

Sally Hastings : A Literary Grass Widow.

It is difficult to define the limits of an Historical Society's proper functions. Broadly and yet fairly stated, they may be taken to comprehend everything that makes for the genius, the moral, intellectual or material life and experience of the people and territory covered in the plan of the society.

Lancaster county as now bounded stretches from the Octoraro on the southeast to the Conewago on the northwest; from the Brecknock forest on the northeast to the slate hills of Peach Bottom on the southwest. Within these boundaries there have been aboriginal, colonial, revolutionary, post-revolutionary and modern epochs. When the full and complete history of this, our great county, is finally written, it will, I fancy, be divided chronologically into these periods:

1. The geological formation and the aboriginal occupation of the county, prior to the incoming of European settlers.

2. The history of the county under all governments preceding the American Revolution.

3. The experience of the county during the Revolution and the formative period of the United States, until the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

4. The development and progress of the county until the War of the Rebellion.

5. The history of the county since 1861.

This, however, is only the chronological order in which events must be marshalled, cause and effect analyzed, forces dissected and results traced to their genesis. The whole scheme must be "cross-sectioned" by an inquiry into the ethnological, religious, educational, commercial, manufacturing and agricultural interests, and, indeed, every activity which has animated our local history. In each of these spheres there have been continuity and evolution; and along all these lines our history must be studied and wrought out into fit expression.

Many maps, ponderous volumes of history and so-called biography; numerous monographs, innumerable papers and sketches, fragments of reminiscences, "disjecta membra," family and church, graveyard and Court House records, vague traditions, deeds and other title papers, private memoranda and public annals, old furniture and older china, land-marks and sign-boards—a thousand tokens are to be noted on the road to a fitting, true and complete history of Lancaster county. This work, when finished, must be a literary and historical achievement, without a taint of commercialism or self-interest, and with nothing set down in malice or for favor.

When this ideal shall have been realized some scant recognition at least must and will be given to Poetry. One of the most clever of modern poetasters has taught us how easily we can dispense with poets if we retain our cooks; and I myself, on a certain occasion, seeming to apologize for Pennsylvania's appreciation

of the material, am blamed for coining the aphorism, "Pig iron has its uses as well as poetry."

For all that I believe I can render a faint service to this club, organized as well for literary and historical as for more strictly social purposes, by recalling to it the fact that, dull and prosaic as the characteristic life of our intensely agricultural community is, there has never been (at least, at no time in the last century) a period when the Muse of Poetry has not been challenged for a moment to halt on our highways to receive, if not to regard, the offerings of a local worshipper at her shrine.

Our Greatest Poet.

I am not at all concerned, for the purposes of this paper, with the world-wide reputation of the finest literary genius our county has yet furnished to fame in the realm of imaginative literature. His position is fixed. Contemporary criticism gives him and his work foremost place. To have, native and nourished within our borders, a poet whom the "Westminster Review" ranks with Wordsworth as a sonneteer, whom William D. Howells, Richard Henry Stoddard and Horace Howard Furness—a trio of eminent critics—pronounce worth a leading place among American poets—is a ripe century sheaf of local literary achievement. Yet Lloyd Mifflin thinks he has failed as a poet where he might have succeeded as a painter. He has never forgotten, what most of us never knew, that his lamented father wrote flawless verse of the highest order.

All this, however, only by the way!

Let me, leaving for a little while the "grand masters" and the "bards sublime," ask for a momentary recognition of a minor minstrel, rural and

local, to be sure, slightly remembered, if not altogether forgotten, a star that flickered feebly in the constellation of local poesy and then was lost to literary view—a flower that blushed not altogether unseen, but whose fragrance soon was wasted on an unsympathetic desert air. Yet to her personality attaches some interest, to her scant volume of slender verse some little value, and to her fading fame some faint claim to restoration.

It was said—I am not sure of which—either of a dancing bear or a preaching woman, that it was not so wonderful she (or it) did it so well, as that it (or she) could do it at all. The relation of things is almost everything. So when we consider what it meant to write and print and publish a volume of verse in the shadow of Donegal Church one hundred years ago, we can forgive Sally Hastings, poetess, and William Dickson, publisher, that their combined efforts of genius and journalism, scoring ambition and commercial enterprise, produced nothing more proud or pretentious than this little time-stained volume I hold in my hand, bought at a sale of rubbish for three cents, and yet salable as a literary curio for \$10 or \$15. You will recall the story of the Baptist preacher, who, taking for his text “The devil, he goeth about as a roaring lion,” divided his discourse into three separate heads. “Who, the devil, he was,” “Where, the devil, he was going,” and “What, the devil, he was roaring about.”

Of Scotch-Irish Family.

Following his plan, let us briefly inquire who was Sally Hastings, what she did and why she did it.

