

# Reform in the West of England

Extracts from the Journal of William Metford  
(1803—1832)

Edited By MICHAEL METFORD-SEWELL

WILLIAM METFORD was the eldest brother of my great great grandfather, Joseph Metford. Their father, Joseph Metford (1776-1863) originally of Glastonbury, had at the time this journal was written, retired from active partnership in the business of Joseph Metford & Son, Wine and Spirit Merchants, at Bath, which he carried on in partnership with his eldest son with whom he had a close affinity of temperament and interests. The shop with its living accommodation was on what is now the site of the Post Office at Bath.

Though brought up as a Friend and deeply steeped in the Society's traditions, William Metford left the Society on his marriage to his first cousin, Sarah Clark, the marriage of first cousins being then, and until 1883, forbidden by the Society's discipline.

William Metford died on the 11th April, 1832, in his twenty-ninth year, leaving a widow and two daughters and a third daughter to be born some weeks later. His Journal covers the period from February, 1830, until six days before his death.

In spite of his youth he became a person of some note in Bath. His recorded public life consisted of many meetings with notabilities and contributions to local newspapers, largely if not entirely in support of the Reform Bill and Anti-slavery activities. William Wilberforce was a friend and, it would seem, a not infrequent visitor at the Bath house. At one time William Metford was a sub-editor of the *Bath and Cheltenham Gazette*, but gave up his position on being required to write his future articles, as he put it, "soberly and oilily" and to "smother political truths" which he was not prepared to do.

He became Secretary of the Radical Candidates Election committee and was an active member of the Committee of one of the two members for East Somerset to be returned to Parliament after the passing of the Reform Bill. The respect in which he was held was such that, although his funeral was after the manner of Friends, the bells of three parishes in Bath, including those of the Abbey, were tolled as the carriages passed.

William Metford's brother-in-law, Thomas Clark (the younger), wrote of him as uniting in a remarkable degree, a sound judgment with an excursive imagination and with a rarely equalled "courtesy of behaviour and elegance of manners." It may be assumed, therefore, that the sometimes intolerant and critical comments of his fellows that sometimes appear in his journal, were not indicative of his outward demeanour, but rather of a youthful need to speak his mind even if only in a private diary.

The name Metford appears in the records of Friends from the earliest days of Friends' activity in Somerset. Thomas and John Metford were, for example, imprisoned with many others in Ilchester Gaol in 1660 for attending Friends' meetings for worship in that part of the Glastonbury Abbey ruins, now known as the Abbot's Kitchen. Nevertheless, although there are many Quaker families of Somerset origin who trace descent from the elder Joseph Metford's father (William Metford, who married Mary Pike) the direct male line of his, the continuously "Friendly" branch, is now extinct. Of the seven brothers of the writer of this Journal five died, three in America by accidents, between the years 1836 and 1844 at ages varying from 22 to 35.

Of William Metford's three daughters, one married but no descendants now survive. A large portrait of the three sisters painted in 1849, now hangs in my office.

The Journal from which the extracts are taken is the property of Matilda Metford of Winscombe, Somerset, a great niece of William Metford.

1830.

21st [MAY]. The Jews Relief Bill has been lost on the second reading by a small majority made up chiefly of the dead-votes of the Treasury. The only novel feature in the debate was an attention to the "Quaker Disabilities". Mr. N. Calvert in a eulogistic speech . . . objected to this measure unless Quakers also were relieved . . . even Sir R. Peel . . . alluded to the Quakers as a case which the Bill ought to have embraced.

30th [MAY]. Thos. Davis in the gallery<sup>1</sup> on his way from the Wittenagemote of London. I wonder whether this Saxon name for Parliament means a collection of wits—if so, it does not belong methinks to our modern legislature. The Yearly Meeting it seems (like other mobs, it must have some prevailing rage) has been running full tilt at the dealers in spirits—as if intemperance was solely confined to grog drinking, and as if excess of this sort was not already provided against by the present discipline of the Society—as was to be expected, the strain of cant all set in one direction—and was at Spring tide; and under this influenza; this rabid horror of liquors, a minute was drawn up which will infallibly consign all us incorrigible publicans to moral outlawry.

The Beer Trade is going to be thrown open after half a century of smug monopoly. On the whole I approve the measure tho' it will produce serious local injury and possibly the liberty it confers may degenerate into licentiousness.

<sup>1</sup> At meeting.

