

# Women's Travel Writings in India 1777–1854

Volume IV

Edited by  
Betty Hagglund



WOMEN'S TRAVEL WRITINGS IN INDIA  
1777–1854



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Volume IV

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# INTRODUCTION

Although little-read today, Mary Martha Sherwood (1775–1851) was well known in her own day and the author of more than 400 books for both children and adults, including novels, short stories, astronomy, geography, fable, and religion.<sup>1</sup> *Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814), a children's book she wrote while in India, went through twenty-two editions within its first decade, was translated into at least eleven languages and was published regularly in India, England, and the United States until the end of the nineteenth century and occasionally through the twentieth; a number of her other works were similarly popular and long-lived.

These memoirs, a substantial part of which cover the eleven years she spent in India, span Sherwood's entire life. Unlike most of the other volumes in this set of women's travel writings, Sherwood's memoirs range widely, both geographically (England, Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary France, India, Switzerland) and chronologically. Nonetheless, the Indian section is arguably the most significant.

## Life

Born in Worcestershire in 1775, Mary Martha Butt was the second child and eldest daughter of the Reverend George Butt (1741–1795) and his wife Martha (*née* Sherwood; c. 1756–1817), daughter of a London silk merchant. Her brother Marten was born in 1773, her sister Lucy in 1781. She was later to describe her childhood as strict but happy. She was educated at home with her brother and sister, learning Latin, French, Italian, and Greek, and then sent to the Abbey School in Reading for two years. She published her first novel, *The Traditions*, in 1795 at the age of 20.

In 1803, Mary Butt married her cousin Henry Sherwood (1776–1849), a Captain in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Foot Regiment who had recently returned from military service in the West Indies; he was appointed paymaster the next year. For two years she followed the regiment around England, amassing, as Nancy Cutt writes, 'a first-hand knowledge of army life and of its effects upon the lives of soldiers' wives and children which she later used in a number of tracts and stories'.<sup>2</sup> Her first child, Mary Henrietta, was born in 1804 at the military base at Morpeth, Northumberland.

When Henry Sherwood was ordered to India in 1805, they left the baby with her mother and sister to 'save her health from the effects of other climes'.<sup>3</sup> Pregnant with her second child, she made the four-month perilous journey round the Cape to Madras. The family stayed in India for eleven years. During their time in India, the Sherwood family moved from Calcutta (Kolkata) to Dinapore, Berhampore, Cawnpore (Kanpur), and Meerut. Four daughters and two sons were born in India; her first son, Henry, and second daughter, Lucy, died in infancy.

While in India, Sherwood was perpetually busy and lived a life much less leisured than many of her contemporaries. Motivated by her growing Evangelical Christian convictions, she set up schools in each of the postings, took on the task of finding homes for military orphans, ran religious services, and wrote constantly, all of this alongside running a household and raising children, while Henry Sherwood was often absent on military duties for long periods. Many of her most significant books were written during her time in India.

Sherwood was 30 years old when she arrived in India and 41 when she left. It was a time of challenge and change for her, not least spiritually as her Evangelical convictions deepened and Christianity came to be the central guiding principle of her life. Six of her eight children were born and spent their early years there, so that on returning to England Sherwood referred to them as her 'little Indians' and to herself as part of 'our Indian family'.

It was in India that she confronted death, never fully coming to terms with it but finding some resolution through her religious faith. As well as her two infant children who died there, there were many other deaths. Death rates among the British population were high; of the covenanted civil servants who went out to India between 1762 and 1771, almost half died in India, many leaving young children.<sup>4</sup> Army deaths were similarly high. Sherwood's active involvement with orphans, including the establishment of informal fostering and adoption arrangements and support for the newly founded institutions for orphans, was a constant reminder of the presence of death;<sup>5</sup> so too were the number of funerals she attended for children she had known or taught.

And it was in India that she met the dedicated and determined missionary Henry Martyn. Becoming almost part of the Sherwood family, Martyn was an essential factor in Sherwood's spiritual development and helped to shape the way she regarded the local Indian population and understood her place in the world.

After Mary Sherwood returned to England in 1816 with her own five children, two adopted orphans, and a motherless girl, she set up a small boarding school and devoted the rest of her life to teaching and writing. Her eighth child, George, was born in 1819 but died in infancy; a few weeks later, one of her adopted daughters died. Two of her other daughters were to die during the 1830s. In 1830 she gave up the school and the family made a tour of the Continent; returning in 1832 she again focused on writing and publishing. Almost to the end of her life she wrote four to five hours a day. Henry Sherwood died in 1849 and Mary Sherwood lived with her youngest daughter, Sophia, the editor of these memoirs, until her own death in 1851.

### Editions and versions

Mary Sherwood wrote three autobiographical works during her lifetime.<sup>6</sup> From 1805 she kept a private diary, its entries composed shortly after the events they describe. Referred to by Sherwood as the 'Indian diary' or 'Indian journal', this diary does not seem to have survived, although Sherwood quotes from it extensively and comments on it in her later autobiographical writings. A second unpublished document, known as the *Family Journal*, covers her entire life in twenty handwritten volumes.<sup>7</sup>

According to Sherwood's explanation in Chapter I, her daughter Emily (1811–1833) 'made it one of her last requests that I would write my life'.<sup>8</sup> A second motive seems to have come from a desire to represent herself, rather than leaving it to others to represent her.

I am tempted to this most singular undertaking, by an observation I have lately been induced to make upon the propensity of the age for writing and recording the lives of every individual who has had the smallest claim to celebrity. Could I be quite sure, that when I am gone, nobody would say anything about me, I should, I think, spare myself the trouble which I now propose to take; but when I consider that it is possible that dear friends . . . may speak too partially of me, or that those who do not understand me may bring forward some of the many errors of my writings to uphold their own opinions.<sup>9</sup>

Sherwood was very aware of the pressures surrounding celebrity, particularly for women. When at the age of 59 she spent a day with the 'celebrated Mrs. Fry',<sup>10</sup> the subject of their conversation was 'the danger of celebrity, for females especially' and the possibility of being 'injured by the world'.<sup>11</sup> She began the mammoth task of producing an edited version of her diaries for publication but died before completing the task. Her daughter Sophia Kelly, with whom Sherwood had co-authored a number of tracts and books, took over the editing and, as Neil Cocks has shown, 'engaged in an extensive revision of the *Family Journal* before publishing it as *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood* in 1854'.<sup>12</sup> In her Preface to the *Life*, Kelly writes that she originally thought she would only need to copy and publish the original diaries, but

on perusal, I perceived that these papers were but too faithful records of past events, and that half-a-dozen pages would comprise a hundred when those parts were expunged which were of too domestic, too sacred a character, to be openly revealed.<sup>13</sup>

The problems created by interventionist nineteenth-century editors are well known and the issue is exacerbated when the controlling editorial voice is that

of a close family member or member of the writer's religious community who may have strong views about what to include or exclude.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are rich in examples of family members writing lives together and, given their previous collaboration on fictional narratives, it is possible to regard this volume as an example of collaboration, with discussion and co-shaping up to the time of Sherwood's death.<sup>15</sup>

Neil Cocks has argued that Sherwood seems to be in sympathy with her daughter on the question of what to exclude in the published account.

The danger of disclosing private information is a recurrent theme in her work, addressed at length in stories such as 'The Old Woman's Tale', as well as sections of *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood* that have been transferred unaltered from the original Family Journal. Thus, on many occasions the narrator of *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood* refuses to disclose a particularly painful fact of feeling, claiming that 'where one has suffered much, one cannot linger in discourse, for there are certain feelings that must be avoided and suppressed'.<sup>16</sup>

Although the majority of the volume is by Mary Sherwood, there are two long sections from Henry Sherwood's diaries; the first describing his time in Revolutionary France as a young man, the second depicting his involvement in the Nepal War (1814–1816).

In 1907, an abridged edition of the 1854 *Life*, edited by Isabella Gilchrist, was published; a substantial part of it is paraphrase of the original and it contains no new material.

