

Elizabeth Jacob, of Limerick, 1675-1739

AMONG the many names occurring in the article, "Friends Travelling in Ireland," which appeared in the last volume of THE JOURNAL, is that of Elizabeth Jacob, of whom the following particulars have been gleaned from various sources.¹

Elizabeth Jacob was the daughter of Thomas and Agnes Head, and was born at Ardee, co. Louth, Ireland. Her parents being Friends, she was educated in Quakerly fashion, partly in Dublin and also in England. Her first appearance as a Minister was in 1697. Two years later she married Richard Jacob, of Limerick (1666-1725), and removed to that city. In 1701, she travelled as a preacher in the North of England and later visits to the sister island took place in 1705, 1711, 1712, and 1729, her companion in some cases being Abigail Craven.²

The return of her companion and herself from Wales in 1712, after eight months' absence, is referred to in the above-named article. From the city of Worcester, on the 5th of Ninth Month, 1712, E. Jacob wrote *An Epistle in True Love, containing a Farewell Exhortation to Friends Families*, which the Author desired should be read in "Monthly and Quarterly Meetings throughout this Nation of England."³ A gloomy view is taken of the religious conditions prevailing at this time: "the spirit of the world, pride, and covetousness, fleshly ease, and self interest mightily obstruct the prosperity of Truth in the earth."

By the kindness of Elizabeth Jacob's descendant, Henry W. Jacob, M.A., M.D., of Great Malvern, we are able to print the following extracts from a book of

¹ MS. Testimony in D.; Leadbeater's *Biog. Notices*; Rutty's *History*; etc.

² For this Friend, see note on p. 81.

³ It would be interesting to know how far such a comprehensive request was complied with. Editions of this *Epistle* were printed in London in 1712, Dublin 1756, Waterford 1787, and Stockport 1816.

records of the Jacob family compiled by Robert Jacob, b. 1789, great-grandson of Isaac Jacob, and also a letter from E. Jacob to her son, Isaac Jacob, from Holland :

Richard Jacob of the Irishtown, Limerick, Cutler, 2nd son of Richard and Joane Jacob, was born 3rd mo. 7, 1666, at Halberton, near Exeter, Devonshire ; he was married in Dublin 7th mo. 12th, 1699, to Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas & Agnes Head of Ardee in the County of Louth, born 2nd 25th 1675 and they had issue viz :—an only son Isaac, born in Limerick 1st mo. 30, 1703.⁴

Richard Jacob, the father, died in Waterford 1st mo. 10, 1725 at his son's house, aged 59 years, wanting two months.

Elizabeth Jacob, the mother, an eminent minister of the Gospel, by whose ministry many were convinced, died at her son Isaac's house in Waterford 11th mo. 30, 1739. Aged 64 years & 9 months.

The following note occurs in the handwriting of Joseph Jacob :

My grandfather Richard Jacob continued in Limerick until about the year 1722, when he removed himself and wife to this city of Waterford (his only son my father having been settled here a little before on the death of his uncle, Joseph Jacob), he continued in this city until his death in the year 1725.

Elizabeth Jacob to her son Isaac Jacob (spelling modernised for the most part) :

Dear Isaac

Rotterdam y^e 21 of y^e 5mo.
1729.

This serves to acquaint thee and all my good friends that on y^e 16 of this instant we took shipping at Yemouth [?Yarmouth] near 7 in y^e morning and by the Lord's good providence landed here y^e next evening, having had a rough but quick passage. I was exceeding sick for near 30 hours, so that after I came to land I had lost my voice for two days, but through mercy am now bravely recovered. My companion⁵ got cold & was a little more sick than she was coming from Ireland. We are now at our friend — Jarred's, where I met with thy acceptable letter, part of it bearing date y^e 18 of 4^m and y^e other part y^e 23, the latter bringing the acceptable news of thy being recovered, the which was cause of joy and thankfulness to thy poor exercised mother. I also observe thou hath answered my bill, which I take kindly and am obliged to

⁴ Isaac Jacob married, firstly, Rebecca Penrose. She died in 1728, and in 1732 he married Susanna, daughter of Samuel and Susanna (Nicholson) Watson of Kilconner.

⁵ Susanna Morris (c. 1682-1755) was E. J.'s companion in Holland. In the Book of Jacob there is a letter from S. M. to Isaac Jacob, dated at Amsterdam, 19th of Sixth Month, 1729.

In a letter from the same source, Isaac Jacob to his mother, 7th of Fifth Month, 1729, there is a suggestion that Robert Jordan (1693-1742) of America might accompany E. J. to Holland.

thee for thy liberality in expressing thy readiness still to serve truth and me. I hope and believe y^e Lord will abundantly reward thee for it I hope even in this life.

