

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

By John Arthur Gibbs - 1922

CHAPTER XIII 1814-16 ANTONY GIBBS' DEATH

In December 1814 Antony, Dorothea, and Anne were on their way from London to Redland to stay with George and Harriett when Dorothea was taken dangerously ill at an inn at Salthill near Slough. She was treated there by a doctor named Pope, who had also attended her sister Eleanor Ward at "The Willows" in her last illness. Harriett came from Redland to help nurse her. It was not till the end of January 1815 that she was well enough to continue her journey.

During part of her stay at Redland Antony had to be in London. The position (already described) of the affairs of his firm was causing him and Henry great anxiety: "I am sick of commerce," he wrote in February 1815. Though the firm's profit for 1814 was, as already shown, a handsome one on paper, none of it was available for use, every penny that was not essential for living expenses being required to support the business. However, the situation was temporarily better in February, so that Henry was able to pay a short visit to his mother at Redland and to the Daubenys at Bath, with whom probably some of the Crawley family were staying as they often did.

Apart from the effects of his carriage accident in 1793 the only recorded instances of Antony being ill are in 1789, 1809, and 1813. Overwork was the cause in 1789 and 1809. Both in 1789 and 1813 his indisposition was accompanied by fainting. On one occasion in 1814 he wrote that he was in high health and spirits." His letters seldom referred to his own health except it was to praise it. In September 1814 Dorothea wrote of him:

Your dear Father did not come from the Club till 12 o'clock last night, he seemed to have enjoyed himself very well; I don't mean that he was at all too merry tho' he said there were 14 bottles of port, sherry, and French wine drank among eight, but he was, he said, very careful indeed, and so I think he must have been because he came up this morning before he went to the Compting House to tell me that he never felt better in his life.

Part of a letter from Dorothea to Harriett of 3 October 1814 may here be given.

Our wedding day : May you, my dear Children, after 30 years spent together feel yourselves as happy as I do; you will never I trust have the trials to go through I have had; I only wish you may have the same cause for thankfulness, for a kinder husband no one ever had, or more affectionate children. I often think how wretched a being I should have been if any of you had proved unworthy, but blessed be God who has spared me so great a trial, for I have nothing to fear for any of you, and whenever it pleases the

Almighty to take me out of this world my last moments will be soothed by the blessed hope of our meeting again never more to part.

Dorothea was by this time so much broken in health, and the various distressing symptoms of her illness had so much increased upon her, that there seemed little human probability that she would outlive Antony. Nevertheless it was he who was to be taken first.

The first hint that all was not really right with Antony occurs in a letter from Henry to William in December 1814, in which also there are interesting references to other members of the family.

His health is not now as good as it used to be; [he is] not much fallen off in appearance, though hardly what you left him. However he is, and, as long as he lives, will be the same excellent, disinterested, generous, kindhearted man which he ever was. I hardly think there is a man to be found who feels so great a pleasure as he does in the prospect of his children's welfare and in the comfort and happiness of all about him. It must be our care, my dear William, to promote and study his comfort and my mother's as much as we can, and it is a great satisfaction to me that with this view I have succeeded ever since I came back to England in avoiding those little disputes and differences of opinion which on all sides were so painful. In the merit of this change my father has his full place for he meets me halfway, and by mutual allowances and concessions we seem always to be perfectly agreed. However I do not know that everyone could manage with my father so well. In consequence of his very bad memory it is necessary to be very patient and cool in explaining anything he does not clearly see, and not too positive in manner: in short it is necessary to know him well. I mention these things because, as you have been a good while away [in Spain], they do not perhaps rest as strongly on your mind as I know they used to do, and it is as well, as you are just coming home, to bring them back to you. Harriett's marriage sadly takes her away from us. Both she and George would be exceedingly glad to be a little further from Redland; their house is rather too near Aunt George, and it would be well if Harriett had not always under her eye so melancholy an object as poor Joanna. Aunt George continues in her stingy ways which makes one sick; her health is indifferent however, she has many good qualities, and we must forget the rest. Uncle George is a truly worthy man; his spirits rise and fall with the state of Joanna's health. George [jun.] is as truly an honest and affectionate brotherly sort of fellow as ever lived: if possible he has shown this more since his nearer connection with us. Harriett is still a great martyr to the headache. Anne you will find grown large, I think, and in her manner more womanly; she has a very sweet disposition, and only wants to be a little steadier, and in time she will be. Joseph is still at Phillips' [school], and my father I believe wishes him to stay there 2 years longer before he comes to the Compting house. On Saturday I take him to Salthill to spend the Xmas day there all together as we did last year at Hastings.