In 1910, F. J. H. Darton, a descendent of one of Sherwood's original publishers, re-edited the original diaries; the result was *The Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood (1775–1851) from the diaries of Captain and Mrs. Sherwood*. Darton restored some passages 'hitherto suppressed on personal grounds' and also interpolated (chiefly in relation to Sherwood's early life), 'some additions from other sources, notably from Captain Sherwood's unpublished journals'.<sup>17</sup> For the current edition, the two versions of the diaries have been compared and the notes include, where appropriate, Darton's later additions.

## Religion

When it was founded in the seventeenth century, the East India Company aimed to be both 'profitable and pious'. The two were seen as mutually interdependent and it was taken for granted that chaplains would accompany its voyages to see to the spiritual welfare of the Company's employees.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, the Company originally forbade any attempts to preach to the local population or to attempt to convert them in any way. Although a small number of Protestant missionaries were active in parts of south India during the eighteenth century, the Company

strenuously opposed any missionary activity in the Bengal Presidency. As Avril Powell has written,

[The Company's] own interests in Bengal were narrowly commercial, and the minority of its servants who were not indifferent about religious matters tended to an 'orientalist' admiration for Indian culture which was very far removed from the evangelical view of Hindu depravity. The notion of 'non-interference' with the religions and customs of the indigenous peoples initially reflected the Company's own convenience, but by the time the Evangelicals became interested in India, 'non-interference' had been enshrined as a principle which must be adhered to in order to fulfill a pledge of honour which would guarantee the stability of British rule in India.<sup>19</sup>

Regulations were issued in 1793, promising the Indian people that the Company would 'preserve to them the laws of the Shaster and the Koran in matters to which they have invariably been applied, to protect them in the free exercise of their religion'.<sup>20</sup>

Back in England, however, the Evangelical Movement had taken hold, and that very year William Wilberforce and others raised the question of this 'non-interference' policy in Parliament, sparking a major controversy. Despite the Company's ban on missionary activity, a handful of evangelically minded Company chaplains began cautiously to make contacts among non-Christians and to distribute Gospels. Chief amongst these were three men who were central to Mary Sherwood's spiritual development, David Brown, Daniel Corrie, and Henry Martyn.

As will be seen in the following, all three men were significant. The most important to Sherwood, however, was the unique and talented Henry Martyn, a passionate preacher and a skilled translator. He sailed to India in 1805 and, after arriving in Calcutta, overwhelmed by 'the thought of the diabolical heathenism' of the city,<sup>21</sup> was welcomed as a guest by David Brown, with whom he stayed five months. He served as Company Chaplain at two military garrisons, Dinapore from 1806–1809 and then Cawnpore from 1809–1810.

Described by D. O'Connor as having an 'often morbidly introspective version of evangelical spirituality, the latter balanced by an attractive sociability',<sup>22</sup> Martyn became a close friend of Mary Sherwood and, at the same time, her spiritual mentor and guide. Aligning herself with his missionary efforts, she moved from the liberal Anglicanism of her upbringing to a much more evangelical position, arguing for the total depravity and innate sinfulness of man, the need for conversion of the sinner through the blood of Jesus Christ and the sanctification of the regenerate soul. However Darton has argued that, after Sherwood's return to England and the death of her daughter Emily in 1833,

she reached, in meditation upon the mysteries of life and death, the view that 'salvation was wholly unconditional, a free gift of Divine love, that

every creature was safe in the hands of his Creator and his Redeemer': a conclusion much in advance of the religious thought of the time in its breadth and freedom from unyielding dogmatism.<sup>23</sup>

Martyn's *Journal and Letters* (1839) gives a detailed description of his life as a chaplain: preaching to the garrison out of doors; the setting up of schools; translation work; Sunday afternoon Hindustani services, often attended by two hundred or more wives and children of the soldiers; his preaching to the 'beggars' at Cawnpore; his debates with Muslim scholars. Sherwood's *Life* describes Martyn engaged in many of the same activities but with a difference. She nurses him through illnesses and, as a friend and a mother, she is able to see the ways in which Martyn's almost feverish activities are exhausting him, leading eventually to his early death in 1812 at the age of 31. While deeply influenced by him, she is also at times critical of his religious positions; see for example Chapter XIX. Many contemporary accounts of Martyn are hagiographic in nature; Sherwood's depiction provides a much more rounded picture.

The Company managed to sustain its anti-missionary position for another twenty years, but in 1813, while Sherwood was still in India, the Company's charter came up for renewal. Parliament was asked to decide

whether or not the acquisition of empire carried with it a bounden duty to promote Christianity . . . [and] what kind of Christianity this should be: that of the Established Church or embracing all Protestant denominations? . . . The unprecedented 908 petitions with over half a million signatures presented in Parliament in 1813, demonstrated the strength and organization of the religious public in Britain, which was determined to have its say in the running of empire.<sup>24</sup>

Eventually the Charter Renewal Act permitted the granting of residence licences to those wishing to promote 'the religious and moral improvement' of the Indian peoples and attempts to convert the people of India to Christianity grew rapidly, an endeavour that Sherwood fully supported, although she remained cognizant of the need for conversion for the expatriate British community as well.

## Genre

Sherwood's text belongs to the sub-genre of travel writing that comprises settlement or residence narratives. Still within the genre of travel writing, settlement narratives tell the story of settlement, albeit temporary. While they begin with a movement from one place to another, the story they tell is one of dwelling, not of touring. Fixed in one place, they chart the development and change in the author's perceptions, as the initially alien becomes familiar, as relationships are formed with those the author encounters and as seasons and events which bring novelty the first time they occur become part of a known annual cycle. Most cultures have

an annual pattern of events and changes, whether those changes are governed by seasons and weather or by more urbanized festivals and feasts. During the first year, a traveller will, at least at intervals, meet the new and unexpected. By the second year, however, the traveller experiences a sense of repetition, of familiarity. A local festival, for example, is no longer seen for the first time – the second time it happens, there is an inevitable comparison with what has gone before. This repeated seeing – and often repeated telling – also moves the narrative away from the kinds of comparisons that are initially made with home, the place of origin, to a self-contained comparison with what has gone on in the new temporary ‘home’.

While there is mobility in Sherwood’s experiences and account, both in her depiction of the initial journey from England to India and as the family moves from city to city, her narrative describes an extended stay in a small number of places, albeit with a frequently shifting expatriate population.

In her work on English travel writing through the centuries Barbara Korte has written:

More acutely than any other genre, then, travel writing is defined by the interaction of the human subject with the world. . . . Accounts of travel let us participate in acts of (intercultural) perception and cultural construction, in processes of understanding and misunderstanding. These processes are undergone by the traveller on the journey and later as he or she writes the account; they are also, however, experienced by the reader as he or she is perusing the text.<sup>25</sup>

It is the space and act of contact – Mary Louise Pratt’s ‘contact zone’<sup>26</sup> – that matters, rather than the mobility of the writer. Accounts of settlement and accounts of journeying can potentially equally involve those acts of intercultural perception and cultural construction for their writers and their readers.

Even more important is the issue of the gaze, what Alain de Botton refers to as ‘the travelling mindset’.

What, then, is a travelling mindset? Receptivity might be said to be its chief characteristic. We approach new places with humility. We carry with us no rigid ideas about what is interesting. We irritate locals because we stand on traffic islands and in narrow streets and admire what they take to be strange small details. We risk getting run over because we are intrigued by the roof of a government building or an inscription on a wall. We find a supermarket or hairdresser’s unusually fascinating. We dwell at length on the layout of a menu or the clothes of the presenters on the evening news. We are alive to the layers of history beneath the present and take notes and photographs. . . . Home, on the other hand, finds us more settled in our expectations. We feel assured that we have discovered everything interesting about a neighbourhood, primarily by virtue of having lived there a long time. It

seems inconceivable that there could be anything new to find in a place which we have been living in for a decade or more. We have become habituated and therefore blind.<sup>27</sup>

So a travelling mindset characterized by receptivity is set against a home mindset described as habituated and without expectations of finding anything new. In Sherwood's account, as in other books within the settlement sub-genre, there is a constant and self-conscious tension between those two positions. On the one hand, she works hard to present herself as noticing, curious, not losing her fresh eye. At the same time she represents herself as gradually becoming an insider rather than an outsider, an 'us' rather than a 'them'. She uses an increasing number of native words as her account goes on and, when the time comes to leave India is torn between expressions of regret at leaving but simultaneous desires for home – both common tropes within this subgenre.

