

**PERSONAL MEMORANDA**

By Elizabeth Howard

I was born in the year 1779 and was the only daughter who survived childhood. My parents then resided in the house attached to my father's business premises in Old Street, St. Luke's. The neighbourhood of the old mansion was at that time almost rural and there was a small garden at a little distance from the house, which I well remember as a delightful play place for the younger part of the family.

There was an old wall at the back on which grew the finest jasmine tree I ever remember to have seen. But all this so pleasant to my earliest recollections was sacrificed for the sake of supplying additional workshops, and as the neighbourhood became more populous of course it lost its rural character.

After the death of my little sisters, my brothers being at school, I experienced the loneliness of an only child varied occasionally by the company of a young visitor.

My early instructress was a young woman, a Friend, who filled the station of upper servant in the family; the instructions I received amounted to little more than long columns of spelling learned by heart in the Ackworth school spelling book, monotonous reading and needlework. To the latter I had a special dislike. The method of teaching was not at all inviting to a young scholar, but having a great inclination for reading, I read for my own entertainment such books as I could find. In those days there was very little variety of books suitable for children and young persons; amongst those which I remember with pleasure were Watts' hymns, Gay's Esop's fables, a collection of voyages and travels in 24 small volumes, Pilgrims Progress and Robinson Crusoe. In my childhood I seldom saw the country except once in the course of the summer when we went to my grandfather Howard's at Wandsworth where I used to meet some of my cousins. There was a pretty garden and small summer house, which afforded much enjoyment. We also greatly enjoyed an occasional walk with our good old Grandfather who was fond of taking us to Putney and other places on the banks of the Thames. My grandmother was very infirm and she was older than her husband. About the age of 11 and a half I was sent to a boarding school at Wandsworth, kept by Catherine West. There were between 20 and 30 girls and I was the middle in age.

My governess was a person of good natural abilities and in some respects qualified for her position, but the system of instruction was not fitted to develop the mind, and the teachers being uninformed themselves, could not impart much to their pupils. In this establishment there was much to discourage and much to endure from variety of disposition and limited indulgence. Few as the advantages were, had I but fully availed myself of them I might have gained much information. I think I must have been a dull scholar rather than a troublesome one; much time was devoted to things of little importance, silk embroidery for instance, which was a source of great vexation to me. Grammar was very little taught but a great point was made of spelling and the meaning of words and our conduct was well superintended. Writing and arithmetic were taught by a master who attended twice in the week. He was a remarkably stiff and austere man, not disposed to give that assistance to his pupils which would have been a benefit to them. The same master taught French and geography. I learned some French but just as I was beginning to make some progress I was cut off from instruction by leaving school at the age of fourteen and a quarter.

As to our recreations we were allowed plenty of exercise in the open air in a good sized playground. Skipping in the long rope was a favourite amusement. Battledore and Shuttlecock and other indoor games we had in a roughish sort of a room set apart for a playground and some other purposes. Our enjoyments and indulgencies were few, but when they did occur such as a half-holiday or a walk they were the more highly prized. We had no examination, no prizes, nor anything to excite to exertion in the acquisition of knowledge.

Soon after I returned home my father took a house in Stamford Hill from which he went daily to business, so that my mother and I were left very much alone. I did not improve the time as I might have done by carrying on any branch of learning. I was much occupied in domestic employments and in needlework assisting my mother in the care of my father's and brothers' linen. Various events occurred during the next few years some of a painful nature in which of course I had much share. My health was not at all strong for several years and I think I had too much upon me. Not having any sister I often felt the want of a young companion who would have shared my occupations and participated in the joys and sorrows which fell to my lot.

Robert Howard  
(1738-1812)  
Elizabeth Leatham  
(1742-1816)

Luke (1772-1864)  
William  
(1774-1860)

Isaac (1777)  
George(1778 -?)  
Elizabeth  
(1779-1869)  
Mary (1782-86)  
Sarah (1785-86)

Robert Howard  
(1706-1793)  
Elizabeth Cullen  
(1700-1785)

Of friendships I had some of an agreeable nature which I can look back to with pleasure after the lapse of many years. The important event of my brother Luke Howard's marriage gave great pleasure to my parents and myself from his excellent choice. Of course there were many preparations to make, some of which fell to my share, but things at that time were conducted in a very different way from what they are now.

My brother took a house at Highbury Terrace, but at the suggestion of the mother of the bride, it was given up, as she was best satisfied that her daughter should commence her married life at the business house in Fleet Street. The wedding day was a cold frosty day in a dull season the 7<sup>th</sup> of 12<sup>th</sup> month 1796. The company consisted of parents on both sides, uncles, aunts and a few other relatives. The wedding dinner was at John Eliot's in Bartholomew Close, a very respectable mansion of his own building. The bridegroom was a slight young man of 24 dressed in light coloured apparel and a triangular hat. The bride was three years older with the appearance of greater difference in age, and dressed like a middle-aged friend. Anne Sherwood and Mary Weston cousins of the bride were Bridesmaids, and they were the only relations she had at her wedding except her Father Mother and Brother for she had never had either Uncle Aunt sister of first cousin, her father's only sister having died before her birth.

