21st of May, about mid-day I was summoned to Hastings, but I was too late. What all Mother's brothers and their wives, with my brother and sisters were to us, as helpers, God alone knows. Aunts Carrie and Susan taking charge of and helping Mother in many ways. Percy was then not 13 years of age, the loss of his two sisters was to him a severe shock - as of course it was to all of us - and affected his school work very much that year. In August he went to Wales and was there several weeks, it helped to shake off the distress consequent of the death of his sisters, he made excellent progress at School and for

6 years gained scholarships varying in amounts of ten to twenty pounds.

XI

For the next year there is little to report at business, trade varied, but in July, when at tea about the last Sunday we received a telegram stating the Canadians were to arrive at Euston Station that evening, we yearned to see and welcome all especially the tiny Arnie. It was a joy to bring them to Alscot Rd.

That year we had many happy meetings, and had the pleasure of spending several days with Will and family in the quaint cottage just off St. Giles'. The visit of the Son and family was nearing its close, they were coming to us for weekend, about the 6th of September. On the Friday before I had discovered that I had lost the sight of my right eye and going to my Doctor, he advised me to go to the Ophthalmic Hospital, Moorfields. On the Monday morning, Mother and I went with Will and family to say farewell at Liverpool St. Station, they going to Hampstead, and we into the Hospital nearby. They were anxious we should send them a report of my condition. I was under examination for nearly 2 hours by various specialists, and in the end I was told it was feared there was something forming in the eye which would need to have the eye removed. This was soon made known to Will and he ran down to cheer me. For 23 weeks I was under observation at Moorfields, as an out-door and indoor patient; it was thought to be a most important case; at last I was seen by Dr. Nettleship, who was of opinion there was no growth, although I had no hope of ever regaining the sight. I had been away from business

all this time by the orders of the Doctors and now, when compelled to return, I found it quite impossible to do Shaping, through my loss of right eye. It is now 17 years since that happened, and I am glad to say my left eye has not been affected and I can enjoy the surrounding scenery and all things at fairly long distances almost as well as ever.

XII

There were several happy events in the years from 1890 to 1895. It was in 1891, that Miss Devonport Hill, who was a member of the London School Board and cousin of Margaret went to visit Canada and spent much of the summer with Will and Margaret. On her return, we were invited to dine with her at Hampstead, so that she may have the opportunity of telling us of the pleasure of her visit.

In 1893 Dr. and Mrs. Hill went to America and spent the summer at Cambridge and during the hot weather were at Cape Cod when our eldest Grandson was born in August, and when the Dr. and Mrs. Hill returned to Holly Hill, Hampstead, we spent a day with them, as they had so many pleasant things to talk about in connection with their visit.

In 1894 Will came alone to England on special business, and in 1896 Dr. and Mrs. Hill went again to America, when they spent many weeks at Mount Desert, Maine, it being Will and Margaret's summer home.

Things in the home were going happily, and Percy, at school, making good progress. In July 1892 the family again came from Toronto, this time bringing dear baby Alice.

Just before they sailed Will had been invited to the Chair of Economic History just founded at Harvard, and very soon after their arrival in England it was decided that he was appointed, so at the close of their holidays, they went direct to Cambridge, Mass, a friend in Toronto forwarding to them all their household effects. They had secured the use of a roomy house at Headington, Oxford for part of their visit, and we had the pleasure of a charming visit there, and in the absence of the Parents in Ireland for a week we enjoyed taking care of Annie and Alice, and taking them about in the Pram. We also visited Dr. and Mrs. Hill at the Crescent, and on one of the days, the Grand-parents and all the family were photo'd. in a group.

It had been arranged that Fred and Nellie were to be married in August. Nellie was an old friend of the family, coming first to us when about 8 years of age and growing up as companion of Alice and Louie. It was a truly happy day when we met at Parish St. for the joyful event, and all the party had a good time at Alscot Rd. That is nearly 15 years ago and we are proud of Fred and Nellie's 3 boys.

As my health had quite failed in May and I was totally unable to follow my employment, Will with unbounded love made things easy for me, we have often wondered at the goodness of both Will and Margaret, whose income was not immense; we, at least, do feel grateful. In September we again said goodbye, when the new Professor went to Harvard.

