

The History of Antony and Dorothea Gibbs & of the early years of Antony Gibbs and Sons

By John Arthur Gibbs - 1922

CHAPTER XII 1813-14

Wellington's great defeat of the French at Salamanca had forced Soult to abandon the siege of Cadiz in August 1812, his troops being required to help the French Army in the more northern part of Spain. Henceforth Andalusia, which Soult had ruled as Viceroy for 3 years, and with it Estremadura and La Mancha, were free of the invaders. It had long been settled that William Gibbs should go to Cadiz as soon as there were prospects of a revival of trade there, and by the end of the year the time had come. Henry was to accompany him for a few months, chiefly for the sake of his health (which the trip entirely restored). The two brothers travelled to Falmouth at the beginning of January 1813, William via Salisbury; Henry via Bath, where he called on his cousins the Rev. George and Elizabeth Daubeny, who were staying there with the said George's parents. At Falmouth they stayed at "The Ship" Inn waiting for a fair wind for their vessel the Swiftsure and a fleet of other packets which for greater security sailed in consort. Arrived at Cadiz they lived there first with a friend named Barber; but by March, when William Branscombe and his wife, who had both gone home in the autumn of 1812, arrived from England, they had taken and furnished a house the curious arrangement of which may be noticed. On the ground floor the office and bedroom for Henry and William, 1st floor dining room and the Branscombes' bedroom, 2nd floor kitchen, parlour, and servants' rooms. They engaged a Spanish cook, a Gallego servant boy, and a boy as clerk. English troops, which had been in Cadiz throughout the siege, were still there, so that Henry and William had an English church (in the barracks) to go to, and several of the English officers having their wives with them there was pleasant society for them, besides the Spanish "tertulias" which they often attended.

Before they left home the interesting suggestion had been made that they should try to get the Commissary General of our Army at Cadiz to order supplies of American produce through them just as America had been supplying our Army at Lisbon, but nothing seems to have come of it.

They spent the days of the Carnival in Seville, whither business had called them. A friend took them one of these days with many others to visit a number of farms, where they joined in wild merriment, "but all sober, for few Spaniards indulge in the vice of getting tipsy... None of the most foolish of our Christmas games [at home] were half so absurd as those we played."

After another visit to Seville Henry sailed away on 4 July 1813, and arrived at Falmouth on the 21st. On the way a seeming American privateer bore down on the ship. The Captain summoned all hands on board together, told them of his intention to fight, and called on them to defend the packet nobly. "I was determined," wrote Henry, "to fight and do my best. A great

weight oppressed my heart at first, and I found if I thought of my friends I was not a bit the better for it, so I made up my mind to the worst as I suppose a man does when he is going to be shot, and for the last hour and a half my mind was really quite at ease." Though the cruiser answered the signals of the packet, treachery was feared, and, as she drew up alongside, our guns were run out, our muskets loaded, and everything made ready for a broadside," when she proved to be an English brig of war, which for deception's sake had rigged out in American fashion.

Before Henry left Cadiz it was arranged that Branscombe should resign from the Cadiz House. There was no question of his general honesty and good intentions, nor of his affection for Antony and his sons, but his judgment was bad, as Antony himself had often found, his temper hasty, and his disposition obstinate. The immediate cause of the decision appears in the following quotation from a letter from Henry to his father:

You and I and William have decidedly agreed that smuggling in any shape whatever was dishonourable, and that the crime though it might appear more venial in Spain from numberless circumstances than in any other country was still a crime, and we settled it as a rule for our conduct in business that we should always avoid doing anything on the propriety of which there rested the least doubt. Smuggling and saving duties is the general practice in Cadiz. Branscombe while agreeing in principle considers that the opposition of Custom House officials, and the power of underselling us which others have, make it necessary to smuggle and bribe... Separation is unavoidable.

His resignation took effect at the end of the year, but his partners still remained on good terms with him, and he continued to live in Cadiz in the same house with William. William wrote of Mrs. Branscombe (20 February 1814) that she "is a most motherly kind of soul and as attentive to me whenever I have anything the matter with my little finger as if I were her son."

William had become a partner in the London House on 1 January 1813, at the age of 22, and from that date onward the House was styled Antony Gibbs & Sons instead of Antony Gibbs & Son. Antony had one half share, Henry and William one quarter share each in the new partnership. William had no share in the Cadiz partnership till by Branscombe's retirement at the end of 1813 A. Gibbs & Sons became the sole partners of the Cadiz House.

The style of the Cadiz House became on 1 January 1814 Antony Gibbs Son & Co., instead of Antony Gibbs Son & Branscombe, and it was not again changed, though, as will be seen, Branscombe rejoined the House later.

Antony in the absence of his sons had had the whole work of the London office on his own hands. He was ill in February 1813, fainting several times, but soon recovered. William wrote to his mother from Cadiz on 26 March 1813: "Considering my father has been so long out of the active management of the business I feared he would have some difficulty," but this had not been the case: and 4 July:

I am glad to see that my dear father has borne his work so well, and that he has managed the large concerns under his care in so efficient a manner. Notwithstanding you must have felt the loss of his society so much when you were unwell, I flatter myself you must have derived some consolation from the reflection that his exertions were producing the most favourable effect on our worldly concerns.

