

## **In Memoriam George Louis Monck Gibbs**

*Born April 28<sup>th</sup> 1838*

*Passed to his rest November 26<sup>th</sup> 1881*

*"I am the Resurrection and the Life"*

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GEORGE LOUIS MONCK GIBBS was the second son of the Reverend Joseph Gibbs, Vicar of Clifton Hampden, Oxon, whose father was Antony Gibbs, merchant, and founder of the present well-known Firm that bears his name.

His mother was Emily Vaughan, daughter of the Reverend Charles Vaughan, a descendant of the Vaughans of Tretower, in Breconshire. George was born at Clifton Hampden, April 28th, 1838, and in 1847 was sent to Marlborough College, which was at that time a rough and badly-managed school.

Thrown at the early age of nine into the stormy atmosphere of this school, he underwent hardships which to the schoolboy of our day would appear little less than purgatorial. There were, however, gleams of light in those dark days, for it was here that George made acquaintance with boys who remained his faithful friends through life, such as Robert Butts, Henry Nihill, Henry Wayne, E. Jordan, and Daniel –(the two latter were killed in the Indian Mutiny). The system of bullying was in full force, and on one occasion George maintained a fight for two days with the greatest bully in the school - a boy much older and bigger than himself. At the end of the fight, which was "drawn," George was carried away much exhausted, but still "game"; and Evelyn Wood, then one of his school fellows, said, "Well, Gibbs, I never liked you, but I shall be your friend now to the end of my life." I mention this fact, as in the autumn of 1880 we met Sir Evelyn Wood at a friend's charming country house in Hertfordshire, and he and George renewed an acquaintance that was a delight to both, and many a talk and laugh did they enjoy over the hard old school days.

On leaving Marlborough in 1852, George went to the Reverend Daniel Nihill, Rector of Fitz, Salop, where he remained as pupil for three years. Here he spent a happy, profitable time. Often did he dwell on the loving care he received from the Nihills, and it was here that he renewed a warm friendship with Henry Nihill, now Vicar of St. Michael's, Shoreditch.

Not far from Fitz, at Mytton, lived Mrs. Hopkins, widow of the late Rector of Fitz, and her two daughters; she was a confirmed invalid, and George was often found reading or talking to her, during his spare moments. She used to say, it did her great good to hear his bright voice, and to see his youthful expressive face, when she felt wearied out with her long day..

On leaving the Nihills, George went up to London, and entered as clerk the firm of Antony Gibbs & Sons, 1855.

During the four years he spent in this capacity, he lived part of the time with Mr. Westmacott, the sculptor, and tenderly was he cared for by him and his estimable wife. The rest of the time he passed at Sydenham, with his cousin, John Lomax Gibbs, now Vicar of Exwick, Devon, and two friends, Robert Wallace and Ferdinand Böhl, who were warmly devoted to him all his life.

In 1859, on April 18th, George sailed for South America, to learn the business that was carried on by Messrs. Antony Gibbs & Sons on the West Coast, where he remained for four years. Here he passed one of the brightest periods of his life, being treated with unflinching kindness and liberality by the people, both English and foreign, among whom he lived.

He often spoke with the warmest affection of the friends he had made there, especially of the Conroys, of Callao, where he spent many happy days - days rendered exuberantly happy by the sunny presence of the inmates of that house, and by the exquisite beauty of the summer days and nights in that delicious climate. This home was a haven of rest for him after his day's work, and his heart, which was pre-eminently a grateful one, always cherished the remembrance of it. It was only a year and a half ago, that we went to see one of the married daughters of the Conroy family, who was living in Bath, and George, remembering how she once lived surrounded by flowers in her tropical home, went to the market there and bought all the best flowers he could find, and presented them to her. I need not say how greatly touched and pleased she was by this little act of attention.

It was in 1860 that George met for the first time Charles Lambert, who became his most devoted friend during the whole term of his life. They met in Coquimbo, when George was on his way from Lima to Valparaiso, and Mr. Lambert told him that he meditated riding from Santiago down to the extreme south of Chili in three or four months' time, and that he would be glad if George could accompany him. George was delighted with the idea, and about four or five months afterwards they started for the south of Chili, accompanied by a regular cavalcade of pack animals to convey the tents, beds and provisions ; and greatly did the friends enjoy their adventurous expedition, fording rivers, scrambling over mountains and through dense forests.

On their way southwards they were surprised and interested to find an Andian volcano at work, and on arriving at Chillan they procured guides, and determined to ascend it. This excursion took two days; they rode to the snow line and walked the rest of the way, ploughing through the freshly-fallen snow, at times up to their waists, and as they approached the crater across frightful crevasses, they sat down, completely tired out, to watch the flames, smoke, and molten lava spouting out. Only one of the eight guides who had started with them had been able to bear the fatigue and the sudden changes of temperature consequent on their ascent; the others had succumbed long before.

On their return to Chillan they went on to Los Angeles, and through the river Bio-Bio to Concepcion, riding from thence to Lota, where they separated to their great regret, little thinking that in the course of three years they would be living near each other in the busy London world.

