Life and Letters of Hannah E. Pipe.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND GIRLHOOD.

(Circa 1370: 1578–1847.)

FROISSART tells us that a Sir James Pipe, or de Pype, was present at the taking possession of Evreux by Lord Philippe de Navarre, and that he became associated with Sir Hugh Calvarley in the governorship of Melun-sur-Marne, and helped to repel the Duke of Normandy, who had surrounded the town and besieged it night and day with the primitive artillery of that time. On their return from the French wars, the de Pypes held lands in Derbyshire, Shropshire, and Staffordshire. Their name and arms point to descent from a royal herald.

The subject of this biography, Hannah Pipe, believed in her descent from the Staffordshire
2 PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND GIRLHOOD. [CH. I.

branch of the de Pypes. She wrote from Bake-
well in 1899: “The vicar acknowledges that I
have a claim on him in virtue of my ancestors,
whose arms are sculptured on the tower of his
church high up amongst its battlements, and all
over Haddon Hall. They were a Staffordshire
family, and their name is well known as attached
to places and persons round Lichfield, but, in the
days of Henry VI., a lady of that ilk married
Sir William Vernon of Haddon Hall, and brought
estates to which she was heiress into the Vernon
family, whence their association in name and
heraldically in the dining-room and various other
parts of the house. From that union descended
the Lady Dorothy Vernon, of romantic memory,
whose steps and walk are still pointed out to
all visitors.”

The de Pype arms may be seen at Haddon Hall
over the entrance tower, in the fourth quarter of
the shield; in the bay window of the drawing-
room, which looks on the terrace; in the third
quarter of a large shield surmounting a door near
the mounting-block; in a shield on the north side
of the dining-room, and in three other shields which
decorate the same room. The heiress who married
Sir William Vernon was Margaret, daughter of
Sir Robert de Pype. She and her husband were
buried in Tong Church, Shropshire, and there the
de Pype arms may again be found,—a shield azure
crucily and two pipes or. The crest was a camel’s
head bridled and ducally gorged sable.
These arms were used by Sir Richard de Pype, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1578, and who was descended from the Derbyshire branch. Of the later generations we have scanty record. Some of them maintained a portion of their lands and honours; others became a remnant, so far as their number is concerned, amalgamated with the educated middle class. But this remnant did not lose the distinction of feature and mind which was its heritage by descent. About the end of the eighteenth century there was a Mr John Pipe, a notable Wesleyan, an earnest adherent of the saintly reformer, and, like him, an itinerary preacher engaged in reawakening the religious sense amongst rural English populations. He was born in 1768, and became a minister, or rather a “travelling preacher,” in 1790, living and working till 1835, when, as his obituary notice puts it, “he peacefully entered into rest,” on July 21. He was the author of ‘Dialogues on Sanctification,’ much valued in his time, and translated into French. He kept a closely written diary in five books at the time of his death, but of these only a fragment survives, and twenty-three pages which begin a sixth book, and owe their preservation rather to the blank than to the written pages, for those are full of notes of lectures attended by his granddaughter, Hannah, long afterwards.

An extract from his record of July 15, 1802, may be quoted, not merely for its own sake, but also to illustrate the earnest atmosphere in which his
two sons were brought up and the inheritance of faith and spiritual reverence which fell due to Hannah Elizabeth Pipe, and was put by her to such far-reaching profit. He was preaching on that day at High Town: “A woman who sat under the pulpit while I was preaching last at Little Town was taken ill last Monday, and died in about an hour. My text was ‘The end of all things is at hand,’ and she was so blest under the sermon and afterwards as to be unable to sleep from the fulness of her joy. This led me to call upon them to prepare to meet the Lord. I have lately been struggling after God, and He has this day answered me by His powerful influence on my mind. He appeared as the altogether lovely. There is nothing in all His works or among His creatures that can justly be compared to Him. His glorious perfections infinitely exceed them all. My soul greatly longs for the living God. Him to know and love and serve, is life without end and pleasure evermore. O that my soul may be filled every moment with His perfect love.”