Our poetess was sprung from that sturdy strain of Scotch-Irish stock which settled in the Pequea Valley

and left the landmarks of its advance in the erection of the Pequea, Leacock and Donegal meeting houses. Robert Anderson, her father, was a patentee of land on both sides of the "old road" or "king's highway," near Intercourse. Her mother, Margaret Clark, was the daughter of James Clark, an early Presbyterian settler in the Martie region. Her forbears on both sides came from Colerain, Londonderry, Ireland, whose emigrants gave name to one of our most sturdy townships. Tradition has it that Anderson had already become what was then called a "bachelor," when he heard of James Clark's curly-haired daughter, Peggy, rode down to her father's house, stayed all night there, and fell in love with the object of his visit. The record of the marriage of these two loyal Leacock Presbyterians is to be found, for some reason, in the archives of St. James' Episcopal Church, of this city. They were wed June 2, 1767, and their daughter, Sarah, was born March 25, 1773. While her mother yet nursed the infant she and her black slave Eve "baked bread for the army," and "knit stockings" for the Revolutionary soldiers, who marched up and down that broad thoroughfare under the swinging signs of the Widow Caldwell's "Hat Tavern" and the "Three Crowns" (both yet admirably preserved at Bleak House).

Brice Clark, who had come up from Delaware, was first married to Mary, sister of Col. James Crawford. She died early; about the same time Robert Anderson's death left his wife a widow and his children fatherless. Their surviving mates made another match and Sally Anderson became the stepdaughter of Brice Clark before he moved, in 1783, to Donegal, settling on the Lowery-Clark farm, now Don Cameron's. There the susceptible Sally

met and married Enoch Hastings, a carpenter, and they dwelt for a time in the brick house in the Square at Maytown, where later Amos Slaymaker, and more recently, John C. Sweiler kept a store. She soon discovered that her family had been wiser than herself in their objections to her choice of a husband; years of separation ensued, which only failed to culminate in a divorce because her stepfather had sterner Presbyterian ideas on the legal dissolution of marriage than prevail in these later days of free and easy divorce. Her daughter, Margaret, died in childhood.

The mark of Sally Hastings' grave cannot be found, but the record of her death, in Washington, Pa., April 30, 1812, shows life to have ended at the age of thirty-nine; as her book was published in 1808, and her remarkable journey to the West, across the mountains, was accomplished in 1800, her literary activity—however early developed—must have been most intensely exercised while she was what men (and even some women) used to rather despitefully call a "grass widow."

We may easily conjecture that her educational advantages were not above the average of her day, and the sentiment of her poems indicates a devotional frame of mind rather than a wide range of classic learning or reading; but it is manifest that the poetry of Alexander Pope, who has been styled "the poet of an artificial age and of artificial life," largely helped to make her style. The title page of her little volume and the ardent invocation to the Muse of Poetry which it contains afford some indicia of the contents and will bear literary reproduction:

Her Title Page.

POEMS

on

DIFFERENT SUBJECTS.

To which is added,

A DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

of a

FAMILY TOUR TO THE WEST,

In the year 1800.

In a

LETTER TO A LADY.

By SALLY HASTINGS.

Celestial Guide, inspire my artless Song,
To warm the Languid, and instruct the
Young;
From Error, to protect the op'ning
Mind,
And point the path to Happiness re-
fin'd;
To wake the Pious, win the careless
Heart,
And Pleasure, with Improvement, to
impart.
Aid me, a right, to speak thy hallowed
Name;
Nor let my rash presumptuous Pen
blaspheme.
Aid me to dress fair Truth in Fancy's
guise;
The Truth's I sign, aid me to realize.
Inspire each Thought, each Sentiment
refine;)
Live in each Page, preside o'er ev'ry
Line;)
Adorn my Muse with Grace and Love
divine.)

LANCASTER,

Printed and sold, by William Dickson,
for the benefit of the authoress.
1808.

Her Apology.

In the opening lines addressed "To
The Public" she frankly confesses that
her Pegasus is a jade of fickle temper:

"Sometimes my winged Pegafus
As fwift as Cupid's arrow flies,
And curb and rein defies.
"Sometimes he takes his foaring flight,
To high Parnaffus' top;
When rais'd to fuch a giddy height,
My fhallow pate grows wond'rous light
And down, alas! I drop."

Appealing to the tender consideration of her critics, in a tone of half apology and half defiance, she reminds them that her learning has been principally

“To read her Bible through,
And write a sorry rhyme.”