The following portion of a letter from Henry to his father of 8 July seems curiously patronising, but may be taken as evidence of the almost brotherly relations which existed between him and his father.

I don't know that I ever saw any letters of yours, my dear Father, that pleased me more; they were so clear and businesslike, and showed that the number of things you had to attend to had not produced the least confusion: this is the point on which you certainly used to be most deficient; your constant attention of late to real businesslike business has I daresay improved your memory, and made business in general more easy to you.

In June 1814 Antony wrote to his wife that he generally went to the office before 9 o'clock, and

The old Scratch must certainly take a part in our business if we don't get rich, for I can truly say that the best means are well managed by us, and I verily believe we shall be too much for that nasty fellow at last, and that the first object of my wishes [the old obligations] will be finished in less than 5 years... After then we shall be able to indulge more freely in the pleasant task of doing good to ourselves and others.

William remained in Cadiz when Henry went home, and the strength of his character is brought out by the way in which he set about to place the business on a sound footing, and by his refusal, on various later occasions, on the score of duty, to come home, in spite of the urging of his parents and brother.

Some of his letters of 1813 and 1814 from Cadiz may here be quoted.

To his Mother 4 July 1813: For the last few years we have been in a most uncomfortable state regarding money matters, but we have now good ground for hoping that many will not pass over our heads before we shall be able to live in a much happier manner, and you and my dear Father to live peaceably and comfortably together after the very different sort of life to which we have been so long accustomed.... Our great object now is to realise something of capital. ... Though our late exertions have been unremitting we cannot expect that the effect will immediately appear, but I am convinced that they will ensure us a most excellent business in future.

To Harriett 3 September 1813. I am determined no sacrifice or exertion on my part shall be wanting to bring to perfection our present good prospects. They certainly are very flattering at present. If you only take care of my father's and Henry's health we shall contrive between the three of us to keep together a good many of the Yellow Boys, and then, if you all behave well with respect to health, I say there will not be a happier family in England, though I trust we shall all branch out into our respective homes.

In the same letter he quotes Harriett as having described him as " a funny little fellow with a face like a full moon."

It was proposed at that time, though nothing came of it, that John Ley Gibbs should join and ultimately manage the Cadiz House, William going home.

William wrote to Henry 6 September 1813:

My father seems to wish me very much to pass the next summer in England, and desires me to consider it as a sine qua non in my arrangements. If after further consideration he still remains of the same opinion I shall conform to it, but does it not strike him and you that it would probably be throwing the business here [Cadiz] into great confusion my leaving it at that period [before probably John Gibbs could

be proficient enough in the language or business, though if he should, and if] it would be for our interest that I should spend the summer in England I should decidedly approve? [As to] the comfort of the thing, which our present circumstances lead me to consider as a very secondary consideration, I do not agree with my father, for under the idea of my going home for good [in 1815] it would be more comfortable [to stay in Cadiz in 1813 than to go home and come out again].

Yellow fever returned to Cadiz in the autumn of 1813, but the danger had passed before Antony heard of it, and, though William promised not to run the risk again, his family were urgent on this and other grounds that he should come home.

In a letter to his father 29 July 1814, William 'Rejoices that the prospects of the business are such that they may all in a few years be able to have leisure for pursuits of a higher order, and employments more suited to their tastes, but he totally dissents from a view expressed by Henry that, even if it should lead to the closing of the Cadiz House, he should now come home so as to help in the London office and so that all should live comfortably together. On the contrary he thinks that efforts should be redoubled in order to secure themselves by accumulating capital, and thinks it would be wrong to give up the position they had obtained in Cadiz (where they are so well known as a fair and respectable House) with the prospects of doing well there when times are again normal. The London business, great as it seems to be growing, might hardly be enough if he and Henry should marry, and he thinks that not only should they not close Cadiz, but should extend also to Gibraltar, where there was no Customs duty, so that the firm's imports would not then have to compete with smugglers. He is greatly disappointed not to come home this summer and assures his father that he has no secret motive for staying, but he is of opinion that, at the moment, for him to abandon to others the care of the enormous concern now in his charge in Cadiz would be an act of imprudence not to say madness. As to London, Henry must not go on slaving at clerical details: "The direction of such a House as ours ought literally to have nothing to do with the mechanical parts of the business, indeed Henry ought almost to have no branch of the concern whatever to attend to exclusively that he might have full time to regulate and overlook the whole." He goes on to give his ideas as to the clerical work of the London office, and expressly urges his father to get a Spanish corresponding clerk: "Nothing recommends a house so much as a rigid attention to the correspondence of their friends and nothing has so bad an effect as contrary conduct."

In a letter of 17 December 1814 Henry expresses to William his fears as to the effect on his character of living so long in Cadiz. He warns him "not to let the lax habits of the people there make him forget the character of a true English gentleman," his object being "not so much to point out deficiencies that have crept in as to put you on your guard lest they should; to cry out to you as the sentries do on the walls of Cadiz *Sentinela alerta*. ... A little peep into oneself now and then is a capital good thing."