7th Mo. 14th. We are now on the eve of a General Election—once a time of intense interest to me—but no longer so and I believe the public participate in my apathy. There will be much fewer contests of importance than usual. There are two causes—candidates are afraid of the expenses (another sign of the times) and political distinctions have so worked themselves out by the drifting and changing of public men that party spirit, the soul of electioneering bustle, has nothing to feed on.

8th Mo. 4th. Some how or other I have got mixed up with election business rather more than I could have believed possible. I have taken much interest in the Bristol election and have consented to act as committee-man for Mr. Protheroe who starts on the novel pretensions of a zealous anti-slavery man. He is supported by the Dissenters and most of the unswayed and unbought part of the Bristol constituency. His opponent Bailey is a W. Indian merchant and the wealth and influence of his party have been too successfully exerted. Protheroe has lost the election. I was there yesterday and witnessed his defeat. There were about 20,000 people in Queen Square—all mad, mad, mad. I foolishly ventured to hiss something that Bailey said and was within an ace of being knocked on the head by one of his fanatical adherents. During the week I presided at an election supper at Freemasons Hall and broached a Deal of most vehement patriotism to a hundred or so of “Britons” till I was hoarse as a frog.

13th [AUGUST]. The Election Dinner of our City members took place this evening and by invitation I made one of the guests. It was held in the splendid banquetting room of the Guildhall—which was completely filled by the Civic and City gentry and “the better sort of tradespeople.” The dinner was plenteous and luxurious—and there was good singing and much—very much—bad speechifying. . . . I have suggested and set on foot a subscription from Bath for the widows and orphans of the fallen heroes of Paris. Keene of the Bath Journal warmly seconds me.<sup>1</sup>

8th Mo. 23rd. Last evening in the gaiety of my heart I scribbled a satirical jeu d’esprit on the Yearly Meetings recent anti-spirituous advice—within three hours afterwards I was seized with another violent affection of my stomach &c.

<sup>1</sup> The 1830 Revolution and deposition of the Bourbons had just taken place.

11th Mo. 23rd. As for politics I am half sick of it. So much folly and knavery and wilful blindness. Nothing heard of but Riots and Burnings—all of course arising from one great cause—distress; and all, with astounding perversity, referred to the agency of a few political agitators.

### A LONDON JOURNEY

1831.

2nd Mo. 26th. I am going to London tomorrow in order to be present at the Reform Debate on the 1st of March. The intense interest I feel on this question reconciles to myself this little piece of extravagance. It will besides give me an opportunity of again seeing London—and not being very well, I think the change may be of use to me. We have again a rather sickly house. Nearly all of us, in turn, have been invalids. Sarah and nurse are still poorly. Blue-bell,<sup>1</sup> however, is very well . . . she has left off her cap and her hair begins to thicken . . . (Mem. to get a cap with her name on it in London—a thing which all Bath cannot furnish). . .

FEB. 28th. Left Bath by mail at half past 6. I had taken my place inside but having a surly churl for a companion, and the night being mild, I soon got out and took the box seat which I retained the rest of the way. Nothing could be more delightful than this ride. The moon shone brilliantly and the sky was cloudless. It was so light that the cattle seemed to mistake it for daybreak and were grazing instead of sleeping. Almost the only human beings on the stir were the men watching the homesteads and rick-bartons—sad omens of these troubled times. It grew very bleak towards the morning and by the time we entered London I was cold and weary. Went to Cooper's Hotel which I have since found a very comfortable house. After breakfast found my way to Henry's<sup>2</sup> home; found him in the surgery. He was much surprised to see me but received me very cordially. He is looking pretty well. We then walked towards the West End—took a peep into the Park and sped to the Parliament House. Here even at this early hour (11 o'clock) all was bustle and excitement. Hundreds of persons outside the house were formed in anxious groups and the words "Reform" and "Russell" were to be heard from every tongue. On entering we found the

<sup>1</sup> Isabella, his eldest daughter then 13 months old.

<sup>2</sup> W.M.'s fourth brother then 18 years old and taking up surgery.



gallery stairs already crowded and every moment the throng thickened till the heat and stench became almost unendurable. Several fainted and the walls were covered with little drops of collected breath and perspiration. Here we staid till half past 5 and when the gallery was at last opened it was found to be over full from the numerous private admissions. Here was disappointment! Take it all together it was the most patience trying I ever suffered. The numbers of members present was excessive; the most intense curiosity in everybody's face.

