

No. 8.

A Speech on the principal traits of the character, and incidents of the life of Mrs. Harriet Sewell.

As the object of our meeting on this day, is the cultivation of a Missionary Spirit within our breasts.

Shurely nothing can be more effectual than a history of the life of one of those eminent apostles of the Lord, laid before our view, who counted not their lives dear to them, but broke the cords that bound them to their Country, and the society of friends, and not fearing the rough ocean Surge, fled across its stormy bosom, and hastening to lend their aid to conquer the votaries of Satan besieging the City of the Lord.

And more especially if these words of the poet be true,
the mighty with their mighty deeds,
composedly we view,
but the weak with feebler deeds,
our admiration move.

Will a bright example from amongst the weaker sex of our kind, certainly be the means of effecting our purpose in the greatest degree. Therefore your attention shall be called to the principal traits of the character and incidents of the life of Mrs. Harriet Sewell wife of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Sewell missionary to India. Her bright subject of our meditation, ^{even} of whom considering the importance of her life, with the small number of her years, we could almost say she is unparalleled in the annals of female glory. She was the daughter of Mr. Moses Sturges a merchant of Haverhill Mass. and was born Oct. 10, 1793. Her childhood was marked

with cheerfulness, sensibility, and a taste for reading.
She manifested no peculiar and lasting seriousness before the year
1816. In the summer of that year, while at the Academy in Bradford,
a place highly favoured of the Lord, she first became the subject
of those deep religious impressions, which laid the foundation of her
christian life. Then it was that she became astonished at her sinful, and
vain pursuits, and was aroused to attend to the one thing needful.
She turned off her eyes from beholding vanity, and employed her
leisure in searching the Scriptures, and listening to the instructions
of those who taught her the way of life.

She saw that the ways of vanity, were they ways which she had pursued
She therefore sought to humble herself and seek for mercy through
the merits of a crucified redeemer, nor did she seek in vain,
but found that Jesus is ever willing to receive all that in
humility rely on his merits, and in no other than the arms of his
love was she willing to give rest to her soul.

Being desirous to embrace every means of uniting herself closer with
God, she found it both useful and encouraging, to review and write
down her religious experience and the exercises of her mind, hoping
that, by frequently reading them, she would be led to adore the riches of
Sovereign grace, praise the Lord for his former kindness to her, and
feel encouraged to persevere in a holy life.

From them I have drawn the following.

The first ten years of her life were spent in vanity; she was entirely
ignorant of the depravity of her heart. The summer that she entered
her eleventh year, she attended a dancing school. But although she
had never heard it intimated that such amusements were criminal;
yet frequent would her conscience tell her that her time

was foolishly spent, and therefore she could not rest, until she had solemnly determined, that when the school closed, she would immediately become religious. But these resolutions were not carried into effect.

When she entered her thirteenth year, she was sent by her parents, to the Academy at Bradford. A revival of religion commenced in the neighbourhood which in a short time spread into the school. A large number of the young ladies were anxiously inquiring, what they should do to inherit eternal life, upon which she began to enquire what these things meant. When her attention was solemnly called to the concerns of her immortal soul, but she was a stranger to hope; she feared the ridicule of her gay companions, and her heart was opposed to the character of God; but feeling that, if she continued an enemy to his government, she must eternally perish.

Her convictions of sin were not so pungent and distressing, as many have had; but they were of long continuance. It was more than three months, before she was brought to cast her soul on the Saviour of sinners, and rely on him alone for salvation. The extasies, which many new-born souls possess, were not hers. But if she was not lost in rapture on reflecting upon what she had escaped, she was filled with a sweet peace, a heavenly calmness, which she found herself unable to describe.

The honours, applauses, and titles of this vain world appeared like trifles light as air. The character of Christ appeared infinitely lovely, and with the Psalmist, she could say, whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth I desire besides thee.

Her gay associates were renounced, and the friends of Jesus became her dear friends. The destitute, broken state of the Church at Haverhill prevented her from openly professing her faith in Jesus; but it was a privilege, which she longed to enjoy.