At the end of 1802 he wrote: “Thus the stream of time rolls on, and we are constantly borne forward by it to the ocean of eternity. May my preparation for it bear some proportion to the swiftness of the stream and the capacity of the ocean. If I look for it to my gracious God, He will seal me by His spirit and fully establish me in His ways. I look not at things eternal unbelieving, but with confidence and assurance. I do not
1803.] WESLEYAN CONFERENCE. 5

dread the swiftly passing away of days and years. Why should I? My Saviour reigns above and orders all things well for me.”

He had the saving grace of humour, and tells how an aged friend, who had walked with God for sixty years, had confided to him that “she had found the devil an arrant rascal, but that now he had given her up as a lost case!”

Of more general interest is his entry concerning the spring Conference of 1803:—

“Mr J. Roberts gave a particular account of a design on the part of Government to compel the travelling preachers to take up arms and become soldiers. This was a sudden and unexpected affair, and it was discovered by him and a few respectable gentlemen, who went to hear the parliamentary debates. To their surprise they heard the Secretary of State announce his intention to introduce a Bill to the purpose. Nothing could have been more gratifying to the guardians of the public liberties. There was a general vociferation in the House, ‘Ay, they’ll pray for you; make them fight for you! make them fight for you!’ Mr Roberts and his friends hearing what was going forward, retired immediately to consult what was to be done to counteract this persecuting spirit. The next day they waited on the Secretary and explained to him, from a document lately printed, the difference between the local preachers and those preachers who were absolutely devoted to the work, and had the charge of those societies
6 PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND GIRLHOOD. [CH. I.

who had placed themselves under their pastoral care. This had the desired effect, and the vile Bill was thrown aside. Blessed be God who has not suffered those who hate us triumphantly to ride over us.”

An entry of the same year gives some details of his work during two years: “I have been assisted to continue in the Lord’s work two years more. We visited nineteen places in Bristol circuit, though only five chapels. We had six local preachers, and had help from others in the Dewsbury circuit. I preached 711 times. The Lord gave me many seals to my ministry, and though there was not that enlargement of the work we desired, yet the Lord blessed and encouraged us.”

His wife, Hannah Pipe, dreamt about that time that Mr Pipe would be appointed to the Manchester circuit, and after preaching twice during the Conference of 1803, he was, to his great astonishment, requested to labour there.

In Manchester, therefore, his second son, William, was born, and in Manchester Mr John Pipe died.

His sons were men of deep religious conviction like himself, but unfortunately they also inherited his constitutional delicacy. They were fond of books: and some brief notes by William Pipe, made in the early ‘Thirties of last century, indicate a wide range of reading: ‘Lord Byron’s Life,’ Burton’s ‘Anatomy of Melancholy,’ ‘Homer,’ ‘Cardinal Wolsey’s Life,’ Babbage’s ‘Reflections
on the Decline of Science in England,'—all read within the space of three months in 1832. His brother John was by this time a Wesleyan minister as his father had been, and a man not only of singular spiritual endowment, but in his own way a poet and hymn-writer. He was especially the poet-laureate of his family, and in July 1830 had commemorated William's marriage to Susanna Spencer, the sister of his friend and partner, John Spencer—

"May the Lord who joined your hearts
Bless you when you join your hands;
May He, while He grace imparts,
Rivet firmer friendship's bands.
May your mutual love increase,
May your piety abound,
Till your happy lives increase
With eternal glory crowned."

So he wrote in serious mood, and then with sprightly rhythm—

"If William at last has gained his Susanna,
Let all friends unite to sing an hosanna!
If Susanna has found in her William a prize,
Let loud hallelujahs ascend to the skies.
Let all friends unite to implore from above
The blessing Divine on their mutual love."

Mr William Pipe took his bride to No. 8 Market Street, and here on Advent Sunday, November 27, 1831, their only child was born. She was christened Hannah Elizabeth after her two grandmothers.