In May 1815 Dorothea was able to return to London. Harriett accompanied her. The affairs of George Gibbs & Son prevented George from going with his wife: indeed he could seldom be absent from Bristol for more than a few days at a time, but his affection for Dorothea was hardly less than Harriett's, and though his letters to his wife show that he always miserably felt her absence he never hesitated to let her go when her mother needed her.

Harriett and Henry went from London early in June to Stowe for a few days, where their aunt Mary Crawley was, as it was thought, in a dying condition. Harriett was a great favourite with her aunt. Dr. Remmett, the faithful friend of all the family in their illnesses, was staying there, and eventually brought Mrs. Crawley through a long illness, during part of which she was out of her mind. His favourite remedy with her and many of his patients was mercury, which he often used to the point of bringing on the clearest signs of poisoning with that drug.

On Harriett's return from Stowe her husband came up for a short visit to Powis Place, but she remained there after his departure to help her mother entertain Samuel and Anne Banfill, and Sibella Gibbs, who had all been staying at Redland and were going on from London to Stowe. Harriett went back to Redland in July under the escort of Dr. Remmett.

During the summer of 1815 Sir Vicary's family were more friendly than ever with Antony's. Charles and George Abraham Crawley also shared in the attentions of the former. George Abraham was Marshal to his uncle in July, and wrote: "I was very much pleased with his manner to me and indeed to everyone on the circuit; I had no idea before how entertaining he could make himself."

Antony and Dorothea, with Henry, Anne, and Joseph, were all staying at Sir Vicary's at Hayes in August. Anne (then aged 18) was pathetically apprehensive of the visit, writing to her sister Harriett:

I should like very much to see Hayes, but should not have the least objection to all the inhabitants except Helen [Fraser] going out at one door while we entered at the other. Uncle Gibbs will be there all the time; I hope I shall have the happiness of passing unnoticed at dinners. Oh dear, I wish you were going, to protect me from all of them. I can't think how I could live over spending 3 weeks with them as I did some years ago. I feel that miserable feeling of restraint before anyone I am not perfectly easy with as much as ever.

But Dorothea wrote from Hayes to Harriett: "It is to be sure a most comfortable place and where one may feel quite at home: your aunt is as usual very kind and attentive and so is your uncle. I like Marianne [Fraser] better every time I see her." Maria Pilkington it is true "was in sad spirits," but Dorothea had some reason for thinking at that time that she and her husband would soon come together again. "Henry continues to be a great favourite [at Hayes]: I never saw more pleasure expressed in anyone's face than in his aunt's when she saw him. I earnestly hope she does not go on encouraging a hope of his being still nearer connected to her." This refers to a desire which she knew Lady Gibbs had entertained that Henry should marry Helen Fraser, and her fear proved to be only too well founded as will presently be seen.

It was no doubt Caroline Crawley's continued indecision which caused Lady Gibbs to renew her hopes for Helen, but Henry was absolutely constant in his attachment to his cousin and was patiently pressing his suit on her. In a letter of 15 December 1814 to his sister Anne he said that Caroline "in spite of everything that has happened still inhabits all the castles that I built and is the first feature still in all the pretty prospects of my future life which my foolish noddle paints." Dorothea's only dread was that Caroline would in the end accept him "because she knows his friends wish it and that she knows his character is good and not from any other motive. Such a heart as my dear Henry's merits a good and whole one in return," but she lived to see her apprehensions on this score dissipated.