It will be gathered from the above that with the South of Spain clear of the French A. Gibbs & Sons had quickly regained their business. The profits divided among the London partners as the result of 1813 were £5,000 gained by the London, and £2,600 (out of £3,940) gained by the Cadiz House, the London profit including £1,000 reserved in previous years. For 1814 though the Cadiz House brought no gain there was no loss there, and in London there was again £5,000 for division, while £4,200 was put to reserve. In these results commissions of the London

House were £2,500 in 1813 and nearly as much as £6,000 in 1814. Their adventures left a profit of £1,900 in 1813, and £1,300 in 1814.

Following on the retirement of the French from Andalusia A. Gibbs & Sons had resumed buying goods for Spain on their own account on a far larger scale than they had ever attempted before. The explanation of the confidence with which they acted is to be found no doubt in Antony's judgment with regard to the commercial position in Spain as shown in some of his letters of 1812 and 1813. He believed that stocks of foreign goods (and it must be remembered that Spain depended almost wholly on other countries for manufactured goods) had been nearly depleted south of Madrid and eastward to Valencia. It had of course been impossible for much of sea-borne goods to enter that area while it was under French rule and the English commanded the ports of entry. When then the French should be forced to retire to the north of Spain, holders of goods in Cadiz, instead of having in Spain only that place and one or two neighbouring towns for their market, as was normally the case, would have in their hands the restocking of the whole of that area, thus obtaining a market, which, in spite of the impoverishment of the people caused by the war and the French occupation, would be far greater than Cadiz had ever had, even when, before the war, she was the chief source of supply of goods to South America.

The firm acted boldly on their opinion, and that it was a correct one may be concluded from the fact that during 1813 they must have sold over £40,000 worth of their own goods, since their stock at the beginning of a year was £18,000, and, though they shipped out £52,000 worth on their own account during the year, their stock at the end of it was still only £29,000 worth; but they were too venturesome the next year, for, encouraged no doubt by the active markets which they found in 1813, they sent in 1814 no less than £96,000 worth on their own account, and the demand fell off so that not much more than £20,000 worth of their own can have been sold in the year seeing that they had the (for them) enormous amount of £105,000 worth remaining in stock at the end of it. (The firm's shipments were not quite all sent to Cadiz; some went, for instance, to Gibraltar and to Seville.)

Wellington had practically freed Spain of the French by the middle of 1813. Napoleon was deposed and peace ensued in the spring of 1814. The firm had probably been among the first in the field with goods in Andalusia, but, though they seem to have realised that it was incumbent on them to clear these stocks when peace should actually come, they had not foreseen that a rush of goods sent by other people would begin, as it did, even before the advent of peace, nor how great a competition they would then have to face. As 1814 went on they found their sales seriously delayed, with the result that they had great difficulty in meeting overdue payments for their purchases, and the firm and family were in sore straits for ready money. It will presently be seen that it was not till 1816 that they emerged from the difficulties caused by their mistake. There is no wonder that William in his letter of 29 July 1814, quoted above, thought it would be madness for him to leave Cadiz at that time.

Besides all the purchases in 1813-14 on account of the London House there were others on account of the Cadiz House, and the latter had also goods for sale sent out by other friends in England. Moreover many Spanish firms placed funds with A. Gibbs & Sons for the purchase of goods which they ordered, so that in 1813 £50,000 worth, and in 1814 no less than £150,000

worth, were sent by the firm to Spain on order. Thus the London and Cadiz Houses had to deal with a very great quantity of goods in these years.

The London firm changed their office in June 1814 from 13 Sherborne Lane, Lombard Street, to 20 Great Winchester St., and in 1815 to No. 28 in the same street. (In 1826 they moved to 47 Lime St., and in 1850 to 15 Bishopsgate St. Within, the house which they still occupy though the number and name of the street were changed in 1911 to 22 Bishopsgate.)

In the first half of 1813 Sibella Gibbs and Joanna Gibbs were staying a great deal at Powis Place. Samuel Banfill also was there for a month; and the Crawleys of Stowe for 2 or 3 weeks with several of their daughters (Charlotte and Caroline, followed by Mary and Susan).

Dorothea's health continuing to be very bad, she left London in June 1813 to go to Dulwich for change of air. She stayed there "in Mr. Cox's lodgings." There can be little doubt that it was the house of David Cox, the water-colour artist, so famous afterwards, in which she had taken rooms. In 1812 and 1813 David Cox was giving lessons to Harriett and Anne. Henry joined them in these sometimes in 1812, and likely enough William and Joseph. In a note on one of the letters Henry Hucks Gibbs states that Cox's method was to paint a small piece before them and leave it with them, drawing half a guinea for the lesson. Cox married in 1808, and lived "in a cottage at the corner of Dulwich Common" till 1813, so that he had been a near neighbour of Antony's family while their home was on that same common.

