

## Letters from Joseph Gurney to Joseph Gurney Bevan

A SERIES of letters written by Joseph Gurney, of Norwich, to his cousin, Joseph Gurney Bevan, of London, now belonging to Robert Leatham Barclay, great-great-grandson of the writer of the *Letters*, has been on loan in D, and permission has been given to print certain extracts. These letters, dating from 1772 to 1776, give a glimpse of the youthful life, at that period, of prosperous Friends of the gayer type.

Joseph Gurney (1757-1830) was the third son and youngest child of John Gurney (1715/16-1770), of St. Augustines, Norwich, and of Keswick Hall, near that city. His brothers were Richard (1742/3-1811) and John (1749-1809) and they had one sister, Rachel (1755-1794). The three brothers were known later as Richard Gurney of Keswick, John Gurney of Earlham, and Joseph Gurney of Lakenham Grove (or, simply, The Grove).<sup>1</sup>

The father of this family, John Gurney, of Keswick, married, about 1739, Elizabeth Kett, daughter of Richard Kett, of Norwich; she was living, as a widow, at the period of the *Letters*. This John Gurney was a son of Joseph Gurney (1692-1750), who married, in 1713, the handsome Hannah Middleton. In 1747 Joseph Gurney acquired Keswick Old Hall. He was a noted Minister. Joseph's father was John Gurney (c. 1655-1721) of St. Gregory's parish, who married Elizabeth Swanton in 1687. He became a Friend and suffered for his religious belief.

Joseph Gurney, the writer of the *Letters*, married, in 1784, Jane Chapman (1757-1841), of Whitby. They had nine children, but no descendants of the name. Their daughter, Hannah Chapman (1787-1850), married Jonathan

<sup>1</sup> Arthur J. Eddington has sent a sketch of the relative position of these three houses. Lakenham Grove (now Hall) is about a quarter of a mile south from the City on the Ipswich and London road; Keswick Hall is three miles from the City near the London road; and Earlham Hall is two miles west of the City.

Backhouse (1779-1842), in 1811, and became the noted Minister, travelling in two hemispheres; Jane (1789-1821) married, in 1820, Henry Birkbeck (1787-1848); Elizabeth (1790-1835) married, in 1814, Robert Barclay, of Leyton (1787-1853); and the youngest, Emma (1800-1860), married in 1826, Joseph Pease (1799-1872), of Southend, Darlington. Rachel (1794-1817), the only remaining daughter to grow up, has become historic through the beautiful volume by Sir Alfred E. Pease, Bart., *Rachel Gurney of The Grove*, 1907. Two daughters died young, and two sons, Joseph and Henry, died within a short time of one another, to the great grief of their family—Henry in 1815, aged seventeen, and Joseph in 1816, aged twenty. Portraits in color of Rachel, Mary, Hannah, Elizabeth, Emma, Henry, Joseph, and Jane, are given in Sir Alfred Pease's book. The Gurneys of The Grove have not had any historian as have their cousins of Earlham in Augustus J. C. Hare to make them famous, but some of their descendants are prominent members of the Society of Friends to-day. There was abundance of life and youthful energy among the young cousins at Keswick, Earlham and The Grove. Richard had six children by his two wives, John had twelve and Joseph had nine, and, in addition, Rachel Barclay had fifteen.

Joseph Gurney is thus described by his nephew, J. J. Gurney (quoted in *The Journal of Hannah Chapman Backhouse*, 1858, p. 94) :

Truly he was a man in *good liking*, of a handsome build, both of body and mind, a right agreeable companion, fraught with amiable tempers, sound intellectual powers, playful good humour, and above all, deep humble piety. He was withal no man's copy. A man of striking integrity and independence of mind who always thought for himself, and when any proposition or sentiment was uttered by his companions, he was sure enough to examine the other side of the question and picked out the weakness of many a plausible notion. He generally wore a smile, and knew how to laugh; his cheerfulness did credit to his religion, and was the happy ornament of that settled seriousness which ever dwelt within. He had read considerably and observed largely and acutely, so that his conversation seldom failed to be informing. His ministry was delivered in great brokenness. It was lively and refreshing, original, frequently presenting some new train of thought for the instruction of his hearers. . . . Many were they who loved him dearly and honoured him faithfully, and his memory will not perish.