Dorothea wrote at this time in reference to her own illness: "I could bear it now and then, but never to be able to do as I could wish in respect to going to Church I sometimes consider as a severe punishment for my faults; the desire I have to do what I consider my duty will I hope be acceptable, for God is just and on his mercy is my trust and hope."

Some of Dorothea's letters of August and September foreshadow the great sorrow that was soon to come to her. She wrote to Harriett on 1 August: "I was quite uneasy about your dear

Father last week as he had a constant headache which made him appear very often quite lost. Don't say anything about this in your answer, for you know he does not like anything said about his health. He was cupped but it did not have the effect it had last time." And in September: "You have no idea what I have suffered this summer in every way. My spirits which do not often fail have been sadly depressed; your dear Father being far from well, my own weak health, and the distressing accounts we were receiving from Stowe (of her sister-in-law Mary Crawley) have embittered every hour of the last 2 months." Later in the same month: "I now despair of anything [in the way of medical treatment] being of service to me: all I can say is, it is the will of God I should suffer, and for some good purpose I have no doubt, and therefore it is my duty to bear it with patience and be thankful for the many blessings I enjoy: your dear Father is ... now seldom as well as I wish to see him ... in short we are two poor creatures, and I am afraid that even the fine air at Redland will not easily effect an agreeable change in us." One circumstance which gave her pleasure at this time was a visit of a week from Louisa Courant, whom she had not seen since the old days at "The Willows." She wrote of her: "She is just the same good creature she always was and is a great favourite with me." Mr. Greaves, the lawyer, came in one day while Mrs. Courant was there, and the meeting together of these old friends with their recollections of the circumstances of their early intercourse must have been a noteworthy event. Mrs. Courant had come home to live at Daventry after her husband's death at Poissy in 1814. He left her in bad circumstances, but a legacy at the death of her brother in 1815 relieved her in this respect.

William had been strongly pressed, and at one time had settled, to come home for a visit this autumn, but difficulties arose, one of which was that his chief clerk, one Spencer (who had been sent out to him from the London office), whom he was to have left in charge of the Cadiz office, became ill, and, though it was apparently open to him to leave the business in the care of Branscombe or of Antony's old friends the House of Boom, he remained himself, and indeed his decision cannot but be considered right in view of the serious crisis which was developing in the business, but it was a keen disappointment to his family, and a great anxiety to them during the Cadiz fever season, and it cost him, though he had no real reason to suspect it, the loss of his last chance of seeing his father. A letter from Harriett to her mother in August shows her feeling on the subject:

William having twice providentially escaped the fever it would be quite presumptuous to brave it again.... I shall wish Cadiz at the bottom of the sea as soon as they are clear of their present difficulties; instead of ever doing them any good it has tempted them to speculate and that has caused them anxiety enough to wear out any liver if the hot climate had not done much towards it before, and now it keeps William abroad when my father and Henry ought to have his assistance at home. I feel quite a spite against the Cadiz House and some against William for being so desperately fond of it;

but Dorothea corrected her as regards William, writing in reply:

I know the dear fellow is making a great sacrifice to what he thinks the interest of all. Had I a better opinion of my own health I should so far as it concerns me think less about it, but the fear of his having the fever is dreadful.

Even in the next year William again found that the state of affairs would not let him come home, and on that occasion he wrote to his brother (May 1816):

Believe me, my dear Henry, that I have felt it very much that on all occasions the objections to my going away have been started by myself in opposition to the opinion of my friends at home. As hitherto however you have all ultimately agreed with me in my reasons for staying so you will also see that my present motives are equally strong and conclusive.

Dorothea and Anne left London early in October 1815 to go to a house which had been taken for them for the winter at Redland near the houses of George Gibbs father and son. Antony was to follow them, and the following letter, written by him to Harriett from London on 1 October, is one of the last letters of his which are preserved.