Some three-score metrical effusions make up the poetic contents of one hundred and seventy-five pages of the publication. “A Private Prayer,” in verse, which is one of the principal poems of the work, breathes an intensely Presbyterian pious spirit and appeals fervently to the compassionate mercy of an angry and avenging Jehovah; while under such titles as “Contemplation,” “Expostulation,” “A Complaint,” “The Request” and “The True Physician, Composed in Sickness”—orthodoxy, humility and the dread of everlasting punishment approach the Throne of Grace with the prayer of a “wretched sinner” and the cry of a “helpless rebel.” “The Indian Chief” tells in rhyme the alleged true story of the circumstance at a Presbytery in Ohio, A. D. 1804, when “Wian-dot’s warlike Chief” from “Sandusky’s distant plains” presented his infant son for consecration to the service of the Christian ministry.

The New Year greeting of 1806 to “Rev. C. M’F——r,” of course, needs no key to tell us that Rev. Colin M’Farquhar, the venerable and distinguished pastor of Donegal, was the object of her poetic and personal adoration; later she weaves into rhyme her abstract of an exhortation delivered at his church previous to the administration of the Holy Communion, July 6, one hundred years ago. “Death Awful” oppresses her muse and clogs her pen.

“Infinite blifs, or wrath divine,
Infinite fkill demand.”

“By special request” she gives place and credit in her volume to “An Epicedium” “on the death of the virtuous and pious Mrs. Mary Bell, composed by Mary Maxfield, of Fags Manor, at the age of eighty years.” “While laboring under a complication of distressing providences,” May 7, 1806, Mrs. Hastings produces a most serious “Invocation to Religion,” and seems quite reconciled to change a “night of weeping” for “one eternal morning in the skies.” “A brief cessation from a cramp in the breast” affords her opportunity for an “Ejaculation” of submission to God’s “awful will” and self-reproach that her profane tongue had expressed “a rebellious word” or her breast cherished “an impious murmur.” With relief from mental sorrows and physical discomfort she assumes a lighter mood and gaily writes of “Lovely Sapho,” “Cupid’s Bow” and in the “Graces of Venus,” “at the request of a friend,” whose name is delicately veiled as “Miss Eliza C——” she pours out a passionate ode to Love, relapsing, however, to the pious mood in a “song” of “Celestial Delights,”

“There living waters freely roll,
 To ease the furrows of the fowl,
 And all its pow’rs refine;
 There peace and pardon sweetly blend;
 And love, and joy, and grace descend;
 And glory all divine.

“There fruits of life eternal grow,
 And seas of purest pleasures flow;
 Without a shoal or shore:
 There angels join with faints above,
 In one harmonious song of love;
 And seraphims adore.”

Old and New.

Elegaic themes especially attracted her and she sings her sympathy to the weeping and surviving family of John Whitehill, of Donegal, January 26, 1807. Sermons heard suggest poetic abstracts of their contents. “The Fall of Man,” with its forfeiture, is

supplemented by "The Recovery" through the scheme of redemption; while her "Reflections in a Graveyard" (inspired, no doubt, by the tombs at Donegal) strike the note of "Vanity of Vanities," not, however, without some echo of the hope of a joyful and triumphant resurrection from death and the grave. At times she is animated by the spirit of social censorship and a too reckless style of décolleté dress by a beloved young friend, "The Accomplished Miss —," provokes her to address to her a poetic warning:

"Sweet Delia, draw your tucker clofe,
And do not needlessly expose
 Your bosom, like the lily fair;
It grieves my heart to see those
 charms,
So form'd to bless a wife man's arms,
 To vulgar eyes disclos'd and bare."

* * * * * *

"Believe me, love, the modest Youth,
Whose bosom beats with honest truth,
 Would deem the act profane, to
 view;
He would the impious thought disown,
And guess your blushes, by his own;
 And such alone can merit you."

Thus, it will be seen that the modern discussion in church and society about the propriety of the "peek-a-boo" shirt waist is "nothing new under the sun!"

Contributing to the albums of her friends the inspirations of her muse, now pensive and now gladsome over the local landscape, essaying bold flights in depicting the wonders of the "Apocalypse," she is not unmindful of the large concerns of national events. The "noble Washington" and the "wise Jefferson" have her unfaltering homage; the brilliant achievements of the American General Eaton against the Tripolitans and other pirates of Upper Africa call forth loud paeans from her high strung lyre.

A Western Tour.