Returned slowly to my hotel—tired, hungry and cross. After taking tea, again sallied forth and went to Drury Lane where I got some compensation for losses and crosses elsewhere. The play—The School for Scandal and acted in a manner that I have never yet witnessed. The whole comic force of the theatre was in the field. . . . Never slept sounder in my life than tonight. No wonder indeed!

MAR. 2. Breakfast—and a feast of newspapers. . . . After breakfast to call on Mr. Hunt<sup>1</sup> to have some chat and get an order to the house—Not at home and said to be ill. Took a stroll amongst the toy shops and booksellers—bought a dog and some ninepins for Blue-bell and a book for her mama.<sup>2</sup> Went with Henry to the top of the Monument. Splendid view to be sure. The whole river and its 5 superb bridges appear just at our feet. A man and his wife were cooking beef-steaks in the lower apartment of this proud pillar. "To what base uses may we not return, Horatio"! Dined today at T. Bevan's. They seem to live in rather a homely style but H. appears tolerably comfortable. T.B. is very stiff and distant and his Wife rather gossiping and common place. Made a second attempt to penetrate the sealed walls of the H. of C. and took the precaution of providing myself with the "open sesame" of a members' order—politely given me by Mr. Dickinson.<sup>3</sup> Twas of no use—the gallery was already full. Returning to my quarters I dropped in at one of those splendid lounges—creations of modern luxury—a Cigar Divan—where for a shilling you are provided with a cigar and a cup of

<sup>1</sup> Henry Hunt, Radical M.P. for Preston: A Wiltshire man. Was imprisoned for 2½ years in 1819 for his part in the "Peterloo" Meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Almost exactly a year later Isabella is recorded as having twice struck her nine months old sister with her fist for knocking down her nine pins.

<sup>3</sup> Probably William Dickinson, then one of two members for Somerset County.

Mocha—chaise longues, couches and ottomans, chess boards and phrenological charts, the newspapers and periodicals and where the progress of the idle time is denoted by the playing of musical clock. Met Richd Ball of Taunton there<sup>1</sup>—and had chat with him about Reform. He is a great radical . . .

3rd [MARCH]. This was a broken day—it was wet and having no definite object, I paddled about the dirty streets all the morning without much end or aim. Found my way into a Café in the Strand and called for Potage au ris and a Cotelet a la Maintenon—both good and the charge low. Delivered a letter of introduction to Cobbett and had an interview with him in the evening. I found him sitting in a huge high backed chair before one of his American-stove fires and in a room where the single candle just sufficed to reveal some hundreds of bunches of “Cobbetts corn”<sup>2</sup> with which the walls were covered. He received me civilly but from his not having had time to peruse my letter there was some slight awkwardness in my self-introduction—which was not diminished by the sternness and hardness of his features, his harsh voice and Johnsonian bearing. Our conversation was of course political. He expressed warm satisfaction at the Reform Bill and treated with contempt the idea that it will not pass. I asked him if we should see him in the course of his lecture-circuits—he said “Oh I don’t know—my work’s done now. I think.” I should have liked to have drawn him out a little more but my time was short and I was fearful of encroaching upon his. Dined late at Fred. Evans’s with Harry and shortly after got into the Mail for Bath.

4th Mo. 25th. This has been to me a day of bustle excitement and personal as well as political triumph. I have made two speeches and attended two meetings. I have seen the cause I have taken in hand put in a train that I trust will lead to success. A meeting at the White Hart this morning—very large and very respectable—most warmly received my requisition to Langton.<sup>3</sup> Ye Gods keep me from all vain glory!

<sup>1</sup> A Grocer formerly of Bridgwater and who later joined the Plymouth Brethren.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbett’s Corn is Indian Corn or Maize, which Cobbett was trying to introduce to the English.

<sup>3</sup> William Gore Langton of Newton St. Loe was returned at this Election (April to May, 1831), and was also returned as one of the two members for the Eastern Division of Somerset in December, 1832, the first election after the Reform Act, 1832.

5th Mo. 1. I have been electioneering all this time my good friends. I have been speaking. I've been scribbling. I am a man of importance, master recorder! To sum up my week's work in a few words then, I am a Secretary to Langton's Election Committee he having acceded to my requisition since which I have drawn up an address from him to the County. We have set going a system of successful agitation—the whole county is in a fever of enthusiasm.