I hope to be with your mother and you all at Redland on the 14th. I was doubtful for a while whether I should not be detained here the whole of this month by there being much, even for me, to do at the Compting House, but as I shall probably be disappointed in this, I have now determined to make it up to myself by going so early to Redland as to give me the additional pleasure of seeing there and at Bath those of our friends who are soon to depart [the Rev. Charles Crawley and his wife were staying with George Gibbs sen., and some of their daughters with the Daubenys at Bath]. I am promised too by Henry that as soon as anything arrives for me to do here, I may depend on his immediately acquainting me with it. I could not prevail on myself to go without this promise, for though any assistance of mine is now but little worth, still, when there is much to do, it proves a very great comfort to Henry the having someone to talk with about what is going on, and I cannot neglect the smallest diminution of his labour, which would then be so much more than I wish, or would be good for himself. How much more rapid has been your dear Aunt's [Mary Crawley] recovery than we had any reason to expect and how friendly in the extreme has been the conduct of our dear friend Dr. R[emmett] towards all our family. I shall never find in my heart again to receive any unfavourable impression from his oddities though they were to increase tenfold.

A letter written by Dorothea on 7 November says that Antony himself had been under treatment by Dr. Remmett, and was "more comfortable in health than he had been all the summer": and the same letter that Caroline Crawley was then staying with George Gibbs sen, and that Dorothea was expecting Henry from London. On 28 November Antony wrote a long letter to John Hucks giving him a great deal of kindly advice, in the course of which he mentioned that Henry was with him at Redland. It was during this visit that Caroline Crawley accepted Henry, as we learn from her sister Susan writing to her on 5 December to congratulate her on doing so

upon such excellent foundations as his unexceptional character, to say nothing of agreeable, amiable, and pleasing manners. When I think of the affectionate brother I am to gain by this change, though it takes from me an affectionate and a more beloved sister, I cannot but truly rejoice in and commend your determination. So good a sister must make a better wife, and I therefore congratulate Henry on his steady perseverance as sincerely as I do his Lady elect on the advantage she has taken of it.

William, writing to Henry after he had heard of the engagement, expressed the feeling which must have been shared by all the family: " I rejoice with you that our dearest Father lived to feel

the pleasure which his generous and good heart always enjoyed in the happiness of his children.”

It was Antony's last great pleasure. Throughout his married life the enjoyment of his family and friends had always been the tempering influence in his anxieties in affairs, and so it was at the end. The last letter written by him which has been kept is one on business written from Redland on 2 December to Henry, who had returned to London but was coming back to Redland in a day or two. The letter is quoted here nearly in full as showing that there was in it no sign of failing in mind or of lack of keen interest, while at the same time it emphasises the serious position of his mercantile affairs.

I am very glad that you succeeded in drawing what you did on Cadiz tho' the exchange was so low as 35, and shall be glad for you to succeed in drawing the same sum at ye same exchange on Tuesday ... I think it likely at ye same time that you may find it for your purpose not to lead the brokers to suppose in ye morning of Tuesday that you shall want to draw, but keep that information for your arrival early on Change. They themselves are the people who fix the rate at which to print ye exchange, and they are much governed in this by ye advices they receive in ye morning from Houses that wish to draw or take, and you might not be likely to draw less on account of your not telling them what you mean to draw before they go on Change.... Make representation to William of the folly of delaying sales [of the great stock of goods held in Spain] in hopes of better prices, when the very existence of our House depends on the circumstance of his making considerable sales or not this season.

He proceeds to ask Henry to collect from public documents statistics of recent shipments to Cadiz and Gibraltar of certain goods which would compete with their own in Spain, and to give him information with regard to their stocks of goods. He continues:

On ye question of your coming here on Wednesday I hope there will turn up no objection to it tho' your present situation is a good deal exposed to such possibility. In any case you must not at such a moment as this expose yourself to confinement thro' too much fatigue. The Crawleys are to remain here till Tuesday se'nnight.