A considerable number of pages, some fifty in this book, are taken up with her diary of a "Family Tour to the West in 1800," which has very considerable historical value, and anticipates that portion of her literary career which was lived in Western Pennsylvania and in the congenial atmosphere of a college town. Those of us to whom a journey from the Delaware to the Ohio now means a daylight ride of ten hours, with parlor and dining car comforts and luxuries, can hardly conceive what the trip of women and children across the mountains from one end of the State to the other meant a hundred years ago. Late in the fall of the last year of the eighteenth century, just one hundred and six years ago, a group of ten persons, five of them young children, set out with a two-horse wagon to make their way, on foot, and with their little team, across the State of Pennsylvania, thus journeying from Maytown, Lancaster county, to Cross Creek, Washington County. Her married sister, into whose protection Mrs. Hastings records she had been thrown "by the rough hand of unrelenting adversity," was in declining health when her husband (who, for several years, had owned a farm in the extreme western part of the State) determined to remove his family to that settlement. They left as exiles, quit their native land, and our narrator describes herself as a child of misfortune setting out for an asylum, where "far removed from the varied scene of my more prosperous days, in the tranquil bosom of Retirement and Solitude, I may become so familiarized with Adversity, as to forget that I once was blest." Addressing her Patroness: "There, Madam, superior to the precarious

favors of capricious Fortune, and unterrified by her frown, might I not hope to enjoy those independent Blessings, which the world can neither confer nor withhold."

Nevertheless, she was intellectually probably the strongest of the party, and seems to have been the directing mind of the enterprise. The first day they traversed eighteen miles of swamp roads, crossed the Susquehanna by ferry somewhere about New Cumberland, and the diary entry as to her emotions, upon being asked to cross the rolling waters, gives some insight into the Presbyterian character of her day. She notes:

"This morning we crossed the Susquehanna; and such is my Fear of venturing into a Ferry-boat, that it required a full quarter of an hour's reasoning to convince me, that, to a Predestinarian, the greatest Danger, and no Danger, is absolutely the same thing! Perhaps there are no two things in Nature more at variance than my Principles and Practice: For, though I indubitably believe in the universal Sovereignty of the Deity; yet I perceive I am never willing to resign the reins of government into his hands, while I can possibly hold them in my own."

Among the Mountains.

Persons much more eminent in literature and travel than our friend Sally have written far duller narratives than this, her early-day story of an emigrant party's passage over the trail of the wagoners of the Alleghenies. If her range of reading had been narrow, her experience in travel was quite as limited; her inexperience, her sensitiveness, her frailty of body and poetic susceptibility to impressions of every kind aggravated the joys as well as the discomforts of

such a romantic and yet toilsome trip. The fine fields of the Cumberland Valley enraptured her and inspired outbursts of verse; the town of Carlisle, though beautifully situated, must have looked askance at the pilgrims, for she detected in the people "an air of impertinent curiosity." The wayside inns were of every sort; while at times the agreeable conversation of an intelligent lodger—a man, of course—restored her spirits and reduced her temper, quite as often as the "repulsive looks and uncivil behavior of the landlady" produced a very opposite effect. Poor land, but well-informed people, attested the predominance of the Scotch-Irish in Franklin county; as she nears the mountains, their "cloud-capped grandeur and forest-crowned summits" inspire her Muse.

"There shroud their awful brow, whose
nodding frown
Sheds a deep, dark and chilling horror
round."

The "gloomy grandeur" of the scene fills her with "painful astonishment," and "such Solitude and Terror as Life" now presents she had never imagined. Every quality of fortitude is required for the foot journey over the mountains. Nothing can "soothe the corroding sorrows of the mind" except she bids her Muse assuage her rising grief. The appeal is not in vain. This "sacred Source of Bliss refined" comes to her solace, even when camping in the open air, treading lonely labyrinths, traveling through the pelting rain, and at last, when reaching lodgings, they find themselves crowded upon chairs and hard benches to sleep, while drunken roysterers made night hideous. Prose, and, indeed, all words, fail her to tell her correspondent the "terrific wildness" of the country through which they pass:

"Great Nature, scorning ev'ry polish'd
 grace,
 In awful terror decks her frowning
 face;
 Assumes the ancient sceptre of her
 throne,
 Bids Art retire, and reigns supreme
 alone."

She records her impressions of Bedford—not altogether favorable—and grows right eloquent when at last "the very summit of the Allegheny towers majestically through the opening clouds and looks down on the rest of Creation as sovereign mistress of our Northern world." When she finds herself entirely separated by the further mountain slope from her Eastern home, grief inconsolable sets in; but, happily, at the very crisis, a kindred soul appears—a man, of course—at the next tavern, who, like herself, has "a passion for the quill." They exchange verses. Is it any wonder she had peaceful sleep and happy dreams? Hear now how changed the note

"As on the lonely mountain's top I
 slept,
 Celestial Guards their wakeful vigils
 kept;
 Around my couch their guardian Aegis
 spread,
 And balmy Sleep o'er all my senses
 shed."