George went through many other interesting adventures in South America; but as I have no diary to refer to, and have to depend only on my remembrance of stories that I have heard him relate, it is impossible for me to narrate his numerous expeditions consecutively. On one occasion he had a very narrow escape in Valparaiso Bay, when with his friends, Henry Kendall, John Garland, and two others, he went out in a small boat to watch a large French naval storeship that was on fire and had been deserted. The large store of gunpowder that had been on board her had been, as they thought, all removed. This turned out not to be the case; for while they were still watching the burning ship, a tremendous explosion took place: the powder magazine that still contained several tons of gunpowder having been reached by the flames. An enormous black column in the shape of a large mushroom shot straight up into the air, and fragments of the ship flew over their heads in all directions. The vessel heaved up for a moment and then sank down, blazing and hissing, into the paves.

George shouted "Row, for God's sake," and they all rowed hard while blazing beams flew over their heads and sank into the water. One piece of red hot brass fell into the boat. The shock was felt far and near, and nearly every window in the town was broken.

On his way back from South America George visited the United States, and spent some time in New York, where he met with the most genial hospitality from people to whom he had introductions, and especially from the Irvins, who gave him the warmest welcome. He always deprecated the narrow criticising spirit in which the English judged their American cousins. In this, as in all his judgments, he showed a wide and tolerant

mind, which perhaps some would call cosmopolitan, but others, more rightly, "charitable": as, in fact, no more fervent patriot, in the true sense of the word, ever breathed.

On approaching New York (it was just after the victory of Bull's Run), a man shouted from the pier, "Uncle Sam's safe!" and this announcement gave rise to the enthusiastic cry, "Three cheers for Uncle Sam!" George, although his sympathies had been with the Southerners, instantly proposed that "Hail, Columbia!" should be sung: he starting this, all joined, and the Yankees were so pleased that, when the song was over, one of them came up to him, saying, "Mr. Gibbs, I have ordered a bottle of champagne to be put in ice, and we'll sing 'God save the Queen,' and drink her health," which was accordingly done with all due honour.

On board the steamer homeward-bound, George became acquainted with the Rev. W. Malet, author of "An Errand to the South," and was warmly interested in his many adventures and courageous exploits. It was curious afterwards to discover that Mr. Malet had named his son, Clement Elton, after my father, Sir Arthur Hallam Elton, to whom he was much attached.

George landed in England in 1863, and in 1864, January 5th, we were married in All Saints' Church, East Clevedon, which my mother had built, and in the lovely Churchyard of which she now rests.

We went for our short wedding trip to Rome, a city I had always longed to see, not only on account of its vast interest and beauty, but because it was my birthplace.

Here we visited the grave of my twin-sister Octavia Maria, (which is near that of the poet Shelley, in the English Cemetery,) and also the house where I first saw the light, the Villa Strozzi, now Villa Mérode, surrounded by its lovely gardens full of orange trees and olives.

On returning to England, the news reached us of the dangerous illness of my father-in-law, who, to George's inexpressible grief, died on the 23rd March, mourned by all who knew him, as being one of the most holy of men, whose example was ever before the eyes of my husband, who loved him with a deep, and reverential affection. He was buried at Clifton Hampden.

Soon afterwards we went to live in London, at 14, Devonshire Terrace, Hyde Park.

In July of the same year, George went to Spain and Portugal on business, and I to Clevedon Court, during his absence.

In the September following, our eldest child, Mabel, was born in London; and we spent Christmas of that year at Mamhead, a beautiful place in Devonshire, which George's uncle, Mr. William Gibbs (of Tyntesfield), had taken for two years.

George was deeply attached to this uncle, on whose noble qualities and generous deeds I need not dwell, as they are widely known and appreciated; but when George joined the house of which his uncle had been for so many years the head, he steadfastly determined to maintain the same spirit of untarnished honour and singleness of purpose in carrying on the business that had characterised his high minded chief.

In accordance with his uncle's wish, George was made a partner in the house of Antony Gibbs & Sons in January, 1865, and from that day to the day of his death he never swerved from an extraordinary devotion to the firm, which was exemplified by arduous and unceasing work - work which followed him, and which he could not throw off entirely even during his times of recreation. His loyalty and devotion could only be compared to that of the sailor whose ship is his first idolised object, and to which, through fair and through stormy weather, he clings with unflinching fidelity and an enduring affection.

So did George devote himself to his duties, and neither his favourite outdoor pursuits nor social pleasures, always congenial to him, were allowed to engross more than a very small portion the time that was to be given up to the profession he had chosen for life. In the July of the same year he was elected one of the Directors of the London Assurance Corporation, and in 1878 Deputy-Governor. The work involved by his Directorship and Governorship was one that always interested him, but it added greatly to the burden, already heavy, that lay on his willing shoulders.

How his work here, as well as elsewhere, was done, I leave the letters of his colleagues to testify. We lived for three years in London, and our three elder daughters were born there. In 1867 we moved to Bickley, Kent, where my husband had bought a pretty little place called "Nutwood." We lived there for three years, my husband's youngest brother, Stanley Vaughan Gibbs, living with us. In November, 1867, our eldest son, Joseph Arthur, was born, and we went down to Belmont, in Somersetshire, for the Christmas of that year, and he was baptized in the fine old Church at Wraxall. This beautiful place, Belmont, was left by his uncle Mr. George Gibbs to my husband's mother, and on her decease to him; but he was destined never to live there, though warmly attached to it, for it was so far removed from his sphere of work as to make this impracticable.

