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The Goff Letters

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AFTER Jacob Goff's death William inherited Horetown, and Elizabeth and her five unmarried daughters went to seek a home elsewhere. This may have fallen in with her inclinations, for she says in a rough note for a letter of the period, "My sufferings were such at Horetown that I left it without regret tho' onst the most pleasing spot upon earth to me yet when deprived of it's greatest ornament all seemed striped and really was so to me." Jacob Goff apparently left his affairs in some disorder, and a crossed out sentence in this same rough note perhaps partly explains why. "My Dearest's good natured disposition having led into some difficulties in agusting them" (the affairs).

Elizabeth and her daughters received many invitations for a round of visits before they finally settled down elsewhere. One was from Anne Watson, the widowed sister of William Penrose, who lived with her mother at Waterpark, near Waterford. She says: "My Mother joins me in solicitation thou wilt not deny us one earnest request & that is to come with thy daughters and spend a little time with us at Waterpark. We have a spare room with two beds and part of a bed in our room so we could

make room with great convenience." The accommodation proposed for six people does not strike us as excessive! Elizabeth apparently did not go to Waterpark, but she went to stay a little at Oaklands, the Sparrow's house, and from there she went to the Sandwith's. Dinah and Arabella meanwhile went to stay with the Wakefields, and Elizabeth writing to the former says:

Last fourth day I accompanied thy kind Uncle and Aunt Sandwith, Charlotte and Lydia to Barnhill, we staid there till 7th day, & thy Aunt Bathed every day at Dunleary Strand, we accompanied her there. Lydia Bathed onst & Charlotte each day, we propose to return there to-morrow & I believe I shall venture to Bathe as my cough is almost intiarly removed & I hope it may be of servis and strenghten my Nervs.

The writers of these letters had a great belief in the beneficial effects of sea bathing. It is, however, rather surprising,—at least to those who know Dublin,—to find that in July, 1814, "Eliza and her dear little boys" had gone to stay in Capel Street for the benefit of the bathing at Clontarf! Barnhill, and the beauties of Dunleary, are frequently spoken of with great admiration. The Sandwiths were most hospitable people and always had their house full of Friends who had been ill and needed a change and fresh air. There is something very attractive in all we hear of this couple, they seem to have been so kindly and unselfish, always working for others. They both lived to a good old age and passed fifty-nine years in true harmony together. When Joseph Sandwith died in 1831 he was within a few days of ninety-four and at that time Jane was eighty-six.

Eventually Elizabeth settled down with her daughters in Aungier Street, Dublin. Here with the Sandwiths close by, surrounded by a large circle of Friends, and with constant visits from her married children, and her many grandchildren, she passed a happy and interesting old age. She was much troubled with a cough, which was probably of an asthmatical nature. She makes frequent mention of being confined to the house with it, and once says: "The day was very fine & as my cough was tolerably

easey, I did get from under fear, and got out in a hand Chair, which I am thankful for & got no hurt."

We must now return to a more particular account of Elizabeth's six remaining children. First of these comes Charlotte, born 1773. In 1786 she was staying with her aunt, and we read :

Thy daughter Charlotte's company has been truly acceptable to me there can't be a more pleasing Child, has been all this week taken up lerning to spin & performs amazing well requests her duty and Dr love where dew, is herty and well and not quite so fat.

When she was nearly twenty-eight Charlotte married Joshua Edmundson. The match was greatly liked by her relatives and several of the letters mention it with approval. Rebecca Goff says : " It is a match that meets with general approbation, as any I have heard, which is very consoling and strengthening to have the approbation of near relatives. It is no doubt very pleasing to Aunt Sandwith to have Dr Charlotte settled so near her." Charlotte had always been the Sandwith's favourite niece, and had spent most of her time with them. After her marriage they continued their kindness to her and her family, indeed the Edmundson children lived as much at Barnhill as in their own home. Charlotte had altogether three sons and three daughters, and she lost one son and one daughter in infancy. In the letters of 1814 we hear several times that Joshua Edmundson was not well, and in June he was taken seriously ill. Elizabeth says :

He quietly and patiently breathed his last . . . thy dear sister has been wonderfully favoured to separte during the whole trial, he departed with his hand in hers, & she closed his eyes in pace, which is a great comfort. . . . Her children are left under her care Intiarly, & I under stand better provided than we could expect . . . he has left all after his Just debts is paid to thy sister for life which they say is considerable, on which I hope a blessing may be granted, as I believe he was an honest

& Upright man, is regretted by moste & said to have the largest funeral ever seen among friends in Dublin.