In simpler lines she tells of the ascent of Laurel hill, steep and rocky, where, through falling snow and freezing rain, in pitchy darkness, her sister, exhausted and weeping, she carried in her arms two children, more than half her own weight, for more than two miles. She indites, with graphic power, an experience at a wayside tavern, where twenty hunters "of savage appearance and in outlandish dress," yet gave them rude welcome and a share of hospitality. At another tavern she was witness and auditor of scenes and sounds of all variety of domestic dissipation, from the frolicsome revelry of a corn-husking to the exhilarating spectacle of an angry housewife

three times in two days horse-whipping her drunken helpmeet—a man, of course.

An Old "Muster Day."

I have been in Greensburg of this modern day, on "halcyon and vociferous" occasions, and I know something of its capacity for hilarity; but a hundred years ago, if this veracious chronicler is not to be doubted, it must have been quite worthy of its later fame. She got there at the end of a day of "General Military Review." At the risk of imposing upon your patience I transcribe her dairy now at some length for a threefold purpose: (1) Because her story throws a charming sidelight on the social diversions a century ago—among men, of course; (2) because the reference to a gallant officer from Lancaster piques our curiosity to know who he might have been; and (3) because to this day the identity of "the person of our party" to whom he made love has been undiscovered—and it is left us only to guess that the widow's modesty caused it to be unrecorded. Hear, then, the doings of that ancient time, when there were sounds of revelry by night in old Westmoreland's shire-town:

"I have already told you, it was the day of a general Review. Most of the Officers of the Battalions had met at this Place, and were refreshing themselves, after the Fatigues of the day, in all the various Exercises which the martial Spirit of Man could invent, or a convivial Bottle inspire. Being all completely equipped, in the various Uniforms of their respective Corps, their Appearance was at once solemn, splendid, and ludicrous; for every Man, except the Landlord, was intoxicated. This Gentleman, who is of the first Character and Respectability, assured

us that, except Noise and want of Sleep, we had no other Inconvenience to expect in his Houfe; for, though it might appear paradoxical to assert it, every Man under his roof was a Gentleman and Man of Honor—who would sooner forfeit his Life, than his Pretensions to those sacred Characters.

“They occupied two large Rooms, in Dancing; and they were very expert at this Exercise. It was difficult to reconcile the different Sensations which their Drefs and Employment created; yet, I must acknowledge, they were a Company of the most active and handsome Men I ever saw. Their Joviality increased, as the night advanced; and their Spirits, which seemed naturally haughty and martial, became extremely irritable.

“Being of different political Opinions, Argument soon became ardent. The field of Controversy became too warm to allow Reason (who ever shuns Contrarieties) to preside, and her Office fell into the hands of those hot-headed Demagogues, the Passions—each of which, disdainful Subordination, rose in Arms, and alternately seized the reins of government. This produced such a medley of Anarchy and Confusion, that it would require a Pen much abler than mine to describe it.

“Those stupendous and intricate Affairs, which require the united Wisdom of the ablest Statesmen of our Country, were here developed, discussed, and bandied from tongue to tongue, with the same degree of Judgment and Intelligence which is evinced by the Disciples of a certain modern political Commentator, in their Attempts to canvass the holy Scriptures. Conviction was not the Object in view. Every man became an Orator; and to obtain Audience was the End most desired. The principal Excel-

lence belonged not to him who spoke best, but to him who spoke loudest and most; and every Man seemed to have the lungs of a Stentor. The more unintelligible they became, the more Vociferation had they recourse to; until, finding that their Voices produced no better effect, than if they were shouting to a Whirlwind. and that they became not only incomprehensible, but disregarded— suddenly dropping their Arguments— they seized their Swords, and appeared as terrific as Milton's Devils! And 'Confusion' became 'worse confounded.'

"We sat quiet Spectators all night; and there was not a Room in the House unoccupied. When we saw the glitter of Swords, and heard the clashing of them over our heads, we began to entertain strong Apprehensions for our personal Safety. We could not wholly conceal our Fear; and one of the leading Officers, approaching the spot where we sat, begged of us to dismiss our Terrors, as he was himself from Lancafter county, and would shed the last drop of his heart's Blood, to procure a proper Respect for every Individual from that place. This gracious Assurance did not, however, very much tend to dissipate our Alarm; until the Gentleman, in a voice which made the Dome re-echo, commanded 'Attention!' His Command, to my utter Astonishment, was instantly obeyed. 'Confusion heard his Voice, and wild Uproar stood rul'd.'

"He then delivered a concise and very nervous Address to them, on the Indecorum of Fighting in the presence of Ladies, and the want of Gallantry betrayed in being the Cause of raising their Terrors. He concluded by reminding them, 'that Intoxication, though excusable in a Gentleman, under certain Circumstances, was by

no means an Apology for a Breach of the Laws of Good-breeding; and the Respect which every Gentleman felt himself bound, in Honor and in Duty, to pay to the Female Sex.'