We constantly spent a fortnight at Belmont in the summer; my husband and his brothers, as well as the cousins who lived at Tyntesfield, being all cricketers, and they held matches with different "elevens" in the neighbourhood. These family gatherings were bright spots in the business atmosphere of George's life.

When the game of cricket and merry supper were over, the balmy summer evening would tempt us all to sit out, and the brothers and sisters, who were all musical, would sing old glees and catches to a late hour. My husband's voice was a singularly clear, sweet and sympathetic one - something between a baritone and a tenor, and the expression and feeling with which he sung impressed all who listened as being spontaneous and from the heart, not acquired by culture or practice, but coming clear and fresh as a spring from unknown depths of melody.

In this, as in everything else, he never seemed to think of himself or of the effect he was producing on others, but sang as the birds do - joyous songs of thankfulness - in the early spring woods. Later on in life his voice became much more powerful, and there was a pathetic ring in it that touched deeply all who heard him. He was fond of Spanish songs, which he sang with great spirit and vivacity.

In the beginning of the year 1869 George was obliged to go to Mexico on important business, connected with the railway then in process of being made there. During his absence our second son, George Harold, was born in London, whither I went to spend the time of this trying separation.

On his return, April 28th of the same year, we spent a great part of the summer in London, as his dear mother was hopelessly ill, and she lingered for several months in great suffering at Mr. William Gibbs's house, 16, Hyde Park Gardens,

She died in September, and was laid by her husband's side in the peaceful churchyard of Clifton Hampden.

To say all that could be said about my husband's mother would take more time and space than I can well afford to give, but she was one of the most lovable and sweetest of human beings, and in many points wonderfully resembled my husband in her ungrudging liberality, her geniality, and her wide-embracing charitableness. When young she was very lovely, and all through life she retained a high-bred grace and sweet dignity of manner, combined with a sparkling vivacity, which made her a most fascinating companion. Her care and affection for me were those of a mother. I need say no more to shew that her memory is enshrined in a very deep corner of my heart.

It was in May, 1876, that we made a little trip to Wales, partly for fishing and partly because George wished very much to visit a part of the country which was deeply interesting to him on account of its having been his mother's birth place and home. We stayed in the fine old town of Brecon, and from thence visited Crickhowel and Llangattock Church, where his mother and father were married. I well remember my husband's attitude of deep reverence when finding his mother's writing in the registry book in the Vestry, he bent down to kiss the faded signature.

But to return to my narrative.

In the November following the death of the dear mother, Stanley Gibbs started for South America to join the house there of A. Gibbs & Sons on the West Coast, as clerk, accompanied by his cousin, George Abraham Gibbs, who was going out on a pleasure trip.

In the spring of 1870, the dreadful news reached us that both young men had been stricken by that dreadful scourge, yellow fever, at Kingston, Jamaica, and had there died. We felt these losses deeply, and my husband for a long time was overwhelmed with grief for the early death of his much-loved brother, one who though young in years was old in thought, and from whose tact and good sense George had always hoped great things.

We left Bickley in the spring of 1870, and went to live at Deacon's Hill, Elstree, Hertfordshire, as we had outgrown our house, Nutwood, and my husband wished also to be nearer his cousin and partner, Henry Hucks Gibbs, of Aldenham House, whose congenial society was a great attraction to us. Deacon's Hill was situated on a ridge of high country commanding a beautiful and extensive view of four counties, and George loved this view as he said it reminded him of his old home, Belmont.

Here we lived for twelve years, years I may say of almost unshadowed bliss. I say, we, for though the labours of business hours brought to my husband many anxieties, yet I believe the happiness of his home to have been deep and lasting; but the energy of his mind, and the zeal with which he applied it to his work, perceptibly affected his bodily health. This was proved by the fact that, when away for a holiday, especially in Scotland, he gained in weight, sometimes as much as a pound a week, which shewed how greatly he needed rest.

His favourite sport was fishing, and many enchanting days we spent in the Highlands, at Spean Lodge, with our friends, the Davys. The salmon fishing on the Spean was a great delight to George, and later on the grouse shooting took him up into the wilder parts round Spean; and often did we, the ladies of the party, join the sportsmen, for luncheon, on the heather covered crest of Stro-na-bar, from whence we could see a grand landscape, the numerous lochs looking like sapphires set in the midst of glowing heather.

Well do I remember how, on these festive days, after wandering about the mountain, we would remount our ponies, and as we rode slowly homeward, watch the wonderful changes in the clear heavens; and then as the day wore on - for the northern day is "long in dying" - the delicate pale pink would begin to tinge the crags, and the blue shadows to deepen in the corries, while the colours of the opal sky would still be glowing and changing long after we had sat down to the hospitable board at Spean Lodge, all pleasantly tired with our day in the pure air.