Joseph Gurney Bevan (1753-1814), the "cousin Joe" of the *Letters*, was son (apparently the only child) of Timothy

and Hannah Bevan, of London. Hannah Bevan (1714-1784) was the widow of Nathaniel Springall (1699-1741), and daughter of Joseph and Hannah (Middleton) Gurney), hence aunt of the Joseph of the *Letters*, and her son, Joseph, his first cousin. J. G. Bevan is known to Quaker history as the solid, sober Friend and has been called by a contemporary "our chief disciplinarian"; we have in these letters an insight into the earlier and lighter side of his life. In 1776 he married (s.p.) Mary Plumstead (1751-1813) and in 1794 he retired from business as chemist in Plough Court. He was an Elder and Clerk to the Y.M. in 1794. His wife was a Minister. He was "a sound writer and classical scholar" (*Jnl.* xv. 13). He wrote a life of the Apostle Paul and also of James Nayler, Isaac Penington, Sarah Stephenson and Robert Barclay. He edited the tenth part of *Piety Promoted* and wrote, in 1790, for the Meeting for Sufferings, *A Summary of the History, Doctrines and Discipline of Friends*, a pamphlet which passed through some fourteen editions in English and was issued in French, German, Italian and Spanish.

A curious view of his character may be found in *Jnl.* xix. 27. See also vols. ii, viii, xvi, xvii, xviii; *Biog. Cata. of London Friends' Institute*, 1888; Memoir in *Letters and Writings*, edited by Josiah Forster, 1821; etc.

I

Norwich 25<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> mo 1772.

Dear Cousin

I shall begin this morning to work in the compting house, but at present they cannot find any thing for me to do; therefore I thought I could not employ my time before breakfast better than in writing thee.

My Uncle Edmund,<sup>2</sup> who I suppose thou hast heard has been troubled with the gout, is much better, so that he attended meeting both morning and afternoon, tho' he seemed to limp a little as he came in.

Soon after I was arrived here J. Oxley<sup>3</sup> came in, and the first thing he spoke to me about was the not answering his last letter, but I told him I thought it was not worth answering, & that it was a heap of scandilous nonsense, &

what was worse it was ridiculing the Scripture, since which he has not mentioned it, for I believe he was ashamed.

My Brother<sup>4</sup> proposes my learning italian, as there is a very cleaver man in town, an Italian by birth, who teaches several young gentlemen here, & among the rest D<sup>r</sup> Manning. I hope notwithstanding the italian I shall have opportunity to pursue my latin, but as yet I have not had time to look over my books, for I have been very much engaged in visiting with my companion, & we spent two or three day's at Matishall where we found all very well.

With dear love I remain sincerely

Thy affectionate cousin

JOS : GURNEY.

2

Norwich 1 2/mo 1773.

Dear Cousin

I think there is a great reformation in the wigs not only of M. Reeves's (as thou mentionest) but also of my Bro' Johnny's<sup>5</sup> who to our great surprise generally puts it on quite strait, tho' no doubt with some trouble to himself & I am glad to hear Celia is well. I wou'd have thee repress thy wrath as much as possible for no doubt in the way my Brother and I am going on in learning we shall arrive at that height, in w<sup>ch</sup> thou wilt bear no comparison with us, not even if thou learnest Greek & Welsh. I note thy dose & approve it very much even more than my favorite Senna (as thou cal'st it). I am sorry to acquaint thee Cousin Benjamin Gurney<sup>6</sup> is dangerously Ill so that he is not expected to live this day out. My Brother John desires thee to return the orders for Tozer's Dividend when fresh shall be sent. With our united love

I remain,

Thy affectionate Coz

JOS GURNEY.

3

Norwich, 22<sup>d</sup> 2/mo. 1773.

Dear Cousin

I have not had lately an opportunity of answering thine, being engaged on a sporting expedition with my Brother

John at Oxborough from whence we returned last 7 day being very well satisfied with our diversion. I wrote some time ago to Fr<sup>d</sup> Hodgkin<sup>7</sup> but not having receiv'd an answer think there may be a mistake in the direction & that he may be removed from Clapton which I should be obliged to thee to enquire & acquaint me in thy next.

Thy argument for my not learning Italian before I have perfected myself in the Latin language seems to bear very little weight with my Brother as I have already begun, & hope in less than a year to be a tolerable master of it, for having some notion of the Latin & French (from which the Italian seems to be mostly derived) it is very easy to be acquired. My Brother John likewise is taught French by the same man, & he is now so full of it that he can hardly talk to any body without coming out with some French word or other, by which thou mayst see we are all going to become remarkably learned.

Thy affectionate Coz<sup>n</sup>

JOS: GURNEY.

[In another hand on the same paper as the preceding.]

I will acknowledge thine reced to Day very soon. I wrote thee from Oxborough.

Dr Joe

I open'd this to say something but have quite forgot what. On my return last night I met several Letters amongst which was one from thee. I was glad to see once more the hand writing tho the subject was trifling.

Good Moidores pass here currently but light ones good People cannot pass.

A Catalogue of Grievances :

No account yet of the purchase of Scott & Paul's Stock.

No dividends reced from Tozer or Mendez.

No transfer made of Jollins's Stock.