While staying at Dulwich Dorothea had Harriett or Anne with her, and at one time Sibella Gibbs, and at another Joanna Gibbs, while her husband often came. Sir Vicary and Lady Gibbs used to bring her fruit, and friends often called, especially Charles and George A. Crawley. Caroline Crawley mentions in her diary of 1813: "*5 August.* Anne [Gibbs] arrived at Stowe for a few days being set down at the pike by Henry who went on in the coach to Yorkshire. *15 September.* Went to the first race ball, where we met quite unexpectedly with Henry Gibbs with whom I danced the first two dances."

Towards the end of August Dorothea was taken from Dulwich to Hastings. She took 6 days to get there, sleeping on the way at Lock's Bottom, Sevenoaks, Stone Crouch, and Battle, being too ill to travel faster. She remained at Hastings for 9 months, Antony and her children dividing their time between Powis Place and Hastings. Sibella Gibbs was again with her part of the time. Of Sibella Harriett wrote "I really believe she thinks of nothing but how to serve her friends. I don't think there is such another woman in the world." Mrs. Cox was also staying in Hastings. There was cause for great anxiety about Dorothea. Antony wrote from Hastings on 15 September 1813 to Henry:

"My natural disposition you know leads me to be too much elated by any favourable appearances on points that interest me deeply, and too much depressed by any alarming token, but when I endeavour to keep the truth upon my mind my conclusion becomes more correct; in my present calamity I still hope for the best, but I cannot help seeing more room for fear than hope." Constant coughing, spitting of blood and other symptoms seem to confirm the assertion made in a previous chapter that she was afflicted with consumption, the disease which carried off several of her brothers and sisters. Her weight is given in October 1812 as 99 lb. Dr. Remmett of Plymouth had been summoned to help, and through a great part of her illness and

convalescence a daily diary was sent to him to enable him to judge of her progress and to give his advice. One of his letters to her (18 November 1813) has been kept. After a time she was able to take exercise on horseback. She remained there till May 1814 slowly regaining strength.

During her stay at Hastings she and Antony took up a poor one year old orphan boy called Thomas Michael Gilman, who lived with them from that time onward and was a source of great interest and amusement to Dorothea. Their friend Mr. Bowles of Dulwich gave them a nomination for him to be educated at Christ's Hospital. "His father was drowned at sea and his mother died about the same time. I remember him very well at Knole in his holidays. He had a great fear of the sea but he was drowned nevertheless [1833] in the upsetting of a pleasure boat." Dorothea left him a legacy in her will.

The affection of George Gibbs (jun.) for Harriett had not lessened since her refusal of him, though, thinking she had not changed, he had not seen much of her and had done his best to keep her out of his mind, but during the first fortnight of December 1813 he was staying with Antony at Powis Place, while Harriett was there. Her parents' attitude may be seen in the following quotations.

To Harriett from her mother 11 December 1813. Whatever you determine upon is my most fervent prayer may be for your happiness. A fairer prospect than yours with George cannot I think be, and if you mean to accept him I hope you will show him by your manner that he will run no risk of a refusal ; you have had time enough to be convinced of his great attachment to you, and if you feel the same for him the sooner you set his heart at ease the more he will owe you. I say this because I know you will be governed by your own feelings and good principles and not by the opinion that your friends have of him. You can have no idea of my feelings at the thought of parting with you. ...

Antony to Dorothea 11 December 1813. No two young people ever united their fortunes with a fairer prospect of happiness than will attend their union. Where virtuous religion is taken as the staff in life it gives main support in the way to happiness, and then what a comfort it would be for us that our treasure would not be lost to us but only diffused among those whom we particularly love and esteem.

She finally accepted him in the following letter:

Powis Place 18 December 1813. I have received your letter, my dear George, and far from being displeased by it I am happy you have given me an opportunity of telling you how grateful I feel for your kind opinion of me and how sincerely I return your affection. In consenting to a union with you you may be assured I make no sacrifice for my own happiness now depends on it as entirely as you can wish it should. With regard to your past conduct I am quite satisfied and wish for no further explanation.

Many of her letters to George have been kept, all showing her to have been very happy in her engagement. The miniature portrait of her by Cosway in Lord Aldenham's possession was painted for George in 1814 soon after his engagement, and given by him to Dorothea a year after his marriage.

George had removed from Stapleton in the spring of 1813 to a house which he had bought "at the bottom of his father's garden" at Redland. His stepmother, Anne Gibbs, wrote to Dorothea in October 1813 referring to her own and Dorothea's husbands: "You and I are particularly favoured in our beloved companions whose hearts are tender and compassionate and their behaviour kind and attentive without having been taught these lessons by an

experience of sickness and languor. Nature is so good to them that they less require what is to many a necessary discipline." But in the following March George Gibbs (sen.) was taken seriously ill. His sister Sibella was staying in his house, but Sir Vicary and Antony were sent for, and Dr. Remmett came from Plymouth to advise. Antony went to him again in May when he was recovering, and in June hearing that he was ordered riding exercise sent him from London his own quiet pony as a present and bought himself a new horse. It was at this time that his brother George joined the Church of England.

