

## 222. Death of 'Lallie' Holt, 1906

... That Sister of mine [Lallie Holt] always knew what she liked & though she often saw with blinkers on she saw far & absolutely straight & clear....

Betty & Molly were with her through the last days nursing her devotedly. She knew she was going, spoke of everything being nicely straightened out & gave Miss Parsons full directions about the service the hymns & all the arrangements saying when this was done 'now put that paper in your pocket & don't think about it till the time comes: it is as good an hour's work as I have done & I feel much better already'—She directed that her body should be cremated & the ashes scattered. Dear old Lallie she was a bit of a Martha about arrangements—and got very impatient with people who left them to chance, her housekeeping was only too good... Sister Holt as we sometimes called her was my eldest & nearest Sister my constant companion for 20 years....

Kate Courtney [née Potter], Diary, 4 June 1906, Courtney Collection, Vol. 32, fos. 126–30 [L.S.E.].

## 223. Death of Lady Cranbrook in Old Age, 1897

November 13 [1897]—'A quiet night but very tired' is this morning's report. That troubles us, for the dear one, though sleeping fairly and taking nourishment, runs down. We cannot forget her age, which is against a rapid rally, but we hope. I saw that Enny and Katie when they came to prayers looked very sad, and no wonder, for the dear mother felt so weak that it struck herself as sinking. We have telegraphed for Alfred, Gathorne, and Evelyn. God help us all, and her!... At a quarter to one o'clock she slept into eternal rest, just passed tranquilly away without a pang; a ray of sunlight came through the blinds on to the dear face, and her last sigh was given while Mr Daubeny read the commendatory prayer. What a fund of love has she taken from the world, and what a blessed memory of unselfishness does she leave! I can hardly realize that the companion of sixty years has

left me, but there was no response to my last kisses. She is with 'the loved and lost awhile' and her end was as she desired.

Diary of Gathorne Hardy, first Earl of Cranbrook, quoted in *Gathorne Hardy. First Earl of Cranbrook. A Memoir* (ed. The Hon. Alfred E. Gathorne-Hardy), 1910, Vol. 2, pp. 360–1.

nothing to repent of, yet in her behaviour to me and to the children, as far as man can speak, she had ever been as an Angel without spot.

... I found she was thinking of being helped through the prayers of those around her, to pass safely through Death.

Account by George W. Lyttelton, 4th Baron Lyttelton, of the death of his first wife, Mary, on 17 August 1857, *Mary Gladstone Papers*, BL Add. MS.46269, fos. 68, 81-2, 97.

## 220. Death of Blanche Scarsdale, Mother of 11 Children, 1875 (aged 37)

It is a very hard trial for us all and especially for poor Papa but we must try to bear it and comfort him—I have just written to Denman's and ordered black trousers for each of us... I slept at 1 Grosvenor Crescent last night but was awake this morning at twenty minutes to four and we drove here in a cab as fast as possible but we were too late—for dear Mama [Blanche, Lady Scarsdale] died at half past three quite peaceably, with no pain. We went in and saw her today, her face was like it used to be, with a happy smile on, but of course very grey and calm, like marble. Aunt Mary put white flowers all over the bed. We shall not see the dear face again.

George to Alfred Curzon, 4 April 1875, quoted by Kenneth Rose, *Superior Person: A Portrait of Curzon and his Circle in late Victorian England*, 1969, p. 37.

## 221. Death of Blanche Cripps: Suicide, 1905

... I must now record a family event... but a very tragic one. Our Sister Blanche Cripps died by her own act in the early morning of the first day of June. [1905]—Maggie Hobhouse [her sister] brought us the news....

Before going to bed she kissed her Husband several times and told him how good he had always been to her—Later at 2 o'clock] she went up to Stan and Harry [her young sons] and woke them to kiss them and tell them always to be good and loyal to their father and then I suppose she went and did it....

Her Husband having occasion to go into the Bathroom found her and he and the two poor youngest children spent the early hours of the morning in the vain attempt to bring back life. Except when those fits of temporary depression came on she was very happy, fond of her Husband and devoted to her children and I never saw young men more affectionate or nicer to their Mother—And she was a noble woman in many ways—generous—affectionate and with a good deal of talent and even force of character—but with some flaw in the brain which destroyed the sequence of her ideas—her memory for events and arrangements and her intellectual sympathy....

She had also I understand left directions with Fanny about her funeral and that she was to be buried with her head on a Bible and her feet on a Shakespeare.

... And so passes another of my eight Sisters—curiously like Theresa the wife of one of the Cripps brothers and the two middle Sisters of the family.

Kate Courtney [née Potter], *Diary*, 4, 5 June 1905, Courtney Collection, Vol. 32, fos. 47-51 [L.S.E.].