We visited Scotland every summer for several years. At one time we went to Glenfeshie, Antony Gibbs having taken this deer forest for a season; and another time we stayed with George Crawley, at Tress-dy, his luxurious shooting lodge near Roggart. One year when we were a Spean, Mr. Lambert brought his yacht, the "Meteor," to Fort William, and we went for a trip of three days, and later on George and several friends and our little son Arthur went for a three weeks' cruise round the West Coast of Scotland.



How restful and enjoyable these calm bright days were to my husband, none but the toil-worn and anxious can ever realize; too short indeed, were they, but remain now in one's memory, full of the joy and sunshine of which no present grief or regret can ever rob them.

The last night on board the "Meteor" after our three days' trip, Donald Mackay, whose gentle courtesy and kindness endear him to all who know him, proposed Mr. Lambert's health, and this was drunk with "Highland honours," viz., each man placing one foot on the table, with enthusiastic cheers, and I need not say that this toast was heartily as well as mirthfully drunk.

I dwell upon these happy holiday times, as it was then that I saw more of my husband than when he was day after day absorbed in his business duties; but in our pleasant home at Deacon's Hill, too, there were many days on which the sun shone more brightly and the air seemed more balmy than usual, for the master of the house was at home, and we had dances and jovial cricket gatherings, and the old glees and part-songs were sung again, and George, who shone in the capacity of host, made everything go smoothly and pleasantly by his courteous attention to all who came to the house. Since we had lived at Deacon's Hill four children had been given us - two sons and two daughters - making nine in all; and as they grew in years George did all that lay in his power to make their home a happy one, not only by means of healthful and innocent enjoyments and pleasures, but by giving them all advantages of education, and opportunities of making themselves useful and cultivated members of society.

Amongst the many enjoyable visits to friends, marked in my note book as "golden days," I should mention those paid to Beau Desert, which Mr. Lambert rented for a few years of Lord Anglesey, and which place my husband named the "Paradise of Sport." We stayed there two successive autumns for shooting, and on one occasion there were amateur theatricals, in which my cousins, the Youngs, and my sister, Mrs. Elton, and her husband acted, George taking the part of the "Marquis" in the "Wonderful Woman." The "poudré" dress of the period suited him admirably, and in acting, as in all other things, he threw himself into the part with intense earnestness, and played it with ease and grace. The beauty of this place, and the kindness and liberality of our hosts, made these autumn gatherings very delightful to look back upon.

With other happy recollections of our earlier married life, our brief but charming visits to Ilmington Rectory, Warwickshire, must not be passed over, where lived my uncle, the Rev. Julian Young, the much loved and well-known "Squire and Parson" of the place.

I cannot enter into all our merry doings there; but where is he who has seen that picture of an English Rectory in the old days who could forget its beauty, the genial hospitality of the host, and his inimitable stories and humorous anecdotes? My husband always looked back on his visits there as some of the brightest and most refreshing he had ever enjoyed. The long drives to places of historical interest, the sparkling conversation at the dinner table, when all made merry under the genial influence of my uncle, and the winding up of the evening, the stroll in the peaceful garden with a first-rate cigar, who could forget such hours of social delight, and not say, with my husband, "Oh! for the old jolly days at Ilmington."

Many people of interest we met there, but time fails me to enumerate these. One friend I must mention, as we made his acquaintance there for the first time, Mr. Knox, well-known in Marlborough Street, and a brilliant writer for many years in the Times. He came to see us last summer, and as he left the house (with his wife, he said to her, with reference to my husband, "That man wants a year's rest!" He little knew how near the object of his sympathy was to entering into a long rest - the rest of Paradise.

In the spring of 1880 George began to complain of a pain in the side of his head; but so great was his dislike to having medical advice that it was only by a "ruse" that I could

procure for him a tonic from our doctor. To my great relief, in May, our friend, the Reverend Lancelot Sanderson, of Elstree School, offered him his lodge for fishing purposes, at Inver-pollie, Sutherlandshire, for a month; and George went with much pleasure, taking with him a little party of friends and relations to whom he thought the change would be beneficial. I was disappointed on his return to see him looking still very thin and careworn, as I had hoped that the change and wild free life would have done him great good; but his application to business continued to be unremitting, and his natural energy amounted at times to feverish restlessness.

Soon after his return from Scotland, we started for a little tour in Switzerland, taking with us our three elder girls. We passed a delightful three weeks in that glorious country; but George did not seem so well, or in such good spirits as he usually was when on a holiday. Although he was enchanted with Mürren and the Rigi, the heat of the valleys oppressed him, and he constantly complained of headache and weariness.

In the winter of 1881, George bought a house in London, 46, Grosvenor Street, partly because he wished by this means to obtain a respite from incessant travelling to and from London, and partly to give his children advantages of education that could not be obtained at Elstree.

In the June of the same year, we went to the Davys', Spean Lodge, and were very much pleased with the new church, St. Andrew's, Fort William, lately built by George Davy, and which is elaborately beautiful.

On leaving Spean, we took a driving tour round the west coast of Sutherlandshire, and were enchanted with our excursion, especially with the drive along the sides of Loch Broom, whose banks then were clothed with yellow broom, young firs and larches. We visited Inver-pollie, where George had spent a month the year before, and he was very anxious to shew me this place, and was gratified with my admiration of the wild scenery, and of the weird, curiously-shaped mountains around the lodge.