One of these, the widowed Mrs John Pipe, knitted soft socks for her, and they were sent with some stanzas by the family laureate,—
8 PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND GIRLHOOD. [CH. I.

...tender and pious stanzas, if not welling from the source of Parnassus:—

“Welcome lovely, charming maid,
Candidate for endless life,
Take thy place in earth’s parade
Midst its complicated strife;
Troubles mortals here attend
As the active sparks ascend.

May the fountain of all grace
Bless her with His mercy mild,
Crown her with His heavenly peace
As His own adopted child;
Father, Son, and Spirit be
Hers and ours eternally.”

Next year, on November 27, Mr William Pipe wrote in his diary: “H. E. P., twelve months old, just learned to say ‘ta-ta,’ and to be bewitching.”

It was towards the end of this year that he and his brother-in-law, Mr John Spencer, entered into partnership as manufacturers. Mr Brazil—who is happily still living, although in far Omaha—writes: “They were fancy manufacturers,—that is, they wove goods with patterns on them, some of the patterns being in colours and the ground white. But Mr Pipe had as a side issue a cutlery shop in Market Street under the present Exchange. I knew Mr Spencer, and Mr Pipe and my father were friends. Mr Spencer was a very handsome man, light-haired and of charming manners. His sister, Mrs William Pipe, was a beautiful woman, also light-haired and with clear pink and white complexion.”

It was from her mother that the little Hannah
derived her lovely colouring, her hair of soft, golden bronze, and her dainty manners. But from her father she inherited depth of thought, great seriousness, a sense of the importance of all things that concern right living, and a certain lofty idealism that was satisfied with only the highest standards, whether of secular or spiritual conduct. It was over the shop in Market Street that Hannah first lived, and on December 19, 1832, first put her little feet to the task of learning to walk, and achieved the whole length of the parlour floor, to her father’s delight. There, too, her first impressions of the outer world were formed,—not very cheerful ones, for the Manchester atmosphere was sombre and Market Street was muddy as at the present time of writing. The little child used to flatten her nose against the window-pane and wonder what it felt like to be down there in the mud, and she remembered the unlovely spectacle all her life. Fortunately she did not stay there long enough to suffer from it.

Up to the early ’Thirties Manchester businessmen lived in the city, over or near their offices and shops. But about that time there began a gradual exodus to the suburbs. Mr William Pipe let his house and shop in Market Street and migrated to the new and pleasant quarter of Greneheys, of which Mr Darbishire has most kindly given me the following account: “About 1834 Burlington Street was a country road, stopped near its west end by a wooden swing-gate which
10 PARENTAGE, CHILDHOOD, AND GIRLHOOD. [CH. I.

restricted the Greenheys boundary. From this gate on into Greenheys Lane the road was a cart-way with ruts. Greenheys was the name given to a wide field-tract, which at that time extended from Tuer Street to Boundary Street, between Chorlton-upon-Medlock and Hulme. There was a wooden bridge from the end of Tuer Street into an oldish street called Chatham Street, on either side of which were fairly fine residential houses, in one of which lived two old ladies, who kept fallow-deer in their large garden; and I can remember as a child feeding these fallow-deer. Boundary Brook, to the south-west of Greenheys Field, ran through the field as a black, dirty, dyed stream, and was called the Black Brook. It passed where now stands Trinity Church, and thence in a southerly direction past the bottom of Burlington Street, through farm-lands and fields to an ancient roadway called Moss Lane. Opposite the west end and across the brook stood a house called Greenheys Hall; this was occupied by a Mr de Quincey, after whose death Mrs de Quincey, his widow, lived here with young Thomas de Quincey, her son. When she died Mr James Darbishire, a wine merchant in Manchester, bought the Hall. He was an old English Presbyterian or Unitarian, and attended Cross Street Chapel, where, in 1828, Mr Robberds, the pastor, was assisted by the Rev. William Gaskell, who survived him, and continued to be pastor till 1878. Mr Gaskell lived in the neighbouring township of Chorlton-upon-Medlock,