I now shall proceed to give thee an account of our entrance in to this great city. We were directed by our friends the Gurneys to this friend's house. Both the man and his wife received us courteously. His wife is a good minister, and hath been long a suffering soul here. She is the great merchant Hope's own sister and he came to see us and behaved very courteously. Yesterday being first day we had two meetings. Y^e morning was very small, but y^e afternoon several of y^e townspeople came in and behaved soberly. I had a pretty close service amongst them and got my mind pretty easy, thanks be to God for it. Here is very few that bears y^e name of Quakers and less that deserves it, the more is the pity, friends' children both here and in England many of them being gone off. We had no need of an interpreter here, which was a great comfort to me, but on y^e 24 of this instant we intend to set forward towards Harlam, another great city, where we are to meet y^e friend which is to interpret for us, for there is no other meeting in this nation, which can understand us without one. Friends tell me here that I speak so clear and distinct that it will be no difficulty to interpret for me. The Lord grant it may be made easy to me for my poor mind have been sorely afflicted about it this long time.

This is a very low country and full of water, but seems to be neatly improved, but we have seen little of it, only friend Hope send his coach for his sister and us to a country seat he has a little way out of y^e city, where his wife met us and treated us with tea and fine fruit, which was a great refreshment to me. When we reach Amsterdam, which will be I hope 6 days hence, there I intend to write again a more full account. We are indifferent well at present as to our health. I heartily desire this may find thee perfectly recovered as to bodily health, and above all that y^e Lord may favour thee with his divine blessings, often replenishing thy soul with his celestial rain, that thereby thou may be kept fresh, green and living before him. My heart in much brokenness is often poured out in supplication unto the Lord in thy behalf, that in blessing he may bless thee and multiply his mercies upon thee every day and every way, and that if we should never meet in this uncertain world, we may so walk in a faithful obedience to his will, that our lot may be in that glorious city, where y^e wicked shall for ever cease from troubling and our poor souls shall be in eternal freedom and liberty, for ever to praise y^e Lord God and y^e Lamb, who is eternally worthy, saith my soul. I shall now leave thee to him which hath hitherto helped both thee and me through many difficulties, still desiring the continuance of thy prayers for my help and preservation, and that, if it be y^e Lord's will, we may see each other again to our mutual comfort in y^e interim. Accept of true love and paternal [*sic*] affection from thy poor mother

ELIZABETH JACOB.

Please to greet me dearly to brother and sister with all y^e children and all y^e Mores with Cousin Harris' wife and family with Aunt Diniss,

and in thy next let me hear if y^e glass-works proves well, and how things in general are amongst you. Give my love to Francis Anslow & wife, with Seelys and all y^e rest of friends, servants and neighbours. I wrote to brother Penros & forgot to date it, pray excuse it. Robert Wickam was writ [to] two or three days after. I think to write to cousin H. Harris some time hence. My companion's dear love is to thee, she hath a letter from her husband and her family is all well. When this comes to hand direct for me as thou did the last to this city.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

Abigail Craven (c. 1684-1752), daughter of — and Dorothy Craven, afterwards Boles (or Bowles), and Watson, began her public ministry while on a visit to England with Elizabeth Jacob in 1712. The date of her marriage with John Boles⁶ does not appear—she was Abigail *Boles* in 1724, nor do we find the date of her marriage with Samuel Watson—in 1733 she was Abigail Boles, widow, and in 1735 she is described as “Abigail Watson *formerly Boles*.” It appears that by her marriage with Samuel Watson she became step-mother-in-law to Isaac Jacob, the son of her old companion in travel, he having married S.W.'s daughter by his first marriage. She was five times in England and once in America on Truth's service.

In “Some Account” of Abigail Watson, written after her decease by her husband (MS. in D. ; it is really only a record of her feelings during the last few months of her life), we read, “She found no engagement to travel abroad during the year before she died . . . but said, she found her Work was done, and nothing in her way. . . . God had been with her all her Life Long, and Now, I shall sing, sing, sing.”⁷

⁶ The following occurs in Elizabeth Jacob's letter to her husband, dated 21st Third Month, 1713, from Woodhouse, “Came to this place to see John Boles and found him pretty cheerful, yet his recovery seems very doubtful, but if it be the Lord's will, he can effect in his time. I thought of a meeting at Cashel this day, but John desires it might be here, which I have consented to, and in the evening at Clonmel and in the morning I desire to Dungarvan, and to have a meeting there and so to Cork to the Quarterly Meeting, and I hope after home as quick as possible.” (“Book of Jacob.”)

⁷ This reminds us of an anecdote recently told by a North of England Friend, who, in his youth, when walking to the Meeting House, which was opposite the Wesleyan Chapel, was overtaken by the Wesleyan minister, and thus addressed: “Come in with us to-day. You'll have to sing in Heaven, you may as well learn now.”

Samuel Watson (1686-1762) was the son of John Watson (1651-1710), who, with his father, crossed to Ireland as a Planter, in 1658. The family home was Kilconner, co. Carlow. Samuel Watson married firstly Susanna Nicholson (d. 1726), and thirdly Deborah, widow of Henry Fuller and daughter of John Barcroft.

MS. Test. in D.; MS. Journal of Mary Weston in D.; *Memoirs of Samuel Fothergill*; *Life of Jane Hoskens*; Smith's *Catalogue*, i. 62; Leadbeater's *Biog. Notices*; Watson and other MSS. in D.; THE JOURNAL, x.