No account from my Bro<sup>r</sup> Rich<sup>d</sup> of the Sundrys you debit us for as paid Tim Bevan he having lost or mislaid the same.

too much bad money in the 600 Guineas which must be returned.

too little time to say more than what thou knows already vizt.

that I am most cordially thy af<sup>te</sup> Cousins

J G. [John Gurney]

Norwich 6<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup> 1774.Dr Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

T'is a very disagreeable thing to see another person busily employ'd & not have any thing to do oneself, especially at 11 o'clock at night, when the drowsy God generally begins to be active in dispersing his drowsiness amongst Mortals—t'is therefore purely in Compassion to myself that I now write thee, my Bro<sup>th</sup> John being on the opposite side of the table writing, thou may'st guess where. I make no doubt but thou rejoicest heartily as well as myself at the Cause of his being thus engag'd.<sup>8</sup> I must confess it was not a very great surprise to me to hear of it, having strongly suspected it long since, & when in thy last letter thee mention'd thy walking solus with Betsey,<sup>8</sup> it then pass'd into my head how my Bro<sup>t</sup> was employ'd, because, thinks I to myself, Joe Bevan & he went together to the Hill & finding it a proper opportunity he propos'd a walk to Betsy, in order to leave them to themselves, w<sup>ch</sup> I find since by my Bro<sup>s</sup> was a true suggestion. Having fixed matters here he proposes setting off again next fourth day as I suppose he will tell thee. Now this I think is doing it in good earnest & setting about it like a Man, & not like one who is asham'd of what he is about.

There seems at this juncture a very propitious Gale w<sup>ch</sup> blows Cupid's darts into our Family & takes off, both the middle aged & young. I wish Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe thee would embrace this favorable opportunity for it may be some time before it blows again,—tho' perhaps thee waits for a more Calm season, & when there is not so much running harum scarum up & down from & to London. I can assure thee it breeds such confusion, that I was forc'd this evening to go hunt for a supper & at last found one at Coz<sup>n</sup> Springall's<sup>9</sup> being turn'd out of our own house on account of secret engagem<sup>ts</sup> here—my Bro<sup>t</sup> has done therefore I now subscribe myself

JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.Norwich, 20<sup>th</sup> Apl 1774.Dear Coz<sup>n</sup> Joseph.

I suppose by the time this letter reaches London thou wilt have seen the Travellers G. Newnham & Bland who set out from hence yesterday, I suppose they arriv'd safe at

London unless the vivacity of the former urges Tommy<sup>10</sup> beyond the Strength of his constitution & gives him the head-ach. G. Newnham is a very clever young fellow, & if thou hast a mind to divert thyself with contemplating the starry regions, he will be an agreeable Companion for thee, as he has made astronomy his great Study.

We expect he will return to this City soon after Yearly-Meeting. I wou'd advise thee when that is over if thou canst not make it convenient to come & see us in these parts, to retire to some other part of the Country for a day or two, for after the hurry & bustle w<sup>ch</sup> of consequence attends that week, a rural side wou'd be very pleasant, it wou'd not only cause thee to enjoy more fully nature in her rudest form, but wou'd give the mind an uninterrupted scope, to contemplate on the good things that must both be heard and experienc'd in that most solemn assembly. I believe it's impossible for thee to enjoy the Country more than I do,<sup>11</sup> for tho' I go to Keswick every night, yet in the day time, I am engag'd in Business here at Norwich. I make it my general Custom to take a walk in the evening & often am much delighted, by setting on a Stile & hearing the different voice of each animal, w<sup>ch</sup> when the serenity of the evening will permit one may hear very plainly, the bleating of sheep, the mooing of Oxen, the Cawing of Rooks, the singing of Birds & various others, which forms a most delightful Concert, I am sometimes ready to wish the Sun wou'd be long[er] asetting that I might enjoy that enchantment (for I can call it nothing else) much longer.

I remain,  
Thy Affectionate Cousin  
JOSEPH GURNEY.

6

Norwich 18<sup>th</sup> June 1774.

Dear Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

I sent yesterday young Jn Margetson off for Hackney according to orders with master *Bobby*, his new Sdle & Bride [Saddle and Bridle]. I have been frolicking about all last week, first going to Yarmouth, & then to Newmarket with Bro<sup>t</sup> & Sister, & for that reason have been oblig'd to stick by the Stuff this week pretty closely, so that I have not

had an opportunity of writing thee before, otherwise I wou'd have done it.

Our Yearly-meeting<sup>12</sup> approaching we have left the Country & are going to enjoy the sweets of the City for next week, by which time I am persuaded I shall be heartily tired of it, for of an evening it appears so horribly dull, it being day light at 8 or 9 o'clock, w<sup>ch</sup> I do not like in the City, for if one goes to take a ramble, instead of the melody of the feather'd songsters, one hears the Cry of *New Oysters* or *hot mutton pyes*, from the harsh throat of a hoarse lung'd old Fellow,—now if it was Candle light & in the Winter one might step into a fr<sup>ds</sup> house & enjoy social Conversation over the Fire side, but the Summer in my opinion is more the time from Contemplation without than Chit chat within.