### *Death Certificate entry for Blanche Cripps*

Registration District: St Marylebone  
1905 DEATH in the Sub-district of The Rectory in the County of London.  
No.: 110

1. When and where died: First June 1905 2 Stratford Place...
4. Age: 52 years
5. Occupation: Wife of William Harrison Cripps a surgeon (F.R.C.S.) England
6. Cause of death: Suffocation/Strangulation by hanging  
When suspended with bandage placed round neck Suicide Temporary Insanity following fits...

effigy of each of us looking towards each other, so that we might one day be reunited.

Lord Curzon, '... notes made by me at Walmer Castle in September 1904 when my darling lay dying...', quoted by Nigel Nicolson, *Mary Curzon*, 1977, pp. 176-80.

## 218. Death of Margaret Gladstone: Puerperal Fever, 1870

The sickness is so dreadful and nothing nothing does her [Margaret Gladstone] any good. All you can do is to pray for us ... we can hardly pray for ourselves. The abcess is disappearing without breaking, and the doctors now think there is some disease of the kidneys....

Elizabeth King to Margaret Henderson, 15 August 1870, MacDonald Papers, P.R.O. 30/69/852.

... After breakfast John [Dr Gladstone, Margaret's husband] said to her 'I think my love God is going to take you to Himself'. She said 'Do you' and after a moment added 'When?' He replied 'I think today'. After lying still a little, she said 'Bring baby Mamma'. When I came back with the little thing she looked to her husband and said 'John you dedicate our baby to God—be short—bring in the children—all'....

... The four little girls stood at the bedside. She took the hand of each and kissed each and said 'Goodbye'—I do not remember more words to them—John said will you shake hands with the servants. She assented with a slight nod but said she could not speak to them. They were all brought in with the children.... There was a great company in the room. John said 'will you shake hands with them.' She said 'Yes' and named Byhoe—so he came first then she said 'Cook' and Cook came. The wetnurse caught

her attention by sobbing, and never having seen her or heard of her, she [Margaret] looked inquiringly at John; he said this is baby's nurse. When she heard this, she tried to raise herself a little and said with deep earnestness in broken accents 'Do the best you can for baby—in God's name'. Then she shook hands with all the servants and said as loudly as she could 'Do the best you can for baby—in God's name—all of you'. They said 'we will' and left the room.... Once she said 'There is nothing in [the] world that John would not get for me and there is nothing I want but a cup of pure cold water'.... This was a very short time before her breath ceased... John stood at her pillow and I was beside her on the bed till almost at the end. She motioned me off and crossed her hands on her breast and so passed very gently away.

Elizabeth King's journal of her daughter's, Margaret Gladstone's, death, 1870, MacDonald Papers, P.R.O. 30/69/852.

## 219. Death of Mary Lyttelton after 12th Labour, 1857

All her strength was given to her 12 children. I remember saying that the 12th baby was as the last gallant effort of the high-metled racer. It was thus that 17 years of married life, and the birth of 11 children, were gone through by her with hardly a passing cloud....

On the 15th [August 1857] I slept not a wink.... At 3, she sent for me.... She asked if she was dying—I had just been to [Dr] Giles, and asked him if there was any hope. He said it was a state of the greatest possible danger, but there was still a faint hope. I therefore replied to her to that effect, softening it however a little. She then said the thought of her children was almost too much for her; spoke of them with some strong words of affection and said: 'They do so bring me back to life....'

I urged her to take comfort in the thought, that if taken from us (as we word it) she might still believe that she would watch over and take interest in, possibly, even influence us, while unseen. And next, I told her to be assured as of the pure truth, that though no one ought to be told at such a time that they had

medicine, which she would not take. Moments so dark as these I have never known. I pray for God's support to us all. Hitherto He has granted it.

[21 December 1848]

Emily suffers no more from pain or weakness now. She never will suffer more in this world. She is gone, after a hard, short conflict. She died on *Tuesday*, the very day I wrote to you. I thought it very possible she might be with us still for weeks; and a few hours afterwards, she was in eternity. Yes; there is no Emily in time or on earth now. Yesterday we put her poor, wasted, mortal frame quietly under the Church pavement. We are very calm at present. Why should we be otherwise? The anguish of seeing her suffer is over; the spectacle of the pains of death is gone by; the funeral day is past. We feel she is at peace. No need now to tremble for the hard frost and the keen wind. Emily does not feel them. She died in a time of promise. We saw her taken from life in its prime. But it is God's will and the place where she is gone is better than that she has left....

Charlotte Brontë, letters quoted by E. C. Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, New York, 1857, Vol. 2, pp. 63, 65-8.

## 217. Anticipating Death after Miscarriage, 1904: Lord Curzon's notes on his wife's experience

3.40 am. Thursday Sep. 22 [1904] Great pain into the night. Eyes.

8.15 am. I'll do my best.

(1) Pain gone to the other side.

Pulse better. Only 110, it was 130.

Cable to my people; they ought to know. I have peritonitis.

How are the little children?