3rd [MAY]. Our work begins to simplify . . . we have but one enemy to combat and he I am afraid will teaze us with a poll tho' he can no longer have any chance of success.

6th [MAY]. This has been a most exhilarating day, a day of great personal triumph to myself and of the signal success of the cause of Reform . . . nothing now remains but the form of an Election at Ilchester and after that I hope to be able to abstract myself a little from electioneering excitement.

8th [MAY]. At meeting today an admirable and impressive sermon from Abigail Dockwra of Manchester delivered with great propriety of manner—and no sing-song.

11th [MAY]. Being appointed one of a deputation of eight to attend the form of an election at Ilchester . . . we set off at 6 o'clock this morning in a carriage and four . . . reached the place of destination a little before 10 having travelled 32 miles in most admirable style . . . the accidental arrival of Lord Jno. Russell en passant lit up the fervour of the multitude. The doings at the election were merely formal—all parchment and prunella . . . After partaking of a dinner and being regaled with some bad wine we turned our faces homewards. We found Bath in a state of excitement. Col. Langton's carriage had been drawn into and around the town by the populace and all seemed joy and exultation.

5th Mo. 25th. This morning attended a final meeting of the Committee . . . so ends this affair. I am right rejoiced: long may it be ere I again put behind my ear the busy bustling important *thankless* pen of an Election Secretary! Nothing now remains but to eat and drink together, that necessary addendum to an Englishman's labours.

6th Mo. 1. To a Dinner of Langton's Committee at the White Lion where in addition to the *agremens* of good eating and drinking and the drawbacks of overmuch toasting—and some wretches *singing* (?) my organ of self esteem might have been very considerably developed by the outrageous bepraise-

ment my electioning services received. I derived but small gratification from this public laud and was better pleased with the judicious and tempered eulogium of Mr. Keene who did me "flattering justice" in as good a speech as I have ever listened to at a dinner. We returned home in respectable time thus setting an example, even in this last act of our collective existence, to all hereafter-to-be-established Election Committees.

#### A HOLIDAY IN SOMERSET

14th [AUG.]. When I was last at Bridgwater, Brother T.C.<sup>1</sup> and I made a sort of touring engagement—of which he has recently reminded me—to pay a visit to Cheddar Cliffs & the neighbourhood which, tho' a Somersetshire Man, I have never seen. I accordingly went over to Whitley this evening, in order to meet him, and proceed thence on our excursion.

15th [AUG.]. Started this morning at 7 to West Harptree, a very pretty village, having some remarkably fine yew trees in the Church Yard, and so curiously cut as almost to reconcile that exploded barbarism—and thence to Ubley—but here we were out of our way, and turned back half a mile, and taking a direction to the left up a very long and steep hill, presently found ourselves on the table-land of Mendip—a most sterile plain, covered with rabbit warrens, but cultivated in parts. We had then to pass thro' an infinity of gates, and on a road which is as bad as can well be, and so circuitous as to puzzle all one's notions of the points of the compass, till we descended the ravine which, continually proving more broken and mountainous on either side, at length conducted us to the Cliffs. By this means, we enjoyed a pleasure not possessed by visitors in general, that of seeing the gradual development of the beauties of this mountainous glen, from the first breaking of the weary plain to the complete burst of the view of the stupendous and overhanging rocks.—The Cliffs are assuredly very beautiful, and they are so singularly disposed as to present the appearance of an ever varying series of ruined castles, which give constant occupation for the imagination. After ordering dinner at the King's Arms, we roamed two or three hours about the rocks, searching for plants. We found one which was quite new to me—the Welsh Poppy, which I

<sup>1</sup> W.M.'s brother-in-law, Thomas Clark.



have since transferred to my garden. Cheddar is a very pretty village, and its situation highly picturesque. One of its greatest beauties is a stream of water of the finest chrystal, which turns several paper mills. Leaving Cheddar after our excellent dinner—and cheap—we set out for Sidcot—and had a pleasant ride over a part of the Mendip Ridge, and thro' the old town of Axbridge, to James Fullers. We passed by the two Quaker Schools—the little girls eyed us with great curiosity, each apparently anxious to recognize a well-known face. Soon after our arrival, Seymer<sup>1</sup> joined us, and seemed pleased to see me after his quiet fashion. He does not seem to be popular at this noisy house. They do not understand him.