Three days after this letter was written, Antony travelled back to London with Henry, arrived at his house, was seized that night in bed with a stroke, and died in 5 days, on 10 December.

Henry had instantly written to George Gibbs (jun.) to ask him to break the news of his father's illness to his mother. She, her daughters, Joseph, and George, came to London, and were present before the end. Sibella Gibbs also joined them, and in a letter to Joanna Gibbs of 23 December she gives us an insight into the attitude of the bereaved family: “They are all wonderfully supported. We cannot too much admire their conduct which has been actuated only by the strongest sense of religion. Your dear Aunt [Dorothea] is in a very natural and delightful state of mind and I do not think her feeble frame is more affected by the sudden and dreadful shock it has sustained than it was reasonable to expect.” Henry wrote to William to prepare him for the sad news, enclosing his letter in one to Branscombe, who would he thought help to break it to him. On 14 December he wrote the following letter to William:

The letter which I was obliged to write to you by the last post gave me more pain than I can express knowing full well the shock you would receive on reading its contents. I did not tell you that we had lost our dearest Father, but everything I said will have led you to this certain and afflicting conclusion. In fact he had already ceased to exist having died on Sunday last the 10th at half past 10 at night. To you, who have been so long separated from him, and on whom time has in some degree had the effect of wearing off the remembrance of his sweet disposition and endearing manners, the loss will not perhaps be so poignantly felt as by us who up to the hour of his attack were enjoying the advantages of his dear society and experiencing daily instances of his disinterested affection, but to everyone of us his death will prove a severe affliction. There never was so good a Father, so affectionate a Husband, so kind a friend as he was. His anxiety and exertions in business proceeded solely from his great love for his wife and children, and the honourable wish he always had at heart of discharging the debts of his youth. I think I never knew such an instance of disinterestedness as all his life displayed, for, whether in matters of consequence or in trifles, self never for a moment occupied his mind. How happy he was in making others happy, and when he had in view any object that would give us or my Mother pleasure how eagerly he pursued it. I verily believe his only fault was a quickness of temper, which now and then for a short time overcame his judgment, and had its origin no doubt in the shock he suffered from his fall in Spain; but for the last two years my Father was quite an altered man even in this respect. Having used the greatest exertions, and succeeded in a great measure in overcoming this disposition, whenever it returned, it made him quite unhappy, and sorry beyond measure lest he should have said anything to hurt us: it was pleasing to see how quickly he would check himself, forget every provocation which might have been given him, and by his affectionate manner endeavour to heal the wound which he feared he had made. You remember, my dear William, the differences of opinion we sometimes used to have and the warm discussions to which they used to lead, in which our manner towards him as children was not always I fear what it ought to have been. Since my return from Spain by our mutual attention to this subject we had gone on together with the most happy unanimity, and it would have been a shame for me with the example my Father set me if my manner towards him had not greatly improved, but still I often blame myself most bitterly for many instances, which I cannot but recollect, when I have given way to most improper feelings, and said things which must have given him pain. Oh how I lament that I should have been the means of adding, if only for a moment, to the pain and anxiety of mind in which from one cause or another he was always involved. From the loss we have sustained I trust, my dearest William, we shall derive all the benefit which God intends we should from every affliction which in His wisdom He is pleased to lay on us: we shall learn to be less worldly minded, and, looking back to the things in which any of us may have reason to accuse ourselves in regard to the dear deceased, we shall earnestly endeavour to amend our future conduct in these respects. Each of us too, knowing the particular points wherein we fail, will do well to keep his example before us, performing with exactness and cheerfulness all our religious, moral, and domestic duties, by which means our minds will be brought to that delightful state compared with which all worldly prospects are mean and dispicable. In such a state of mind the death of friends removes them from us but a little way..... By such thoughts as these my dear William, provided they sink deep into our minds, we shall as it were sanctify the death of our dear Father, make him still our instructor, and be doing honour to his memory in the way of all others which would be most gratifying to him.