But alas! these seasons so precious, did not long continue. Soon was she led to exclaim --- What I were as in months past, her zeal for the cause

of religion almost entirely abated; while this vain world engrossed her affection, which had been consecrated to the service of her Redeemer. Day after day began to be foolishly spent in vanity and sin. The Bible once so lovely, was entirely neglected. The company of Christians became, irksome and unpleasant, and she endeavoured to avoid them.

and indeed she seemed but fitting herself for a vessel of wrath. The still small voice of the Spirit would frequently whisper, "all is not right;" and caused her to pass many long nights sleepless in misery, but such conflicts did not bring her home to the fold, from which, ~~in~~ and like a stray lamb, she had wandered far away.

The death of a beloved father and uncle, had but little effect on her hardened heart.

how astonishing is the long-suffering of Jehovah, because of the riches of his mercy he did not leave her; he had prepared her heart to receive his grace, and he glorified the riches of his mercy, by carrying on the work.

She continued in her deplorable state, until providentially she was invited to visit a friend in Newburyport. and she complied with the invitation. on the evening previous to her return home, she attended public worship. it was on the 28th of June 1809, the truths of the Gospel which were delivered, sunk deep into her inmost ~~part~~ ^{heart} and her past transgressions heaped like mountains before her. The most poignant anguish seized her mind. Her carnal security fled; and she felt herself a guilty transgressor, washed before a holy God. On the next day she returned to Haverhill, and then made the solemn resolution, in reliance on divine strength, that she would make a sincere dedication of her all to her Creator, both for time and eternity. The duty of professing publicly on which side she was, now was impressed on her mind. She came forward, and offered herself to the church; was accepted; received into communion; and commemorated, for the first time, the dying love of the blessed Jesus, August 16th 1809

This was a precious season, long to be remembered, the manner of spending the remainder of her life, in the most beneficial manner to her soul, became the subject of her meditation; she would frequently conclude that she would no more leave the residence of her mother— have no more to do with the world; but seclude herself, and spend the few remaining days entirely devoted to the Best of Things. But this she said would not be following the example of the blessed Jesus. So, while I am in the world, let it be my constant endeavour to do all the good I can to my fellow mortals, to rise above its flattery and flatteries, and give no occasion for any reproach to be brought upon the cause of religion.

A great desire now arose in her heart, of becoming actively engaged in the cause of her redeemer, and expressing her concern for the welfare of immortal souls, to a friend she wrote thus, Oh my beloved friend, you cannot know my feelings. But it is dreadful to see mortals, bound to eternity, spending their lives with no apparent concern about their never dying souls, and alluding to those who once, with her were inquiring what they should do to be saved but had now become careless. But it is if possible, more dreadful to see those, who have "put their hands to the plough, look back, or being often reproved harden their hearts against God.

A great portion of her time she spent in making herself acquainted with the scriptures, and intreating at the throne of grace, for the conversion of sinners, and the extension of the redeemer's kingdom. And thus she continued serving the Lord in an humble manner until the 20th of October 1810 on the morning of which she was visited by a female friend who informed her, of her determination to quit her native land, to endure the sufferings of a Christian

amongst heathen nations - to spend her days in India's sultry clime -
her heart being affected at this news, she said, Is she willing to do
all this for God; and shall I refuse to lend my little aid, in a
land where divine revelation has shed its clearest rays?
I have felt more, for the salvation of the heathen, this day,
than I recollect to have felt, through my whole past life.
How dreadful their situation! what heart but would
bleed at the idea of the sufferings, of they endure, to obtain the
Days of Paradise! What can I do, that the light of the gospel may
shine upon them, they are perishing for lack of knowledge,
while I enjoy the glorious privileges of a Christian land!
Great God direct me! O make me in some way beneficial
to their immortal souls.

Such were her feelings, and her prayers for the poor benighted heathen
~~but~~ perhaps not thinking, that an opportunity might be offered her, of telling
ing those dear benighted heathen, what she had felt of a Saviour's
Love, and of the worth of his blessed gospel.