J. Fuller's company and conversation are always agreeable, and so far we had a pleasant evening. All the rest was alloy—for the children, the eldest excepted, were troublesome and unmannerly, and the wife querulous. I here saw the worst-managed garden conceivable, and I thought it a type of the family for, though the soil is good and there are many excellent things in it, yet it is choked by weeds, and runs wild from neglect. As an instance of the boys' ill-manners, I shall not soon forget their letting loose, and setting at me a fierce yard-dog—all from sport! At this place, we met a female friend—a quere fish—named Wheeler. She was remarkable for the largeness of her faith. She repeated with grave approval a strange tale told her by one of the aforesaid guides, that the fissure of Cheddar Cliffs was produced at the Crucifixion, when "the vail of the Temple was rent, and there was a great Earth-quake." So much for credulity.

16th [AUG.]. After breakfast started for Weston Super Mare—a pretty drive of eight miles thro' Banwell. We did not stop to see the Ante diluvian Cavern—for which I suppose Professor Buckland, would have pronounced us tasteless Goths. We had another purpose to serve by dispatch, which was to get off to the Steep Holmes whilst the tide served. On reaching Weston, after a little delay, we got a sailing boat, and taking provender—embarked for our destination. We were 3 hours on the water, tho' the distance is but 6 miles. It was nearly a dead calm—till within a mile of the shore the wind sprung up, and there came on heavy rain which lasted

<sup>1</sup> Seymer, W.M.'s youngest and only brother born in the Bath house, was 11 years old and at the school run by Joseph Benwell (brother of John Benwell, founder of Sidcot School).

two hours or more. We landed on a little ridge of pebbles stretching out into the sea, almost the only accessible part of the Island. The Steep Holmes have—at least of late years—been uninhabited—except in winter as a fishing station for the Sprat fishery. It has lately been bought of the Bristol Corporation by a Mr. Baker, who now has men at work building a wharf and making a road to the steep acclivity of the summit—on which he intends to erect some houses. He probably will open a trade in time with the Welsh Coast—as the stone is well adapted for burning. It is indeed of the same kind as the stone of the Mendips—and there are strong reasons to believe that the Island was originally connected with the Mainland, and formed a promontory of that ridge of hill—of which Brean Down is now the western-most extremity. It is of greater extent than I had supposed. It is nearly two miles round at its base. It is quite barren, but has many attractions to the naturalist. Ours was a botanical survey. We went in search of several plants which are said to be peculiar to the place in their wild state. Of these to our great delight, by the aid of one of the workmen, we found the garden peony<sup>1</sup>—a species of cabbage—and a large kind of garlic—the caper spurge &c. Rejecting the theory of the botanists that these plants had fixed their “habitat” on this small lone spot of all others in the world, I in my presumption, formed one of my own, viz.: that they were the remains and indications of garden cultivation at some remote period—an idea probable in itself and strengthened by the fact that there are many palpable remains of buildings of some sort—either camps or forts or houses, and in one place we could distinctly trace a garden wall. On one side of the Island is a curious stratum of limpet shells—many feet above the reach of the sea, and how they should have come there unless the inhabitants had thrown them away after eating the fish, I know not—for Geologists would hesitate at pronouncing them Ante Diluvian. The present sole tenants of the soil are foxes and rabbits in abundance. We took our repast in the temporary shed occupied by the labourers, and could almost fancy ourselves, surrounded by their rough and uncouth figures, in a bandits’ dwelling. After effecting all the objects of our visit, we had another tedious pull, and arrived late at Weston, and returned

<sup>1</sup> The Peony is not a native of Britain, but is known to have become naturalized on Steep Holm.

wet and weary to our comfortable quarters—Reeve's Hotel. Weston seems to increase in attraction and is now very full. The fact is people cannot afford to go so far as Weymouth or Sidmouth for sea air.

17th [AUG.]. Sallied out early, and took a pleasant dip in a new Salt-water Bath—afterwards to the Roman Camp on Worle Hill overlooking Birnbeck Island, the scene of a tragedy in which I once, with Joe and Tom played a part. *Real* tragedies have been acted there, both before and since. Soon after breakfast we took leave of Weston intending to reach Bourton to dinner. On our way we turned out of the road about a mile, to see Brockley Combe. Whoever would wish to see trees magnificent and luxuriant in size and growth, and forming the most picturesque groups, and fantastic combinations, should come here. To the Landscape Painter, Brockley Combe presents an abundant supply of studies of wood scenery such as I have never before seen. At Bourton, we were hospitably treated by E. Naish. He has a beautiful garden which much delighted me. Reached Bath late.