From thence we drove on to Loch Inver, the road winding above the clear emerald waters of the "Mynch." This pleasant trip to his beloved Highlands was destined to be the last he should ever make, and I well remember the impression made on me, of the wonderful effect the bracing air and change had made on my husband. I was struck by the healthy glow on his face, and by the cheery bright manner that resembled that of old days; and much I wished he could have extended his holiday.

The rest of the summer we spent at Deacon's Hill, as our London House was let, friends and relations, as usual, coming to see us. In narrating what happened this year, I must not forget a very charming little driving tour we took with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. May, from Elstree to Oxford, passing Hughenden, where not very long since George had gone to attend the funeral of our great Statesman, Lord Beaconsfield, whose loss he so deeply deplored, and whom he had ever regarded as one of the best and wisest of England's advisers. We slept at High Wycombe the first night, and drove down the lovely valley of the Thames, then white with May bloom and sweet with scents of Spring, stopping to lunch at Henley, and from thence to Clifton Hampden, where we slept, and on the next day to Oxford, where we spent a very happy Sunday, returning home next day by train.

In the October of this year my husband, Mabel, and I, with our cousin, Colonel Gibbs, started for Holland. We went out of our way for the purpose of seeing the picturesque old city of Antwerp, which interested us greatly, and after leaving this place we went to the Hague, that fascinating "village," with its art museums; to Rotterdam; and to Amsterdam, where we revelled in the glorious collections of pictures. From thence we journeyed, viâ Cologne, to Baden Baden, and on the way, as I watched the glowing tints on the banks of the Rhine, I casually remarked to myself—"If this trip is the last we ever take, it has been the happiest one of all!"

George seemed wonderfully better; he enjoyed his breakfasts - a rare thing for him to do, - and his great appreciation of pictures and of objects of art made this tour a peculiarly interesting one to him. We stayed with most hospitable foreign friends in Baden-Baden, who have a beautiful country house there, and nothing could exceed their liberality and kindness. There was every variety of sport for the gentlemen, and glorious drives into the Black Forest for the ladies. The evenings were passed in the most sociable manner, with music and dancing, and numbers of people of all nationalities dropping in. My husband, who was a keen politician, had an interesting talk with a very distinguished Russian, Prince Volskonsky, who unfolded to him some of the advanced opinions peculiar to "young Russia," but he was not an extreme Revolutionist, and impressed George with the idea of being a remarkably sensible man, as well as an acute observer.

This happy sojourn at Baden-Baden was the last bright time of recreation that we ever spent together. On our way back, viâ Paris, where we intended leaving Mabel with the excellent Pasteur Bersier and his wife for educational purposes, George remarked that he must hasten homewards as he had a "hard month" before him. Little did he imagine that his work on earth, so nobly and unflinchingly done, was to end for ever in November, the month before him,

In Paris we stayed two days, the Secretary to the Chilian Legation, Morla Vicuña, spending the evenings with us. George was much attached to this upright and accomplished man, and always spoke of him with warm affection.

The early part of November was mild and beautiful, and during the short intervals of business, then very pressing, my husband hunted with his pack of harriers. He had lately started the pack, and had taken up this sport as it afforded him great pleasure, and was also a means of seeing more of his neighbours than he otherwise could.

In the middle of November we received very happy letters from Mabel and from the three boys at school, with good reports of them. On my saying what a happy day this had been, George said, with a certain sad solemnity, "Yes, but all the same, I feel as if there was a great blow coming." This remark struck me as strange, as George, although anxious and troubled, as he often was, seldom gave way to feelings of despondency; but the shadow passed, and he went on working as usual, every now and then taking a day with his harriers. One especially lovely day we all drove to the meet, which was held by invitation of Mr. Gilliat at Charley wood, Rickmansworth, and this day of pleasure will long be remembered by all who were present. On the 19th there was to be a meet near St. Alban's, and George went off very much relieved in his mind by the prospect of a holiday, but to my mind looking depressed and pale. He had only a few nights before been talking to me about giving up business altogether, and telling me that he intended to do so in a year's time.

The day was fine, and George seemed particularly to be enjoying the sport, saying to Herbert Gibbs, "What a jolly day we are having," when he suddenly fell forward unconscious on his horse's neck, his cousin, caught him in his arms, the horse mercifully remaining quiet, and had him conveyed to a farm house near, where after some minutes he revived, and after an interval of rest, was brought home in a carriage. He walked up to my room, calling out for me, as he always did, "Beatie!" but in a peculiar tone, which to my ear gave the impression that he had some unpleasant news to convey to me.

He sank into a chair, saying that he had fainted on horseback; but with his usual indomitable pluck and wonderful calmness, he shewed no fear or anxiety about himself, and merely said he had already sent for our doctor, and wished to be instantly put to bed. I noticed a strange and unusual look of great sternness on his face, and a vague fear then seized me that this fainting was something more than ordinary faintness; but as I had not been present, I had no actual ground for my fears, and from that day to the end of the tragedy I remained in a state of stunned and dreamy condition, never at all realising until too late that his days were numbered.