Mariabella Eliot  
(1769-1852)

Mariabella Eliot  
(1736-1769)

I was the partner of John Eliot Junr. My dress at the age of 17 was much more suited to ten or twenty years older, but not otherwise that nice and fit for a bridal occasion, perhaps the lightest in the company.

John Eliot  
(1771-1830)

The afternoon and evening were agreeably spent. Wedding journeys were not then thought of, so the newly married pair had only to go from Bartholomew Close to their house in Fleet Street. They did not reside long in London for within the year they removed to Plaistow.

Six years afterwards my brother William was married, but it was a very different occasion. Being married at Church none of his own relations were present except perhaps a cousin who some years before had left the Society. My brother William on his marriage settled in Old Street and resided there for some years which made a great difference in the arrangements there, for the house was modernised and handsomely fitted up. My brother afterwards removed to Charter House Square, and then to a good house and grounds in Hanger Lane, Tottenham, and eventually to Hartley House near Plymouth. On my brother's leaving Old Street the house came again into my father's possession and was much used by him as he was frequently in town. In the year 1800 when I was in my 21<sup>st</sup> year I accompanied my Father, Uncle Thomas Howard and my Cousin Anne Howard (who was a few months older than myself) on a journey into Yorkshire. This being my first visit to my mother's native county I remember was very interesting to me. The weather was intensely hot. We travelled by the Mail Coach, then the most rapid conveyance, and we reached my Uncle John Leatham's at Pontefract in 24 hours after leaving London. My cousin and I stayed at my Uncle J.L.'s, where we were most hospitably entertained. The family consisted of my uncle and aunt and their two sons, my cousins William Leatham and his younger brother Flintoff and one daughter. The latter did not live long after this time. My uncle lived at the business house in the Market Place.

21 Aug 1802

William Howard  
(1774-1860)  
Ann Bell

Thomas Howard  
(1736-1824)

My father stayed at the Institution at Ackworth, being an active member of the committee, and one of his objects in this journey being to attend the General meeting. We went to the different sittings of the General meeting which interested us much, and I enjoyed seeing so many friends. The school was in a very different state then from what it is now, and all was new to me. My father had exerted himself to promote the welfare of the Institution from the very commencement. How little did I then anticipate that in coming years I should so frequently visit Ackworth as the home of my dear brother Luke Howard.

The time spent in Pontefract was filled up with visiting and seeing the country and my cousin and I were very much interested in some of the Yorkshire customs. From Pontefract we went to Barton near Malton to visit my uncle Isaac Leatham, who was the occupier of a well cultivated farm adjoining the Castle Howard estate. After a little more travelling in that part of Yorkshire my father left us to return to London. I must not forget to mention that in going to Barton we passed through York, and had the pleasure of visiting the Minster.

My cousin and I accompanied my uncle Thomas Howard to Nottingham where his youngest son was apprenticed. After a little stay there we went to Matlock and were delighted to explore some of the wonders of the place and neighbourhood.

We returned home by Post Chaise after about a month's absence, having seen much that greatly interested us. As years went on my time was much devoted to the care of infirm parents, and the latter part of my father's life I used to go to town with him. For his connection with business and various objects of interest did not cease until he was quite unable to give his attention to them.

My Father died in 1812 and very soon after his decease my mother and I removed to Bruce Grove, Tottenham, our departure from Stamford Hill was hastened by a disagreeable landlord, out of whose hands my father wished us to get as soon as possible.

In the long retrospect of time now fifty years that I have resided in this place, and leaving me, since the recent death of my friend Anne Ball, the oldest inhabitant of Bruce Grove, I have witnessed many changes both in the extent of the place and in the largely increased number of inhabitants.

In my own immediate circle two generations have risen up, and my dear brother now in his 90<sup>th</sup> year and myself nearly 83 are the only ones left in our generation in the Howard family. With my decease the name will cease to exist in the Society of Friends (with the exception of one of my young nephews David Howard, who I have just learned is still a member of the Society) after two centuries in which it has been more or less numerous, though confined I believe to our circle of relations. This remark only refers to the name, as there are some both of my father's and uncle's descendants who are still members of the Society of Friends. But whether in the Society or not it is my earnest desire that all should belong to the true church, which is not confined to any sect or party. As to myself my attachment remains strong to the profession in which I was brought up and though now excluded by infirmities from taking any active part or indeed from sharing in any public privilege connected with the Society, my interest in its welfare is unabated and I hope for its increasing prosperity on the most essential things.

On first coming to Tottenham being then of active habits I was soon induced to engage in various benevolent undertakings particularly the girls school which was established soon after I came to reside in Tottenham and which for many years engrossed much of my time and attention. The Tottenham Ladies bible Association was established about six years after I came to live in Bruce grove. And on the retirement from Tottenham as a place of residence of my beloved sister, the office of treasurer devolved upon me, and my name still stands as Treasurer, though the duties belonging to the office are now discharged by my friend R. Stickney.