Sherwood's position is complicated by the wide variety of 'others' whom she encounters as she engages with the various communities that make up the world of early nineteenth-century India. Within the expatriate community, she came into contact with well-off 'ladies', with middle-class women like herself and with the soldiers and women of the barracks. Many of the soldiers had taken Indian mistresses and their situation and that of their children caused Sherwood much concern. Through her schools and orphan-related activities, she involved herself with both English and Eurasian children and with young soldiers who were sent to her for education. She spent increasing amounts of time with the missionary chaplains and their wives and rejected the gaieties and frivolities of British social life in India.

Her relationships with local people were similarly varied and included Muslim and Hindu servants at one end of the social scale, and the wealthy Begum Somru at the other. As an army officer, Henry Sherwood was invited to social events by prominent Bengalis and Mary Sherwood writes of attending nautches and an evening of illuminations hosted by the Nawab of Bengal in his palace at Moorshedabad (Murshidabad).

Her grasp of Hindi/Urdu was limited which created a barrier to any real friendship with local people. And with both Europeans and Indians, her inflexible evangelical beliefs and her judgemental attitudes frequently made it difficult for her to empathize with those she encountered. She manages to overcome this, however, in relation to those who have cared for and loved her children. When she meets the Indian nurse who has cared for Henry who has died, she writes:

There are moments of intense feeling, in which all distinctions of nations, colours, and castes disappear, and in their place there only remains between two human beings one abiding sense of a common nature. When I saw the beloved nurse of my Henry brought into the boat, and unfeignedly weeping for her boy, I felt in truth that she was a human being like myself.<sup>28</sup>

Similar instances occur at other points in the narrative.

### Sherwood's other Indian writings

The *Life* is not Sherwood's only writing about India and ideally her autobiography needs to be read together with her Indian novels and children's books.<sup>29</sup> Most of the books she wrote while in India had Indian themes and she continued to draw on her Indian experiences after returning to England; many of her short tracts and tales are thinly disguised (or undisguised) accounts of happenings easily identified in her autobiography. Some were aimed at the audience back home, others were designed to explain Christianity to local converts, still others were designed for use in her schools. She warned of the dangers of India to English young men's morals in *George Desmond* (1821), rewrote *Pilgrim's Progress* by setting it in an Indian context as *The Indian Pilgrim* (1818), and told stories designed to teach Christian morality to servants in an Anglo-Indian home in *The Ayah and the Lady* (1813). *Stories Explanatory of the Church Catechism* (1823) is a particularly interesting volume. Discovering that the children growing up in the barracks could not make sense of English schoolbooks (see Chapter XXIV), Sherwood wrote a book of stories that linked the teachings of the catechism to common incidents in the life of a child growing up in an Indian Army post. As Cutt has argued,

Not until Kipling brought them to life again in the 1880s were the daily happenings in the married quarters depicted with such lively detail. The lack of privacy, the constant temptation to drinking and extravagance, the easy irritability flaring up into bitter quarrels and violence are all here. Idle women with no interest but dress and gossip, and sober 'methodists' are glimpsed shopping at the bazar or in the 'Europe Shop', sewing and chatting, planning or giving a party, attending church or a funeral. Mrs. Sherwood, who was very well aware that children raised under barracks conditions had nothing to learn about the darker side of human life, made few concessions to sentiment . . . and no attempts whatsoever to gloss over or ignore the sordid aspects of barracks life.<sup>30</sup>

The readership for *Stories Explanatory of the Church Catechism* was probably largely restricted to the children in India. Sherwood's best known book was *Little Henry and His Bearer* which tells the story of the conversion of a little boy of five or six and his attempts to convert the Indian servant who he loves; he succeeds on his deathbed. The book was a bestseller and is frequently cited as one of the books which shaped British attitudes towards India and missionary work during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

### Afterlife

Changing attitudes to children and religion at the end of the nineteenth century led to the works of evangelical writers such as Hannah More, Mary Sherwood, and Sarah Trimmer falling out of fashion. As control of education shifted from the

churches to the state, books for children became more secular, and even the tract societies, set up to publish short religious works, began to cater more and more to secular interests.

By 1851 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge listed an ancient classical atlas; much biography; and material on Canada and Australia that testified to the current interest in colonization and emigration. . . . By 1860 they were offering the vigorous if stereotyped adventure stories of Kingston and Ballantyne, and accounts of the excavations of Thebes, Ninevah and Tyre.<sup>32</sup>

With only a handful of exceptions, late twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on Sherwood has tended to focus on one of two areas: post-colonial analyses of the Indian writings (particularly *Little Henry*) or censure of her evangelical writings for children. Little critical attention has been paid to other aspects of her writing.<sup>33</sup>

Until recently, writings of conservative eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers have been neglected by scholars in favour of those whose social and political views made them more acceptable to modern tastes. As Nicola Thompson wrote in 2002:

While we might have expected the canon of Victorian women writers to have expanded due to the feminist literary criticism of the last twenty years, the ideological agendas of many contemporary readers have blocked sympathetic and serious engagement with most Victorian women writers. In their search for admirable female role models, feminist critics have found it difficult to engage with the apparently conservative characters and agendas of so many novels produced by important Victorian women writers. Victorian women writers considered suitable candidates for critical rediscovery are usually those whose ideologies can be viewed as consistent with current feminist ideas or who can be interpreted as subversive in some way.<sup>34</sup>

While Thompson is speaking of Victorian women writers, the same argument holds true for conservative women writers of earlier periods.

More recently, however, there have been moves to reevaluate and revalue these authors and their writings. As a bestselling and celebrated author of her time, whose writings on India influenced attitudes and arguments at home, Sherwood's works – her life-writing, her novels, and her works for children – surely need to be rediscovered and revalued.

## Notes

- 1 M. N. Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974) is the best source of bibliographical information for Sherwood's writings. It also

- provides useful contextual material, particularly about Sherwood's publishing history. It does not, however, include any discussion of translations of Sherwood's works.
- 2 M. N. Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood*, p. 2.
- 3 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter XIV, p. 195 in the present volume.
- 4 C. J. Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773–1833* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 21.
- 5 See D. O'Connor, *The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), pp. 106–7. See also endnote 603.
- 6 The best discussion of Sherwood's various autobiographical writings and their inter-relationships will be found in N. Cocks, "'Scripture Its Own Interpreter': Mary Martha Sherwood, the Bible and Female Autobiography", *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies* 7:3 (2011), available at <https://tinyurl.com/tdbgnp>. Last accessed July 2019.
- 7 This diary forms part of the Sherwood Family Papers 1775–1850, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, collection 1437. The papers also include unpublished correspondence and other materials. The diaries are extensive and, although scholars (notably Neil Cocks and Sumathi Ramaswamy) have drawn on them, the diaries as a whole still await serious scholarly investigation.
- 8 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter I.
- 9 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter I.
- 10 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter XXIX. Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) was a Quaker prison penal reformer and philanthropist, well known for her philanthropic work.
- 11 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter XXIX; F. J. H. Darton (ed.), *The Life and Times of Mrs. Sherwood (1775–1858) from the Diaries of Captain and Mrs. Sherwood* (Abingdon: Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., 1910), p. 457.
- 12 N. Cocks, "'Scripture Its Own Interpreter'", section II:7.
- 13 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Preface.
- 14 See, for example, R. Cope, 'Composing Radical Lives: Women as Autonomous Religious Seekers and Nineteenth-Century Memoirs', in M. M. Wearn (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century American Women Write Religion: Lived Theologies and Literature* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 45–58; N. Sweet, 'Renegade Religious: Performativity, Female Identity and the Antebellum Convent-Escape Narrative', in Wearn (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century American Women*, pp. 15–32; P. Gutacker, 'Joseph Milner and his Editors: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Evangelicals and the Christian Past', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69:1 (2018), pp. 66–104.
- 15 See F. James and J. North, 'Writing Lives Together: Romantic and Victorian Auto/biography', *Life Writing* 14:2 (2017), pp. 133–8; L. M. Linder, 'Co-Constructed Selves: Nineteenth-Century Collaborative Life Writing', *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 52:2 (2016), pp. 121–9; A. Culley and R. Styler (eds), 'Lives in Relation', special issue of *Life Writing* 8:3 (2011), pp. 237–350; L. H. Peterson, 'Collaborative Life Writing as Ideology: The Auto/biographies of Mary Howitt and Her Family', *Prose Studies* 26:1 (2003), pp. 176–95.
- 16 N. Cocks, "'Scripture Its Own Interpreter'", section II:7.
- 17 F. J. H. Darton (ed.), *Life and Times*, p. xiii.
- 18 D. O'Connor, *Chaplains*, p. 4.
- 19 A. A. Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1993), p. 79.
- 20 Regulation III of 1793, D. Sutherland, *The Regulations of the Bengal Code* (Calcutta: Geo. Wyman, n.d.), cited in Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries*, pp. 79–80.
- 21 J. Sargent, *Life and Letters of the Rev. Henry Martyn* (London: Seely Jackson, 1868), cited in D. O'Connor, *Chaplains*, p. 111.
- 22 D. O'Connor, *Chaplains*, p. 111.
- 23 F. J. H. Darton, *Life and Times*, pp. xi–xii.