"I know not why it was, that this Officer had so much Influence over his Companions; but, certain it is, his Commands were as strictly adhered to, and held as inviolate, as the Laws of the Medes and Persians: And for his own part, he carried his Politeness so far as to make Love to a Person of our Party; whom he entertained with a Song, which consisted of two elegant Lines and a —Hiccough.

"The Landlord, by a well-timed piece of Policy, concealed all their Swords; and, in the heat of another Argument, when the Champions wished to support their Cause by resorting to them, they were not to be found. However, a more vulgar mode of convincing Antagonists was substituted—some Sculls being too thick for Reason to penetrate—and they turned out; boxed in pairs; and returned as peaceable and affectionate as Brothers. This was new to me; nor did I ever behold, at the same time, a more striking display of the Dignity and Depravity of fallen Human Nature."

At the Terminus.

McKeesport and Confluence, when reached, in the midst of clear waters and wild exuberance of overgrown nature, were then very different from the blazing and bellowing industrial towns which now make the valleys of the Monongahela and the Youghiogany look literally "like hell with the lid off;" but Canonsburg, an ancient seat of learning, with a college commencement in progress, afforded a spectacle of decorum in happy contrast with the orgies at Greensburg; and their twen-

ty-four-day trip ended in placidity and repose—even if they slept at first in a cottage which had “neither window glass, paint nor roof.”

I have thus—at perhaps too great prolixity—abstracted the contents of this unique little book, not so much because it is rare, but because it is one of the few recorded memorials of a Lancaster County woman who wrote and wrought one hundred years ago, when Iris clubs—and even Hamilton Clubs—for better or for worse—were scarcer than they are now, and “books were books!”

My tale had been longer were the literary remains of Sally Hastings' life in Western Pennsylvania more numerous or better preserved. Happily her kinswomen in this good town—the Misses Clark, to whom I am greatly indebted for much of this matter—are in possession of some manuscript, including three notable autograph letters, which help us to gather some information touching her later experiences and fortunes.

Writing Letters Home.

From Cross Creek, Washington county, August 14, 1801, she writes to Margaret Clark, Donegal township, Lancaster county, addressing her with the stately ceremony of the times, as “Honored Mother,” and folding the foolscap sheet, after the manner of that envelopless day, so as to superscribe the address, sending it East by the hand and “favor of Mr. Elder.”

In a fashion of letter-writing that quick communication, telephones and typewriters have now utterly killed, she pours out to her distant mother the domestic woes of herself and sister, “Becky,” who is dispirited, ill, likes neither this place nor its people; her reference to the taste of

metheglin, as an entirely novel drink to her; and her careful preparation of a "bowl of penada" for the languishing mother of the new baby in the household, recall some domestic concoctions growing unfamiliar to the oldest of us. She dwells with daughterly freedom on the social life of the neighborhood; tells how the young men and young women "drop in" to "sit up" with the sick; and how "all the beaux on Cross Creek" come at one time—and that a time when none was wanted. Though her letter indicates a certain freedom of manner in respectable society then, that nowadays would be counted rude and even gross, I doubt not the communications of young people were quite free from much of the nasty nice things in literature and on the stage which our boys and girls are allowed to touch with impunity, and which they are expected to taste without impurity!

Some Church History.

Though Sally, in her letters, as in her book, is sentimental to the last, and winds up with a Shakesperean quotation, the most valuable feature of the paper is her description of the local Presbyterian preacher. She is no indiscriminating critic of herself or of him. Listen:

"I go very little abroad only to Meeting. There I attend as regularly as the Church Doors are open. I will not say it is merely Religion takes me there. I believe Indeed it is more for the pleasure I take in hearing the Eloquent Orator Speak, than the Sound Devine. But be that as it may It is for the pleasure of hearing Mr. Marquis alone. To hear him is harmony, Though he often gives us the lash of the law in all its severity. He has before now fairly made me jump off my Seat with terror and slapping

the pulpit. If he would only quit that he would be the Sweetest man in the world. But the people here would not like him if he would preach in moderation, he is the Dreadfulest Thunderer I ever heard. Nothing Seems more at variance than his preaching and his Countenance, one is all Terror tother all Sweetness and Mild persuasion. Scold as he may I will love him. Nay I cannot help it, he was formd to be beloved. It is only giving him his due. But you donnegall people would not bear him at all if he would take a fit of sending you to the D——l and that he would do without any Ceremony, for things you would scarce think you merited Sutch rough treatment. Oh how he would handle your Dancing and singing your Dressing and Gay conversations your giddy round of—visits your state and refinements, your preparations for Company, and all the etceras of your Fations. I just wish to hear him at you. Yet he would do it so nicely, and with sutch a grace, you would love him.”

Who was this man who made such marked impression upon her religious and literary sensibilities?