Harriett Gibbs to George Gibbs (jun.) 25 April 1814.

I do indeed rejoice to hear that he [her uncle George] has united himself with the Church and gone through the trying and very affecting ceremony of the Sacrament so calculated to soothe and tranquilise the mind at all times and in sickness it must prove beyond all expression consolatory. What a happiness that he had determined on this important change before his illness.

We must now turn to the affairs of John Hucks, which as so often before were demanding Antony's attention. In October 1813 John Hucks wrote to Antony about a claim which he thought he could establish to some property left to his aunt Mrs. Jackson by his grandfather Joseph Hucks. There was much correspondence between them on the subject (Oct.-Dec.). John Hucks consulted his wife's cousin Robert Gifford of Exeter (afterwards Lord Gifford), then a rising barrister, who had been elected Recorder of Bristol on the resignation of that office by Sir Vicary Gibbs in 1812, and Antony consulted his nephew Robert Remmett, but both lawyers decided that John had no claim. Sir Vicary had very properly told Antony that he could not listen to the matter on the ground that he might have to try the case if it came into Court. Matilda Hucks wrote to Dorothea in July 1814 that John took his disappointment over the reversion of his grandfather's property well, and that "Mr. Gibbs' brotherly kindness and liberality enabled him to bear it." Her husband was again sadly in need of funds. But for Antony sending him £50 he could not even have got his corn in that summer.

John Hucks had to suffer another disappointment. Robert Hucks, of Great Russell St., London, and Aldenham House, died in June 1814, and was buried at Aldenham. Antony went to Dulwich on John Hucks' behalf to see Maria (Mrs. John) Warner about the will, and afterwards wrote that it was to be "read Wednesday when John Hucks will be present," who, as the only surviving male representative of the Hucks family, had hopes of succeeding to at least part of his cousin's fortune; but the will which Robert had made in 1771, before he was declared lunatic, gave nothing to John because all the legatees had died before Robert except his nieces Sarah and Anne Noyes, who as his heirs at law inherited not only what the will would have given them but nearly the whole of his estate. It was partitioned between them by deed of 11 April 1815. *Sibella Gibbs to Dorothea 9 July 1814* expressed her sorrow for John Hucks' disappointment:

It must have been a sad stroke upon him [John Hucks], but I have no doubt it is wisely ordered, and one is the more led to the idea from your family having so often missed the wealth which worldly wisdom seemed to have designed for you, but I really hope Miss Anne Noyes will do something for your brother during his life. I can have no doubt but she will, and that she will do very handsomely for all your family at

her death. If the [Anne Noyes'] moiety of the estates falls to dear Henry's lot I feel sure it will be in good hands, but with his present prospects [in business] I feel hardly a wish about it.

Antony and his family since they went to live in Powis Place had become very intimate with Anne Noyes, who also was by then living in London.

John Hucks to Antony 1 August: - It appears to me evident that the testator's [R. Hucks'] intentions were (as was the case] to secure the property to his family, and, though my father's death defeated his purposes, I think in justice it ought to return to us after Miss [Annel Noyes ; in fact if Sarah Noyes [who as already stated was of unsound mind] survives her sister her share (unless she should make a will in a lucid interval) must come to the heir at law;

and, in a letter to Antony of 25 May 1815, he stated more explicitly that Sarah Noyes' estates would in the above event revert to the representative of the family of William Hucks of Knaresborough, that is to himself, or if he were dead, to Henry. Antony said in reply "I believe no one disputes your being heir at law after her."

Neither moiety of the Estates was released from Chancery as a Statute of lunacy was taken out against Sarah Noyes. She afterwards recovered her reason, but she did not leave her share, which was mainly the property in Hertfordshire and Middlesex, by will, and when she died in 1842, John Hucks having predeceased her, it did go to Henry. At the same time Henry succeeded to Anne Noyes' share, mainly the property in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, which at Anne Noyes' death in 1841 had by her will been left to Sarah for her life and afterwards to him. It will be seen later that in as early as 1816 Anne Noyes declared Henry her heir to Clifton Hampden, but that after-consideration induced her to add the rest of her property to her bequest to him, and to interpose Sarah's life before he should succeed to any of it, even to Clifton Hampden.

Sarah Noyes omitted her estates in her will, not, wrote Henry Hucks Gibbs in 1877, because she "was not in her later years sane enough to make a will but because she chose to leave out all mention of her real estate, saying 'it came from the Coghills and to the Coghills it ought to go but they shall not be obliged to me for it'. But she was wrong in her law good soul." It is clear that Antony's family were under no such delusion as she was as to who the heirs at law would be in case of her intestacy. Moreover, a letter of 21 October 1817 by George Gibbs (jun.), who, for protection of loans made by himself and Henry to John Hucks, had taken legal advice on the point, confirmed the opinion of that family.

Having suffered the two disappointments related above, John Hucks was in desperate straits, for his creditors were pressing him. His hopes centred on Antony, and on Antony's influence with Anne Noyes, who had given him the impression from many kind things which she had said to him in London that she recognised that he had a claim on her. A long correspondence ensued between him and Antony.

