

" 'I do not wish to remove; I am well enough here.'

"There is a need-be for removing. She will arrange her dress a little then. Rude voices answer, 'You have not got far to go.' She too is led to the hell-gate—a manifest Queen's Friend. She shivers back at the sight of bloody sabres; but there is no return! Onwards! That fair hind head is cleft with the axe, the neck is severed. That fair body is cut in fragments, with indignities and obscene horrors of moustachio *grands levres* which human nature would fain find incredible,—which shall be read in the original language only. She was beautiful, she was good, she had known no happiness. Young hearts, generation after generation, will think with themselves, 'O worthy of worship, thou king-descended, God-descended, and poor sister woman! Why was not I there, and some Sword Balmung or Thor's Hammer in my hand?' Her head is fixed on a pike, paraded under the windows of the Temple, that a still more hated, a Marie Antoinette, may see."

Luridly realistic as this description reads in 1906, the effect of the news upon the household at Slough in 1792 must have been startlingly intensified by the so recent visit of the unfortunate victim—one bit of special personal interest and regret in the tragedies of great seething Paris,

which had its army of martyrs in the Revolution as surely as had, and has, and will have, the Church militant here on earth.

Another aristocratic visitor who may be mentioned was the Prince of Orange, who, not finding any one at home, left a quaint note to inquire whether it were true that Mr Herschel had discovered a new star whose light was not as that of common stars, but with swallow-tails! The reply may be guessed, as also the amusement caused in the scientific *menage* by the ingenuous inquiry.

But the happy days of *solitude a deux*, as the French prettily call it, were now drawing to a close, and it was another woman's hand that was destined for many a long day to darken the happiness of the devoted little sister.

On the 8th of May 1788 William Herschel married Mary, only child of James Baldwin, and widow of Mr John Pitt

For sixteen years Caroline had devoted herself to him with an identity of interest and a supreme self-sacrifice, unique even among the histories of unselfish women; and we can almost see the tear-dimmed eyes and quivering fingers with which she made the last entry in her Journal of that year, "I gave up my place as housekeeper."

We cannot doubt that expostulations ensued, and that propositions were made that she should

continue to live at Collingwood; but she was no longer *needed*,—there lay the sting. Through evil report and good report she had never thought but of him, and now another was to enter into her kingdom. That the bride was gentle and amiable, and that she brought with her a jointure which enabled her husband to experiment still more unfetteredly, did not make the blow any less hard for Caroline to bear; and, in the destruction of all her personal papers from 1788 to 1798, we can see plainly that she thought it best to destroy what in the very anguish of her soul she had written. In after years she learned to love and esteem her sister-in-law, for her own sake as well as for the sake of him whom both loved so dearly.

As we read of the lonely vigils of Caroline Herschel in the poor cottage of Spratt, the workman, and the unwritten story of her aching heart, we think irresistibly of Mrs Carlyle and her less reasonable, but somewhat similar, sorrow. As Mrs Ireland touchingly says, "She had clung to her husband through long weary years of obscurity and struggle, having given lavishly of her own health and strength to make his path smooth for him, and now she began to feel as if, after all, it were not she who reaped the golden harvest of his rapidly-growing success, but this other lady, whom she could not feel to be her intellectual superior, and who knew none of the dark, terrible, sunless hours spent in

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Spratt *menage*. When the family were away she used to go and stay in the house, looking after the interests of him whom she loved so well; but there is a profound melancholy in an entry in her Journal made on one of these occasions, "All came home; and I went to my solitude again."

Her "Book of work done" shows no decrease of mental or physical activity, but the contrast between her own small lodging and the happy home-life so near, from which, rightly or wrongly, she felt herself debarred, must often have been very bitter. Within a stone's-throw was all that she most cared for, brother and nephew—the little John Herschel, born in 1792, who in after years inherited the love which she had lavished upon his father, and the genius which enabled him to sweep the southern hemisphere, from his observatory at Feldhausen, with the same earnest assiduity which had characterised his father and his aunt in their northern surveys.

Of this South African Expedition she exclaimed in her vigorous Anglo-German, "Ja, if I was thirty or forty years younger and could go too! In Gottes Namen!"

"Bills and receipts for my Comets" is the quaint way in which she docketed her memoranda relative to these erratic phenomena, for five of which, at least, she could claim undisputed priority of discovery. The most laborious of her undertakings,

however, was <sup>^</sup> entah<sup>^</sup>tr <sup>\*\*\*</sup> a*i* flu; star-chislers and rt<sup>\*\*</sup>buln! olwrwd h) h<i <sup>^</sup><sup>\*\*\*</sup>f tit-r, and it was k<r this that tli>- p>k<l HMF<sup>if</sup>S ff ill-\* IhyM ,Avir<sup>^</sup>fioiiiiif>il Societv was \vi\*<sup>d</sup> !-• iii-r in r-,;;;5. thih>\wd bv tin/ extraordinary distm<"tiMi of ;tn h-n<>nuy member-ship. Tiiin catah<sup>^</sup>ut: wa?<sup>\*</sup> th<- >>>;itoomt' of many wars of lal)?Hlr. but ic WHH H Id.<sup>^</sup>m >>>'l<sub>M</sub>VC, HH b>>>>u<< the curriT-st<sup>^</sup>m,' i<k th>\* t<sup>^</sup>i.M<sup>^</sup>h- ^" his lam<sup>\*\*</sup>.

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was still strong in Caroline when, in 1822, the tie of more than fifty years was for ever broken, and William Herschel, full of age, wisdom and honour, saw the sun set for the last time on earth, and woke to find himself beyond the stars. It was when stupefied with grief that Caroline took the fatal step of making over herself and all her little capital to the care of Dietrich. What was at the root of her action we can only guess. Possibly she had some sort of craving to take up once more a place in the home of her childhood, and hoped to bury her sorrow in associations that would be both old and new.

"Distance lends enchantment," and she forgot that she had been steadily moving and progressing, while Hanover had been comparatively standing still. At seventy-two the "knitting up" of old friendships was an impossibility, and there was nothing to compensate for, nothing to reconcile her to, the dull commonplaceness of the life to which she had condemned herself.

"A few books and my sweeper" is the pathetically brief inventory of her possessions at this time; and her only capital, £500—the savings of fifty years of toil—she transferred to Dietrich, thus giving herself no possibility of retracting her determination of leaving England for ever and settling in Hanover with him. Little did she expect that twenty-five years more of life would

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"I hardly ever knew a man of his age labouring under more infirmities, nor bearing them with less patience." Then her patience and his impatience alike ended, and he went to his own place.

That Caroline Herschel was merry as well as wise, we have ample proofs in her quaint observations upon men and things.

After Dietrich's death she removed to 376 Braunschweiger Strasse, where, with her confidential servant Betty, she lived for fifteen years in an eventide that had in it some faint after-glow of the days that were gone.

The sparseness of her belongings seems to have been a source of amusement to her rather than of chagrin, as witness the following items in her household inventory:—

"Plate. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

"Requisites for self and servant, mostly bought at fairs.

"Cane-bottomed chairs, each valued at eighteen-pence" (of which she says proudly, "after seven years' use, *like new*").

"About fifty books, and a few tea-things."

Little tea-parties would seem sometimes to have ensnared her in their giddy vortex, for we observe that she had twelve tea-spoons; but pudding, vegetables, and salt must have been "unconsidered trifles," for each of which she had but one spoon.

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