- 24 P. Carson, *The East India Company and Religion 1698–1858* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), p. 3.
- 25 B. Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 10, 180.
- 26 A contact zone is a ‘social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today’. M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 7.
- 27 A. de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 246–7.
- 28 M. Sherwood, *Life*, Chapter XVIII.
- 29 Works with Indian themes or subject matter include *Ermina, The History of George Desmond, The Ayah and the Lady, Little Henry and his Bearer, Little Lucy and her Dhaye, Stories Explanatory of the Church Catechism, The Indian Orphans, The Indian Pilgrim, Arzoomund, The Last Days of Boosy*, Volumes I, IV, and VI of *The Lady of the Manor*, and *Memoirs of Sergeant Dale, His Daughter and the Orphan*. The list is not exhaustive and there are probably many short tracts or stories within stories that have not yet been identified.
- 30 M. N. Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood*, p. 16.
- 31 See for example, D. R. Regaignon, ‘Intimacy’s Empire: Children, Servants, and Missionaries in Mary Martha Sherwood’s “Little Henry and his Bearer”’, *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 26:2 (2001), pp. 84–95; K. Mascarenhas, ‘Little Henry’s Burdens: Colonization, Civilization, Christianity, and the Child’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 42 (2014), pp. 425–38; R. Krishnaswamy, ‘Evangelical Empire’, *Race and Class* 34:4 (1993), pp. 47–62; K. K. Dyson, *A Various Universe* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 357–61.
- 32 M. N. Cutt, *Ministering Angels* (Wormley: Five Owls Press, 1979), p. 31.
- 33 For post-colonial debates about Sherwood’s work, see J. Grossman, ‘Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers: Mary Sherwood’s Indian Experience and “Constructions of Subordinated Others”’, *South Atlantic Review* 66:2 (2001), pp. 14–44.
- 34 N. D. Thompson, ‘Lost Horizons: Rereading and Reclaiming Victorian Women Writers’, *Women’s Studies* 31:1 (2002), pp. 67–83 on pp. 68–9.



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M<sup>r</sup>s Sherwood

THE  
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THE LIFE  
OF  
MRS. SHERWOOD,  
(CHIEFLY AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL)

WITH  
EXTRACTS FROM MR. SHERWOOD'S JOURNAL

DURING  
*His Imprisonment in France &  
Residence in India.*

EDITED BY HER DAUGHTER,

SOPHIA KELLY,<sup>1</sup>

AUTHORESS OF THE "DE CLIFFORDS," "ROBERT AND FREDERIC,"  
ETC., ETC.

LONDON:  
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## PREFACE

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Too often have I blamed writers, especially those who are first presenting themselves before the public, for the apologetic preface, that has probably been drawn forth from feelings somewhat resembling mine at this moment—a desire to make an excuse for themselves for what they probably fear needs an excuse. In the present case, all I have to do is to relate my situation simply, and circumstances will plead for me. A beloved mother, from whom I had scarcely ever been separated, was removed from me by a heavenly Father's will, so unexpectedly that it was not till all consciousness had left her, and till she was struggling with the last death agony, that I comprehended what was taking place.

Whilst deeply mourning, but, thank God, not rebelliously, over a loss to any child, under any circumstances, inexpressibly heavy, I was called upon to fulfil a task she had herself imposed upon me in happier hours, of preparing the records of her life for publication. I had imagined that my portion of the business would prove a light and easy one; for a journal of great extent, fifteen volumes, kept by herself of her own recollections, was in my possession, and I believed I had but to copy and send it forth to the world. But not so. On perusal, I perceived that these papers were but too faithful records of past events, and that half a dozen pages would comprise a hundred when those parts were expunged which were of too domestic, too sacred, a character to be openly revealed.

Then truly began my labour, which commenced and ended in deep sadness of heart—a sadness that could scarcely be imagined without some little explanation. It must be understood, that when first my infant mind began to comprehend the affairs of this life, my mother was a favourite and popular writer, and hence, before I could make out the characters her pen had traced, I knew the high value set upon even the signature of her name. Had I not, then, a reverence for my mother's handwriting, even beyond that which every affectionate child must feel for the handwriting of a parent who is no more? And it was this writing I had to peruse, this to copy; and, more touching than all to me, it was in this same writing I had to read sentiments of such tender maternal love, especially in later years, that I have often left off my task for days together, from the unspeakable grief of thinking that this beloved one could no more hold communion with me

on earth—in one word, that I was motherless. But through Him who died for us, and is now risen again, is this glorious hope that

The love that seems forsaken  
When friends in death depart,  
In heaven again shall waken  
And repossess the heart.<sup>2</sup>

To those, then, who are motherless themselves, or who fear to be so, do I address myself for sympathy; and to these also I would add, that respect and love for the living has restrained me in many instances from saying all I could say that would interest the public. Much, very much, has been withheld, and events are told as they occurred in regular order; whilst the later dates are purposely avoided as too sure clues, occasionally, where anything is desirable to be told, but not too largely dilated upon.

I gladly, however, take this opportunity of thanking my relative, the Rev. Henry Short,<sup>3</sup> of Bleasdale, Co. Lanc., and also my kind friend and near neighbour, F. G. West,<sup>4</sup> Esq., Barrister-at-Law, for their very able assistance, without which I could not have presented to the public the records of a relationship to the family of Bacon, with whom my mother's family have intermarried more than once, and whose daughters she resembled in person, as in the case of Margaret Bacon,<sup>5</sup> whose portrait by Holbein I possess.

As regards my mother's sentiments and opinions, I have said little in this work, as her own writings more correctly express them than any other writer can do for her; but I must be allowed to record here the style of her conversation in private to those who were privileged enough to be with her in her domestic hours. "Some have believed of me," she would say, "that I doubt that my Saviour, my Redeemer, is perfect God as well as perfect man. Oh! those who say so cannot know how, through the Divine blessing of the Holy Spirit, I have been taught to see this Saviour. No created being could suffer what our Lord has suffered for us, his ransomed brethren. Christ's love for us is eternal—fathomless—Divine. He is the cedar of Lebanon, that forms our spiritual temple;<sup>6</sup> the scape-goat<sup>7</sup> of the wilderness; the hewn tree that makes the bitter waters of Marah sweet;<sup>8</sup> the rock of refuge, sending forth its stream of living waters;<sup>9</sup> the foundation stone;<sup>10</sup> the sun that sheds soft emanations from above on crystals, drawing forth from them brightness and beauty; the precious spices that embalm the dead, leaving its perfumes on the door—that door the only entrance into life eternal;<sup>11</sup> ever the Saviour, but under another figure of love and mercy. Again, he is the noble roe, now hid behind the lattice till the morning breaks forth with joy and gladness."<sup>12</sup>

But now that lattice is removed, the veil of separation is torn down, and to her

Hope has chang'd to glad fruition,  
Faith to sight and prayer to praise.<sup>13</sup>

## PREFACE

My mother—now, even now, thine eyes behold the King, not in his terrors, but in his beauty; but the land to us seems far, very far off. Isa. xxxiv. 13–17.<sup>14</sup> Our view is but through a glass, dark and misty;<sup>15</sup> but thou knowest what our God has done; thou canst rejoice in acknowledging his might. For in His presence is fullness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. Psa. xvi. 11.

