

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

By John Arthur Gibbs - 1922

CHAPTER XVI 1817-20

INCLUDING THE DEATHS OF GEORGE GIBBS (SEN.) OF REDLAND, MARY CRAWLEY (SEN.) OF STOWE, SIR VICARY GIBBS, AND DOROTHEA GIBBS

Dorothea had all her children and George Gibbs (jun.) with her in London for Christmas 1817. George wrote to Henry after wards :

I could see that her thoughts were much oftener with the dead than with the living, and that the sight of all her children collected together at a season when he was so fond of meeting and caressing them excluded every thought but that of her dear departed husband.

William started again for Cadiz on 5 January 1818. He took with him Charles Crawley, who was to learn something of the business in Spain and to perfect himself in the language. They travelled overland, for William at all times suffered terribly in journeys by sea. Up to at least January 1817 Charles Crawley was doubtful whether he would continue with A. Gibbs & Sons or take Holy Orders, as appears in a letter of Dorothea's suggesting that in the latter case the living of Clifton Hampden might do for him. It is to be supposed that he had quite settled to remain in business before he went to Spain.

Dorothea remained in London for the whole of the first half of 1818. Her diary records that Sibella Gibbs, the Rev. Charles Crawley with his wife and his daughters Susan and Charlotte, and George and Harriett Gibbs were staying
with her at Darrin Diana

One of Harriett's visits was specially arranged to coincide with the wedding in London of John Merivale's eldest daughter Frances (Fanny), who was one of her greatest friends, and who was married in May to John Louis Mallet.

Henry and Caroline's first-born Anne, destined to a suffering life of only 2 years, was born at Powis Place on 27 May.

News reached Dorothea at the end of June, a few days after the christening of Henry's baby, that George Gibbs (sen.) who had been at Bath for some months for his health, but had lately returned to his home at Redland, was very seriously ill. She therefore left London on 3 July to

go to her old quarters at Redland, where her daughter Anne already was. She took the child Tom Gilman with her. Henry escorted her, but he returned to London in a few days. George Gibbs' illness ended in his death in a few weeks. Dorothea says in her diary:

3 August. My dear brother asked Dr. Barnard to tell him the state he was in. Poor Mrs. Gibbs, she only is to be pitied ; our dear brother is in an enviable situation.

8 August. Mrs. S[ibella] Gibbs and poor Joanna arrived [from Exeter].

16 August. At 2 o'clock this morning our dear brother breathed his last and we have lost a most dear and valued friend. Oh may my end be like his!

How much Antony and Dorothea owed to George, to his steady and loving friendship, and to the counsels of his well balanced mind has been sufficiently related in these pages.

The following letter was written by Sir Vicary, on hearing that his brother was dying:

Sir Vicary Gibbs to his nephew George Gibbs; 2 August 1818. I am thankful to God that He did not send this affliction upon us suddenly to overwhelm us by it but made the apprehension of our impending loss a continuing lesson of instruction to us, as encouragement to the practice of virtue, by showing us that the good man's life closes in peace and in the joyful prospect of eternal happiness. I am approaching the same goal, how speedily I know not, but the period of my life and the warnings I have had must convince me that I am not far distant from it. In regard to your own condition remember that to have had such a father is a rare blessing, to lose him is the common lot of humanity. I can at present add nothing but the assurance of my most affectionate regard through the remainder of my life, and if ill health should hereafter weaken my mind, as it is too apt to do, remember that these were my sentiments while it was perfect. May God bless you and direct you through life as he has done your father whose memory will ever be most dear to me.

William Gibbs to G. Henry Gibbs; Cadiz, 18 September 1818. We who know the acute and afflicting feelings which are caused by the loss of a beloved and affectionate parent can well understand the dreadful shock which our dear George has sustained and can truly sympathise with him. We also for ourselves, my dear Henry, have ample cause to lament the death of so kind and dear a friend who took such a hearty and affectionate interest in our welfare and who indeed on all occasions has proved himself to us a second father. His brotherly love and kindness towards our dearest father during the whole course of his life and his generous and affectionate behaviour towards us will never be obliterated from my memory and will never fail to inspire me with the most heartfelt feelings of gratitude and affection. Under such a heavy dispensation his friends have indeed the Divine consolation of knowing that he is enjoying the just rewards of a life spent in the exercise of the most exemplary piety, humility, and virtue.

Sir Vicary Gibbs to his nephew George Gibbs; 18 August 1818. We have a hard duty to perform in governing our grief for so irreparable a loss but it is a duty which we owe to God and to ourselves. The hope that Harriett and Joanna and you will always suffer me to make you the objects of that affection which I felt for your parents is my greatest consolation. I am much broken down but as long as my life continues you will always find me your most affectionate uncle.

Sir Vicary Gibbs to his sister Sibella Gibbs; 24 September 1818. I travel [to Worthing] with my own horses, Lady Gibbs and Miss Drummond in Maria's carriage, and Maria and I in my chariot and I allow 3 days for 56 miles so that there is no danger of too much fatigue.... Nothing could be more gratifying to me than the very kind letters which I received from you and Joanna. We are creatures of an unequal dispensation indulged with many blessings and afflicted by various calamities. The former we should enjoy with gratitude and thankfulness always remembering that they are a call upon us to show ourselves worthy of them by obeying the Will of Him by whose Fatherly goodness they were dispensed. The latter

let us consider as trials to which our virtue is exposed in this world with a confident assurance that if we bear them as we ought the highest reward awaits us in one that will endure forever. Such reflections naturally make us serious when the mind is full of them, but, if they take an atom from our cheerfulness, if they prevent us from encouraging the mirth of youth when it breaks out with its natural spring, we mar the purposes of our Creator, who gave us no faculties for enjoyment without meaning that we should indulge them within the limits of innocence.