The yearly meeting to all appearance will be very small as, I don't know of one being come yet to Town, neither do we hear of any strangers being likely to be here except Jo<sup>s</sup> Procter<sup>13</sup>; for R<sup>t</sup> Willis<sup>14</sup> [I] find does not come as he first intended.

I am surprised at thy ignorance of the note of nightingale, its somewhat like that of the Blackbird tho' much finer & softer, however, if thou hast a mind to hear him, transport thyself by some means to Keswick one evening, & I'll warrant he'll wellcome thee there.

The Frank<sup>15</sup> is now doing up therefore I conclude  
assuring thee that I am

Thine Sincerely,

JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

7

Norwich 24<sup>th</sup> Aug 1774

Dr Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

I have just about 25 minutes to spare before I go to Milend to dinner with some other young men, w<sup>ch</sup> time I intend to employ in writing thee, & to acquaint thee that my Bro<sup>t</sup> John desires I wou'd send my Horse for thee to ride whilst he has thine, w<sup>ch</sup> I shall with the utmost readiness comply with. He is a long lean Beast & very much of the same sort as Don Quisote's Rosinante except in this particular, that whereas Rosinante never gallop'd but once, this my Horse is very fond of it. I wou'd have thee take particular pleasure in riding him, considering that thy dear Coz<sup>n</sup> Joseph has mounted him *many a good time & oftens*—



he will leap over either Gates or Hedges or Ditches w<sup>ch</sup> I know thee likes when thee rides out.

Thou hast not wrote me of some time tho' I believe by the rule of right thee ought to have done it first, however, as that is very immaterial betwixt us I wish to have one from thee soon, as I dearly love to receive letters tho' I am not very fond of writing them. We have had down here a *bright* youth from your parts, that is to say Jn Owen. I took a little round with him when he was here we went to yarmouth & from yarm<sup>o</sup> to Walsham & from there to Norwich, he seem'd to enjoy it with as much relish as a stone wou'd. I think t'is one of the most provoking things in the world, not to have ones Companions partake of the enjoyment w<sup>ch</sup> we ourselves feel, but to answer to every thing with *it's very well, or as you please.*

I am now called to depart w<sup>th</sup> one of my Companions, therefore must take leave & assure thee that [I am]

Thy Affectionate Coz<sup>n</sup>,

JOS. GURNEY.

8

Brighthelmston,

19<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Dr Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

This is (as thou mays't perceive) a very dirty sheet of paper, but my Bro<sup>t</sup> John says it's good enough for Joe Bevan therefore in pursuance of his opinion I shall proceed, & acquaint thee that it's a very wet and disagreeable afternoon w<sup>ch</sup> is the reason of my staying within, & having nothing better to do I shall begin writing to thee.

By the date of this Letter thou may'st know where we are, having taken our leave of Tunbridge last 6<sup>th</sup> day, after dinner, we came to Lewes that evening where we lodged at a very grand Inn the sign of the Star. Lewes is a neat Town the entrance of which is very romantic being guarded on each by a high clift. The first houses that present themselves to our view, are a set of poor old Cottages, whose Inhabitants seem cheifly employ'd in cultivating the Earth & whose smoaky dwellings give one rather a poor idea of the Town, but then when one assends the Hill there are a variety of very good Shops & handsome Houses. In this uper part of the Town, on a high Hill, stands an old ruined

Castle, from whence may see a delightful prospect, on the one side a vast extent of a beautifully fertile Country, & on the other a barren one, yet agreeable variegated with green Hills w<sup>ch</sup> afford Pasturage for many flocks of Sheep.

On our return from visiting this Castle the Coach & Horses were all ready for us to set off for this place, it being near ten o'Clock, so paying our reckoning we proceeded on our Journey & arrived here about eleven, & went to the Castle Inn, w<sup>ch</sup> is a nasty, dirty, filthy place. Our first business was to seek out for Lodgings, therefore we all sallied forth, our Landlady none of the neatest, being our guide; the first house we look'd at was that of a whimsilah old Maids, & a very whimsical one it was, I don't know how to describe it to thee, but I suppose the old Lady was so remarkably taken with the appearance of the Waves of the Sea that she made the Cieling very much to resemble them, but so low, it was scarsely high enough for one to walk under, therefore examining the house from bottom to top, & finding it not convenient we departed from it, & at last fixed on a small one upon the Clifts from whence there is a fine prospect unto the Sea, & in w<sup>ch</sup> I am now writing this letter.