John's purchase of his farm in 1810 included Foxdown (previously leased by him) and Payn's Cliff, both since mortgaged to his wife's trustees for £1,000, also Holywell since mortgaged for £1,000, and Henharsh, in all 200 acres, for which he paid £4,000. The rest of the £6,000 which had come to him from the sale of the Yorkshire property left him by his mother and the £2,000 raised on mortgage had gone, partly in improvements, partly in indiscreet expenditure of various

kinds. He had let half the property at first, but the tenancy had lately been thrown up, there was no demand for farms, he had no means wherewith to stock the whole, and needed £1,000. He and his wife Matilda had of late made every effort to economise by close attention to the farming. Writing in 1813 she said that he had suffered much from gout for many years, but that his habits and disposition become gradually more moderate, and, his appearance and disposition being youthful, and his spirits sanguine, she trusted he would enjoy a green old age in the most respectable manner"; and in 1814 she said: "He has resolutely conquered every incorrect propensity and cultivated every good one; in truth I am sure he may say without reproach from the monitor within 'for the last two years I have done my duty under every trial,'" and that "he was so strongly impressed with a sense of his character as well as fortune suffering in the opinion of all estimable people by his previous inattention to his business that she was convinced he would steadily pursue the right path." Anne Noyes at first sent him the discouraging present of £5, but later, October 1814, undertook to give him £50 a year. Antony tried then on John's behalf, and again in May 1815, to get her to commute this annual payment for a lump sum of £1,000, but on each occasion she declined to do so, saying that her capital was still in Chancery and that she could not afford such a sum out of her income. In the course of John Hucks' correspondence with Antony the former earned a well merited rebuke (August 1814) for an ungenerous reference to his late brother-in-law H. Townley Ward, to whose actions towards himself he attributed some of his expenditure. Antony wrote to him:

I really think it would not be so unjust to talk of injuries done you by myself as by Mr. Ward because, though I have had as good an inclination towards you as he had, I have not had the means of affording you the same assistance as you received from him and appear now to have forgotten. I have the same desire to serve you as ever, and am only sorry that my means do not keep pace with my desire, but I hope you will not conclude, because I follow the example of Mr. Ward in doing for you all I can, that your own want of consideration [in spending money] is my fault too.

Antony had always been attached to him in spite of his faults, and for this cause, and out of respect for the memory of Mrs. Hucks and for Dorothea's sake, never spared himself in trying to help him. He had already been making him some further advances for pressing debts. He could ill afford to do so, for his own affairs were so seriously affected by the difficulty which A. Gibbs & Sons found in selling the large stocks of merchandise which they held in Cadiz that, as he had to confess to John Hucks, he hardly knew himself where to turn to get cash without borrowing, but he and his sons Henry and William made up their minds that it was their duty, if they could, to provide the means of saving John Hucks from bankruptcy, and, from time to time, as they were able to do so, they lent him sums of money, till the total reached £850 in July 1815, secured to them only by Henharsh, which was not worth that sum. It was a matter of deep regret to Antony that they could go no further in their generous attempt to rehabilitate John Hucks.

Antony's nephew Robert Remmett had consoled himself for Harriett's refusal of him in 1809 by marrying Elizabeth Tozer of Totnes.

Antony to Dorothea, London, 21 July 1814. I drank tea with the bride [Mrs. R. Remmett] and found her much to my liking; pretty, lively, and good tempered, though not the very pink of gentility ; very attentive to

her husband and so is he to her; age about 22 to my thinking, and I confess that I was agreeably surprised by her and gave my niece a kiss as natural as life.

Caroline Crawley's diary records a visit on which she, with her father and mother and her sisters Mary and Susan, went in June 1814 to Sir Thomas and Lady Crawley Boevey (her uncle and aunt) at Flaxley Abbey, Gloucestershire. They started from Stowe in their own carriage at 7 a.m., did not reach Gloucester till the following 2 a.m., and after sleeping there went on to Flaxley. Those of her cousins (Sir Thomas' children) whom she found there were Susanna (Susan), Katherine (Kitty), Mary, Elizabeth (Bessy), Margaret, and William, none of whom were at that date married. At "The Cottage" in the village were another brother Charles (the incumbent of Flaxley) and his wife Catherine, and with them Charlotte, a sister of the latter, who was the widow of Charles' late brother Captain George Crawley. The Catherine and Charlotte mentioned were daughters of the Rev. Duke Yonge of Cornwood and first cousins of the Crawleys of Flaxley and Stowe. Thomas, the eldest of the Flaxley family (afterwards 3rd Bart.), is not mentioned by his Christian name in the diary, but "Mr. & Mrs. Crawley," who came one day to spend the day," were probably Thomas (25 years older than Caroline) and his wife Mary Albinia (born Page), who lived in Gloucester till his father died in 1818. The only one of the (then living) members of the Flaxley family not mentioned during this visit was John Lloyd Crawley the rector of Heyford.