Neither of Charlotte's daughters ever married. Her elder son, William, went out to Australia and married there. Her younger son, Joshua, seems to have been the family favourite. "Really," as his grandmother once says of him, "Jos is a moste desireable boy remains as fond of his mother as ever and quite sedate since his Dr father's decease." In 1840 Joshua married Mary Wigham of Edinburgh, and died in 1848. Charlotte Edmundson herself outlived her son by one year.

It was, perhaps, rather hard on Arabella Goff that while Charlotte's match, which took place about the same time as her own, was so greatly liked by the family, her own was quite as much disliked. Arabella wished to marry John Fennel of Cahir, and Elizabeth was greatly against the match, partly because of the relationship, the young people being second cousins, and partly because she did not think that John Fennel was enough of a Friend. The Fennels also were against it.

Arabella is staying with the Wakefields, and Elizabeth writes to Thomas Christy Wakefield and encloses a note for Arabella. She tells Arabella that she will never give in on this matter, and she tells Thomas that she will give in if she must, but not to let Arabella know that. Eventually she had to give in, and Arabella was married from Moyallor, in the same year, 1800. When the deed was done, Elizabeth very sensibly withdrew her objections, and afterwards spoke with affection of John Fennel. The couple had no children. They lived at first at Cottage, Cahir, and afterwards at Cahir Abbey. Arabella does not appear to have been a ready reckoner, for we find a little sum on one of her letters

10d.

10d

3d.

I. 11d.

She was widowed in 1825 and died in 1846.

Joseph Fade Goff, Elizabeth's younger son, was born in 1780. He was educated at Forster's school near Tottenham, and we find that William Penrose took him over and left him there. On his return he reported to the Goffs that Joseph had a very affectionate, sympathetic mind. We have a letter from Joseph while he was at school. It is written in the most beautiful copperplate, and has a postscript, "I am, thank Providence, preserved in health." When he was twenty-one Joseph married Elizabeth, William Penrose's daughter by his first wife. Joseph writes to his mother: "'Tis with heartfelt pleasure I inform my dearest Mother that on 3rd day my darling Eliza and I were united—she performed remarkably well, I believe they seldom heard a Woman spake better." Joseph and his wife set up in a house called Brunswick, but their happiness was shortlived. Elizabeth died in the October of the following year, and was buried on the anniversary of her wedding day. Afterwards Joseph joined the Yeomanry and left Friends for a time but later on was united with us again. He married, for his second wife, Anne Grogan Morgan, and they lived at Raheenduff, near Horetown. Rebecca Goff says of Anne: "Thou knows she has not much strength of mind." Joseph died in 1826 from the effects of a shooting accident, leaving one son and one daughter, neither of whom had children.

After Elizabeth settled in Dublin, Dinah seems to have spent a good part of her time visiting her married sisters and other relations. Elizabeth writes frequently to her, pleasant chatty letters, full of innocent gossip about the large circle of Dublin Friends, and her own very large connection. Elizabeth had at this time sixty direct descendants, and she kept well in touch with all of them. She must, I think, have got on particularly well with young men, for her grandsons-in-law all seem to have had a great affection for her. Jonathan Pim, for instance, in the days when he was courting her granddaughter Elizabeth Goff, used frequently to drink tea with her and talk over his plans. She calls him "a steady Valuable young man, exemplery in appearance and practis" and thinks that he will make "an exelant Husband & an agreeable Companion for dear Elizt^h."