George Gibbs' funeral took place in the parish church of Redland on 22 August. Henry and Joseph came from London to attend it. By his will, which was dated 14 July 1814, he left £1,000 to his sister Sibella, £500 to Harriett Gibbs, his house at Redland to his widow with ample provision for her maintenance, his counting house (in Orchard Street, 2 Bristol) to his son George, and the rest of his estate between his son George and daughter Joanna. His widow, Anne Gibbs, continued to live in the Redland house till she died in 1832. She gave up the charge of her step-daughter Joanna, as is related in a letter from George to Henry dated 20 September 1818, who there says that he had had "a very proper letter from her] grounding her decision upon Joanna's evident want of affection to her and great preference for her aunt Sibella, upon Sibella's excessive attachment to Joanna, and upon her feeling that the charge of Joanna under these circumstances in her present state of health was of a sort that she could not undertake, consistently with the quiet and composure which it was her great desire to enjoy." Soon after this Joanna took up her abode with her aunt Sibella Gibbs in Exeter and was with her, or sometimes with her aunt Anne Banfill at Exwick, during the few remaining years of her invalid life.

George and Harriett continued to live in their own house at Redland. They had earlier in the year arranged to buy a larger house there from a Mr. Morgan for £3,150 which they were to enter in September. They thought of doing this because, now that Henry had begun to have a family at Powis Place, and that there would be so little room in that house, it would be more comfortable for Dorothea to make her home permanently with them and in a larger house than their present one; but after the death of George Gibbs (sen.) they decided not to conclude the purchase, but to live more in the country. Early in 1820 they took Knole Park, a delightful old house belonging to the Chester family in the village of Almondsbury about 6 miles north of Bristol, but Dorothea never lived there with them, for her death came before they went into occupation.

George wrote to Henry on 18 October 1818: "My happiness is now wholly dependent on my connection with your family taken in all its interesting relations." The whole of the rest of his life was indeed an illustration of the truth of this.

In September 1818 Dorothea went with her daughter Anne to stay with the Banfills at Exwick. Thence to Sidmouth, where they had Harriett with them and (part of the time) George. The Banfills came to see them there, and John and Matilda Hucks. Some of the Misses Hendy were staying there too. Moreover Henry and Caroline, with their poor little baby Anne, and Joseph, paid them a visit. During this visit Caroline wrote of Anne Banfill: "Dear Aunt Banfill is such a nice sweet delightful comfortable soul," and of George Gibbs: "The more we see of him the more we love him and I have already the affection of a sister for him. He was indeed always one

of my greatest favourites and as a child cousin George and Henry always were placed together in my affections."

Dorothea's health, which had been very bad, improved at Sidmouth, and her diary tells of her driving to Beer and Seaton, of going to Lord Rolle's at Bickton, and of riding on donkeys. At the end of October she and her daughters returned to Redland to entertain Elizabeth Daubeny and her children who came from Bath to stay with them. Soon after she began to suffer so much from gout and rheumatism that Dr. Remmett was summoned from Plymouth to see her. Chiefly for her benefit George started a carriage and horses. Of him she wrote in November to Henry:

Such a son-in-law no one ever had I am sure. How gratifying it is to me to be assured that both he and my dearest Harriett are equally anxious for me to remain with them and that when I am absent they are looking with pleasure to my return. I sometimes fear they will think me ungrateful for leaving them, but you are all dear to me, and not looking to be long with you, I like to divide the time I may have among you as we cannot be always together.

Three other quotations from her letters to Henry may here be inserted.

28 July 1818, after her last stay at Powis Place: I should not like to be thought an unsociable being and that it was on my account that you did not see as much company as you would otherwise like to do. I never had a dislike to company in my life. Before I was married I had been used to a great deal and of the best sort and it is not likely that from choice I should have preferred the retired life we have always led for very good reasons.

29 January 1819: I was surprised at your dining with Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Heath for tho' we have visited ever since we came to town the gentlemen only dined and the ladies met in the evening, but mine are old fashioned notions. The dining with people out of town is unavoidable and that is a tax great enough.

She proceeded to warn him as to the expense of giving dinner parties.

12 February 1819: My income is sufficient for everything I can want, and however favourable fortune might have been we should never have indulged in any luxuries till the great object we had in view for the last 30 years was accomplished.

Dorothea went to London in March 1819. Thence in May with her daughter Anne to lodgings at Brighton. She had her granddaughter with her there, of whose charge it was desirable to relieve Caroline, and to this infant she devoted herself during the remaining year of her life, fruitlessly endeavouring to bring it to normal development of body and mind. Henry paid her two visits at Brighton, and Charles Crawley (jun.) another. Early in July, after a week again in London, she returned to Redland, taking the baby with her with Harriett's ready assent.

Henry's second child and eldest son, Henry Hucks Gibbs, was born at Powis Place on 31 August 1819. Sir Vicary wrote to Sibella Gibbs that Lady Gibbs or Maria Pilkington had meant to offer to attend Caroline on the occasion but that Mrs. Merivale was going to do it. Caroline went to her parents at Stowe soon after and remained there till the end of the year, and the child was baptised there by her brother-in-law Rev. John Lloyd Crawley. The godparents were Anne Noyes, and John Hucks. Caroline wrote on 6 Dec. that the boy was not so fat as most babies of

his age: "he has naturally too a very narrow face like his Papa so that he is generally remarked as a little creature and delicate looking. As to notice I do not think he is a forward child." (3 months old !)

Sir Vicary, who had been ailing most of 1817 and much away at health resorts, and of whom Dorothea wrote in June 1818 that he was "dreadfully broken, so pale and feeble," wrote of himself to his nephew George Gibbs in October 1818 that he was gaining ground sensibly,

but with no hope of being able to resume the labours of my office, and I feel well content with the state of quiet and moderate enjoyment of which it has pleased God to give me the hope if I observe strictly the severest rules of diet and abstain altogether from the business of the Courts. I should hold it almost sinful to repine at a state into which my most merciful Creator has thrown me though it may be stripped of some of the advantages and indulgencies which for a time He permitted me to enjoy. My cheerfulness remains unbroken and I encourage it as a testimony of my satisfaction and thankfulness for what it has pleased God to leave me.

He formally resigned his office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas on 5 November 1818, and was granted a pension of £3,300 a year.

He wrote on 16 March 1819 from Russell Square to Gorge Gibbs:

Pray tell Mrs A. Gibbs that I look forward with no small satisfaction to the prospect of seeing her again, but then it must be by her visits to me and not mine to her for they have not yet suffered me to stir out of my house.... My library has become a place of resort for all descriptions of persons high and low of both sexes, from Hannah White and her husband to the top of the tree, and this when I am alone so there is no disgrace or disparagement in visiting me, though perhaps there may be some suspicion that I begin to be considered as a mere old woman, a suspicion not unlikely to fix itself upon a man who has passed his 67th year.