The Sunday passed peacefully; he seemed better, - took beef tea and milk and seltzer water, and was able to listen to the Service that I read to him and to join in the few prayers. Our little girl, Beatrice Rhoda, read to him a poem of Longfellow's; and when she came to the verse,

*"He, the young and strong, who cherished  
Noble longings for the strife,  
By the road side fell and perished,  
Weary with the march of life," -*

he repeated the lines in a deeply solemn tone. Doubtless there swept over his soul the shadow of a coming dread, but it was a fleeting one, for he appeared to have no apprehension that his illness was dangerous; and as he did not speak of or ask for any absent relations or friends, I was misled by his calmness to take a sanguine view of the case, especially as our two local doctors appeared to have no doubt as to his ultimate recovery. Monday and Tuesday passed in quiet hopefulness; on the latter day George was allowed to get up and to lie on a sofa in our room, but he was very weary and drowsy, and complained of a pain in his back. Nevertheless, he, walked about the room with the light step and perfectly upright frame which was peculiar to him, and he said little or nothing of his own sensations.

My brother-in-law, Joseph Gibbs, came to see him, and after he had left him George retired to rest, feeling very tired.

All night he was restless, complaining of heaviness in the head ; and about half-past five in the morning he started up in bed with acute agony in his head, and to my unutterable horror he had another attack of insensibility, with stertorous breathing, which lasted a quarter of an hour, and from which I had no belief that he would recover, so totally unprepared was I for this crisis, never having been enlightened as to the nature of the attacks. I instantly sent for all his relations and for Dr. Wilkes, senior physician of Guy's Hospital, at Henry Gibbs's recommendation; but though a terrible dread had seized my soul, the hopeful view the doctors took of the case buoyed me up again and lulled my fears for that day.

George was very drowsy all that day and spoke little. He was ordered to be kept extremely quiet, and when I sat by him in the course of the afternoon, he did not speak nor did he enquire for any of his relations; the sole remark he made in the afternoon was to say, "This day has had no existence for me."

Next day, Thursday, he was still quiet, complaining only of feeling very heavy and inclined to sleep. During his short sleeps he spoke of things relating to his business.

At five o'clock on that day he had another attack, and we telegraphed again for Dr. Wilkes. But now he fell into a state of unconsciousness in which he remained till Saturday morning, when, as the clock struck nine, his pure and noble spirit passed away, and entered into that perfect rest which "remaineth for the people of God;" and on the fine face there settled down that ineffable calm, and that solemn grandeur of expression that seemed to testify that God had been very near him, and that He had taken His faithful servant into His own holy keeping for evermore.

The numerous relations who had gathered round that dying bed, and watched through those two nights and day of anguish and vain yearning and grief, shewed the unfailing love and reverence they bore him by their deep and untiring sympathy, and if I had been asked to name those whom he would have chosen to watch by him, I should have unhesitatingly mentioned those who were present.

Our daughter Mabel had been brought from Paris by my brother in-law, Joseph Gibbs, but too late to see her loved father in life; she could only kiss his marble brow and place a

lovely wreath of flowers upon that breast that only a few days back beat high with human hopes and fears.

I will not dwell on the days that followed for there must be a veil drawn over this time of darkness; but to all those who may one day experience a like anguish, and know what it is to be stricken to the earth as it were by a heavy blow, I would say that when one least expects it strength is given, and when the horror of a great darkness descends on the fainting soul, then does a light break in upon it that is Heaven-born; and one realises the truth, never before understood, of the words, "My Grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Before I close this memoir I must mention, though very briefly, through fear of intruding one's own feelings on others, how inexpressibly grateful for, how deeply touched I was and have been ever since, by the profound sympathy shewn me and mine by the relations and friends who felt my loss as their own, and who have shewn their sorrow by unflinching care, kindness, and affectionate consideration, which can never be forgotten.

On the 1st of December we laid the mortal remains of my revered husband in the lovely, peaceful churchyard of Clifton Hampden, near his dear father and mother. The oak coffin - with no gloomy pall on it, but entirely covered by the wreaths and crosses of exquisite flowers made by loving hands - was borne by relations, friends, and faithful workers in the office where he had spent the best years of his life, and numbers of people flocked to the solemn service held over him who had been the centre of all our affections and interests,---whose young active life had been so suddenly brought to a close. Who knows but that he had work to do elsewhere?

*"So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?"*

*"We pass; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim with weeds;  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age? It rests with God!"*

So in the quiet churchyard, close to the little cottage where he was born, and near the broad silvery river that he loved, we left him; and I placed the lovely wreath of double violets from dear far-off Somersetshire on the flower-laden coffin, and with it the sunshine, the joys, and the sweetness of eighteen blissful years - but not in despair in Love, and Grief, and Hope !

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In adding a few words concerning my husband's moral and mental qualities, I shall not enter into details of his daily life.

All who knew him, knew how nobly and religiously he fulfilled the duties of his calling, and how he shone in his relationships as Son, Brother, Husband, Father. Few men have been so loyal to their own nearest relations, and, at the same time, so entirely free from narrowness or intolerance.