#### CORONATION OF WILLIAM IV

9th Mo. 8th. Coronation Day. It was "ushered in" to use the immemorial newspaper phrase—by a monstrous deal of ringing and firing of cannon, anvils, muskets and horse pistols, pistols and pistolets. The whole town seemed to have made up its mind to be mad for 24 hours—more or less—and accordingly every appliance of fun and foolery was had in early requisition. I was amused, whilst dressing, with the assiduity and loyal zeal of my opposite neighbour Gorely—a grave little brushmaker, who made it his special rejoicing to run backward and backward in shirt sleeves loading a little wicked blunderbuss at his drawing room table and then stealthily firing it off out of the half open window. He prosecuted his business all day in this fashion, waxing violent at every bounce till by and bye in the evening he overcrammed the pistol and the pistol revenged itself as was very right, by breaking some of the panes and extinguishing the glory of an illuminated crown. The illumination in the evening would have been very splendid had not the clouds most plenteously—mercilessly—and continuously poured their contents over the city and drowned the light of the lamps and the loyalty of

the leiges together. Our house had got no Crown nor Star nor lamp nor farthing candle—but being inhabited by a (soi-disant) Quaker and protected by a pretty good looking constable we had no windows cracked. I might perhaps have showed a light like the rest of the folk but I dislike the thing.

The transparencies were numerous, and one or two good, but the devices displayed little ingenuity and were very trite. The allusions to Reform abounded—in fact it was an illumination for Reform and not for William the 4th as such. The Corporation set their faces against it but fell in at last from fear or shame.

25th [SEPT.]. In the afternoon, at J. Gillett's, patiently listened to a private lecture from Josiah Forster on the impropriety of my calling. His objections were chiefly levelled at the retailing of spirits and I met them by showing that the argument, *derived from their abuse*, told equally against the sale of wines of beer or any other inebriating beverage—and I put it to him whether he was prepared to go to the length of saying the trade should altogether cease? He candidly admitted he was not.

10th Mo. 11th. Closely engaged these two days in preparation for a public meeting which is to be opposite the Sydney Hotel where hustings are being erected. The greatest excitement prevails. Tonight a mob followed, with violent outcries and denunciations, the carriage of Lord Londonderry—just arrived for peace and quietness sake.

13th [OCT.]. Today has been one to be remembered and one that I shall never forget . . . the papers of the day are full enough of description of the magnificent spectacle . . . no disorder but perfect good humour and unanimity. I have now but one feeling . . . renewed confidence . . . if I have another it is that of extreme self satisfaction in having been a chief instrument in bringing about this memorial meeting. It is supposed there were 20,000 persons present and the sight was truly grand.

20 [OCT.]. Attended a large dinner of Reformers at Sydney Hall—a large company . . . not a very respectable assemblage tho' by the bye. There was much speechifying of the *usual calibre*—and we had some beautiful singing from Mr. Manners and a Mr. Hooper. Spender proposed my health in an elegant eulogistic speech—and it was received in a manner that quite overpowered me at the moment and has



left an impression not soon to be effaced. I am now enjoying a popularity—I trust an honest and legitimate popularity—such as might content to the full any man less greedy of praise and less convinced than I am of its instability. I do not feel disposed much more to court the dangerous distinction which I have in part acquired tho' there are not wanting many who would fain push one forward in a career which they scarcely dare enter on themselves.<sup>1</sup>

### THE BRISTOL RIOTS

30th [OCT.]. This has been a day to be long remembered. The City has been this evening disgraced by the most dreadful riots, arising out of this circumstance: Sir C. Wetherell foolishly made his public outing into Bristol yesterday, he being Recorder of the City. The people attacked him, mastered the Constable and defied the Military, who were not powerful or determined enough to deal with them.—From thence have arisen a series of outrages, each out-heroding the other until their sum amounts to this—both Gaols destroyed by fire—the prisoners set loose—a toll bridge destroyed—great property injured—the Bishop's Palace menaced—the whole City a prey to violence, and considerable loss of life. The Recorder too having fled. This afternoon, the Bath Yeomanry was called out to march to Bristol, but when assembling, were furiously attacked by the people and dispersed. A few with their Capt. (Wilkins) took refuge in the White Hart, which then became the object of attack. The windows and shutters were soon demolished, the mob got into the house and destroyed the furniture, arming themselves with legs of chairs and tables with which to make further fight. After this they made demonstrations of attacking the Guildhall, but were repelled by a large body of Special Constables, who being in great force prevented further outrage, and the night passed with tolerable quietude. Father came in this evening. Dear S. has suffered a good deal from nervous excitement tonight.