I do not think that Elizabeth was very well off. In 1809 in a letter to Dinah who was staying at Horetown with the William Goffs, for the marriage of one of their daughters, she says :

Present my dear love to thy Brother & Sister Goff, tell them I wish them every comfort on the increase of Union in their family, as I do permanent Happiness to these dear Children, having no earthly mains to offer I hope I am thankfull that I can offer my sincere love and best desires.

Elizabeth was a very faithful member of the Society. As long as it was at all possible for her to do so she was a diligent attender of Meetings, and it was a real cross to her when her cough prevented this. Once when writing of some very acceptable ministry she says : “ Indeed, my Dear, I do not think myself fit to write of the subject, not being able to sit or to worship among my friends, the Lord only knows my Heart, in whome is my Trust in this life and that to come.” She was very anxious that her grandchildren should take their proper places in the work of the Society. She writes to Dinah when at Moyallon : “ Give my love to Thos. who I hope conducts steady in his dear Father’s absens. I wish him to walk steady and become a Usefull member in the Truth as Professed by us.” Once when she heard that a granddaughter was likely to marry out, she wrote her a most agitated letter with the pathetic signature, “ thy much tried Grand Mother.”

Another rather severe letter is to her granddaughter, Anne Lecky, and is on the duty of getting married when a suitable man presents himself. Anne had reached the age of twenty-six years, and now that she has received a proposal was not accepting it as quickly as her grandmother thought she should. She is afraid Anne is inclined to be lazy and selfish and hopes she “ may be favoured to see beyond selfish desires, which may lead to remain longer in a single stait than best wisdom sees meet.” “ Every state,” as she truly says, “ produces its trials,” and she appears to think that Anne’s mother’s consent and “ the approbation of her near connections,” make it incumbent on her to undertake the trials of a married life.

Also Anne's marriage may be "a mains of strength to other of thy sisters, when it pleases Providence to call in like manner for their exertion, and enlargement in this life which cannot be attained so fully without a companion." Altogether marriage seems to be looked on as a rather unpleasant duty!

We have no letters for the last three years of Elizabeth's life, but we know from *Divine Protection* that she died in Dublin in the seventy-eighth year of her life, in perfect peace. Her illness was short and her last words were to Dinah, "May the blessing of the everlasting hills surround thee, my dear child, when I am gone."

After her death Hannah and Dinah had a house at Ranelagh and here Hannah died in 1838. Dinah moved to England and died and was buried at Bristol in 1858. Lydia married at the age of fifty, Simeon Lamphier, M.D. The Lamphiers lived at Waterford, and in 1839 Lydia was left a widow. She died in 1844, aged seventy-three.

One cannot help being struck with the large part that the Society filled in the lives and minds of the writers of these letters. It is saddening at the present day to read of the large gatherings for Yearly and Provincial Meetings, the country Meetings, then so well filled, now empty and closed, the many Friends' houses with their ready hospitality, now held by other owners,—and one wishes that by a stroke of a magician's wand one could restore again the Society as it was in the Ireland of that time. On the other hand we notice the comparative emptiness of these people's lives, and the entire lack of any organised work for others such as we all undertake now. If it be a fact that intimate letters betray character, then the character of the Goff family must have been particularly good. There is not one cross or ill-natured letter in the series or one nasty remark. They impute no ill motives to any one, and they all speak a language of thoughtfulness and affection, but they seem to have had singularly few interests or amusements. There are no allusions to charitable works, not a book is mentioned, or a flower, or a garden. On the other hand they had constant

visitors and could talk over the latest family news with them. With the exception of business failures—due to the war—there is no allusion to outside affairs. The family and its concerns seem to have satisfied them for conversation, and indeed if they talked it over thoroughly, the size of the immediate family, and the ramifications of its connections, would have left little time for any other conversation.

The writer feels that she has given a very inadequate account of what is an extremely interesting collection of letters, but she would ask her readers, in the words of a postscript to one of the last of Elizabeth Goff's letters, to "Excuse all errors from so wake a scribe."