No other than the famous Thomas Marquis—born in the Valley of Virginia, removed to Washington county, converted by the first sermon preached in that region, and offering his first-born child as the first to be baptized, educated and licensed as a preacher under the famous Rev. Dr. McMillen of “Log College” fame, he preached thirty-two years at Cross Creek, but spread the fame of his silvery oratory and fiery eloquence wherever Presbyterianism was known; esteemed as the most eminent pulpit orator of his day, he was likewise one of the most judicious of the church counsellors; while he quelled the dis-

orders of his denomination in the turbulent Synod of Kentucky, he furnished models of speech for the most polished orators of Philadelphia and Princeton.

There are other signs than early appreciation of Marquis' genius that the literary taste and judgment of Sally Hastings were maturing. Her sister died prior to 1805, and that or other events determined her return to Lancaster county. On page 103 of her Poems is one of the reflective character, tinged with melancholy, on leaving her place of residence in the West and resigning charge of her deceased sister's orphan family, February 1, 1805. Perhaps the good aunt was superseded by a stepmother. This does happen sometimes—the fault of the man, of course.

Though she had written to her mother less than four years earlier that she found her new neighbors good-hearted, but insipid, dull and uninteresting and strangely different from those with whom she had been raised, she now laments her departure from them. To Rev. Marquis she bids adieu as her "tender, kind, parental Friend," and "eyes suffus'd in mournful tears" weep out their last farewell to the "smiling orphan babes."

Whether her "Song" of April 19, 1807, was written East or West, and to what particular "clergyman" her effusion of March 10, 1807, was addressed, I know not—it was neither Marquis nor M'Farquhar—but her later lines indicate by their more joyous pastoral note that she was amid the green pastures and by the still waters of Donegal; and one poem of this period proves by its title that she was detained on the further—I dare no longer say the York county—shore of the Susquehanna, February, 1807, by the breaking up of the ice.

It may be assumed that the years 1805, '06, and '07 were spent here; but in 1808 we find her back in the town of Washington. Her brother, Robert Anderson, who had gone there, had become a man of distinction and influence. He seems to have been a widower, and she was an indulged member and the respected head of his household. All this and much more she writes with pride and affection to a woman friend, "dear Eliza"—but when she speaks of "D—— as the friend whom she most dearly loves and from the hand of inexorable destiny has separated her forever," I suspect that there is a man in the case—of course.

Romantic to the Last.

Confirmation is given to this suspicion of a romance by a letter of June 29, 1808, to her step-father, Brice Clark, in which she argues at length, expostulates, entreats and coaxes for a divorce. Neither the indulgence of her over-kind brother nor the harmony and affluence of her domestic situation reconcile her to her "unhappy matrimonial connection." Under that shaft she incessantly smarts. Though generally reputed out there to be divorced, she wants to realize it; and especially thus to resent and stamp out a malicious insinuation that some offending of her own bars the way to matrimonial freedom. Regained health and reviving spirits spur her on to break "the lengthening chain of misery through life on account of an unhappy transaction, which is beyond the power of human skill to amend, and from which the law will surely extricate." She argues her case with an eloquence and logic that no modern court could resist; but there were giants in those days—among the Presbyterians. Brice Clark was inex-

orable, and Sally Hastings died as she lived, a "grass widow."

When Robert Anderson was elected (1808) to the Pennsylvania Legislature, which then met in Lancaster, his sister Sally became his faithful correspondent; her letters not only mirrored every detail of domestic life, but related all the little affairs in the town, office, street, field, Courts, &c., that a man far from home and family then would want to hear. Two strong-minded Yankee women who had spoken in the Washington County Court House in that early day excited her mingled admiration and scorn—praise for their intellectual ability, and hate for their poisonous sentiments. She takes frequent occasion to assert her social superiority and the popular appreciation of her literary celebrity, always, however, mindful of domestic and business concerns. Her brother was also Sheriff; and, as such, he kept the jail and had his family residence there. It was somewhat of a political and social centre; though she admits there were ladies of such high degree in Washington that she would not expect them to call upon her at a prison—albeit they admitted her social equality.

That she remained to the last coy and coquettish, her letters attest. To a Mr. Porter she expresses regret that his wife does not possess her own attractions; "she is certainly too quiet." Of the attentions received by herself, she writes: "My train of beaux has, as usual, punctually attended. I have during the last week added a few to their number." Not long before her death she writes: "Our house and office is the most public resort in Washington. I am incessantly engaged with company." Of the wife of a celebrated preacher of that day she observes: "She is a large, unpolished,

very homely country girl. He looks ashamed of her, but she is rich and a gilded dawdy has always charms in the eyes of an Irishman." With that same Bishop Alexander Campbell, founder of the Church of the Disciples, she engaged in a spirited newspaper controversy, in which he found a "foewoman" worthy of his steel.