We find Coz<sup>a</sup> Priscilla Barclay<sup>16</sup> & her 2 fair attendants quite finely & in good Spirits. Yesterday being first day we went to meeting, both forenoon and afternoon, therefore cou'd not enjoy much of their Company only walking with them on the Stein between meetings, but this morning it being very fine we took a most agreeable ride in 2 whisky's we hired, Lucy, Sister, & Bro<sup>t</sup> in one, & Betsy & myself in the other;<sup>16</sup> we went to Rotten Dean about four miles, distant, a place not very remarkable for anything except the pleasant ride to it, w<sup>ch</sup> is by the Sea Side, upon the Clifts, & over some delightful Downs.

Now w<sup>ch</sup> our united dear Love, I remain, in the dark  
Thy affectionate Coz<sup>a</sup>

JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

9

Norwich 8<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1774

D<sup>r</sup> Coz<sup>a</sup> Joe.

We are all most heartily rejoic'd at the recovery of our Fr<sup>d</sup> Catharine, & sincerely wish the continuation of Health & Happiness may attend her.

I have the pleasure to acquaint thee that my Bro<sup>t</sup> has in great measure recover'd the fatigue of *that* Journey from London, he went to Yarmouth last third day, but return'd yesterday in order to be at the meeting for nomination of Candidates, it held but a very little while, & my Bro<sup>t</sup> happen'd to be rather too late, therefore it was attended w<sup>th</sup> no bad consequences to him, w<sup>ch</sup> I was afraid the heat & noise of the people wou'd have occasion'd. He goes back today where he intends to continue till he finds himself mended.

As these subjects are uppermost in my mind they naturally come first, therefore having finish'd them I shall proceed to some more trifling & in the first place acquaint thee that I deliver'd according to orders the letter that was inclos'd in thine, & desire thee wou'd in future inclose all such letters to me that they may be deliver'd without molestation.

There will be no opposition this year against our old members, Bevor having no intention to stand w<sup>ch</sup> I don't like, not from any political reasons, but that I should like once in 7 year at least to see a little bustle. Here's Tom the Postman now waiting for this w<sup>ch</sup> I'm almost asham'd to send as it's so short, however it may be the sweeter for it, so w<sup>th</sup> love &c., I remain,

Thy affectionate Coz<sup>n</sup>  
JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

10

Norwich 24<sup>th</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup>, 1774.

D<sup>r</sup> Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

I received thy letter just as I was going out w<sup>th</sup> my Bro<sup>s</sup> Richard to Hempsted. I never was before in that part of the Country, & was very much surpris'd to see such a very rich fertile Country in the County of Norfolk, w<sup>ch</sup> in general is look'd upon to be barren & marshy. On a Hill just past the Earl of Buckingham's, there is a prospect, w<sup>ch</sup> altho' it is not certainly so extensive, yet I think it comes up in richness to almost any I saw either in Kent or Sussex, the beauty of it's large Woods together with the addition of water renders it extremely agreeable, one sees from it several Gentlemens seats peeping out between the Woods, & the Cottages below, seem to denote the arbitrary sway w<sup>th</sup> w<sup>ch</sup> these gentlemen govern them; the day being very

wet when we went, the Pheasants (of w<sup>ch</sup> there are incredible quantities) cou'd not keep in the Covers, but were sprinkled like so many Chickens all over the Fields, & I am sure I speak in moderation when I say I saw upwards of 150 brace in one large Piece, an enchanting sight for a Sportsman! Oh how Dan<sup>l</sup> Bells<sup>17</sup> fingers wou'd itch to be at them, he talks a great deal of coming down to see us, but has not yet been, I wish he wou'd come & my Bro<sup>re</sup> wou'd carry him into the Country I have been speaking of where he might shoot till he cou'd no longer hold his gun. Suppose, Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe, thee invites him to come down along with thee & visit us now we are got once more into our Winter's habitation, which Circumstance I am very much pleas'd with, as the evenings begin to grow desperately cold & long, & very disagreeable to ride over to Keswick in, besides there is a robbing about us, as I suppose thou hast hear'd of that daring one w<sup>ch</sup> was committed on Coz<sup>n</sup> Wright<sup>18</sup> at between 3 & 4 in the afternoon. As this is a very uncommon Case here, it has served as a good Story for many old Gossips, & having pass'd thro' many hands, has met Corrections & Editions as usual.

I heard some time ago that our old Master Jn<sup>o</sup> Revoult<sup>19</sup> was in Exeter Gaol, his long imprisonment is certainly some atonement for his transgression but I am afraid since he has once tasted the vicious life, he will when he is set free again, instead of regaining his Character by proper Conduct, fall into the same wicked line, however, we will hope for the best, & as he has experienc'd the Punishments of a Gaol, he may for the future be urg'd to avoid them by some laudable employ.