But soon was her faith put to the test, a young man by the name
of Samuel Revell, who expected to spend his life, in preaching
a Saviour to the benighted pagans, was introduced into the family
and soon she became the object of attention and desires,
on the 17th of April 1811 she visited Boston where she remained a
few days, and on her return a letter was handed to her, the
contents of which gave her much anxiety and distress.

It was a request for her to become a helpmate with him
in the work of the Lord.
This was an important and interesting question, though according
with her wishes, yet connected with many considerations which

made it hard to decide. Shall I consent to leave forever the Parent of my youth; the friends of my life; the dear scenes of my childhood, and my native country; and go to a land of strangers, "not knowing the thing that shall befall me there?" though the call might be loud and evidently divine, yet these considerations would render it difficult for a tender female to decide, but she had already learned on whom to trust for direction, and said I go to God, and with an unprejudiced mind, seek his guidance.

Her mother she thought would decide on the negative, and contrary to the advice, and express commands of her pious mother she never could act.

But the fact was, that her mother made no objections to her accepting the offer of Mr. Jewell, but cheerfully left her to act according to ~~her~~ as she was convicted of duty. Having thus contemplated the subject and being convinced of duty, in the language of humble submission she thus answers the request, "Here am I, Lord, send me" to distant India shores, if it may be for thy glory. Separate me forever from the guardian of my youth, and the companions of my playful years, and give me the uncivilized ^{self} Heathen of India for my associates, if it be thy will. Numerous were the Epistles which she wrote, on the subject, of her anticipated mission & all combine to prove that she did not only look with complacency but also with pleasure on the expected trials of her future life. At length the long expected hour arrived, when she was to bid a long farewell to all whom on earth she held most dear, it was a scene affecting indeed

A widowed mother's heart with anguish wrung, the tears of sorrow flowing from the eyes of brothers and sisters dear, while the last farewell was pronounced,

on the 6th of Feb^y 1812 when the missionaries were ordained at Salem, Mrs. Sewell was present, on that interesting occasion, she manifested remarkable tranquillity and resolution. Feb. 19, 1812, with Mr. Sewell, and Mr. and Mrs. Judson, she sailed from Salem, ^{in the ship Caravan,} and took leave, forever, of her native land, amidst the prayers and benedictions of multitudes. The first week after their embarkation she was confined to bed with sea sickness, but her spirits were not depressed and she soon recovered. On Feb. 24 the vessel sprung a leak, and was in great danger of sinking during the night, but the winds changed in the morning, and providentially the leak was discovered and prevented from doing further injury.

But to abridge our narrative we will consider them for a season, toying through the boisterous ocean surge, experiencing various changes of calm, & storm, as must be expected at sea, and hasten to meet them along the coast of Orissa, on the morning of the 12th of June the joyful exclamation of "Land! Land!" was heard, it was the coast of Orissa, about twenty miles distant.

This is the land of pagan darkness.
on the 13th they passed the temple of Jaggermatt and the black pagoda after sailing a considerable distance along the coast and receiving numerous visits of the hindoos in boats, and passing hundreds of the hindoo cottages, which resemble hay-stacks in their form and colour, in the midst of cocoa-nut, banana and date trees, a large English house would appear to vary the scene. Here will be seen a

large white pagoda through the trees, the place where the idol gods are worshiped: there a large ancient building in ruins, although they arrived a Calcutta, on the 17 of June Mr. A. and Jussou went on shore: ... and returned in the evening, having entered their names in the police office, they called upon Dr. Carey, at his dwelling-house at Calcutta, were cordially received, and by him invited to go to Serampore. They likewise saw Mr. Marshman and Mr. Ward.

But on the account of the English East India Company being violently opposed to missions, they had but slight hopes of remaining long, a few days after their arrival they took a boat and came to Serampore - 15 miles from Calcutta. There they supposed would be the place, to prepare them for their future trials, and arduous work. There were five large leeward buildings belonging to the mission, viz. the printing office, the common house, Dr. Carey's, Dr. Marshman's, and Mr. Ward's dwelling houses; besides several other convenient out houses.

on the 26th of this month, they went in a lugger (or small boat) to see the worship of the Hindoo god, Juggernaut, a few miles from Serampore. and this is the account Mrs. Jewell gives of it.