SOPHIA KELLY.

PINNER,

*January 27th, 1853.*



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# THE LIFE OF MRS. SHERWOOD

## CHAPTER I.

REASONS FOR WRITING MY OWN LIFE—MY FATHER'S FAMILY—HIS FRIENDS—MY UNCLES JOHN MARTEN AND THOMAS SIMON BUTT—MY AUNT SALT—THE SOCIETY AT LICHFIELD—MISS WOODHOUSE—THE PRESENTATION TO THE LIVING OF STANFORD IN WORCESTER-SHIRE—MY MOTHER'S EARLY LIFE—SAMUEL JOHNSON AND HIS WRITINGS—MY PARENTS' MARRIAGE IN 1773—DESCRIPTION OF STANFORD—MY BROTHER'S BIRTH, 1774—MY BIRTH, 1775.

I AM tempted to this most singular undertaking, by an observation I have lately been induced to make upon the propensity of the age for writing and recording the lives of every individual who has had the smallest claim to celebrity. Could I be quite sure, that when I am gone, nobody would say anything about me, I should, I think, spare myself the trouble which I now propose to take; but when I consider that it is possible that dear friends, when mourning for me, may speak too partially of me, or that those who do not understand me may bring forward some of the many errors of my writings to uphold their own opinions, I feel it but justly due to Divine love and mercy to state, how, through a life of many changes, I have been gradually brought to see the truth in a point of view which is luminous indeed, and bright as the day, when compared with the twilight ray that I first discerned. The light of lights, which I now enjoy, is not a deceitful one—an ignis fatuus,<sup>16</sup> or feeble emittance of fire, which can possibly lead me astray; and for this reason, that in the same measure as it burns brighter and brighter I discern more and more of the *all*-sufficiency of God, and of the total insufficiency of man. Thus, to speak in scriptural language, "The city shall have no need of the sun, for the Lamb shall be the light thereof."<sup>17</sup>

Although I seem to be forming a plan of bringing myself principally forward as the heroine of my own story, this is far from my design; I trust I desire no such thing. For it is my intention to speak of what I have seen, and to show, if I am permitted, what the Almighty has done for me, and those most dear to me, in leading us on in the way of salvation. And it is my earnest desire that I may be enabled to do this in simplicity and in truth, without considering self in a higher light than that of an observant spectator, unless it may be where certain portions of my experience might serve as warnings to others who are following me in the

journey of life. But wherefore should I deny the motive, which perhaps was the leading one, which induced me no longer to delay this undertaking? A lovely daughter, of whom for many years I was the proud and happy mother,—I say the proud mother, for alas! I was too proud of that beautiful child,—made it one of her last requests that I would write my life. Oh! then, for Emily<sup>18</sup> it shall be written; and may grace be given me, that it may be so written that she, with whom all present things are past, may now approve. And what, might we ask, could please a glorified spirit in a work of this kind? Surely it must be, that all glory should be given to God, and that the creature should be humbled.

There has been a singular Providence attending me through life, and preparing me in a remarkable manner for that which it was the Divine will I should do. I say *singular*, more perhaps because I am better acquainted with the steps which have brought *me* thus far in my progress, than with the histories and experiences of other persons. But far be it from me to suppose that anything I ever received was in any way merited by me. All I have received is a free gift; and the remarkable benefits which have been bestowed upon me, and the very high privileges which I have enjoyed, ought rather to excite wonder and gratitude than self-congratulation. Oh! my God, “what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him!”<sup>19</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

But to my memoirs.—My father’s name was George Butt,<sup>20</sup> his family resided at Lichfield;<sup>21</sup> and my grandfather, Carey Butt,<sup>22</sup> exercised for many years the medical profession in that place, and was a man of exemplary piety, integrity, and benevolence. The family of Butt, Butts, or De Butts, is of considerable antiquity, and the tradition handed down from one generation to another is, that they first came to England with the Conqueror. The word Butts seems to be derived from archery, the butts being the dead marks at which the archers shot; hence the modern term to “butt at” a person or thing.

In the fifth year of the reign of Edward IV.<sup>23</sup> an ordinance was made, commanding every Englishman and Irishman dwelling in England to have a long bow of his own height; and the Act directs that “*butts*” should be made in every township, at which the inhabitants were to shoot, up and down, upon all feast days, under the penalty of one halfpenny for every time they omitted to perform this exercise. This, in the poetical legends, is called “shooting about.”

Of our King Henry VII. it is said,

“See where he shoteth at *the butts*;  
And with hym are lordes three;  
He weareth a gowne of velvette blacke,  
And it is coted above the knee.”<sup>24</sup>

Such a derivation of our name pleases me, as my imagination amuses itself with the question, Did my ancestors get their *soubriquet* from their humanity

in substituting dead marks for "shooting about;" or were one, or more than one, of themselves the doomed "dead marks," while still all glowing with life and feeling?

Some, I know, say the word is from the German *Bott*, a guide; and they, in defence of their argument, point at the golden stars on the azure field on our coat of arms; for a star, in the language of heraldry, denotes "the guide." I do not like not to insert our family pedigree, as we have one, and a good one too; but all I can say is, that should this work be ever published, those that do not care for pedigrees may pass it over, whilst those that do may, perchance, amuse themselves therewithal at the expense of our family pride. On one point, indeed, I think we have a right to be proud, and that is—of our connection with the noble and talented family of Bacon. And we may be proud, too, of the line by which we boast this connection. Sir William De Butts married Margaret Bacon, and his grandchild and sole heiress, Ann Butts, wedded her relative, the son of the Lord Keeper Bacon. Sir William is immortalized by the pen of Shakespear<sup>25</sup> and the pencil of Holbein. The former represents him discovering to Henry, in a familiar conversation, the mean malice of Bishop Gardiner against Cranmer; and the latter has left us an excellent portrait of him, in the remarkable picture, so well preserved in Bridewell Hospital, of the Surgeons receiving from Prince Henry their Charter of Incorporation.<sup>26</sup> Sir William De Butts was a Reformer. It is recorded, in his praise, that at one time Henry VIII. gave evidence of a somewhat favourable disposition towards even the doctrinal views of the Reformers; for he made the famous Latimer one of his chaplains, on the recommendation, it is said, of Cromwell and of his Physician Dr. Butts!

Sir William, or Dr. Butts, had three sons, who, strange to say, married three sisters, co-heiresses of the house of Bures of Acton. Of these three marriages there was only one representative, Mistress Anne Butts, who, as I remarked above, wedded her relative, the eldest son of the Lord Keeper Bacon. The sons of the Butts of that line thus failed in the third generation; hence *our* line became the eldest male branch, and I reckon in my pedigree five successive Williams, two Leonards, and a Timothy, which brings me to my grandfather Carey, whose son George was my father. Sir John Hawkins, in his *Life of Samuel Johnson*, says (page 6), "There dwelt at Lichfield a gentleman of the name of (Carey) Butt, the father of the Rev. George Butt, now King's Chaplain (1787), to whose house on holidays and in school vacations he (young Johnson) was ever welcome. The children in this family, perhaps offended with the rudeness of young Johnson, would frequently call him 'the great boy,' which the father (Mr. Butt) overhearing, said, 'You call him the great boy; but, take my word for it, you will live to call him the great man.'"<sup>27</sup>

Now *these* children of Mr. Butt were many in number, but four only arrived at maturity; the eldest was my uncle John Marten Butt, M.D., F.R.S., who after a while went out to Jamaica, and resided there; and whilst there, the great Lord Erskine<sup>28</sup> was for a short time placed under his care. Lord Erskine, in a letter to his brother, thus writes of my uncle, Dr. Butt:—

"KINGSTON, IN JAMAICA, *July*, 1764.