Only think of Uncle Bland, his Sally<sup>20</sup> begins to look upon him with a Sparkling eye, & does not seem to have lost any flesh by the dart of Cupid, but rather I think the dart is of a fatning nature. Uncle looks finely & when in each others Company there are many Sighs & shy glances fly from one to the other. My Bro<sup>t</sup> Richard receiv'd the other day a humorous Playbill from London hadst thou any hand in it.

Andrews Reeve departs from hence tomorrow.

It's now late & I am going to sup with H. Kett therefore have not time to look over what I have wrote, but Concluding it will do I remain

Thine Etc.,  
JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

II

Norwich, 30 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1774.

D<sup>r</sup> Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

I should have been very glad to have heard from thee before this time but since it has not been convenient, I am determined not to break off the acquaintance & therefore (tho' I have nothing to say) I shall endeavour to scribble out a short letter & not wait the formality of an answer.

Coz<sup>n</sup> Robert will set out tomorrow, on his way to London, my Bro<sup>r</sup> John & myself I believe shall accompany him as far as Livermore, in order to purchase a horse. I shou'd suppose by all appearance the World, as no angry looks seem to be thrown out against him.

If my Sister<sup>21</sup> shou'd run away from us, we shall miss her very much, as she is the chief Life of the family, & it is most likely our faces will drop at least one Inch on her departure. I think it seems likely that I shall be, in a short time left solus with my Mother; however, I shall be very well contented with it, & wish heartily it may be so. I am sorry to find Catharine has not entirely got rid of her most disagreeable complaint. By what Aunt Barclay said we were in hopes she was got quite well under the management of her Aunt Priscilla,<sup>22</sup> however I hope the approach of spring will entirely reinstate her. I wish thee Joy at being an Uncle & hope very soon thee will have to Congratulate me on the same subject. My Sister<sup>23</sup> looks nobly & is at present in perfect health, the Casting up is much hastened in order that all things may be clear against the arrival of the young stranger.

Our loves attend you all, & I remain

Thy affectionate Coz<sup>n</sup>

JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

II

Norwich 27<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup>. 1775.

D<sup>r</sup> Coz<sup>n</sup> Joe

This day was our Monthly Meeting, & my Aunt & Tommy<sup>24</sup> for the first time pass'd, I believe to general satisfaction, tho' she spoke very low. We all sup at my Aunt's this evening, after which Tommy will lodge at our house, as, according to the good order of our Society, it seems meet that the *young people* shou'd not both lodge in the same

House. This seems an odd Custom, but I suppose our forefathers, foreseeing that disagreeable consequences might happen, from the violence of *youthful* passion, thought this a necessary Caution.

We are very glad to find Coz<sup>n</sup> Springall's again reinstated amongst us ; their long absence seems to have answer'd the desir'd effect of reestablishing Health to David & Martha,<sup>25</sup> but, as a damp to the Joy of their coming home, Richenda is taken ill with the Mumps, by the name it appears a laughable disorder, but in it's effects very disagreeable as she has been very poorly with it for upwards of a week and still continues to be so. They thought L. Bell<sup>26</sup> was likewise going to have it, but happily it vanish'd in thought.

We expect the 2 Rob<sup>t</sup> Barclay's<sup>27</sup> down tomorrow or the beginning of next week. I suppose in Complisance to my Bro<sup>t</sup> thou could's't not come w<sup>th</sup> them, or otherwise thy having made a third <sup>th</sup> wou'd have been very agreeable, however, I hope thee will come to pay us a visit when my Bro<sup>r</sup> returns.

I have no inclination to write any farther, therefore, I conclude in the first place signing

Thy affectionate Coz<sup>n</sup>

JO<sup>s</sup> GURNEY.

(*To be concluded*)

#### NOTES

<sup>2</sup> For Edmund Gurney the younger (1723-1796), see *Jnl.* xvii, xviii. He was uncle by marriage (and also otherwise related), his first wife being Martha Kett, half sister of Elizabeth Kett, mother of the writer of the *Letters*. E. Gurney's third wife was Priscilla Bevan, half sister of Joseph Gurney Bevan.

<sup>3</sup> This was, probably, Joseph Oxley, b. 1748, son of Joseph and Elizabeth, of Norwich. Joseph, Senr. (c. 1714-1775), after passing through a period of indifference to religion, was aroused to better things by a narrow escape from death by crushing in a crowd, in 1739, he being small of stature. He became a Minister of some note. (*Journal*, 1837.)

<sup>4</sup> " Brother " here may refer to Richard Gurney (1742/3-1811), who inherited and enlarged the Keswick estate, and by his first wife, Agatha Barclay (1753-1776), daughter of David Barclay of Walthamstow (d. 1809), was the father of Hudson Gurney (1775-1864), F.R.S., F.S.A., M.P. By his second wife, Rachel Hanbury, he was father of Elizabeth who married her first cousin John Gurney of Earlham, *s.p.*, and of Anna Gurney (1795-1857), the Saxon scholar and sailors' friend, of Northrepps Cottage, Cromer. (See *The Friend* (Lond.), 1857.)