Though Dorothea Gibbs had become much stronger by the spring of 1814 she was still not allowed to return to London, but she and her daughter Harriett had removed to Cheltenham from Hastings in May, so that she might have the benefit of the waters there, and that Harriett might be near to George Gibbs (jun.), who was able to come over there from Redland for weekends and sometimes for longer visits. In June her health was so far restored that she was able to take her party to Oxford for some days of gaiety there. On 12 July the Stowe Crawleys left Flaxley and went also to Cheltenham to stay there for Harriett's marriage. Caroline Crawley mentions that one day her cousins William Crawley of Flaxley and James Yonge came over to Cheltenham from Flaxley to go to a ball with her and the other (Stowe) Crawley and Gibbs young people.

Harriett's marriage with her cousin George Gibbs took place at Cheltenham on 8 August. Not only were her father and mother, her sister Anne, and her brothers Henry and Joseph, present, but also the Rev. Charles and Mary Crawley, their sons Charles and George Abraham, and the 3 of their daughters mentioned above. George and Harriett made their wedding tour in Wales accompanied by her sister Anne, and by Mary Crawley (of Stowe); Joseph Gibbs, and George Abraham Crawley escorting them on the way as far as Tewkesbury.

The rest of the Stowe Crawleys except Caroline then returned to Flaxley Abbey. Antony and Dorothea took Caroline for an expedition to Malvern on 12 August, and on 15 August conveyed her to Flaxley Abbey, and themselves stayed a night there. On 25 August the honeymooners and their companions came to Flaxley Abbey, and the next day George Gibbs took his wife Harriett, and Anne, to his house at Redland. This house, as already mentioned, adjoined his father's house. To the latter Antony and Dorothea had already gone from Cheltenham on the 17th. On 2 September all the Stowe Crawleys went home from Flaxley. Dorothea and Anne went back to London on 12 September after an absence of over a year.

George and Harriett had a marriage settlement fund of £4,000, as appears from her will. £2,000 of it was contributed by her side, made up of £433 which was her own money in A. Gibbs & Sons' hands, £1,500 which was part of the money left to Dorothea by H. Townley Ward and which was now given to her, and the rest provided by Antony.

A few letters with regard to the marriage may here be quoted. The first contains some hopes never to be realised by Antony and his wife,

Antony to Dorothea: dated. London. 1 August. You will still insist upon the marriage being a loss to us though I have told thee over and over again 'tis no such thing but a great gain and such an one as we might well pray for if it had not been granted to us. God grant that Ann may find such another. What a delight it will be for us as we draw towards the end of our [lives] to have our own [children] branch into other amiable families with our own [home] as their head and we considering all those families as our own: 'tis a heavenly prospect. I know very well what you are looking for; you want me to build an ark in which for all the families to pig together, but I tell you once for all the noise would be too much for our old age and that it will be much better for us to pay them occasional visits and for them often to go to see Graffer and Grammer who have done their best to secure happiness for them all in the road of religious virtue.

While writing the above letter Antony had been watching that rarity of those days, a balloon with passengers in its car, which had ascended from Hyde Park.

Sir Vicary to Dorothea; dated 21 August. I had not an opportunity of saying all that I wished to say to my brother and you upon the subject of Harriett's marriage. I congratulate you upon it with all my heart, and I can express my satisfaction fully and without reserve because I really think that every circumstance on both sides holds out as sure a promise of happiness as can possibly be expected or wished for. Al though I am persuaded that you do not want any professions on my part to assure you of the interest I take in Harriett's and George's welfare, yet I would not be silent upon a subject which really is so near my heart, and I know that Lady Gibbs feels as I do upon it.

William to Harriett; dated, Cadiz, 26 August. The circumstance of my having considered and loved him [George] as a brother would not fail to have made the connection peculiarly gratifying to me. You have therefore the satisfaction, my dear sister, of not only having satisfied your own choice but that of all your friends, for the feelings of all of us are I am sure on this point unanimous, and tho' I fully agree with you that in an affair of this sort the principal thing is to please oneself yet in such a happy family as ours I should consider the circumstance of having also met the wishes of my friends as a peculiar blessing.... I have regretted very much indeed that I have not been at home to give you both a good quizzing, and to have assisted Ann in teasing you a little.... When you were plain Harriett Gibbs spinster it was very well for Henry and I to get each side of you and worret you a bit till you were quite exhausted with laughing, but this will be far below the dignity and consequence of Mrs. George Gibbs. Dear De-ar, who would have thought it !

In reading the following letter it must be remembered that George's sister Joanna had nearly all her life been subject to frequent illness.

Dorothea to Harriett; dated 12 September. Poor Joanna's situation must often throw a damp over your spirits, but you will I hope soon feel less distressed by it as you know it is irremediable. You will have in

her a most affectionate sister and good companion; we have all our particularities, perhaps Joanna more than people in general, but she is a good creature, and I know it will afford you much satisfaction the alleviating her sufferings as much as you can by every little attention in your power: your Uncle and Aunt George are both disposed to love you as a daughter. God bless them for it. Your Father has been sadly down in the mouth since he came home. He feels the parting from you more than he wishes me to think.