## Table of Descent.

BUTTS.=CONSTANCE, daughter and heir of SIR WILLIAM FITZHUGH, Knight,  
of Congleton and Elton, county of Chester.

Sir William Butts, Knight, = Alicia, daughter of Sir Ranulph Cotgrave,  
Lord of Shouldham Thorpe, county of Norfolk;  
and Congleton, county of Chester.

Slain in the Battle of  
Poitiers.

See Camden.

Isabella, daughter of = William Butts, Lord of Shouldham Thorpe  
and Congleton.  
Robert De L'Holme,  
Lord of De Trammur,  
county of Chester.

Elinor, daughter of = Robert Butts, of Shouldham Thorpe  
and Congleton.  
William Boteler, or  
Butler, Esq., of Warrington,  
county of Lancaster.

Constance, daughter = Edward Butts, of Shouldham Thorpe  
and Congleton.  
of Thomas Wentworth,  
of Broughton,  
county of Flint.

Ursula, daughter of = William Butts, of Shouldham Thorpe  
and Congleton.  
Matthew Ellis, Esq.,  
of Overleigh,  
county of Chester.

William Butts, of = ———, daughter of Kervill,  
Shouldham Thorpe.

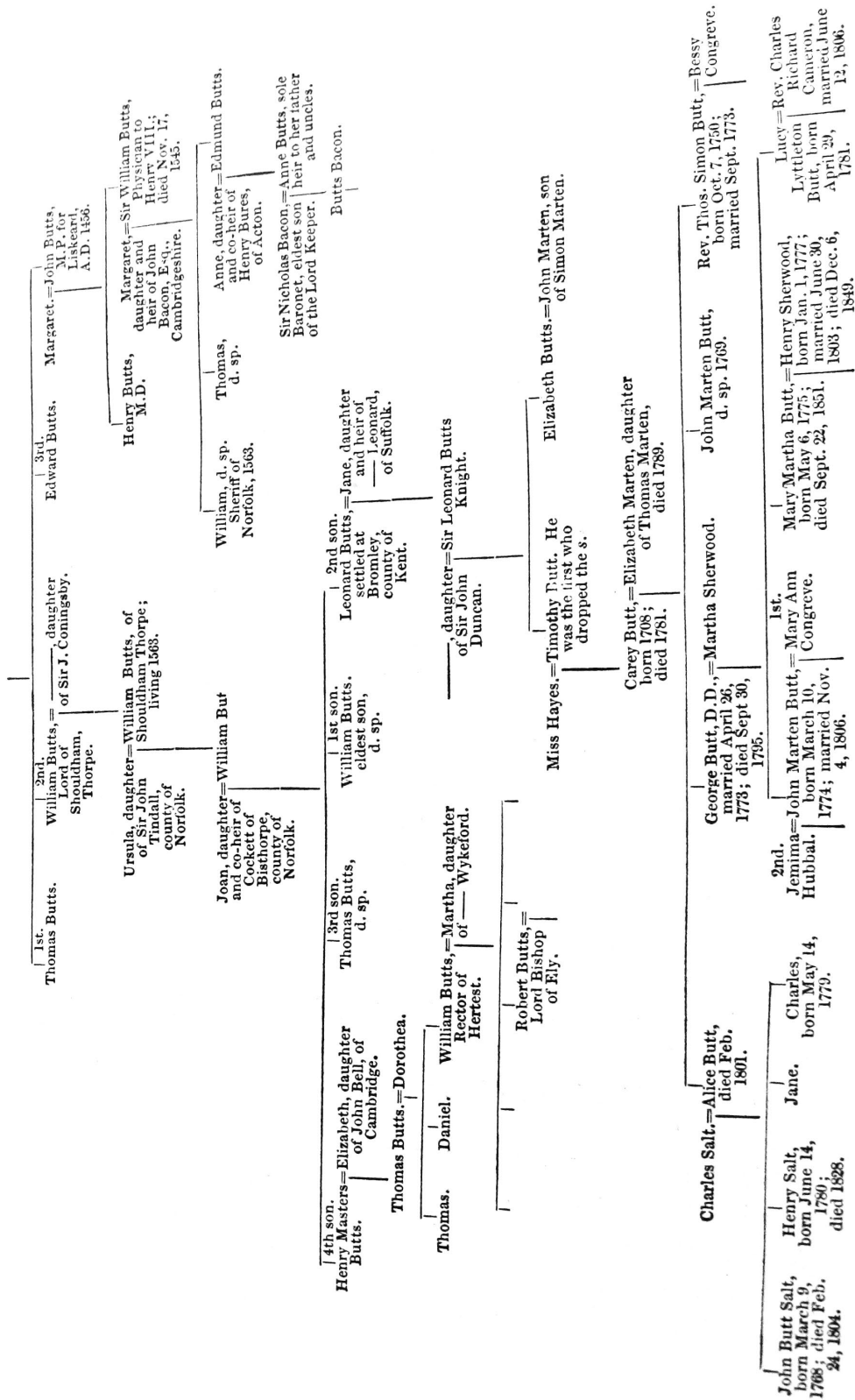


Table of Descent.

“MY DEAREST CARDROSS,—I wrote to you about ten days ago, giving you some small account of what I had seen here. I am still with Dr. Butt, but shall sail now in about ten days; he is appointed Physician-General to the Militia of the Island of Jamaica, by his Excellency Governor Lyttleton,<sup>29</sup> whom I waited upon at Spanish Town, along with the Doctor, some days ago.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I begin now to draw indifferently. I am studying botany with Dr. Butt, so I will bring you home some drawings of all the curious plants, &c., &c.,—of everything that I see.

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“If you have got anything that you wish to send me, you need only direct it to Dr. Butt, in the same manner you direct letters, and put it into a merchantman bound for the West Indies, and it can’t fail coming safe. Dr. Butt desires his best compliments to you, and he will be obliged to you if you will send him out such a profile of you as you copied from Mr. Hoar’s.”<sup>30</sup>

With a genius scarcely inferior to that of my father’s, my uncle John Marten possessed a considerable share of that worldly prudence in which my dear father was so decidedly deficient. His health, however, failing him, he left Jamaica and settled in Bath, where he died in 1769. He was buried in the Abbey Church, where a beautiful inscription to his memory was placed by my father. I have been told that the tablet was taken down on the repairing of the Abbey some few years back, and was never restored. My uncle married the widow of a Mr. (or Dr.) D’warris, from whom is descended the present Sir Fortunatus D’warris;<sup>31</sup> but he himself had no child.

Next to my uncle John Marten was my father George Butt, of whom more presently, after I have spoken of the youngest boy, my uncle Thomas Simon, who was junior to the rest of the family by many years, being born when my grandmother was fifty-one years old. In his youth a cart had gone over him, inflicting an injury which had stopped his growth and given him a peculiarity of form. He had been intended for an agricultural life; but, not liking the pursuit, my father educated him for the church, a thing not so difficult at that time as it is now. He was ordained in due time, and married. In the course of my memoirs I shall often have to speak of him, and of his son, my cousin Thomas Butt, the only other relatives of our name. Besides these three sons my grandfather had one daughter, who married a Mr. Salt,<sup>32</sup> a surgeon, who after a while took my grandfather’s practice and settled in Lichfield. Of his family I shall also have occasion to speak.

And now I will return to my father George Butt, the second child of his parents, and eventually the elder line of the house. He was born at Lichfield on the 26th of December, 1741.

\* See Jesse’s, ‘Life of Beau Brummell,’ vol. 1, p. 296.