XIII

It had long been felt that it would be a great help to my health if we could leave London, and all the family wished us to do so. But as Percy was at St. Olave's, we found it impossible to make the change, and so we reached 1895 and Percy would be leaving School in July.

We spent many days that spring in going to places in Kent, Surrey and Essex to try to find a suitable home, even going - at Will's suggestion - as far as St. Albans. Percy, who was now - jointly with Webber, Captains of the School - had been 3 times to Oxford, to compete for a Scholarship: he had been successful at Lincoln where he obtained a Scholarship value £60, for 3 years. The good brother and sister had made all arrangements, and invited Percy to stay with them at Mount Desert, when he had finished at St. Olave's.

On the 26th of July, Friday, it was Commemoration. I was invited to lunch with the Governors and then I learnt that Percy had been given an exhibition of £50 for 3 years. He also had a large number of Prizes.

The next morning, Fred went to see Percy off, on his way from Waterloo Station to go on board the St. Louis, at Southampton. When landing at New York he was met by Mr. Matthews who had been a Teacher in Parish St. Sunday School and had married an old friend of Lila's, Miss Doggett. They were now settled in New York. Percy stayed with them the night, and next morning went by Fall River Boat to Mount Desert, where he found Will and Margaret awaiting his arrival.

On the evening of Percy's sailing Mother and I went on a visit to Uncle Edwin and for some days in real earnest we sought all about Epping Forest for a suitable residence but without success. Returning home

about the 10th of August, I saw in "Daily News" advertisement of houses to let at Worcester Park and Ewell; as these two stations were next each other on London and South Western Railway, I determined to visit each place, going first to Worcester Park. The house there I did not like and when enquiring my way to West Ewell was directed into the London Road, was delighted with the country around, and after passing the entrance to Monsuch Park about 80 yards away I came to 2 houses which were in course of building, one was nearly ready, and after I had been to West Ewell to see the house the advertisement of which had brought me down, I went to see the Landlord of the houses which were building and which, after learning the rent, I decided to take, subject to Mother and Lila's approval. I thought the house just the ticket, and surroundings beautiful. The following day Mother and Lila went to Ewell and it was decided to enter the new home on September 15th, as they both liked it much, as also did Fred when a few days later he and I went to measure for blinds.

So it "came to pass" that after residence in London from May 4th 1856 until September 15th 1895, we came to Ewell richly enjoying its pure air and on the whole our health has been greatly benefited and at all times it has been our delight to be able to receive all the members of our family, and many times it has been a kind of Convalescent Home.

Percy had a glorious time at Mount Desert, Boston, Cambridge, and other places, and was greatly pleased with our new home and its surroundings when he came to us, on the 11th of October and going into residence at Oxford University 2 days later.

During the next three years all went comfortably at Ewell, Percy coming home in University Vacation and Fred and family spending every holiday time with us. There were as usual the regular weekly American letters keeping us closely in touch with the family there. In 1898 Percy had his final Exam in the Honour School of Modern History and we were all immensely pleased, to learn on the 21st of July, that he had gained a First Class in Honours List. A few days before this result was made known, Percy had been in for a prize Examination at the London School of Economics, and on the following Tuesday, July 26th we were proud to learn he had gained a Scholarship of £100 a year for 2 years for research work in Germany and France. That same month Will had arrived in England, for the "Sabbatical" and he and his family were in the old country to share these pleasures with us. In October, Percy went to Germany and we had many long and deeply interesting letters from him about his journeyings and work, coming home in time to spend August Bank Holiday with us on Box Hill. That year we were again in Oxford, staying with the American family in Banbury Rd., when on one Sunday afternoon we met amongst other callers, Dr. Caird, the Master of Balliol.

In September the Sabbatical came to an end, and we once more most reluctantly farewelled the Professor and family for America. That was just one month before the commencement of the Boer War.