Harriett's "Aunt George" had her "particularities" too, but she had her merits, one of which, that of being fond of Dorothea, few found difficulty in acquiring.

Antony to Harriett; dated 19 September. I have received great pleasure from your kind long letter and must say that you are a very good child for having indulged me with it. I am not at all disappointed you rogue at finding thee a little mammy-sick at first. You have been so choice a child, and have had so blest a mother, that you could not expect to avoid that natural tax of pain in parting. For my part I shall enter into all the plans and contrivances that employ your attention, and I have not the least doubt that I shall soon see you as brisk about them as you used formerly to be with us. I am only afraid that George will not be so forward as I used to be in finding fault, but you must every now and then remind him that finding fault is the parent of improvement and gives life to conversation.

It seemed a strange circumstance, in view of Sir Vicary's letter quoted above, and of the great friendliness with which his family treated Antony's at that time, that neither he nor his wife nor their daughter Maria Pilkington had sent Harriett a wedding present, and Harriett, feeling in consequence some delicacy in writing letters to Maria, consulted her mother, who replied on 13 October

Other people doing wrong is no excuse for our doing so, I therefore hope you will write to her. I do not think that their not having given you or George a present is any proof of their disliking you, for they live too expensively to be able to give away anything except to charity and their servants: in the former they have much merit for I believe they are very kind to the poor at Hayes.

Quite lately Sir Vicary had dined at Powis Place and praised Dorothea's children. She wrote to Harriett: "He was in high good humour and it pleased me much to see your father at his ease in his company." She had just been staying with Lady Gibbs at Hayes for a few days, and while she was there Sir Vicary arrived from a visit to the Crawleys at Stowe and set off again with his daughter Maria for another visit elsewhere. "How do you think that a person who is constantly travelling about with 4 horses and 2 for riding can afford to make presents; it is impossible for him with his fortune to do all he would wish; he therefore keeps to what suits his own taste and comfort." She might have added to her kindly excuses for Sir Vicary's family that George was very little known to them, for later on (June 1815) we find George writing to Harriett, then in London, that he did not share her friendly feelings towards that family: they had never once asked his stepmother nor his Aunt Banfill (Sir Vicary's sister) to their house; George himself had only dined with them twice since he was ten years old, and thinking that he was not welcome he was inclined to regard their increased civilities to Harriett's family as a grievance to himself. The fact was that Lady Gibbs was for the most part wrapped up in her own relations, with whom she kept her house full.

Early in the year, when he became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir Vicary had changed his house in Russell Square to a better one on the opposite side of the square, which

had just been vacated by Sir John Nichols. Dorothea, writing on 26 September, said of the new house: "I never saw such an one in a town in my life, not only handsome but comfortable in every respect"; and again, in December, staying at Hayes, she spoke of the comfort and luxury of both the houses.

Hardly had Harriett's marriage taken place when the attachment of Henry to Caroline Crawley, aged 20, the 6th daughter of the Stowe family, had begun to be a subject of family correspondence. The first hint of it is in a letter from William to Harriett of 26 August 1814. A letter from Antony to Harriett of 20 October shows that she had refused him, and that Antony had counselled him to have patience and to let 2 or 3 months go by without seeing her again. "We have the greatest reason," he wrote, "to be satisfied with Caroline and all her family, to whom the connection appears to be agreeable, and I was much pleased at hearing from Henry himself that Caroline's free choice was the great blessing he had at heart."

The Rev. Charles and Mary Crawley, with their 3rd daughter Susan (aged 24), came in October from Stowe for a visit to Powis Place. The special object of their visit was to fit up rooms for their sons Charles and George Abraham, who, as already mentioned, were living in London. Charles Crawley, after leaving Oxford, had at first studied for the Law, but finding it uncongenial to him had hesitated between taking Holy Orders or accepting an offer made him by Antony to join Antony Gibbs and Sons. He consulted Sir Vicary, who in his reply (7 July 1814) made it clear to him that he could be of no help to him in Church preferment and could give him no advice either way. He (aged 26) entered Antony Gibbs & Sons as a clerk in September 1814. His brother George Abraham Crawley (now 19), as we have seen, was in a solicitor's office in London.

Dorothea was hardly in a fit state for the Crawley visit. "You know," she wrote to Harriett, "I have great pleasure in seeing my friends and will not think me unhospitable," but "I think Henry carries his attention to the Crawleys a little too far sometimes, George Abraham has been living here ever since I came home, and Charles for 5 weeks before, and our house is stuffed full of their furniture." Mrs. Crawley and her daughter Susan both arrived ill at Powis Place and had to be attended by doctors. Dorothea had 20 souls in the house to provide for, and, though she was able to go one day with some of her party and Anne Noyes to see Edmund Kean act in "Othello," and sometimes drove in Sir Vicary's carriage, she soon became herself (end of November) so ill with cough and a return of pain in her side that she could hardly move. Henry just then had to go away for a visit in the country and she wrote to Harriett: "I shall miss my dear Henry sadly for it is impossible to tell you how affectionate he is to me. What a prize Caroline seems inclined to lose!"