The following allusions to Abigail Craven, *aft.* Bowles, in the Book of Jacob have been sent us by the kindness of Dr. Jacob :

(a) RICHARD JACOB to ELIZABETH JACOB:—Limerick, 16th of 1st mo. 1711. "Dority received Aby's letter and desires me to inform Aby that she is very well."

Postscript to above:—"Dear Mother, I am very well & my dear love is to thee and to Abigail. This is all from thy affectionate son,
"ISAAC JACOB."

(b) ELIZABETH KAY to ELIZABETH JACOB:—London, the 28th of 6th mo. 1711. "Dear Friend and Sister, after the salutation once more to thee and thy husband with companion A. C. and all my friends."

(c) ELIZABETH JACOB to RICHARD JACOB:—Hull, the 30th of 4th mo. 1712. "I had a letter from Henry Gouldney last week with one from Isaac in it, who made a groundless complaint of me and my dear companion of our not writing in two month's time, which I hope before this comes to hand will be taken out of the way, so shall not say much of it, knowing our clearness."

Postscript to above:—"My companion's dear love is to her mother and you all."

(d) RICHARD JACOB to ELIZABETH JACOB:—Limerick, 18th of 5th mo. 1712. "We are all much as when thou left us; so is Dority and hath her dear love to Abigail. . . . Susanna Moody hath long expected a letter from Abigail; she desires to be remembered to you both. Ben Craven was here about ten days ago and was well. My dear love to thy companion, our dear friend."

Postscript to above:—"Dear Mother, I am glad to hear that thee and my cousin Abigail are well. . . . I am with very dear love to thee and dear Abigail. . . . I am thy son, ISAAC." (Direction: "for Daniel Abraham att Swarthmoor neer Ovston [Ulverston], in Lancashire, England, for Elizabeth Jacob.")

(e) ELIZABETH JACOB to RICHARD JACOB:—"Liverpool, 25th of 6th mo. 1712. Give my kind love to Dorothy and let her know her daughter is well."

(f) BENJAMIN HOLME to ELIZABETH JACOB :—“ Fairfield, 1st of 7th mo. 1712. Give my love kindly to thy companion. I believe she is so exemplary in her conduct that she gives a good savour to many. I would have her to be encouraged.”

(g) Postscript to letter from ELIZABETH JACOB to RICHARD JACOB : “ Dublin 11th of 3rd mo. 1713. . . . Please to give my dear love to mother and Dorothy ; tell her Abay is well.”

(h) ELIZABETH JACOB to RICHARD JACOB :—“ Woodhouse, 21st of 3rd mo. 1713. Please to give my love to Dorothy and tell her her daughter is well. A. C. dear love is to her mother and friends.”

(i) MARY RUSSELL to ELIZABETH JACOB :—“ Tottenham, 9th of 8th mo. 1713. . . . Please to give my dear love to thy husband and little son, though unknown, I love them for thy sake, so shall conclude with the salutation of my very dear love to thyself and dear A. C., who I believe will be concerned for my great loss.”

(j) ELIZABETH GOULDNEY to ELIZABETH JACOB :—London, 1st of 12th mo. 1713. “ Greet me with much love, nearness and true affection to A. C. Tell her my cries and supplications cease not to the High and Holy one, on her behalf, as I hope her’s doth not on mine. Dear W. Penn we think gains some ground of his distemper, he is and hath been all along very sweet in his spirit and his company very edifying.”

(k) HENRY GOULDNEY to ELIZABETH JACOB :—“ London 1st of 10th mo. 1713. Pray give us some account of dear A. Craven, how it is with her, and if she grows in a service, to be sure, if she dont neglect her gift but gives up in obedience, there is a good work for her to do.”

(l) HENRY GOULDNEY to ELIZABETH JACOB :—“ London 20th 5th mo. 1714. It pleaseth me when I hear of thy welfare and many good services thou art heartily engaged about, and methinks I still would hope, when the acceptable time comes, thou will be enabled to give up, and with thy dear companion, honest Abigail, wilt make us another visit, that she may be an help-meet with thee in thy exercise and travails, and if it would not strip thy dear husband too much, that thy beloved Isaac accompanied thee also, who I understand grows bravely and is in good esteem ; it would be a comfortable visit, which thine ever was, to friends generally.”

(m) ABIGAIL CRAVEN to ISAAC JACOB :—London, 15th of 4th mo. 1717. “ Dear Isaac, Thou hast been often in my remembrance, with desires for thy preservation from all those hurtful things which youth is prone to, that thou may be kept in thy innocency and simplicity, which truth leads to, remembering thy Creator now in the days of thy youth. . . . Think nothing of thy learning, for it signifies nothing to making thee a wise scholar in Christ’s school, but learn of Him who is meek and low, so thou may find rest to thy soul, if thou art willing to take his yoke upon thee, which with desire it may be so, I rest thy loving friend and well-wisher,
ABIGAIL CRAVEN.

“ My companion’s love is to thee.”