S. HILDA BELL.

*Solitude, Lurgan,
Ireland.*

CHILDREN OF JACOB AND ELIZABETH GOFF

1. ELIZABETH (1760-1841). Married John Lecky, of Ballykealy. Her daughter, Elizabeth, married John Watson, of Kilconnor, and her daughter, Elizabeth Lecky Watson, married Joshua John Strangman, of Summerland, Waterford. From them descended the Strangman family of Shanagarry, Ballycotton, Co. Cork.
2. WILLIAM (1762-1840). Married Rebecca Deaves. Their eldest daughter, Rebecca, married Francis Davis, of Waterford. Her son assumed the surname and arms of Goff and from him come the Strangman Davis Goff family.
 Their daughter, Elizabeth, married Jonathan Pim, of Bloomsbury, Monkstown, and from her come the Pim family of Lisnagarvey, Lisburn; a daughter of Elizabeth married Sir John Barrington.
 Their daughter, Arabella, married Jonathan Pim, of Summergrove, Mountmellick, and has many descendants.
 Their daughter, Mary, married Thomas Harvey, of Youghal, and their daughter, Margaret, married Joseph Clibborn, of Anner Mills.
3. MARY (1764-1785). Married James Forbes. Daughter, Elizabeth, No descendants.
4. DINAH (1765-1781).
5. SARAH (1766-1801). Married Richard Sparrow. Four daughters survived. One, Elizabeth, married Samuel Penrose and had a son. No descendants among Friends.

6. HANNAH (1767-1838). Unmarried.
7. JANE (1768-1836). Married Thomas Christy Wakefield. From her come the Richardson family of Moyallon.
8. ANNE (1771-1795). Married William Penrose. From her come Penroses of Kilkenny, not Friends.
9. LYDIA (1771-1844). Married Simeon Lamphier. No descendants.
10. CHARLOTTE (1773-1849). Married Joshua Edmundson. From her come the Edmundson family.
11. LUCY (1774-1796). Married Joseph Pike. Her daughter, Elizabeth, married Joseph Bewley, and their son, Samuel, lived at Sandford Hill, Dublin. No descendants among Friends.
12. ARABELLA (1779-1846). Married John Fennel. No descendants.
13. JOSEPH FADE (1780-1826). Married Elizabeth Penrose and Anne Grogan Morgan. No descendants.
14. DINAH WILSON (1784-1858). Unmarried.

There was a century, wanting two years, between the birth of the eldest child and the death of the youngest.

FLUSHING OAKS.—Francis Thompson of Croydon, has presented to **D** an urn-shaped article made from the white oak-tree at Flushing, Long Island, under which George Fox preached, in 1672. This interesting article was presented by Lydia Williams Longstreth Price (1801-1843)¹, of Philadelphia, to her sister, Susan Morris Longstreth Thompson (1802-1856) and by her to her son, Francis Thompson, the present donor. Lydia Price received it from Sarah Hicks in 4mo. 1842.

¹ There are portraits of Lydia Price and her husband, Richard Price (1794-1865), a foremost merchant of Philadelphia, in *The Longstreth Family Records*, 1909 (copy in **D**. presented by F. Thompson).

WILLIAM ALLEN, F.R.S. AND FLY-FISHING.—Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829) to William Hasledine Pepys (1775-1856), 2nd April, 1808 :

“ I have proposed that we should leave town at about 5 or 6 on Monday morning. Sleep at Foot’s Cray and try fly fishing there. Will you arrange with Allen whom we must initiate in the vocation of the Apostles, as he wants nothing else to make him perfect as a primitive Christian and a philosopher.”

RECKLESS OF NOTTINGHAM (v., vi., vii., x.).—“ One of our companions was a person of the name of Reckless who informed me that he was a descendant of the sheriff of that name, formerly of Nottingham, and mentioned by George Fox in his Journal. This family have increased in number and consequence since coming to America, and have founded a town which bears their name.” Robert Sutcliff’s *Travels in America*, 1811, p. 278—New York State, Ninth Month, 1806.