The death of his brother George who used to "settle my account book" every year, and on whom he relied in all matters of business, created terms of much closer intimacy between him and George Gibbs jun. than had previously existed, for he now depended upon him as greatly as he had upon the elder George. It will be remembered that Sir Vicary was Recorder of Bristol till November 1817, so that opportunities to see his brother had been frequent. In one of his letters to his nephew he wrote:-

The memory of my dear brother's [George] kindness in rendering me every possible service in assisting me with his most valuable advice and clearing all my difficulties by the aid of his most excellent judgment will always be fresh in my mind and awaken in it the warmest sensations of affection. Do not think I flatter you when I say to yourself as I have often said to Lady Gibbs that your resemblance to him in the best qualities of your mind adds not a little to my love and regard for you, but I had rather you collected this from my acts than from my words.

In striking contrast to Sir Vicary's relations with his nephew George was the fact that the coldness which, as told before, he and his family had shown to Henry since 1815 had subsisted without abatement, but in December 1818 a reconciliation took place, of which, throwing as it does so much light on the characters of those concerned, I will give rather a full account.

Henry, acting on a determination which he had previously made, declined (18 December) an invitation to dinner sent by Sir Vicary to him and Caroline. Sir Vicary then gave them the choice of two other days, adding: "but do not let me press you to do what may not be agreeable to yourselves." Henry, seeing the opening afforded to him, replied that they would dine with him on Saturday, and

I assure you, my dear uncle, it cannot fail to be agreeable to me to dine with an uncle for whom my dear Father entertained such a sincere affection, but, to tell you the truth, my reason for refusing your first invitation was that I feared our company might not be agreeable to others, and I drew this inference from the very great coldness with which I have been treated by you and your family ever since my Father's death, and the great inattention which has been shown to Caroline and others of our family. I abstain from entering into particulars, and if you think proper this note may be burnt and I will never think about it more, but I will do exactly as you please, and perhaps after this explanation you had rather that we did not dine with you on Saturday, &c.

Sir Vicary replied that he would still be glad for them to dine on Saturday at 5.30, saying that the impression on Henry's mind must have arisen chiefly from misapprehension and mistake, and treating the letter as merely a complaint of the omission of conventional civilities to Caroline on the part of Lady Gibbs and her daughter. He added some words of affection and said that the matter had already agitated him so much that he hoped the subject would not be renewed.

But Henry was determined not to let the moment slip and to place the matter once for all on the proper footing, so he wrote a long letter to his uncle. He would not, he said, have been capable of harassing him from a mere omission of "forms of civility." The coldness to him had begun three and a half years ago, long before his marriage, as was notorious among all the family. During that time "I have endeavoured by forbearance and every proper attention (in calling and other ways) on my part to bring about a change, hoping that time or chance might place us on a more comfortable footing," but had "refrained from speaking in spite of the advice of my friends." He firmly believed that his uncle was not himself aware of the extent to which this coldness had been carried and proceeded to give proofs of it, among which were the following. The very few occasions on which he had been invited to his uncle's house during those years were "when my uncle George or uncle Crawley or Lloyd Crawley were staying in our house when it could not well be avoided, or when Robert Remmett and his wife or anyone whom you did not like your own friends to meet were asked to dine." Also

though Caroline called in Russell Square the day after her [recent] arrival from Bristol it was not till more than a fortnight after that Mrs. Pilkington came to see her. I am not well acquainted with the mere forms of civility but I believe that you will allow that between relations that was hardly kind and I felt it the more perhaps as the extreme danger of her baby at that time would have rendered the attention of any relations particularly grateful. If I were not extremely anxious to cut short this disagreeable subject I would enter fully into the circumstances which led to this more than usual coldness, though I should have hoped that no friends who knew me so well as Lady Gibbs and Mrs. Pilkington could ever have seriously brought against me the charge I refer to, at all events it ought to have been done openly that I might have had the means of openly defending myself. If I had acted the base part attributed to me why was I not at once cast out of the family, and if not surely the things said of me ought never to have been said, nor ought such a marked change of conduct to have been resorted to. The whole of my conduct on the occasion

alluded to was such as no gentleman or honest man can have had reason to be ashamed of as I shall feel most happy in being permitted to prove to you. I should say nothing which Miss Helen Fraser herself would not fully confirm. She and her brother I know acquit me, and if Lady Gibbs and Mrs. Pilkington can sincerely do the same I shall come to your house with comfort and with every disposition to see things in their most favourable light and to be as friendly with your family as such near relations ought to be, but whilst the impressions I refer to remain on their minds my visits to you must be extremely painful to them and to me. Your expressions of regard to Caroline and to me are extremely grateful to me, my dear uncle, and I hope you will do me the credit to believe that if I had not felt an equal degree of affection for you I could never have refrained so long from appealing to you on this subject even at the sacrifice of my character with some of your intimate friends who I was in the habit of meeting at your house.

Sir Vicary's reply was :

I am sure you must see that it is quite impossible for me to follow the discussions to which your last letter might lead and they are of so delicate a nature that if you will take my advice you will drop them altogether. I will therefore only repeat my answer to the question you put to me in your first letter whether we still wish to see Caroline and you on Saturday that we certainly do wish it, that we shall meet you with great pleasure and hope that we shall always live together with the regard and affection which belong to such near relatives. Your aunt will send the carriage for you at a quarter after five.

Henry in commenting on this to his mother, who was at Red land, to whom he sent a copy of the correspondence, wrote: "I call it admirable because I believe few men would have seen the propriety and had the good sense and resolution to cut it short as he has done considering his station and age and what I said of him and his family. I really pity him a great deal." Henry's answer to his uncle was: "Caroline and I shall have great pleasure in dining with you, and we will leave behind us if possible even the recollection of what has passed. I fully see the propriety of dropping the subject now and cannot refrain from again repeating my regret at the uneasiness it must have caused you."