Nothing annoyed him more than to see a family selfishly engrossed in each other, and making outsiders feel uncomfortable through their being kept in ignorance of the particular jokes and allusions which were engaging the attention of the family.

His native courtesy and high breeding alone would have made this kind of family feeling distasteful to him; but he was actuated by higher motives. He deprecated family exclusiveness, as being selfish, and as tending to make those who cherish it uncharitable in their judgment of all who lie without their own little circle. It was not thus in my husband's house; the stranger found himself as welcome as the friend, at all times and at all seasons. He followed to the letter the command "use hospitality without grudging." Its laws were to him as sacred and binding as they were to the old Eastern Patriarchs. But though his kindness and courtesy to all who came across his path were unfailing, his devotion was more conspicuously seen in his family. Never was there a more faithful brother, nor one who less grudged time or trouble in helping his kinsfolk in any possible way.

Often this was done to great effect in little ways, for a few words of loving warning or advice from him went further than long effusive speeches from any other man.

I pass over in reverent silence the theme of George's virtues as a husband, nor will I desecrate it by my own words of feeble praise. He was one of those rare, chivalrous, pure souls, "who revered his conscience as his king,"

*"Whose glory was redressing human wrong;  
"Who spake no slander; no, nor listened to it;  
"Who loved one only, and who clave to her."*

With his children, George, with the warmest affections, was perfectly just, and never betrayed the slightest partiality; any such betrayal he would have considered injuriously self-indulgent. His calm, reasonable spirit, in passing judgment on his children, and his deep insight into their different characters, made him a father whose loss is irreparable. Few have the patience and the firmness to correct their children's faults, as he did, without shewing temper or cold annoyance, at the same time maintaining a dignity of manner and an evenly poised judgment which made him revered as well as loved. He never acted on impulse, whereby his influence was more deep and lasting; and he did not hesitate to shew his disapproval of any one who encouraged vanity or self-consciousness in his children, either by undue praise or by making them objects of attraction.

His views with regard to education were very liberal. He disliked ignorant women, and although he would not help them to push into the place of men, he thought they had been deplorably neglected in times past; and he believed that in giving them more scope for using their mental powers, and more freedom in choosing their own line of study and culture, we should not only raise the tone of their minds, but give them greater resources in their often lonely lives, and prevent their being tied down either to a life of common-place drudgery or to what is worse, a life of vain and empty pleasure.

He also thought a higher education, as his favourite book "Friends in Council" maintains, would make them more reasonable companions, and therefore to all sensible, as well as to all clever men, more congenial and happier wives. He often said that education was so much "capital," from which the children could "draw" all through their lives, and which he trusted would one day make them feel grateful for the resources and advantages, as well as the independence it gives.

With regard to his sons, he was most anxious that they should all work, and each choose a profession - one that would be suited to their particular capabilities. He did all he could to inspire them with a zeal for learning, and laid great stress on their choosing friends at school who would prove to be real, dependable friends to them. He warned his sons not to be dazzled by what he called "flashy boys," but to choose for their friends gentlemen in the right sense of the word: not to turn to those who were richer or of higher rank than themselves, but to boys who had sterling worth to recommend them. Nothing did he hate more than any kind of snobbishness; and the man who was purse-proud, or proud of rank and made this evident to others, was stamped by him at once as a person to be avoided.

My husband was warmly interested in all parochial affairs, and no application, however humble, ever failed to receive patient attention from him, even at the end of a long day's work. If help in money was needed, his was the open hand that never hesitated to give, and to give liberally; but he was not content with the easy charity of money-giving. He had the much rarer gift of real sympathy, and was always ready with time and trouble to enquire into any case of suffering or distress. Easy and delightful is the power of helping when means are at hand to help, but how rare is it to find one who will give up a day that might have been spent in needful rest or recreation to devote himself to the distresses of some poor stranger! This was the kind of help that my husband delighted to give.

In 1880, he put up an organ chamber and organ in Elstree Parish Church. He had for years past taken his place in the choir, and always studied his parts in the hymns and chants, however tired and fagged he might be on the Saturday evenings. He had wished for a long time to beautify the Church, where he had worshipped Sunday after Sunday the "Giver of all good things." This gift was one that could not be hidden; but as a rule, and through the whole course of his life, my husband was one of those who, as a quaint and faithful friend said in speaking of him, "will do good by stealth and blush to find it fame."<sup>1</sup> To tell of all the kind and generous things he did for the afflicted, the suffering and the sad, not to mention those whom he felt bound to help, and those who, having no claim, were yet aided without hesitation and without stint-- to tell of all this would be to fill a volume; and I knew him well enough to fear that I have said too much already. In the hearts of those whom he befriended, his memory must ever live cherished in loving gratitude.

I will mention a remark he once made with reference to doing good: it was that he considered the duty of benefiting the individual the one that should first be fulfilled; and that a man who gave large sums to any general charity or scheme of benevolence, while those about him were in need of help, did not rightly understand his obligations. I think in all these things, whether small or great, he acted from high religious motives; but he rarely if ever spoke of his own feelings and convictions, and only with great reluctance did he ever pass judgment on the characters of others. He suspected no one of evil, but trusted and believed in the goodness of all about him to the utmost limit, and it was a great struggle to him, even when he had discovered he had been deceived, to give them up entirely. He clung to the last straw of hope and belief in some remnant of goodness in them.