A Notable Book.

Sally Hastings' venture into the field of literary publication, like that of most amateurs, was likely not profitable. The imprint of her book is 1808, and the William Dickson, publisher, was the old-time editor and proprietor of the Lancaster "Intelligencer" and man of affairs generally hereabouts. Two years later, writing to her step-sister, Betsy Clark, she says, with some bitterness: "Well, after all, Mr. Dickson settled my affairs abruptly. I expect the loss I have sustained through his indolence is considerable at least to me. I pity him; and not so much but that I can spare a little compassion for myself."

"Now dull Democracy adieux,
No more I cloy my muse with you."

No lack of industry, however, in promoting the publication can be imparted to her, if we may infer her energy and pertinacity from the names and addresses of the subscribers printed in the back of the book. That old fashion, now not in vogue, adds much interest to this and like publications. They are arranged alphabetically and grouped in States and Counties—from Allegheny County running far down into Delaware and the Eastern Shore. The notorious Anne Royall, who later travelled these same regions and published her "Black Book" of local and personal notes, wrote people up and down, accordingly as they acceded to or scorned her blackmailing levies:

but Sally Hastings stood on her merits. The list of her patrons is a bede-roll of Presbyterianism. Clergymen and elders, saints and psalm singers, good men and better women, largely of her faith and race, were her subscribers. If Rev. Marquis headed the list in Washington county and Brother Bob Anderson led off with ten copies, he was scarcely ahead of the beloved Parson M'Farquhar, who put his name down for seven. The six columns of Lancaster county names will tell you at a glance how closely she canvassed the Presbyterian sections; the graveyards of Donegal, Leacock, Pequea, Octoraro, Little Britain and Chestnut Level bear them nearly all on mortuary tablets.

Her own grave is unmarked. Wild flowers have bloomed and blown over it and wild birds have sung her threnody for nigh a hundred years. Their fragrance has not been wasted, though there was none to inhale it; their song has not died unheard, though there was none to listen. For the Muse of Poetry ever watches in the shadow of her children—some day Jove calls the Bard to his throne—some day the God of Music and of Love sounds the call which the prophetic ear of Sally Hastings heard when she sang:

But, when the trumpet flakes the
 fkies,
Bids Earth retire—the Dead arise!
Then, deck'd in bright celestial bloom,
They'll rise, immortals, from the tomb;
Then, at a solemn signal giv'n,
Triumphantly they'll soar to heav'n;
There join the happy choir above,
Where all is harmony and love;
Where trees of life immortal grow,
And copious seas of pleasure flow;
Where groves of bliss, celestial bow'rs,
Yield lasting fruits, unfading flow'rs;
Where fairs and angels sweetly join,
And tune their harps to love divine;
Where God unveils his shining face,
And all the riches of his grace—
Which, to admire, adore, and praise,
Demands eternal length of days!!!"

SWEET POLLY'S MAIL.

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1799.

BY LLOYD MIFFLIN.

In connection with his paper on "Sally Hastings," Poetess, before the Iris Club, Mr. Hensel read the following poem by Lloyd Mifflin, which has never before been published. It was suggested to the author by the incident of coming across some old love letters that passed between his grandparents before their marriage. Joseph Mifflin lived in Drumore and Martha Houston in the Hempfields. They were accustomed to send their missives by the teamsters who passed to and from different parts of the county:

"Wains from Conestoga
"With their merry strings of bells."

The Mail-coach does not come our way,
But nearly every other day
By snowy hill and dells,
I send love-letters to Drumore,
Then oft I listen, at the door,
To hear the slow returning bells—
Upon the horses four!

Great Conestoga wagons take
These letters for the Lovers' sake—
The Teamster never tells!
I bless the wagons o'er and o'er;
The grand, gray horses I adore;
What music like their jingling bells—
The bells upon the four!

No sound did Maiden ever greet
More wished-for, or more soothing
sweet
To heart that fluttering swells,
Than wagons coming from Drumore
With longed-for letters to her door
'Mid clanging of the winter bells—
The bells upon the four!

When I am wed, ye Teamsters true
Shall toast me for a night or two
In candle-lit hotels!.....
Ah, here they come! They near the
door!
Teamster this letter—just one more!
And let him hear again your bells—
The bells upon the four!

Your leader's head shall wear this rose!
I kiss the wheeler's velvet nose!
And over hill and dells,
O Teamster! when the wedding's o'er,
'Tis you must haul us to Drumore
With all your joyful, blessed bells—
Nine bells upon the four!

Norwood, Jan. 10, 1905.

Author: Hensel, W. U. (William Uhler), 1851-1915.

Title: Sally Hastings : a literary grass widow / by Hon. W. U. Hensel.

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