There are letters from Mary Crawley (Sir Vicary's sister) and George Gibbs applauding Henry's outspoken letters and congratulating him on the result. The latter also wrote to Henry: "It was necessary to probe deep and therefore, though I pity him for the pain he must have suffered from the operation, there was no help for it, and we have only to apply by future kindness and attention, if we are permitted to show them, the most grateful and effectual cure."

In a letter to Harriett Henry described their reception and the whole evening. Great pains were taken by their hosts, Sir Vicary, his wife, and Maria Pilkington, to show cordiality and to make themselves pleasant, Sir Vicary indeed rather overacting his part. Marianne Fraser, George Abraham Crawley, and a Mr. Hatton were also of the party. Sir Vicary though strong in mind and apparently well in health could not walk or sit at table for the dropsy which affected his legs, so he did not go into the dining room with the rest but remained in his sitting room on a sofa presenting "a most curious figure wrapped in a rug and with Maria's grey market cloak and hood on." When Henry and Caroline had returned home "we both" he wrote

felt more inclined to cry than anything else. We had obtained I may say a sort of triumph but it was over a person whom we could have no pleasure in seeing in such a situation. A likeness too which had struck us in the course of the day to my dearest Father and to Aunt Crawley tended to increase this

feeling. We could not make up our minds as to whether Aunt G[ibbs] and M[aria] had seen the whole or what part of the correspondence. Whatever course Uncle G[ibbs] pursued one thing is certain that it was the proper one, as the result has shown, all parties remaining friends. What I always feared in any explanation was that it could not be made without implicating and accusing his nearest and dearest ties who would consequently utterly hate us so as to prevent any possible reconciliation. That danger has been wisely avoided while we may congratulate ourselves on the great object being obtained of his eyes being clearly opened.

Henry went on to tell of various civilities that had passed between the two houses in the succeeding days and expressed himself as "most anxious now to show Uncle G[ibbs] every attention in our power and that nothing shall be wanting on our part to produce a hearty reconciliation."

Henceforth there was again complete friendliness between the members of the two families in England, but William, who when at home in 1817 had been more bitter than anyone for Sir Vicary's behaviour, was not appeased by what he heard in Cadiz of the events related above, and even when Sir Vicary died wrote to Henry that though his death "has I hope stifled every feeling which I may have entertained towards him in consequence of his conduct to our family it would be hypocrisy in me to say that I felt any real grief at his loss," but Henry Hucks Gibbs in a note on this letter says that in later years William saw reason to look more favourably on Sir Vicary's character and conduct, and that it was the perusal of the whole of the above correspondence which changed his opinion.

To turn now to William whom we left going to Spain with Charles Crawley. The following glimpse of their less serious occupations is furnished by William in a letter to Harriett of 7 July 1818.

For about a month or 6 weeks in the spring we went every Saturday into the country, but during the summer Cadiz is cooler than any other place in the neighbourhood, so that our country excursions are at an end. The heat of the sun prevents us taking any exercise till the evening, when about sun-set we generally take a walk in the Alameda, where many people assemble for the same purpose. After we have taken a proper review of the ladies we come home and take a warm bath (alias a cup of tea) after which we devote ourselves to the service of the fair sex. Sometimes they order us to stay at home with them and listen to their singing, playing, or chatting, but generally we sally forth with them to walk.

It is recorded that William gave a ball in Cadiz in April 1818.

The founding of a house of business at Gibraltar, which as we have seen had long been mooted, was now to be carried out. The choice of a man to manage it fell on John Lees Casson, who was then about 30 years old. Henry had previously met him in England, and in Cadiz William had been intimate with him for some years.

William's first idea was to obtain Casson's services for the Cadiz House, but before he could get a decision from home Casson had started business on his own account in Gibraltar. By October William had made all arrangements for him to leave his own business and to open a House there for A. Gibbs & Sons, and Henry was already preparing goods to send out to him, and drawing up the partnership deed in Bristol in consultation with George Gibbs. The House was opened that same month as Gibbs Casson & Co. and it retained that style during its

existence - that is, till 1833. A. Gibbs & Sons and Casson shared equally in the profits and losses of that House during its whole lifetime. Casson had no interest in the Cadiz House till 1820. The partnership deed is not extant.

Meanwhile a partner had to be found for the Cadiz House so that William might be free to come home. Several men were discussed. The most natural one for the post was José (Pepe) Maria Boom, since he had been in the employ of A. Gibbs & Sons in London. Moreover, in the latter part of William's trip to England in 1817, he, though he had then his own separate business in Cadiz in partnership with Don Felipe Molenier (who was another candidate in William's mind for the partnership), had been managing the Cadiz House, but William did not as yet trust him sufficiently to confide its permanent charge to him. It then occurred to George Gibbs that the solution could be found in A. Gibbs & Sons' former Cadiz partner William Branscombe, who had retired from business and was living at Alphington near Exeter, but felt the quiet life there irksome to him. When the offer was made to him Branscombe accepted it with alacrity. The terms of his partnership are set out in a letter to him from Henry of 29 December 1818, and the deed itself exists. The House was to continue its former style of Antony Gibbs Son & Co. A. Gibbs & Sons had two-thirds and Branscombe, who was to be permanently resident in Cadiz, one-third share in the partnership. Branscombe was staying with George Gibbs in January 1819, and went to Cadiz in March. Shortly before he started Casson came home for a visit. He arrived back in Gibraltar in June, and William was with him there in the same month. William wrote thence to Branscombe at Cadiz: "Our business here is carried on with great order and regularity and our establishment is I have no doubt already considered one of the most respectable in the Garrison, and will never fail of yielding us a decent emolument." From Gibraltar William went on to Malaga, and to Granada, made an expedition to "the very top of the Sierra Nevada," and visited other places before returning to Cadiz.

Writing in 1818 William said that during that year the business of the Cadiz House had been as follows. It had received for sale 3 or 4 cargoes of iron and tin plate goods, 3 cargoes of fish, and £13,000 worth of textiles. It had had good orders from English firms for quicksilver, bark, saffron, and other drugs. There had been a little bill business with Lyle Gibbs of Genoa. It received a commission on bills which A. Gibbs & Sons drew on their clients and sent it for collection. Its gain for the first 9 months of the year was at the rate of £1,530 a year.