From the state of my mother's health during the four years she survived my father, she required close attention. After her decease I had more time of course at my own disposal, which was interrupted however by several severe attacks of illness, but through all I have been brought beyond expectation to my present advanced age, and I have indeed great reason to number my mercies which have followed me all my life long.

An intimate friendship with my dear old friend Margaret Pope commenced in 1815. It was a great support and comfort to me when I was left alone and now that we are so far advanced in the journey of life, it continues unabated. We have spent much time together but within the last few years this enjoyment has been much curtailed as from increasing infirmities we have been more confined to our respective homes. For more than 30 years, M. Pope was my guest at yearly Meeting, and we have together partaken of the company of our friends in doing what we could to entertain them at dinners during the Yearly Meeting, though M.P. continued the practice some years after I gave it up. It is a source of great pleasure to me to see my dear friend in the enjoyment of much that contributes to her own benefit and that of others and that in dispensing to others it has been returned with rich blessing to herself. M.P. has no very near relations, but she has a companion who has been with her for many years, who is well fitted for the position and between whom and M.P. there exists a mutual friendship.

To return to my present state of age and infirmity I am often reminded of those who are gone, as well as of the kind thoughtfulness of some of my younger relatives by the chair which I occupy and which contributes to my ease and comfort for in consequence of my inability to use active exertion I am usually to be found 12 hours a day seated in my elegant chair of carved walnut and green velvet. The chair besides its elegance and the ease which it affords me, has a greatly added value as the gift of my two dear nephews presented to me on the 7<sup>th</sup> of 12<sup>th</sup> month 1851, the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my brother and sister's marriage and the last before her decease. On this occasion the aged and beloved parents their children and grandchildren met under my roof to spend the evening together in pleasant social intercourse and before we separated the 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm was read and the voice of prayer was heard for a blessing on the assembled family circle. In less than three months after this reunion my dear sister was called to her rest, her long and useful life being closed in peace after a short but severe attack of increase illness.

?Gt-nephew:  
David Howard  
(1839-1916)

(25 Oct 1816)

(23 Feb 1852)

To those who are much engaged in the pursuits of active life it may seem as if time must hang heavily when day after day is passed with very little variety. This however is not my experience and it may not be uninteresting to know how an aged aunt occupies herself. I enjoy rising early, particularly in the summer, but being dependent on assistance, I do not generally begin my day downstairs before 9 o'clock. After my domestic arrangements are made with my cook, I usually devote some time to reading.

I have in my time taken great pleasure in the distribution of tracts and small books, and I still do something in that way, and as I like to know the character of the books I distribute, I generally read them and this affords me both a pleasant and profitable occupation. There are several periodical publications which I make a point of reading and they in some degree keep me informed of what is going on, for although I am so very much withdrawn from society I feel a great interest in all right efforts to do good. I am privileged at times to have social visits and calls from my friends and I occasionally return these calls, but owing to my great deafness, social intercourse is very much restricted and this make me fall back with all the more pleasure on books. Reading has always been a source of very great pleasure to me, and never more so than during the years that deafness has shut me out from social converse and it is a great blessing that my sight has been so comparatively good though now it is failing in some degree.

I occasionally too when the weather is fine enjoy a drive out and when in the course of a little expedition of this kind I call upon a friend the visit is often paid in the carriage to spare me the exertion of getting out.

I am sometimes confined in the house for a good while together; for instance last autumn and winter I was not out of doors for six months and it is now more than nine years since I slept out of my own house.

A young person might be ready to say What dull work! And so it might be and doubtless would be to those who have their bodily powers in full vigour, but with lessened capabilities there is generally a lessened desire for change.

I must not omit to mention my garden, which has been a great pleasure to me, and as I still am able with assistance to walk a little in it, I do not lose my enjoyment in it and when I cannot walk I can see it from my windows and that is cheering.

For many months I have been quite prevented from going to meeting, and not being able to join my friends is a great privation, for though my deafness prevents me hearing anything that might be said yet as long as I had ability in other respects I did not consider that a sufficient reason to keep me away from the religious assemblies of my Friends with whom I have felt it in times past a privilege to meet.

My opportunities for social intercourse are now very much curtailed, but among the friendships which have been and are a source of pleasure to me I would specially mention that of the Forster family for many years and their Christian fellowship has at times afforded me much comfort. We have been much united in different objects of benevolent interest connected with this village particularly the Bible Society and the Girls School, also in Tract distribution not confined to the village.

Now having arrived at the age of nearly 83, I am privileged to enjoy a tolerable share of health, but with greatly lessened bodily powers. I am thankful that active exertion which once was both a pleasure and a duty is no longer called for.

In looking back on this long life I desire to remember my mercies and to seek to be ready for the great change which cannot be far distant and whether more or less warning be given of its near approach, may I be found watching for His coming who is the Resurrection and the Life.

(She died 1869)

*Signed:* Elizabeth Howard

Bruce Grove 11 mo., 21. 1862