The next extract is from a letter written by Sir Vicary to his brother George.

Our only consolation under this most grievous affliction is that he expired without any corporal sufferg, that everything was done which the greatest skill, applyd at the earliest moment, could suggest or execute, and that his whole life was a constant preparation for that awful account to which he is now called. With the exception of what proceeded from the giddiness and levity of youth, and which was

immediately corrected by his entrance into a more sober course of life, I know no man whose conduct was more exemplary; and the steadiness of his temper, his simple and unoffending manners, his charitable construction of the acts of others, the warmth and openness of his heart, his charity to the extent of his means, his universal benevolence, the candour and purity of his mind in which no bad passion ever found a place, his patience and submission under misfortunes, the steady perseverance with which he constantly followed what he thought to be right, his strict exercise of every duty, religious, civil, and domestic, which belongs to a man and a Christian – these virtues will I humbly trust thro' the merits of our Blessed Redeemer have sent him to his reward.

George Gibbs sen. to Sibella Gibbs; 16 January 1816. It were perhaps wiser to abstain from mentioning a subject which is so grievous to us both but yet it would be unnatural to be silent where our feelings are in perfect unison on an occasion that has so deeply wounded them. We will seek however for sources of consolation rather than indulge the propensity to grief which the mournful event so painfully excites. We will look more to the vast accession of happiness which we trust the angelic temper and virtuous disposition of him we lament have procured for him than to the temporary privation of his sweet society which we hope soon to enjoy again in a more perfect state. We will above all things bow ourselves down with meek submission and pray for Grace so to follow the example of our dearest brother as he was a follower of our blessed Lord.

George Gibbs (jun.) (after his return to Redland), writing to Harriett on 2 January 1816, says of his step-mother:

No one felt more strongly than she did the peculiar excellencies and sweetness of your dear Father's character. You know she has latterly so often experienced I may say the real comfort of his engaging attention when in our family parties she would, but for him, perhaps have felt herself not quite on an equality of friendship with the rest. But his pleasure was in reconciling all this, not being happy himself while any one near him had a chance of being otherwise. Never she says was there such an instance of real kindness and disinterestedness as he was displaying every day.

Henry Gibbs to John Hucks; 26 February 1816: The greatest consolation we have received has arisen from the general expression of regret which has flowed in from all quarters and the strong marks of respect for his honourable and truly upright character which have been shown by his private friends and by everyone with whom he was in any way connected.... When I consider what a Father I have lost, what an affectionate friend, how completely all his ideas and hopes and schemes were linked and wrapped up with mine, I wonder at the composure with which I can set about my occupations.

None of the letters referred to in the last extract from people outside of the family have been kept except one from Henry's friend Thomas Barber.

Antony was buried in the churchyard of the parish church at Hayes, where also in the same grave his widow, and in a separate tomb his brother Vicary, were afterwards interred. A flat stone which marks the grave is simply inscribed

"In memory of Antony Gibbs Esqre. died 10th December 1815 in the 60th year of his age."

"Dorothea Gibbs wife of the above Antony Gibbs ob. 24th February 1820. Aet 59."

The family remained all together in London till March 1816 when Harriett took her mother and sister to her own house at Redland.

Dorothea in a letter thence to her son Henry, dated 26 March, speaks of "the sweet and affectionate attention of her children which had helped to support her, and of the agony which it was to her that being so ill herself she felt herself to stand alone in the world, for," she said,

I feel that I can no longer be of use to them, nor return, as once I thought I could, the comfort their society gives me, for to them I look now for whatever share of the blessings of this life is left to me... Such a friend and such a husband few if any can have to regret for he was everything that was kind, and his tenderness, particularly in sick ness, was so interwoven with his every feeling that nothing could have shaken it. Through how many severe illnesses has his sweet attention supported me.... No one can love me as he did.... His happiness was my first object when he was here and I ought to rejoice in the hope that it is now made perfect, but human nature must feel such a loss and thro' the mercy of God I hope to be pardoned for any want of submission He may have seen in me: no one can be more assured than I am that whatever He wills is for some wise purpose and that His Providence is equally manifested when He afflicts and when He crowns us with success.