In the autumn of 1819 Cadiz was visited, as it had been so often before, by an epidemic of yellow fever, so William in fulfilment of his promise to his family left the town and took up his abode in Seville, at the house of his friend Manuel Baños Gonzalez, but the fever followed him there, and in October he was staying at the "Hacienda de las Caleras " and corresponding thence with Branscombe at Cadiz and with Casson at Gibraltar. Branscombe himself was threatening to leave Cadiz. William therefore was in an awkward situation for he had undertaken to return to London at the end of the year, letters reporting his mother's increasing weakness made him long to hasten his departure, and yet there were many things which he could only settle by his personal presence in Cadiz. To add to his troubles poor Branscombe caught the yellow fever and died early in November.

It will be remembered that Branscombe was first engaged by Antony Gibbs in 1789. He had faults as a man of business as we have seen, but "a more honourable man never lived" to quote William Gibbs, and he was always a faithful friend to Antony and his sons. His wife had not

accompanied him on this last trip to Spain but had remained at Alphington. The sad news was conveyed to her in a letter from Henry sent through Anne Banfill who herself went at once to see her.

Several of Mrs. Branscombe's letters are preserved. George Gibbs wrote of her: "I am quite overcome with the feeling shown by Mrs. Branscombe and the natural manner in which everything good is expressed by her. I hope indeed such a woman will never want a friend." She always remained a close friend of the family, and in after years she and her niece Honour Branscombe Berry were not infrequent guests of George Gibbs.

On Branscombe's death William had no choice but to put J. M. Boom again in temporary charge of the Cadiz House, for no one else in Cadiz knew so much about the business, and the selection of a permanent partner for Cadiz again became a burning question. However when all risk of the fever had gone and William could return to Cadiz in January 1820 he was able to say that his opinion of Boom had greatly improved and that he now thought him better for the post than anyone else, and in the end he was chosen. But as a safeguard Casson, though still to be usually resident in Gibraltar, was made a partner in the Cadiz as well as in the Gibraltar House, while Boom was only a partner in the former. Casson and Boom were each given a share of one third in A. Gibbs Sons & Co., Cadiz, the other one-third being A. Gibbs & Sons' share. It was also laid down that William Gibbs should be principal manager of Cadiz but with optional residence, while residence should be obligatory on Boom, and that when William was absent Casson should have the chief control. The new partnership began 1 March 1820 and continued till the House was closed in 1827. On 25 May 1821 William wrote that he was quite satisfied with Boom.

There was some talk in 1818 of opening Branches at Bilbao or Santander but that plan did not mature.

The question of sending a representative of A. Gibbs & Sons to Lima and of eventually opening a House there was a more serious one which came into prominence in 1819. In August that year Henry and George Gibbs were consulting together about it. It was decided to wait to open a Branch House in Lima till by the struggle which was going on in South America against Spain Lima should be declared free; indeed William wrote that till that occurred no Englishman would be allowed to set up a mercantile establishment there: but preparations were at once set on foot in anticipation of that event. There was no question at this time of William going to Lima (indeed neither he nor his brother Henry ever went to South America), for Henry and George were determined to have him at home as soon as he could be free of Cadiz, and Casson could not be spared from the Gibraltar House, which was doing very well. The choice eventually fell on John Moens, 4th son of Adrian Moens, consul for the Netherlands at Bristol, of whom Robert Bright had a high opinion, but the decision did not prove to be at all a happy one. Moens joined A. Gibbs & Sons early in 1820 to prepare himself for his mission, and arrived at Lima at the end of that year as will be told in the next chapter.

Charles Crawley arrived home from Spain in March or April 1819. While he was in Spain Henry and William had been consulting together by letter about taking him into their partnership. It was believed that he would prove to be of value to the business and that his assistance would give them that greater measure of leisure which after 20 years' work they thought it right that they should have. William was inclined to view with a jealous eye any encroachment on those

means to which he and Henry looked for fulfilment of their late father's obligations, and this he thought should preclude that generosity in the matter of terms which they would otherwise have had pleasure in showing to Charles. Charles was in Gibraltar when he received the offer of the partnership in the form in which it was finally agreed and wrote to William: "As to the terms it is enough for me that they have been proposed by Henry and sanctioned by George and yourself but ... they appear to me to be on a very just and liberal basis." His partnership began 1 January 1820 with an interest of one-ninth in A. Gibbs & Sons and in their shares in the foreign branches.

Henry's work and responsibilities in the London House had for long been more than one man could properly undertake, as is shown by letters of several of the family. Thus, Sir Vicary wrote to Sibella Gibbs in March 1819:

What you say of Henry often occurs to me, and not without the attendance of some uneasiness, but youth is generally a match for such fatigues, and I hope they will be lessened soon by the arrival of Charles. I endured a heavier burden with no prospect of intermission but always increasing till I was near 60, and upon the whole being past 67 I have little to complain of the consequences.

Robert Bright had joined Antony Gibbs & Sons' office in March 1818 for 6 weeks to practise himself in Spanish correspondence before taking up his partnership in Bristol, which began on 1 May on the retirement of George Gibbs sen. On the same date the style of the House at Bristol had been changed from George Gibbs & Son to Gibbs Son & Bright.

Robert Bright's younger brother Samuel (1799–1870) was taken into A. Gibbs & Sons' office at the end of 1818 and remained till 1821, when he was offered by the Bristol House a partnership in their Liverpool House when the existing one there should terminate on 30 April 1825. In a letter to his brother Robert of 7 February 1821, referring to the Liverpool offer, he wrote

I feel more thankful than ever that the Gibbises received me into their Compting House, where to have been wild would have been at once to have refused the offered friendship of one of the best families, to whose good opinion I have ever looked forward as one of the greatest blessings I enjoy.... I thought that Mr. [George] Gibbs had through [taking] you [as partner] done much more for our family than could have been expected. . My good friends at Powis Place [G. Henry Gibbs' family] seem almost as glad of my happy prospects as if I had been one of their own family.