XIV

In 1900, Percy went to France, and had a long stay at Toulouse, where he had an alarming illness, and it was his good fortune to meet in the Hotel an American lady who was extremely kind to him and cared for him in the nursing. Again we had long letters descriptive of the places he visited and the official people he constantly met in his enquiries. He returned to England in August, and that same month was appointed Lecturer in the London School of Economics. About this time he entered as Resident at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, Tavistock Place, and for about 5 years had much to do in its management and work. It was I think in 1901 that by arrangement he met Mr. R.B. Haldane at the house of Mr. Sydney Webb and was invited by Mr. Haldane to become his political Secretary, a year later was also asked by Sir Edward Grey to act in like manner for him, and a year after was also doing similar work for Mr. W. Runciman, M.P. for Dewsbury.

In 1903 early in the year Percy did a special work for Mr. Haldane on the History of the Irish Land Question from its earliest days, it was printed by Mr. Haldane for circulation amongst his friends, one of these papers was given to the then Prime Minister - Mr. Balfour - who sought an interview with Percy in the Prime Minister's private room in the House of Commons, and which led to Percy doing 3 pieces of important research work that summer for the Government.

Now I must get back to the family at Harvard; who giving up all hope of coming permanently to reside in the Old Country had bought for

themselves, as summer residence, a cottage with some land, near the sea, at Smiths Cove, Nova Scotia, and were thus part of the year, under the rule of the British Flag. Percy in 1901 had been invited to give a Course of Lectures at The University of Wisconsin, Madison, U.S., and when these lectures were ended it was arranged that he would travel through Canada in August, and have a long visit to Will and family, at Smiths Cove.

Birmingham University had recently been founded, and it was decided by the Council to establish a Chair of Commerce, the first of the kind in any English University. Very early in July I saw an advertisement in the Weekly Edition of the Times, describing the position of the New Chair, its value and inviting Candidates for the Professorship. This I sent to Will when he decided to offer himself for election, and arrived in Birmingham three days before the Election, which was fixed by the Council for July 31st. There were many Candidates for this Chair, leading economists and others, with these names the Committee had to examine and select, and after two or three meetings it was decided by the Committee that Professor Ashley's would be the only name recommended to the Council, he having had much experience and teaching on commerce, both in Toronto University and Harvard. He was thus unanimously elected by the Council, he was then called into the Council Room and informed by the Chairman, Mr. Beale, who is Vice Chancellor, of his success, and after a few words by the Professor the Chairman said his stipend would date from the next day, August 1st. There was great joy in the home at Ewell when Father, Mother and

Sister received the good news by wire, and that day Will joined us in thanksgiving, for this turn in events so unexpected three months before, and on the next day he sailed for home to prepare for breaking up the home and bring to England his family - they had thus been about 13 years in Canada and Cambridge, and always been treated with utmost kindness and had no complaint of people or climate, but there had ever been a longing for the old country, where the parents of both Margaret and Will lived, with brothers and sisters on both sides of the family. And now about Percy in these changes. In his journey from New York to Madison he had visited Niagara Falls, and other places. After his work of lecturing was over, he did travel through Canada to Smiths Cove, but by reason of the appointment at Birmingham, the visit to Smiths Cove was not so long as had been arranged, and with the family they all returned to Cambridge to get all ready for the voyage to England.

It was important that Will should visit many of the most important Iron and Steel districts in the States before commencing his duties at Birmingham. Whilst the housebreaking and packing was going on, Percy and Will visited many places and were in the Hotel at Buffalo in September when they were startled to hear that the President - McKinley, had been shot in the Exhibition buildings in Buffalo. They at once went to the place, and saw the President carried away on an ambulance, he died a few days later, and when they were driving from Cambridge to go on board their boat at Boston, they heard the bells tolling announcing the death. I was at Old Bond St. in business, when news was received of Abraham Lincoln's assassination. It had taken place on Good Friday, April 14th,

1865. There was then no telegraphic cable to New York; one had been laid, and messages passed for a short time, when it became useless, and it was not until Monday, April 24th, the news was received from Queens-town. There was immense excitement, and on the following Saturday evening I attended a meeting of sympathy with the American people held in James's Hall, and addressed by many eminent men. When Garfield died, after lingering some weeks, I attended - with Will - a meeting of sympathy in Exeter Hall, when Lowell - who was then American Minister - presided; and now, when McKinley was murdered, the third American President who had thus been assassinated, I went from Ewell to attend a Memorial Service at 11 o'clock in Westminster Abbey, and being in the City on business, I saw there was a Service in St. Mary's, Aldermanbury, at 2 o'clock to which "Merchants" were invited. I attended that, and at 4 o'clock went to one in St. Paul's Cathedral. Each of these services were most impressive, with crowded congregations. At each service the hymn was sang, some part of which the dying President repeated - "Nearer my God to Thee".