They took the idol, a frightful object, out of the pagoda, and bathed him in the water of the Ganges, which they consider sacred. They bathed themselves in the river, repeated long forms of prayers, counted their fingers, poured muddy water down their children's throats, and such like foolish, superstitious ceremonies, in honour of their god. Thousands on thousands were assembled to perform these idolatrous rites.

but dark and intricate are the ways of our God, though his illuminating gospel was so much needed there, yet it appeared that Mr. & Mrs. Jewell were not appointed to

labour in that part of his vineyard, on the 16th July they were ordered by government to leave the British territory, and return to America immediately. This was a command to which they could by no means be reconciled, they could not think of being the instruments of discouraging all the attempts of American Christians, to give these nations the word of life.

on the 28 of July Mr. N. returned from Calcutta, with the news of having obtained liberty to go to the Isle of France! and hearing that the English governor favoured missions, & that a large field for usefulness was there opened, of - 18,000 inhabitants ignorant of Jesus. being forced to leave Serampore, they concluded to go to the Isle of France having provided the necessaries for the voyage Mrs Sewell left the East India's with ^{not} one female companion, - but she went with renewed ~~strength~~ courage, rejoicing that the Lord had opened a way for them to work for him. but their voyage was attended with dearthness for a time, which greatly depressed the spirit of Mrs Sewell. His health failed so that his female companion, ^{feared} that he would soon sink under the trials of a missionary life. but feeble and weak as she herself was, she yet endeavoured to ease ~~the~~ her dear friend's heart of the heavy burden.

but because of contrary winds, they were retarded in their voyage until ^{the} ship sprung a leak, and they were forced to make the nearest land on the Coromandel coast, and on the 8 of September, 1812 they landed at Coringa, a few days before the arrival of the vessel in port. Mrs Sewell was seized with severe pain in the stomach and bowels, the disease of the country; but in three days after going on shore she was in a good degree recovered, on the 19th September they re-embarked, & Mrs N. enjoyed comfortable health till nearly three weeks

after leaving Rorunga, and about 3 week before reaching the
Isle of France, when she became the joyful mother of a daughter.
Four day after, in consequence of a severe storm of wind and rain,
the child took cold, and died on the evening of the next day,
after having been devoted to God in baptism.
thus was this blessed offspring taken away, but soon was the
mother to follow. About a week after Mrs. N.'s confinement,
there were symptoms of a consumption perceived, the disorder
which terminated in her death. She immediately recognized the
disease of which her father, and several other of her family conspired
died, and was confident she should never recover. Her health
continued uniformly in a declining state, till a few weeks after their
arrival at the Isle of France, when ^{the sound of death was heard} approach-
ing, but she was not alarmed at the noise, for she knew on
whom she had trusted, and being told that one day would finish her
earthly career, she replied, "O joyful news; I long to be gone."
Sometime after being asked how death appeared to her, she
replied; "Glorious; and truly welcome;" thus triumphing did
the slender female, who had endured losses & sufferings as cheerfully
and resolutely as an apostle,
and found a grave in the Isle of France.
thus brethren we have heard how even a tender female could bear the
trials and sufferings of a missionary life, in reliance on the
strength of the Lord, and shall we shrink at the thought of
leaving our country, while millions of our fellow mortals
are perishing in pagan darkness, for the want of gospel
light. can we approach a throne of grace, and plead for their
illumination, when we refuse to lend our aid, in the accom-
plishment of the work's way to distant lands must Christians

flee those sinners bonds to ~~be~~ unloose,
and if their journey here below,
be wearisome, joyless and far long,
tho' yet but short, and ere long their weary feet
shall greet the peaceful inn of lasting rest.
Then ye Christian heroes! go - proclaim
salvation, through Immanuel's name:
to India's clime the tidings bear,
and plant the rose of Sharon there."