His cousin the Rev. Dr. Franck Bright (my father-in-law) told me that as he knew him in later years he was a keener man of business than his brother Robert, but not so scholarly, gentle, or winning in his manner, a difference corresponding he thought to the fact that the trade of Bristol was dying while that of Liverpool was developing and pushing ahead rapidly.

When S. Bright took charge of the Liverpool firm A. Gibbs & Sons continued, as they had previously done, to employ them as their agents, and in later years this agency contributed materially to the prosperity which S. Bright's firm came to enjoy.

Charles Vicary White, a son of Sir Vicary's butler and Hannah White, who had been a clerk in A. Gibbs & Sons', having left, Hannah White's nephew John Hayne 3 joined their office in 1818.

His capacity was such that in 1825 he became a partner in their South American branches, and in 1848 in the London House.

John Hayne wrote from Liverpool on 4 August 1825 to G. Henry Gibbs: "I had always a high opinion of S. Bright's assiduity and management, and the more I see of him the more this opinion is confirmed. He has all our South American business in excellent order."

Joseph (16 years old in September 1817), Henry's youngest brother, on leaving school early in 1818 had at once been put into the London office, the intention being that he should eventually become a partner, but to the disappointment of his brothers he had, though he tried to be assiduous, no aptitude for business, and even a dislike to it, and wished to go to college and to take Holy Orders. Evidently his father had anticipated this, for George Gibbs at a time when Joseph was staying with him in 1820 wrote to Henry:

Your dear father often told me that if he could acquire a good provision for Joe in the Church he should think it undesirable to send him to college to qualify for it because by so doing he should deprive him of the advantage of being the companion of William and yourself ... The strongest part of your dear father's understanding lay in the sound conclusions that he formed on subjects of this sort.

In another letter at the same period George wrote that in conversation with him Joseph had

treated the subject in a way that did as much credit to his heart as to his understanding and I verily believe no one can feel more than he does the advantage and comfort of his present situation in being with you and the pain that he shall give you by the part that he is now taking. His whole manner was calculated to interest me greatly.

But, though George did not approve of his wish, seeing nothing but poverty for him "in the church," he suggested that he should begin to work hard at the classics under a tutor besides attending at the office so that after a year he might be fit for the University if he should be still of the same mind.

Soon after Charles Crawley came home from Spain in 1819 his mother, Mary Crawley, had become ill and went (May) from Stowe to London to consult a doctor and was going on thence to Exwick. Whether this latter plan was carried out is not recorded. It will be recalled that Caroline Gibbs went in October, a month after the birth of her son Henry Hucks Gibbs, to Stowe. But already her mother was prostrated there with her last illness, and on 31 October she died. Evidently it had been known for some months that she could not recover, for Sir Vicary wrote of her to Sibella Gibbs in August :

It is my constant and earnest prayer that what remains to her of life may be passed quietly and serenely and that she may be spared to us until all the enjoyments of this world are swallowed up and extinguished in the hope of a better.

The following letter transcribed by Rev. Charles Crawley in a letter to Sibella Gibbs in November was addressed to him by Rev. Duke Yonge, vicar of Cornwood, his brother-in-law.

Certainly, my dear Charles, yours is no common loss. I ever considered your wife as the best pattern I had ever seen for a wife or mother. So much cheerfulness and good sense, sweetened with that

gentleness without which everything loses in woman its true condition of being helpmeet and is that which all denominate true feminine character, does not often occur.

The last days both of Dorothea and of Sir Vicary were now also fast approaching.

At the end of September Sir Vicary seemed so much better that he was contemplating a visit to Ashridge, but in January 1820 he was worse and early in February Dr. Remmett and Dr. Babington were both in attendance on him. George Gibbs, who was in London and constantly seeing him, wrote to Harriett a few days before his death:

No one I believe ever appreciated another's worth or valued it more justly or valued it more highly than he did my dear Father, and he seems to feel a pleasure in speaking of it, which is present state cannot be assumed and therefore excited the feeling which I never had before when conversing with him.... Tell your dearest mother that he speaks of her with great affection. He talked very particularly with me about his affairs and seemed exceedingly anxious to provide enough for Lady Gibbs and Maria. Henry seems to think that at one time he had given your dear Father the reason to suppose that it left him a large legacy. Should you by any accident discover anything of this in your mother's conversation you had better say to prevent disappointment that he had expressly told me that he had left scarcely any legacies except to Aunt Bell and to White.

Sir Vicary died at his house in Russell Square on 8 February 1820. He was buried on the 15th in the churchyard of the parish church of Hayes, where he is commemorated by an inscription on his raised tomb and by another on a mural tablet in the church. His nephews, Henry and Joseph Gibbs, Charles and George Ab. Crawley, attended the funeral. By his will, dated 6 October 1818, he left to his sister Sibella £100 a year for her life, to his butler William White £200, and £50 to his godson (White's son) Charles Vicary White. The rest of his estate to Lady Gibbs and his daughter Maria Pilkington.

Shortly before Sir Vicary's death the Rev. Charles Crawley and his wife had paid him a visit at Hayes.

The Rev. Charles Crawley to Sibella Gibbs, 10 February 1820: There was so much solicitude and kindness on your brother's part especially towards your dearest sister that the impression will never be effaced from my memory and will always be thought of with gratitude and pleasure. These kind attentions are the ties which endear us to each other and we lose the greatest pleasures this transitory life affords when we let them go or even slacken them.

There are no other letters on the death of Sir Vicary except those of William Gibbs quoted earlier in this chapter.

Dorothea after returning with her daughter Anne to George Gibbs' house at Redland in July 1819 remained there during the 7 last months of her life. We hear of her driving to Almondsbury to see Knole Park in October, but in November of being too ill to receive letters. Henry was with her at the beginning of December for a short time. It was impossible for him to pay very long or frequent visits away from London either to Redland, or to Stowe where his wife and little son still were. Towards the end of December he sent Joseph to stay with their mother.

Henry to his mother, 23 December 1819: Your greatest happiness consists I am sure in the patience with which you have endured your sufferings and in the example you have set your children how they ought to behave under similar circumstances. Every religious and every proper feeling which we possess we owe under God to my dearest Mother and to our blessed Father who is gone before us to receive the reward of his virtuous life. The care with which in our youth you laid the foundation of our future characters by instilling good principles into our minds can never be forgotten by us and must afford to you on your bed of sickness another source of inexpressible satisfaction. Such considerations must indeed be your best comfort under all circumstances whether it please God to hear our prayers and lengthen your days upon earth or whenever in His wisdom He may think fit to call you out of it.