If it chanced that he had to find fault, no one knew better than he how to "speak the truth in love"; and however righteously, however justly indignant he might be with the offender, he never allowed his anger to pass reasonable bounds, nor the "sun to go down upon his wrath." If there was a spark of good to be worked upon, he would do all that lay in his power to fan that spark into a flame. It was only from the callous, the mean, and the crafty that he turned away with sickening heart and depressed spirit. I have said he spoke little of his religious feelings. He was a good Churchman, most tolerant of other people's views and opinions; and there was a reality in his religion that was manifested in his daily life, in his

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<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, our friends have put up a beautiful Chancel Screen in Elstree Church; and George Davy, a richly-carved West Door at St. Andrew's, Fort William, in memory of my husband.

simple, humble following of the revered parents who had set him an example of personal holiness, and in his large and wide embracing charitableness.

His mental capacity corresponded to his moral character. He was a "born arbitrator," as a friend described him. He had a natural gift for commanding and ruling his fellow men, without appearing to domineer; and the feminine tact which he possessed to an extraordinary degree enabled him to exercise this power, whether it was employed in arbitrating or in advising, in a manner that never wounded, and that invariably impressed those interested with the sense that not only was he right but that what he counselled was the best thing for them. The same friend remarked that George Gibbs had no difficulty in seeing what was the right thing to do, and that without a shade of hesitation; it almost seemed as if he had been born "choosing the good and eschewing the evil," so unhesitatingly did he act on the side of right and honour, and so unswervingly did he hold fast the principles of a pure and loyal creed.

He had a great love for politics, and if time and circumstances had permitted he would have taken an active interest in them. His clear judgment and logical mind enabled him to grasp political situations and deal with difficult problems in this province with remarkable ability; but a life of unceasing toil, and one in which all his best powers were consumed, excluded all hope of his being ever at liberty to take an active part in political affairs. Had his life been otherwise ordered, I feel certain that a political career would have been to him not only a most congenial one, but admirably suited to his alert and logical mind.

When young, George had comparatively small educational advantages; but his great industry helped him to acquire languages, and to cultivate literary tastes later in life, and nothing relieved his hard-worked brain more completely than reading well-written books of history, biography, and criticism, and good novels. Thackeray, George Eliot, Bulwer Lytton, and Nathaniel Hawthorne were his favourites in fiction, not to speak of some minor authors. The merely sensational novel he disliked, unless a humorous element prevailed in its contents and amused him during a tired hour or so. I have already spoken about his love for music, which was in-born. Whenever he had leisure in the evenings he would hear the children's music, sing part songs with them, and encourage them in every way to cultivate the slightest talent for music that they possessed.

With such a temperament, he naturally liked society of a congenial kind, and I think if he had been spared would have gathered pleasant intellectual circles round him in London, and renewed acquaintances with interesting people whom we had met in our early married days and from whom we had been somewhat removed by our country life at Elstree. Of course, tired out as George was in the evening, he could not have indulged in social enjoyments without hazarding his health, and he was much too conscientious to sacrifice what he knew was essential to his daily employments. But he did often regret that he could see so little of his friends, and I have heard him say with a sigh, "I am consumed by business, I have no time for the amenities of life." He had resolutely determined to retire in the course of another year from a business life that had worn him to a shadow, and I think the life of a country gentleman was the one most congenial to his tastes: not the life of an idle country gentleman - that would have made him utterly wretched, but with just enough mental occupation to keep his brains, as he said, in good order, and enough leisure in the day for the enjoyment of out-door exercise. This with congenial society, would have constituted a happy useful existence, and we often pictured the time, alas! never to come, when he should be free to enjoy the healthy calm life I have described.

Besides tastes for out-door pursuits, he had a natural turn for mechanics, and was very fond of engineering, and of chemistry.

Of his business talents I am not qualified to speak; but I doubt not that he was distinguished in business by the same clear-sightedness and directness of purpose that I have already noted, and that here too was seen his wonderful gentleness and consideration for the feelings of others.



I have said before that he devoted himself to the interests of the firm in which he occupied so prominent a place. This spirit of self-sacrifice was evident in all that he did, and through all the vicissitudes of his life. To shew the kind of feeling he had about his duties towards the House, I will quote a few lines from a letter to me, written on his way to Mexico on business, in 1869: "What we must all do now is to look forward to April, when, by God's blessing, we shall come together again, and be all the happier for feeling that we have not let our love for each other stand in the way of an imperative duty!"

With these words I conclude this little sketch of my husband's life, believing that "he being dead, yet speaketh," and that the generation that comes after him will not lose sight of the bright example he has left them. Though life can never be the same to those who loved him, yet the fact of having known and loved him cannot fail to make them better, purer, - therefore happier. "For we needs must love the highest when we see it."

*"Vattene in pace, Alma beata e bella,  
Vattene in pace alla superne sede,  
E lascia all 'altri esempio di tua fede."*

LAURA BEATRICE GIBBS.