Whilst a boy at school, at Lichfield, it seems he had some boyish struggle with the great Samuel, which the faithful Boswell has recorded amongst the thousand and one events in the life of the immortal Lexicographer. It seems my father<sup>33</sup> showed early in life great indications of genius, and it was in consequence decided that he should be educated for holy orders. Dr. Newton,<sup>34</sup> afterwards the famed Bishop of Bristol, my grandfather's intimate friend, was so pleased with the boy's promising abilities that he took him in his own carriage to London; and, owing to his patronage, got him elected on the Royal Foundation at Westminster School.

Here he became Captain of the school, and headed the schoolboy processions at the funeral of George II. and at the coronation of George III. At school he took little part in games and exercises, but preferred reading the English authors at leisure hours, more especially the poets. But he had the highest ideas of friendship; and on one occasion, when some of his young schoolfellows were engaged in battle with a superior number of *men*, though he had no natural inclination for such scenes, yet for their defence he assumed a force which proved the energy of his mind, and seizing the leader of the hostile mob, he brought him awed and trembling to the college. His dearest friends at Westminster were Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq., M.P.,<sup>35</sup> John Thomas Batt, Esq.,<sup>36</sup> Francis Burton, Esq.,<sup>37</sup> one of the Welsh Judges; and Dr. Jackson,<sup>38</sup> Dean of Christ Church, afterwards Tutor to George IV. My father was distinguished at Westminster for his public speaking; and on one occasion he so bore away the prize, that he was wont to say, "he quite overflowed with money forced upon him by the liberal audience."

From Westminster, in 1760, he was chosen Student of Christ Church College, Oxford, where he continued the same friendships and the same habits which he had formed at school.

My grandfather Carey Butt was a specimen of the true Christian gentleman, all heart and benevolence. Well do I remember some of the little courtesies of his manner, and now I recall how it was his custom, on every Sunday morning that the weather allowed, to present each of us who were staying in his house with a small nosegay of his own selection. He had no idea of a false profession, and though wholly incapable of giving "a reason for the hope that was in him,"<sup>39</sup> yet was he no doubt divinely guided, and led unerringly in the way of truth and peace.

On the marriage of his daughter he left Lichfield, and retired to an estate called Pipe Grange, about a mile from Lichfield, and there taking to building, he impoverished himself in no small degree; but worldly wisdom was no part of his endowment, as it was no part of the inheritance which descended to my father.

At this time there was in Lichfield a brilliant knot of choice spirits—choice, I mean to say, as it regarded intellectuals and externals. Amongst these were Dr. Darwin,<sup>40</sup> the author of "The Loves of the Plants;" Miss Seward,<sup>41</sup> Mr. Edgeworth<sup>42</sup> and his celebrated daughter Maria,<sup>43</sup> then a mere child; Mr. Hayley<sup>44</sup> the poet; and Mr. Day,<sup>45</sup> a friend of Mr. Edgeworth's and the author of "Sandford

and Merton.” David Garrick,<sup>46</sup> too, came to visit his brother often in the city, and Samuel Johnson<sup>47</sup> was also a native of the place. Among these talented of the earth my father was a welcome addition, possessing as he did immense conversational powers, though he never seemed to have derived aught from this society but what the friends of virtue and religion could have desired. There are some persons so constructed, or rather so protected, by their Almighty Father, that without seeming to have during youth any very strong sense of religion, yet are they led through the most dangerous scenes without appearing to incur that contamination which such scenes are calculated to impart. To compare that which is intellectual with that which is merely physical, some constitutions are not so liable to receive contagion as others are; and those characters who are so formed as to pass through scenes of temptation with the least injury are persons who have naturally much vivacity: hence they skim gaily over the surface of society, letting little of its influence rest on their animal spirits. It is true that there is danger in excessive vivacity; but long experience has instructed me, that lively young people in general are by no means the most corrupt; and that, where youth becomes corrupted, it scarcely ever preserves its vivacity. It is a great mistake, however, to confound vivacity with excitement. The modern arrangements of society excite, without imparting, cheerfulness; on the contrary, they destroy the spring of the mind by overstraining it. I have been led to this reflection by considering how, on many occasions, my father mingled with dangerous society without seeming to be affected by it. The society at that period at Lichfield,<sup>48</sup> when we consider the characters of those who formed its basis, must have been particularly dangerous, because it must have been particularly fascinating.

Miss Seward was at that period, when my father was a very young man, between twenty and thirty; for I know not her precise age. She had that peculiar sort of beauty which consists in the most brilliant eyes, glowing complexion, and rich dark hair. She was tall and majestic, and was unrivalled in the power of expressing herself. She was at the same time exceedingly greedy of the admiration of the other sex; and though capable of individual attachment, as she manifested in after life much to her cost, yet not very nice as to the person by whom the homage of flattery was rendered at her shrine.

She was, in a word, such a woman as we read of in romances; and, had she lived in some dark age of the past, might have been charged with sorcery, for even in advanced life she often bore away the palm of admiration from the young and beautiful, and many even were fascinated who wholly condemned her conduct.

My father was attracted into this society by the charms of the lovely Mary Woodhouse,<sup>49</sup> whose brother Chappel,<sup>50</sup> late Dean of Lichfield, was his pupil and the object of his sincere affection. This favoured pupil became his inseparable companion, and unremitted were his labours to make him the accomplished scholar and the Christian gentleman.

I have said that my grandfather was a pious man. It was whilst at college I have that to record of my father, of the nature of his youthful friendships, which shows

that the instruction of his childhood had been blessed from on high. "When in danger of being beguiled by the enticements of youthful pleasures," said Mr. Hawkins Browne<sup>51</sup> to me, "your father, Miss Butt, restrained me by pointing out the words of Joseph—'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?'"<sup>52</sup>

Oh my beloved father, whenever I recall thee to mind, I cannot but think of the beautiful passage in "Milton's *Paradise Lost*;"—

"The grave rebuke,  
Severe in youthful beauty, added grace  
Invincible. Abash'd he stood,  
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw  
Virtue in her shape how lovely."<sup>53</sup>

When does the grave rebuke of sin come with such force as from the lips of youth—when the temptation sounds strong in the youthful ear—when the bait looks gilded to the youthful eye—and nothing but the restraining influences of Divine Power leads the young heart to desire the purity of perfect holiness? Let not the worldling imagine there is not temptation alike for all; but let him without mockery confess the sanctifying and restraining power of the Holy Spirit on the once fallen but now ransomed race of Adam.

In 1765 my father was appointed to the curacy of Leigh in Staffordshire, a living<sup>54</sup> in the gift of Sir Walter Bagot,<sup>55</sup> with whose sons he was already connected in friendship; and he was ever a welcome guest at the hospitable seat of Sir Walter, on whose public and domestic virtues he would dwell with rapture. But he did not continue long at Leigh, for he was recommended as a private tutor to the only son of Sir Edward Winnington,<sup>56</sup> of Stanford Court, in the county of Worcester, and having accepted the offer, he resided for some time with the family in London, and eventually, in the month of October 1767, accompanied his pupil to Christ Church. It was there he associated with many young noblemen and gentlemen commoners, to whom the vivacity of his genius and his wonderful powers of conversation rendered his society highly acceptable. To the late Duke of Leeds, then Lord Carmarthen,<sup>57</sup> was he so endeared, that he had an opportunity of becoming his private tutor; but he declined the valuable situation from motives of honour and affection to Mr. Winnington. It was in 1771 my father was presented to the rectory of Stanford, Worcestershire, by Sir Edward Winnington, which preferment he held to his death. The situation of Stanford is delightful, and congenial in the highest degree to the feelings of the poet. And, as it was necessary that a parsonage-house should be built, my father chose a spot within the glebe, of such rare and exquisite beauty that he provided for himself an ever-charming feast for his imagination; and here, no doubt, his genius and his taste would have been indulged, to the serious injury of his family in a worldly point of view, had it not been for the counteracting influences of my beloved mother, who supplied all those deficiencies, which

were the effects of that improvidence which is too frequently the attendant of superior genius.