In the last week of September 1901 to our great joy, Will and family with Percy landed at Liverpool, Will for his duties at Birmingham University and residence at Edgbaston. We have had many happy visits to that delightful home, and seen the upgrowing of our grandchildren, having also had the opportunity and pleasure being twice present in the Town Hall on Degree day. These things have been much enjoyed but our chief thoughts of the return of the family to England have been gladness because Margaret was thus brought near to her dear dear parents in the

sorrowful events of the next two years. The loss of both Mother and Father were severe blows, but we feel they would have been much more severe had it been that the family were in the far-off land and Margaret not present to cheer and help.

Everything has been going so well at Ewell and the good daughter, Sister and Auntie has made it quite easy by her cheery help to Mother, for us to have frequent visits from everyone of our Sons, Daughters, and grandchildren which dare I hope at my age may be long continued.

Fred is going on much as usual with a full and busy life, not only at Old St., but in many other things, such as lectures, and his full day on Sunday in connection with Union Chapel, first as Superintendent of the large School and Choir Master. It is a pleasure to see Fred and Nellie's three boys growing up and as we believe they will be stalwart men; the trouble with Freddie seems to have quite passed away.

And now a few words about Percy. His has been a remarkable growth and progress. We have been pleased that he has by his work been brought in close touch during the last 6 years with several leading statesmen and this coupled with his writing of books, has helped him into his present position at the Board of Trade.

About 4 years ago I was invited to the unveiling of a couple of busts, at the Passmore Edwards Settlement by the American Minister, Mr. Choate and Mr. Humphrey Ward. On that day I was introduced to a young lady "Miss Hayman" who made me very happy in the Settlement Gardens with tea and strawberries. I had my suspicions, but did not mention them; anyhow, "it was love at first sight" with me, and when on 18th

July, 1906, Miss Hayman became Mrs. Percy Ashley it was one of the happiest days of our lives, only crowned by the joy we had, on receiving the news of the birth of their son on September 4th, 1907. And that dear boy Grandpa is going to see on Saturday next, November 23rd, 1907.

And now I close these notes hoping they may interest all our family.

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POSTSCRIPT

The youngest grandchild of James Ashley was Percy's daughter, Audrey May Dora, who was born on February 6th, 1909.

James Ashley died on February 5th, 1911, and his wife in 1924. Their grave is in Ewell churchyard.

This autobiography passed into the possession of William Ashley, and some pencilled notes by him, made when preparing some account of his own life, record that he received the honour of Knighthood in June, 1917, a year before he became Vice-Principal of the University of Birmingham. In 1933 Percy Ashley received the K.B.E. for his work at the Board of Trade and the Import Duties Advisory Committee.

The existence of this autobiographical writing seems to have been unknown to most members of the Ashley family. In 1945 it came into Percy's hands, and he was very greatly pleased and interested. He wrote to his daughter a long letter of comment upon it, planning to have copies made for different branches of the family. "I have started to prepare it for copying," he wrote "adding a few notes and making some slight corrections of fact: for my father's memory, as is not uncommon, was more precise

and accurate about the far-off events than about those in the last decade of his life. But these are very small points and I am certainly taking no liberties with the style."

Some 52 pages of the autobiography had been thus edited, up to the point when Will gained the Brackenbury scholarship in 1878. Percy died on September 13th, 1945, and his daughter has had the remainder of the book copied just as it was written by James Ashley. It is hoped that this record will be of interest to the younger generations of the family.

When Grandfather died, the M.S. was given to Uncle Will and on his death passed on to Father. Gerald took charge of the M.S. when Father died and lent it to me to read. I thought it should be edited and possibly printed for the benefit of future generations of the "Family" and sent it to Uncle Percy who dealt with it as recorded in the above "Postscript". I am the "Freddie" mentioned on page 48 and was very ill as a boy, living with my Grandparents for several years and to whom, among many other things, I undoubtedly owe my return to good health, "Life's Greatest Blessing".

F.P.A.