William, whom we left still shut out of Cadiz by the fever there, had received in Seville about the middle of January 1820 what up to then were the worst accounts of his mother. At first he determined to set off home at once but abandoned that plan when he found that the roads were rendered by snow and rain so difficult of passage that he would be ten days longer on the way than usual, and that he could with great advantage spend that time in Cadiz helping his new partner Boom to correct the confusion which had arisen in the office during the late troublous times. Danger from the fever in Cadiz was just at an end, but no other way of getting there being available he went by steamer down the river to San Lucar and so on to Cadiz. The receipt of reassuring news of his mother, who had rallied considerably, then caused him to extend his time in Cadiz and he was still there when he heard at the end of March of her death. He then postponed his departure for a few months partly in order to get a new house, with office and warehouse, for the Cadiz firm.

Dorothea's end had come on 24 February. She had expressed an earnest wish to be buried with Antony at Hayes. The funeral took place there on 10 March.

A letter from Henry to his sisters (who remained at Redland) tells us that he and Joseph had left Redland on the 8th, slept a night at Bath and arrived in London on the 9th. The coffin had come up under Mrs. Harmer's charge, two men sitting up with it each night. At 8 a.m. on the 10th Henry, Joseph, Charles Crawley, George A. Crawley, Robert Remmett, and Hannah White set off in postchaises to Croydon, where they met the coffin and the mourning coaches, which had started from London 2 hours before them. They reached Hayes church at 12.30.

Henry to his sisters: [Mr Till, the rector of Hayes] performed the service in a very impressive manner. I saw the coffin placed close by the side of my dearest Father and there they now rest together waiting for the hour when they shall be raised incorruptible at the last day. Yet it seems like a dream all that has passed since I set off for Bristol, and when I think that my dear Mother on whose account we have lately spent so many anxious moments is now numbered with the dead, that all is over and that her remains are hid for ever from our sight in the stillness of the grave, I can hardly believe it real: yet such a dream as this will all those years appear, whether few or many, which separate us from the dear affectionate parent we have lost; they will be but as a moment compared with the eternity that will follow them, an eternity in which we shall most assuredly exist in some state or other. This thought is calculated more than any other I think to encourage us to bear with cheerfulness all those afflictions with which it may please God to visit us during our passage through this life, but I will not enlarge upon it to you and our dear Anne as you have both shown on the late melancholy occasion a courage and firmness and a cheerful resignation which nothing but a proper sense of the nature and true end of our existence in this world can impart. God bless you my dear sisters and continue to you His support in this hour of trial.

Caroline Gibbs to Harriett Gibbs. Powis Place, 8 March 1820. I know by a melancholy experience how much the long and unremitting attendance upon the sick bed of a dear Parent seems to bind one's affection to them still closer and closer instead of weaning one for the impending stroke of death. I can conceive therefore that in your case the unusual length of time that my dearest Aunt [and mother-in-law] stood in need of your utmost care and attention the more must you now feel the dismal blank. ... Still this very cause that in one way must increase your grief yet in the other as it respects your dearest mother herself you have surely great cause for rejoicing in her release from such a state of suffering. To compare my own feelings on this present occasion or even to speak of them at the present time with yours might seem perhaps trifling and I do not pretend to judge yours by my own except inasmuch as this second and similar affliction in your family seems to call back to my mind what we were suffering in ours only 4 months ago in its full extent. I cannot think of your situation without regarding both as represented in one picture so that I may compare my grief at this moment to a wound which had itself only begun the work of healing before another was inflicted upon the same part, and the second is again increased because I had since my dearest Mamma's death looked up with more affection and dependance than ever upon dear Aunt Antony as her representative. But, my dearest Harriett, what a delightful comfort it is to imagine that immediately on their release from this world of suffering they were hailed with delight by those dear friends whose society had once made their happiness on earth.... I hope this is not only an earthly vision. At all events, if it is an error it must be an innocent one and I should be very unwilling to give it up, and we have certainly I believe more wise men's opinions for us than against us in this matter. Dear old Mrs. Merivale sat some time with me again yesterday and cheered me with the delightful and consoling turn of her conversation. I am sure it does one's mind good to contemplate such a character as hers, and when we see her in her old age after such a life of trial, so happy and yet so prepared in her mind to meet death or even a less welcome misfortune with cheerful resignation, it gives one comfort in the hope that after any misfortune it may please God to send us we may still find happiness even here amidst the consideration that nothing can befall us but that it is designed for our good either here or hereafter. She said that the present time was her happiest and yet she has scarcely a relation left among many that she once dearly loved except her husband and two of many children." I think with great pleasure of your having dear Aunt Banfill's society. I know what a delightful comforter she is to people in trouble. I am sorry dear Aunt Bell [Sibella] has been so poorly. I pity her feelings which are always so strongly alive to any family affliction.

Mary Crawley to her Aunt Sibella Gibbs; 21 March, wrote as follows with regard to her mother and her "Aunt Antony."

[They were] both lovely in their lives. Each taught us how to die and looking to the joy which was prepared for them we forget our own grief and thanked God for a chastisement without which Heaven might have been lost to us. It is an infinite satisfaction to hear that with such reflections as those our dear friends at Redland have been wonderfully supported.

Mrs. Branscombe to G. Henry Gibbs; 4 March: I know enough of Mrs. Gibbs to admire, respect and love her and I must ever remember with gratitude the kind interest she took in the welfare of my dear husband. Her sufferings in this world have been great, and glorious will be her reward, and [speaking of William Gibbs who was with her in Spain when he heard of his father's death] never was a child more tenderly attached to a parent.... I know what his feelings will be for I have witnessed them and I shall never forget it.... How few can boast of two such parents as you have had.