<sup>5</sup> " Brother John " was the second son of John Gurney of Keswick, who became known as John of Earlham (1749-1809). In 1775 he married Catherine Bell, daughter of Daniel Bell, of Stamford Hill and had twelve

children whose lives have been made famous by Augustus J. C. Hare in his volumes on *The Gurneys of Earlham*. He was not such a strong character or so good a Friend as his brother Joseph, but Percy Lubbock is hardly fair to his memory when he writes of him in his book *Earlham*, 1922, p. 35: "He was a worthy and not an interesting man. All his history is that he married the charming Gainsborough lady, Catherine Bell was her name, and that his affairs prospered far enough to enable him to plant his family at Earlham in 1786. He seems to have sat in the background placidly till he died."

In the *Memoirs* of his son, J. J. Gurney, he is described as "abounding in kindness to all, uniting remarkable activity both in public and private business, with an acute intellect and extensive information."

There is reference here to "Johnny's" wig—it is said in *Gurneys of Earlham* that John had bright, red hair, and that one day, being jeered at by urchins for having "a bonfire on the top of his head," he went in disgust and had his head shaved and took to a wig.

The picture by Gainsborough represents Catherine Bell (just prior to marriage in 1775), her elder sister, Priscilla (who married Edward Wakefield in 1771), and Edward Wakefield.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Gurney (1717-1773), of St. Augustine's, was a son of Benjamin and Sarah (White) Gurney (m. 1716). Benjamin, Senr., appears to have been a brother of Joseph Gurney who married Hannah Middleton.

<sup>7</sup> In *The Hodgkin Pedigree Book* there is mention of a Thomas Hodgkin, son of John and Susanna (Hitchman) Hodgkin, born in 1744, who married Anna ——— and had a son Arthur, who died young. He was appointed a master at Ackworth School in 1781 at a salary of £100 per annum "with apartments in the School for himself and wife, and had one of the domestics to wait upon them; but the Committee had not foreseen the birth of a little Hodgkin, and were sorely perplexed, and appealed to the London committee for advice, who ordered the baby to be 'put out to nurse.'" Apparently this was the child who "died young."

"Thomas Hodgkin taught on both sides of the School till 1789 and was honoured by being appointed Treasurer (Superintendent) of the Institution in the temporary absence of John Hill in 1790" (*History of Ackworth School*, 1879; *Teachers and Officers*, 1895).

T. Hodgkin was the means of the introduction of his nephew, John Hodgkin (1766-1845), to the Ackworth faculty as writing master.

Thomas Hodgkin is described above as "of London" and was probably the Friend named by William Forster, of Tottenham, in a letter, dated "November, 1773":

"The upper Clapton Company, its said, will be dissolved at Xmas, their present N<sup>o</sup> is now eight, several of them fit for Business. T. Hodgkin I believe, is undetermined what way to go into, tho' some have advised him to open School at Wandsworth, yet I rather think he'll not continue in this Employ" (Forster MSS. in D).

Perhaps, for the time being, T. Hodgkin assisted W. Forster with his school. There is in D a notice to the following effect, lithographed on a card, undated:

By  
Forster & Hodgkin,  
Youth are Boarded & Taught at Tottenham,  
near London,  
By the most improved Method render'd familiar  
to the Capacity of a Learner.  
N.B. And great attention paid to the Health and Morals of y<sup>e</sup> Children  
T. Hodgkin, Scrip<sup>t</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> John was writing to his fiancée, Catherine Bell, of Stamford Hill. "Betsy" was probably Catherine's sister who married John Hanbury.

<sup>9</sup> Springall of Norwich was an old East Anglian family. Nathaniel (1699-1741) was the first husband of Hannah Gurney, afterwards Bevan. The family here referred to, and in Letter 12, was that of Nathaniel, Junr., who married Richenda Barclay, daughter of David, of Cheapside. See Springall chart in Lilian Clarke's *Family Chronicles*, 1910.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Bland (c. 1740-1818), of Norwich, was in the employ of Samuel Gurney in the Bank and was later a partner. It is stated in the *Annual Monitor* (1820, p. 6) that "his mind was stored with a great variety of accurate information. He contributed largely to *The Gentleman's Magazine*."

He was an Elder among Friends. He married Sarah (Lawrence) Gurney in 1775. See notes 20, 24. An abbreviated form of the first name was not uncommonly in use at this period. Its use did not imply any slight.

