

Matter connected. Her Grandmother repeated to me one of her exhortations in these words (nearly if not quite), " My Mind has been deeply impressed with these words—If ye will open your hearts, I will come in, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." She was naturally of a [very] lively disposition, but became solid and serious in her behaviour previously to her appearance in the Ministry.

All J. & H. Hoag's children with their Partners are Ministers—or Members of the Select Meeting.

The following is added in the Lloyd manuscript :

1844. Lindley Murray Hoag, now on a religious visit in England, is a Widower with 4 children. He is a very eloquent preacher. Of this truly patriarchal couple (Joseph and Huldah Hoag) Dougan Clark, when in Ireland, 1844, related to John Abell the following particulars, That each now in their 85<sup>th</sup> year had last season been out on extensive religious service.

Joseph in paying a visit to Friends in Canada about a thousand miles from home, whilst his wife was a great distance away in another direction, he wrote to her that he hoped they might meet at the " Fall " and spend the winter together. After feeling released, he was about to return, but just as he was going on board the Steam Boat, he fell on the Quay and broke either his leg or thigh, which detained him a long time, and when able to travel again, he found his mind engaged to pay a visit in another distant Quarter and consequently their anticipated meeting had to be deferred.

## Elizabeth Robson

**E**LIZABETH ROBSON (1771-1843) was the youngest daughter of a Quaker master mariner, viz., Isaac Stephenson (1694-1783), of Bridlington Quay, Yorkshire, by his third wife, Elizabeth Maire (1741-1795), of Beeford in Holderness.

Elizabeth Stephenson, later Robson, was descended from East Riding yeoman stock in several lines of ancestry,

who had been Friends from the earliest days of the Society.

Educated at Ackworth School, she resided, upon her mother's death, at the hospitable home of her brother, Isaac Stephenson (1765-1830), a corn-miller at Stockton. He, who was later of Manchester, was an eminent Quaker minister, and closely associated with his sister in some of her ministerial engagements.

Elizabeth Stephenson married, in 1796, Thomas Robson (1768-1852), then of Darlington, linen manufacturer, son of Thomas Robson of the same, and Margaret Pease, his wife. Thomas Robson, who was a Quaker Elder, accompanied George Richardson of Newcastle upon some of his ministerial travels; also William Flanner of America, and other Friends, as well as his wife, to whom he was companion in her second visit to America. He was also a great student of Quaker history, and wrote many biographies of early Friends, which are now for the most part at Devonshire House; he also indexed many old Quaker journals, and possessed a valuable collection of Quaker literature and many manuscripts which have unhappily mostly been dispersed.

Elizabeth Robson was recorded as a minister in 1810. She removed with her husband and family to Sunderland in 1811, and to Liverpool in 1821, where she died in 1843.

She was a woman of remarkable ministerial, as well as social, gifts, and for some thirty-five years she travelled extensively upon religious service in Great Britain and Ireland; was twice in America (1824-28 and 1838-42), and twice upon the continent of Europe (1816 and 1831), visiting Friends in Germany and France, as well as the Netherlands, Holland, Switzerland, etc.

It is said that she visited every Meeting of Friends in Great Britain, Ireland, America, and upon the continent of Europe (and in many cases several times), with only one exception, when the members of a small Meeting attended an adjoining Meeting at which she was present.

Elizabeth Robson held meetings with sailors, soldiers, miners, Red Indians, coloured people in America, and all sorts and conditions of men and women. With members of Congress she had two or more meetings; she

visited John Quincy Adams, President of United States; the statesman, Henry Clay; Marie Amelie, Queen of Louis Philippe, King of France; the King and Queen of Würtemberg and their family; the Grand Duchess of Oldenburg, and many other interesting people. She visited schools, workhouses, asylums, penitentiaries, prisons and other public institutions; addressed innumerable public meetings, sometimes numbering thousands of people, and visited many hundreds of Quaker and other families.

It is interesting to record that a religious concern she had for the poor prisoners in Newgate in 1817, drew the especial attention of her valued friend, Elizabeth Fry, to the deplorable condition of its inmates, and she commenced her celebrated work in that prison from that period. This is recorded in a letter of their mutual friend Elizabeth (Lister) Beck, and in Henry Robson's *Memoir* of his mother.

Elizabeth Robson corresponded or was well acquainted with the leading members of our Society, such as Joseph John Gurney, Elizabeth Fry, William Allen, Stephen Grellet, Hannah Chapman Backhouse, Daniel Wheeler (whose funeral she attended in 1840), and many more.

She corresponded with such interesting people as Frederic William III., King of Prussia, who sent her an appreciative letter signed by his own hand; and addressed printed pamphlets to Friends of Indiana Yearly Meeting; to the inhabitants of the Island of Stroma; to Seamen; and to the inhabitants of Berlin on the outbreak of Asiatic cholera, which was printed in German at Pyrmont in 1831.

For obituary and other notices of Elizabeth Robson we must refer to the *Testimony* issued in 1844 by London Yearly Meeting, which was printed in extenso in *The British Friend* that year; also Susanna Corder's *Memorials of Friends* (sixth edition, 1845, pp. 415-431); *The Annual Monitor* (1845, pp. 115-121).

An elaborate *Memoir* of her was also written by her eldest son, Henry Robson (1798-1850), then resident with his father at Huddersfield, who also contributed to the account. This *Memoir* consisted of nine quarto volumes

of several thousand pages, and was very carefully and voluminously edited from many sources of information.

Unhappily the first three volumes were lost after the death, in 1897, of Elizabeth Robson's granddaughter, Mary (James) Backhouse, of Westbank, York, and we fear were sold with other books at the break-up of the Westbank home in 1907, following the death of Mary Louise Backhouse. The remaining volumes are now at Devonshire House, as are many of Elizabeth Robson's letters and manuscripts. An extensive manuscript memoir, as well as one in verse, and many letters, silhouette portraits, various relics and manuscripts, are in possession of Joseph J. Green, of Hastings; and Rachel Priscilla Robson of Saffron Walden, and Wilson Crewdson of St. Leonards-on-Sea, descendants of Elizabeth Robson, also possess letters and other relics. It is a cause of much regret that an adequate record of Elizabeth Robson has not yet been published, as few lives have been more fruitful or so full of incident; and few individuals have been enabled to accomplish so much for the well-being of their fellow men, or have been more deservedly beloved by the wide circle of their acquaintance and friendship.

The many testimonies borne to the exemplary character of Elizabeth Robson, apart from those of her own kin, were remarkable; among the names of the authors of which are Priscilla Hannah Gurney, Amelia Opie, and Frances (Phillips) Thompson; and poetical tributes by Isaac Sharp, William Ball (E. Robson's great-nephew by marriage), and Thomas Copland. She was indeed exemplary in every relation of life, and her conversational gifts remarkably interesting and instructive, from the stores of experience and anecdote derived from her arduous and extensive travels.

*Clive Vale, Hastings*

JOSEPH J. GREEN

It may seem to some that, under the changed conditions of our lives in the present day, there can be but little meaning for us in these lives lived two hundred years ago; but the same Light is here to guide us, and the same Truth to teach us, and the call of Duty is still sounding in our ears.

J. H. MIDGLEY, *Margaret Fell*, in Friends Ancient and Modern Series, 1916.