William Gibbs to G. Henry Gibbs ; Cadiz, 28 March 1820. Although your letters of the 25th past and 2nd instant prepared me to expect the afflicting event which you communicate to me in yours of the 6th I

cannot describe to you my feelings on knowing the certainty of its having taken place. You and my other dear Brother and Sisters who have equally with me to bewail the loss of a dear affectionate Parent can alone enter into my feelings. ... I feel it as a dreadful addition to my misfortunes that I only of all her children have been unable to afford to her and receive myself the great consolation which would have arisen from my having been with her during her last moments and receiving her last parental Blessing. My affliction is also mixed with a certain degree of Self Reproach for having delayed so long my Departure from this Country, tho' I am in some measure comforted by the reflection that no want of the most sincere Affection and Duty towards our beloved Parent, or the most ardent desire to do what I thought was right, has caused my unfortunate Detention here. It will be a very great Comfort to me to know that the same Impression was strongly on the Mind of our dearest Mother for I know how much she must have regretted my Absence. Would to God I had gone home direct from Seville as I had at one time nearly determined. But there is no use in wishing for what now can never be realised. I must console myself with the idea that I acted for the best and pray to God that I may meet with proper resignation and humility this severe Blow which in His great wisdom he has thought fit to inflict on me. May He mercifully grant that this sore affliction may conduce to my own Improvement and that the death of my dearest Mother may have the effect of engraving on my heart those Excellent Precepts of Religion and Morality which she never failed to instill into the Minds of all her Children and enforced so strongly by her own pious example. Altho' it has pleased the Almighty Disposer of Events to take from us both our Earthly Parents, their Remembrance will always live with us, and by an earnest Endeavour to copy their Virtues and tread in their steps we shall take the best means of securing our Peace of Mind here and of rendering ourselves worthy, thro' the merits of our Saviour, of being reunited to them hereafter. Consolatory as are such Reflections it is impossible not to feel in the bitterest Manner such an irreparable loss as we have sustained. Our Prospects are indeed, my dear Henry, most dreadfully altered and for me in particular the change is truly melancholy. To see my dearest Mother comfortably settled and to contribute to her Happiness by every attention which a grateful and affectionate Son would pay to a tender and excellent Parent had been long the first wish of my Heart and the principal Spur to my exertions. In the realisation of this Wish I had centered all my Hopes of Earthly Happiness, and, as these are now forever cut off, I feel a Blank in my Prospects which can never be filled up. But these are selfish Considerations which should give way to the Joy which we ought to experience in the idea that our Blessed Mother has been removed from a world of Pain and Suffering to one of eternal Bliss where she is enjoying with our beloved Father the promised Reward of a virtuous life. This indeed is a Consolation under our great affliction superior to every other and which the heavenly Character of our dear deceased Mother enables us to indulge in with unbounded Confidence...

Henry was the sole executor of his mother's will, which was drawn by the solicitors Jones & Green, witnessed by George Abraham Crawley and Robert Archibald Douglas, dated 2 July 1818, and proved 14 March 1820. The will was supplemented by memoranda to her children in her own handwriting. Her estate in A. Gibbs & Sons' hands amounted to £4,266 (after 1 per cent. legacy duty and certain small bequests had been paid) and was divided up by them on 31 Dec. 1820. Nearly all the money was to remain in Henry's hands in trust, to be employed in the business at interest till he should think it prudent or convenient to pay it out. She also provided in her will for the division of £6,400 held in trust for her and her children by the executors of P. C. Bruce on mortgage, being what was left of H. T. Ward's bequests to her. Thus there was in all £10,666 for distribution. Joseph was of course expected to make his own living as his brothers were doing, and Harriett was well provided for before by her marriage, so that Anne, who was unmarried, rightly benefited most under the will.

There was £50 each to John Hucks, Anne Banfill, Sibella Gibbs, and George Gibbs, as tokens of her affection, and mourning rings (as was the custom) were to be given to "Mrs. Banfill, Mrs. Crawley, my dear Bell [Sibella Gibbs], Lady Gibbs, Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. [John] Hucks, Mrs. [Anne] Noyes, Mrs. and Miss Warner, Mr. [William] Harding, Mr. and Mrs. Bowles, Mrs. Merivale, and my dear Mrs. Mallet, and my old friend Mrs. Courant." She left also from £2 2s. to £10 10s. to each of 13 or 14 servants and former servants, and an annuity of £10 to Mrs. Pring of Exwick, the old nurse. Towards the education, &c., of her protégé Thomas Michael Gilman (5 years old in 1818) she left money in Henry's hands. About him she wrote in the memoranda which accompanied her will:

For your blessed Father's sake and mine you will I hope all interest yourselves about him. The taking him might not be a prudent thing but remember it was the Soul of Charity and kindness that prompted the deed and most anxious I have ever been that the blessed intention should succeed. I wish if possible to have him kept from associating with very low people. By his own industry he must get his bread. God grant he may in all his actions be governed by the principles of religion and honesty I have endeavoured to instil into his mind.

In the same memoranda she distributed a number of her personal effects, some of which may be mentioned for the sake of the words which she added in mentioning them. To Henry,

the silver coffee pot which I know he will particularly value on account of its having been given to his father as a memorial of his honourable conduct: to William the silver inkstand given to his blessed Father by the person he served his apprenticeship with. Tell him if I am not allowed to live to see him return that he was ever dear to my heart and that my most fervent prayers have and ever will be to the last moment of my life offered up to the throne of Grace for a blessing upon him and all my dear children. I wish I had any little thing to leave that would be acceptable to my dear [son-in-law] George. He has ever had my warmest affection, the only return I could make for his unbounded kindness and attention to me which nothing could exceed. I wish he thought of his dear wife's picture as I do, for then I should have much pleasure in leaving it to him knowing how valuable it would be to him. The only books that I think may be acceptable and which I hope he will keep in remembrance of one to whom he was ever very dear are 2 vols of Tasso. I wish my brother (John Hucks) to have the small miniature picture of my sister [Mrs. Ward] painted by Crosse. The large one my dearest Henry will take care of for my sake.

She concluded as follows on 14 August 1819:

I intended to have written these little memorandums over again, to have made them more correct and intelligible, but I have put it off I fear too late, for I consider it now as mercy to be allowed once more to tell you how earnestly I pray God to reward you all for your dutiful and affectionate attention. Farewell my best and dearest ties on earth. Remember your Mother with affection.