My mother was the daughter of Henry Sherwood, merchant, of London and Coventry,—of a good old family from Newcastle-on-Tyne. My grandfather Sherwood was a man well versed in business, and rich; hence my mother was selected by my grandfather Butt as a good match for his son, as money was then much needed in my father's family. My mother had one only brother, at whose birth, in 1754, she lost her mother; and thus, from her earliest infancy, she was brought up at school, only returning in the holidays to her father's house, either at Coventry or London. She has often told me how her widowed parent at these times, on a Sunday evening, would take her on his knee, and read and explain the Bible to her. That peculiar blessing, which I have often observed shed upon the religious instructions given by a parent to a child, was bestowed upon my mother, for she never forgot some of those Sunday evening lessons, more especially one, which had a reference to the history of Joseph. At the age of fourteen, my mother was taken from school and placed under the charge of Mrs. Woodhouse, a connection of her family. This lady was the widow of a physician residing at Lichfield, the mother of my father's friend Chappel and the beautiful Mary, to whom he was attached. It was the will of God, however, that this lovely young woman, Mary Woodhouse, should be taken early from this world of trials; and it was whilst still mourning her loss my father consented to his father's earnest wishes to marry my mother, whose fortune rendered her a desirable match under the pecuniary circumstances of the family. Mary Woodhouse was one of three sisters, all of whom were accounted lovely; whilst my mother, then Miss Martha Sherwood, was a very little woman, having a face too long in proportion, with too decided features. She was marked too with the small pox, and had no personal beauty but in her hands, the like of which I have never seen equalled. She was of a meek and gentle spirit, and it was no doubt oppressive to her to be associated in the house with three of the most lovely women of the time. What, then, must her feelings have been when her father's commands or wishes were made known to her, that she was to marry one who still mourned the untimely fate of the fair Mary! Often have I thought of this since, and been led to consider that the smallest circumstances of human life are, no doubt, arranged in such a way as to advance our everlasting good, though, through the devices of Satan, we love to "kick against the pricks,"<sup>58</sup> wilfully misunderstanding the arrangements of Providence. For the Almighty is teaching individuals, by different experiences, the evil consequences of sin, and the effectual and perfect work of the Saviour's sacrifice to reconcile the world to God—a glorious exhibition of Divine love, justice, mercy, and holiness, to be manifested in due time.

It is probable that the circumstance of my mother's small personal attractions, when compared with those of her companions, disposed her to withdraw into the back-ground of every scene. Hence the retiredness of manner which pursued her through life. There is no doubt that this very cause, together with the spirit of the society in which she mingled, led her to endeavour to cultivate her mind

by reading; and most eagerly did she peruse the books of her day, of which very few were suitable for young people. Hence her pleasure may be imagined when a new writer, such as Dr. Samuel Johnson, appeared to augment the number. My mother, I remember well, used to tell me, that being out one day, walking with Mrs. Woodhouse under the trees in the Close in Lichfield, they met the celebrated Johnson. My mother happened to have a volume of "The Rambler," or of "Rasselas," I forget which, in her hand. Johnson seeing the book, took it from her, looked into it, and, without saying a word, threw it among the graves, from which my mother had to recover it. This was probably done in a fit of awkward vanity by the great Doctor, who, finding a young lady with one of his own volumes in her hand, could neither let the circumstance pass unheeded, as a man of less vanity would have done, nor make some polite speech, which a man with more address would have thought of; but he must needs act the bear and do the rudest thing he could do. Oh, poor human nature, how exceedingly absurd we all are! our very greatness, or imaginary or comparative greatness, makes our absurdities only the more remarkable! There is one thing, however, which I must be permitted to say; that if we know anything of ourselves, we shall be led to see that there is little cause for one human being to despise another on the score of folly.

My mother was not much more than of age when she was married, in the year 1773, in the month of April, and came to reside with my father at his living of Stanford,<sup>59</sup> where they commenced housekeeping in considerable style—a style which they retained till I was five or six years of age, when they found it necessary to retrench. It would be utterly impossible, through the medium of words, or at least any words which I can select, to give an idea of the lovely country where I was born and reared. Few have travelled farther or perhaps seen more than I have; but yet, in its peculiar way, I have never seen any region of the earth to be compared with Stanford. The parsonage-house commanded four distinct views from the four sides, and so distinct that it could hardly be conceived how these could have been combined in a panorama. On the front of the house, towards the west, a green lawn, with many fair orchards beyond, sloped down to the bed of the Teme, from which arose, on the opposite side of the river, a range of bold heights richly diversified, at a distance so considerable as only to show its most pleasing features, such as copses, farm-houses, fields of corn, villages with their churches, and ancient mansions. The hills of Abberley and Woodbury terminated the view: the one being celebrated for the encampment of Glendower,<sup>60</sup> and the other for Abberley Lodge,<sup>61</sup> the seat of William Walsh,<sup>62</sup> the friend of Addison, and supposed by some to be the place wherein was written the fine old character of Sir Roger de Coverley,<sup>63</sup> though this I have heard disputed in later years. On the south, my father's house looked over Sir Edward Winnington's park, to form and adorn which a whole village had been sacrificed; whilst Broadway and fair Malvern gave their beauties to the scene, separated from us only by the silver Teme, which near that spot empties itself into the river Severn.<sup>64</sup> The hills and lands, on the east, were so richly wooded that the country partook there more of forest scenery than aught else I could name, neither were waterfalls wanting;

whilst, on the north, we had orchards of fruit trees and cultivated fields, presenting altogether such regions of various beauties, that my eyes, as I said before, have never seen the like since. How many times, in wanton childhood, have I inhaled the fresh breezes in those lovely regions; and though many years have passed since last I dwelt there, still to this hour the fragrance of primroses, or the sight of the harebell or wood anemone, brings to my mind those haunts of childhood—those devious haunts which never were fully explored, even by me: for there were certain bounds, which I was not permitted to pass over, in this terrestrial paradise. The genius of my father also gave a character to every room of the house: there was a hall of considerable height with a hanging staircase, in which hung a large coloured cartoon of Raphael's, representing the martyrdom of St. Stephen and the heavens opening to his gaze.<sup>65</sup> My father afterwards gave this painting to the altar-piece of the old church at Kidderminster.<sup>66</sup> In every sitting-room were prints or portraits, to each of which was affixed some tale or legend familiar to me in earliest childhood, and repeated to me over and over again by my father; for these works of art afforded him hints for many conversations; and if others failed to seize the images which he endeavoured to convey through their aid, it was not so with me, as I shall take occasion to show in the course of my memoirs.

And now I will only add, that had I been born of the noblest or richest family in England I could not have entered life, under any circumstances, in which more of what is elegant and beautiful could have been presented to my young apprehension, and more of what is coarse and inelegant withdrawn from it; for all my early impressions were most beautiful as regarded natural things, and classical as regarded intellectual things. Picture then to yourself, whoever condescends to read these memoirs, the lovely parsonage of Stanford, the elegant home in which I was born—my genius-gifted and benevolent father, tintured with that romance an early disappointment seldom fails to call forth—and my humble-minded, sensitive mother, a lady of a literary and accomplished mind, whose rare integrity and excellent principles were congenial with my father's exalted sense of virtue. Picture too, then, my father discharging his duties as a pastor, showing by his conduct the effect of habitual piety, which produced in him, as it ought to do in all, a warmth of feeling towards the Saviour and of love to man, which, being wholly uncongenial to the unchanged heart, can only be attributed to Divine influence. See, also, my mother superintending all the arrangements of her household, with perhaps a too lady-like withdrawal from the coarse every-day affairs of life; yet, with maternal care, the lessons of humility and Christian courtesy, which my father inculcated, were followed out by her with a beautiful earnestness and sincerity, that left no doubt on the minds of her children of their truth; nor will their effect, I trust, ever be erased from their recollection.

Owing to my mother's fortune, and the proceeds of the living of Stanford and that of Clifton-on-Teme, my parents' circumstances promised to furnish even a luxuriant state of housekeeping, and thus matters seemed prosperous on the birth