31st [OCT.]. The news from Bristol this moment is dreadful. The Custom House, Mansion House, Bishop's Palace, Lawford's Gate Prison etc. were rifled and burnt last night, and the mob were still going on unchecked in their horrible

<sup>1</sup> This last is believed to be a reference to a possibility of standing for Parliament at the next opportunity.

career. The spirit still prevailing here is of the worst possible description, and we shall have more rioting to-night. I have just heard that they made an attempt to fire the Guildhall last night. 10 o'clock—All is quiet here by the exertions of the Special Constables, and we have no concomitant of riot here except its noise. I drew up a placard this morning exhorting the people to quiet and order, which the Mayor sanctioned, and which having been extensively posted I trust may have produced some effect. At Bristol, how different! There the destruction of property has been going on at a dreadful rate, and the loss of life by fire, by drunkenness and by the Soldiery has been very deplorable. Some women and children suffered with the rest.

11th Month 1st. All was quiet here last night, and Bristol is at length tranquil—that is the Military have full possession, and the rioters have been overcome.

11th Month 2nd. Curiosity—"the World's witch", spirited me over to Bristol this afternoon, for I could not longer forbear visiting the scene of such inexcusable doings. It was wet, but I believe I saw the extent of the devastation. The appearance of Queen Square, of King Street, the Bishop's Palace etc. was most dreadful. I saw and sickened with the sight—a headless and limbless body—blackened with fire, dug out of the ruins of the Custom House, and dozens more met the same fate. The City is now thronged with Soldiers, and is under martial law, and the Citizens parade the streets as Special Constables. But the danger is all past, in fact it was never so great but that if it had been met by any common degree of resolution, it might have been dissipated. A Wine Merchant in Queen Square who was still standing at the door of his half rifled cellar armed cap a pie, told me that he would have engaged at any time to have put an end to the riot, if *thirty* determined fellows would have followed him! It was a boy-mob, a collection of boy thieves and infamous girls, and the authorities (*authorities!*) of Bristol owe a dismal debt of reparation to the Country for the evils which their folly and imbecility have brought on the City. I suppose from what I hear, the expiation is, as usual, to be blood. They will hang a lot of the poor misled wretches, and then talk of "the restoration of tranquility", and whisper peace to their blighted conscience.

3rd. Sam is gone over to Bristol to have a look at the

fallen City. The 52nd Foot came into town this afternoon in waggons and carts from Warminster on their way to Bristol, to help shut the stable door after the horse has been stolen.

1832.

29th [JAN.]. Yesterday there were two meetings here to form an Auxiliary Temperance Society which were very large and at which the usual quantity of mixed truth and error, fact and exaggeration were given out by a Mr. Carr, the hired traveller of the concern and his local adherents. They threaten to hold meetings every fortnight! This is attacking the "spirit below" with a vengeance. This is one of those societies concerned in the spirit of intolerance and all uncharitableness. If one offers a word on the other side, one is forthwith set down either as a drunkard or an interested person and the whole army of wide-mouthed canters are in full cry after you as "one coming eating and drinking—a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners". Thus the aspersed trade of the dealer goes undefended and the tongue of the moderate consumer is tied: thus too, will prohibition and the persecution of opinion beget hypocrisy and concealment—the gin bottle will get to be contraband, but smuggling will go on.

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In *History Today* for October, 1952, pp. 676-684, there appeared an article on "The founding of Pennsylvania," by Henry J. Cadbury. It gives a good picture also of early Pennsylvanian progress, and social and political life. There are five illustrations.

*The Quarterly Review* for October, 1952, contains an article (pp. 461-472) by Beatrice Saxon Shell, entitled "Quaker Tercentenary," in which are outlined the leading characteristics of Quaker faith and practice illustrated by the doings and sayings of Friends both ancient and modern.

The *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, October, 1952, includes (at pp. 109-111) a long and interesting review by Dr. H. McLachlan of Frederick Tolles' "Slavery and the Woman Question: Lucretia Mott's diary, 1840" in which he traces the entries in the diary which concern Unitarians, and further identifies some of those referred to.