<sup>11</sup> J. G. Bevan was fond of the country; he wrote "Town Thoughts on the Country," 1792 (*Jnl.* xvi. 139).

<sup>12</sup> That is, the Circulating Yearly Meeting (for worship only) for the County of Norfolk.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Procter (c. 1729-1809) was of Yarm, within the Q.M. of Durham. He travelled extensively in the ministry for about fifty-two years. His parents were Emanuel and Barbara Procter, of Clifford, near Thorp-Arch, Yorks.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Willis (c. 1713-1791) was "from the Jerseys," touring the British Isles as a Minister between 1770 and 1774. James Jenkins says Willis "was a man of extremely wild and rustic appearance" (*Records and Recollections*, p. 96).

*Bulletin F.H.S. Phila.* v. 59, 72; *Jnl.* xiii.-xvi.

<sup>15</sup> A "franked letter" was a letter bearing the signature of a member of Parliament, permitting it to pass through the post without fee. This privilege of M.P.s was withdrawn in 1840 on the passing of the Act that established Penny Postage.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps, Priscilla, daughter of David Barclay, of Cheapside, d. unm.

The others mentioned in this Letter were probably daughters of Daniel and Katharine Bell of London.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Bell (1726-1802) married Katharine Barclay, youngest daughter of David, of Cheapside. "Shooting was one of his delights, and he was always alluded to as greatly skilful in this charming diversion" (*The Bell Family*—typescript in D.)

<sup>18</sup> There is a Robert Wright in the Springall pedigree, who married Rachel Springall, brother of Nathaniel who married Richenda Barclay, daughter of David, of Cheapside.

<sup>19</sup> In *Jnl.* xix. 25 it is stated that John Revoult was buried (1811) as a non-member. Further light is thrown upon this in a letter from William Forster, of Tottenham (1747-1824), to his sister Elizabeth, 8 mo. 26, 1773:

"Jn<sup>o</sup> Revoult Wife (I was going to say Widow) died about two wks since at Samuel Barnes. Its tho't her husbands Ill Conduct hasten'd, he is still in England, but not known where."

It is now known that he was in gaol.



<sup>20</sup> “ Sally ” was Sarah (Lawrence) Gurney (1732-1800), at this time widow of Samuel Gurney (1723-1770), son of Joseph and Hannah and uncle of the writer of the *Letters*. She was at this time engaged to be married to Thomas Bland (note 10), she being about forty-two and he thirty-four. Her nephew refers to this engagement in Letters 4, 10, and 12 and finds amusement therein.

Samuel Gurney “ was a paralytic, but his mind was so exalted his society was delightful (*Samuel Hoare*, 1911, p. 7). He had two children Sarah (1758-1783) who married Samuel Hoare (1751-1825) and Hannah who married Thomas Kett ( -1820), of Seething (pedigree in *Samuel Hoare*).

<sup>21</sup> The only sister, Rachel (1755-1794), married October 2, 1775, Robert Barclay, of Bury Hill (1751-1830). They had fifteen children.

<sup>22</sup> “ Aunt Priscilla ”—Priscilla, daughter of Robert Barclay, of Cheapside.

<sup>23</sup> The writer’s sister *in-law*, Agatha, wife of Richard (see note 4). Her son, Hudson, was born 19 i. 1775.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Bland and Sarah Gurney were married early in 1775. They had one son, Michael (1776-1851), who, by his wife, Sophia Maltby, had a large family. He was admitted a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1816 (*Jnl.* vii. 45).

Sarah Hoare (1777-1856) frequently mentions her “ grandmother Bland ” in her memoirs of her father (*Samuel Hoare*). S. Bland was a Minister.

<sup>25</sup> The children of Nathaniel and Richenda Springall were Rachel, Priscilla, Martha (b. 1766), Rachel and David. David Springall married Christiana Bell, sister of Mrs. John Gurney of Earlham. They were first cousins “ a marriage rather unapproved on this account. He was a Quaker bred and a singular character, but Chrissy was not as plain a Friend as he. They were obliged to be married in church ” (Clarke, *Family Chronicles*, p. 45).

<sup>26</sup> “ L. Bell ” was Lucy “ d. unm. although her suitors were many ” (*Family Chronicles*).

<sup>27</sup> Of the two Robert Barclays one would be the writer’s future brother in law, of Bury Hill.

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## “ The Handsome Quaker ”

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This title has been given to Susannah Smith, of Bishops Stortford, Essex, born in 1723, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Smith, of Thaxted M.M., who married John Hoole (1727-1803), a non-Friend, 1757. Hoole was a poet and translator of Tasso. He also wrote a Life of John Scott, of Amwell, in 1785 (see Smith, *Cata.* ii. 551). There is a pedigree of Hoole in the *Transactions of the Hunter Archæological Society* for 1921.

Information from Christopher S. Watson, of Sheffield.