There are other later letters of hers in which similar expressions of pious resignation occur. But her letters show, and more as time went on, that she did not allow the contemplation of her loss to prevent her from taking her part so far as her health permitted in simple practical matters relating to her household nor from interesting herself in her children and friends.

The crisis which had been hanging over the affairs of Antony Gibbs & Sons since the latter part of 1814 became still more acute immediately after Antony's death, and the business demanded the closest attention both on the part of Henry in London and of William in Cadiz. The firm's speculative purchases in 1815, though far below those of 1814, had still reached to nearly \$10,000, and, though their stocks had been reduced, yet they amounted to £60,000 worth at the end of 1815. The result of the London business of 1815 was a loss of £390, and the £4,200 set aside at the end of 1814 was kept as a provision against loss in 1816. The Cadiz House only made £360. Early in 1816 it was apparent that in that year a loss, of an extent which could not be gauged, but which was certain to be a very serious one, was before the firm, so that it was even more necessary than before to restrict expenses of all kinds.

In these circumstances George Gibbs (jun.) had generously determined that Dorothea and Anne should make their home with him and Harriett at Redland until it could be seen how matters would turn out, and he suggested that if after a time Dorothea should still be unable to afford to live in London she should take a cottage in Redland belonging to his father, or that he and Harriett should move to that cottage and let her live in their house. She stayed in his house till June 1817 when, as we shall see, she was able to return for a time to London. Though she tried several times to induce George to let her contribute to his household expenses, he always refused to take anything. Joseph also was brought from Phillips' school at Turnham Green to live at George's house and to attend daily at the school in Redland of the Rev. John Parsons, who was a great friend of George's and was indeed a better master than Phillips. Henry remained alone at Powis Place, and Dorothea arranged for Mrs. (Ann) Harmer (a former valued servant of Eleanor Ward) to keep house for him, with one maidservant only. Later on Dorothea asked Mrs. Harmer to remain permanently, writing to her (September): "I should be very glad that you had determined to give up your room and to live with us all for your life. I do not mean as a servant, for indeed we should never keep one less for your being with us, but as a faithful

friend who anxious for our interest would overlook the other servants,” but “I have too great a regard for you to persuade you to do anything that you did not yourself think would be agreeable to you. The good old lady was so much overwhelmed by the kindness of this letter that she declared to Henry that she could never reply to it in writing; but she did remain at Powis Place.

The situation of the family and their business called forth a generous act on the part of Charles Crawley. He wrote to Henry (11 May) offering to terminate a 5 years' agreement which he had made with the firm in 1814, which he said had only been entered into by them for his benefit, at any time that Henry might wish, and meanwhile not to take a rise in salary to which the agreement entitled him. In a second letter he wrote:

I am much gratified, my dear Henry, by the manner in which you have treated my proposal, and your accepting it affords me the most convincing proof that you understand the spirit in which I made it. I feel not the slightest concern at the little sacrifice I make to the necessity of the times; my only regret is for the occasion of it, and that I do lament with all my heart, tho' I cannot help feeling very confident that it will not be of long duration. Till that time comes I shall be content to run with the times. Indeed as you hold out to me a prospect of sharing in your good fortune I should not feel satisfied unless you permitted me to bear my part also in the bad. It is my wish to be considered as one of you as far as it may be consistent with your interest to make me so, and with respect to the quantum of salary at present, or of profit hereafter, I shall be perfectly contented in letting it depend upon circumstances whatever they may be.

There had been no actual promise of a partnership to Charles Crawley, but it will be seen below that he was given one in 1820.