(2) All right. Would you like to see them? No.

My tongue is quite dreadful. It is cracked right across.

(3) Asked about Champneys and Barlow [doctors].  
knew going to be operated on  
said she knew it would kill her  
said I must not say anything to make her cry  
Try and keep up. Make a good struggle. Keep your strength.

I haven't got any

My darling, my beau. Don't make me cry.

3-8. From 3.30 to 5.30 things were at their worst. During this time she was thrice nearly gone. Her hands and arms and extremities become cold. I rubbed her arm and hand with brandy and hot water bottles were put under feet and legs, even up to her thighs.

She was most reluctant to believe that she was going and said that she did not want to see the children till the end.

At intervals she gave me instructions about everything.

Don't let the children remain here. It is too cold for them....

Don't take them to India. Ask Mama as my last wish to come and take them to some warm place and look after them.

I asked her if she died whether she would wish to be buried at

Kedleston.

Yes I should love it.

Here she said, Don't put me in the ground. I have a horror of being put in the ground (and at another time: I have a horror of being buried alive.) Put me in the vault.

At one time when she thought she was going she asked me to read through our favourite psalm, 'Lord who shall dwell in thy holy tabernacle or who shall rest upon the holy hill' and I read it through in floods of tears. She repeated the first two sentences after me.

Then she asked me to read Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, and I repeated the first verse. She said, 'But you must not mourn for me'. At one moment when she was nearly going she said, Repeat the Lord's Prayer, and I repeated it and she after me....

I asked her whether in another world, if there was one, she would wait for me till I could come. Yes, she said. I will wait. When I said that we had loved each other long and been all in all to each other, she asked that that might be inscribed on her tomb. She asked that we might be buried side by side with a marble

215. *Death of a Grand-child: Johnny (1914)*

I think Top has written to tell you of the death of dear little Johnny. It was most sad for us all...

I never think the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is the same comfort with regard to a baby that it is with regard to older people—at least from a mother's standpoint—because it is the body that she loves at that age—the affection is the instinctive animal affection, she wants to have it in her arms, to feel the little fingers clasping hers. She does not know what the soul is like yet, so she can only love that vaguely—but the other instinct is so strong that she suffers cruelly if she loses her baby....

Maud, Lady Selborne to her son, Bobby Palmer, 18 November [1914], Selborne Papers, MS Eng. lett. C. 454, f. 173 [Bodleian Library].

After the Service Top and Grace [Palmer] strolled round to the tiny grave with its pathetic little holly twigs and white flowers, side by side with Father [Lord Selborne]—little Johnny's Great-grandfather. Poor Grace! Her plain black clothes, her sad eyes, all so touching. On Wednesday she talked to me about the sad little death quite freely and very intensely. She had to stop speaking sometimes....

Laura E. Ridding [née Palmer], 25 December 1914, 'Christmas at Blackmoor', Selborne Papers, MS Eng. hist. c. 1018, fos. 60-1 [Bodleian Library].

216. *Death of Emily Brontë: Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 1848*

[29 October 1848]

... I feel much more uneasy about my sister than myself just now.

Emily's cold and cough are very obstinate. I fear she has pain in her chest, and I sometimes catch a shortness in her breathing, when she has moved at all quickly. She looks very thin and pale. Her reserved nature occasions me great uneasiness of mind. It is useless to question her; you get no answers. It is still more useless to recommend remedies; they are never adopted....

[23 November 1848]

I told you Emily was ill, in my last letter. She has not rallied yet. She is *very* ill. I believe, if you were to see her, your impression would be that there is no hope. A more hollow, wasted, pallid aspect, I have not beheld. The deep tight cough continues; the breathing after the least exertion is a rapid pant; and these symptoms are accompanied by pains in the chest and side. Her pulse, the only time she allowed it to be felt, was found to beat 115 per minute. In this state she resolutely refuses to see a doctor; she will give no explanation of her feelings, she will scarcely allow her feelings to be alluded to. Our position is, and has been for some weeks, exquisitely painful. God only knows how all this is to terminate. More than once, I have been forced boldly to regard the terrible event of her loss as possible, and even probable. But nature shrinks from such thoughts. I think Emily seems the nearest thing to my heart in the world.

[10 December 1848]

... Hope and fear fluctuate daily. The pain in her side and chest is better; the cough, the shortness of breath, the extreme emaciation continue. I have endured, however, such tortures of uncertainty on this subject, that, at length, I could endure it no longer; and as her repugnance to seeing a medical man continues immutable,—as she declares 'no poisoning doctor' shall come near her,—I have written, unknown to her, to an eminent physician in London, giving as minute a statement of her case and symptoms as I could draw up, and requesting an opinion. I expect an answer in a day or two....

[Tuesday, December 1848]

I should have written to you before, if I had had one word of hope to say; but I have not. She grows daily weaker. The physician's opinion was expressed too obscurely to be of use. He sent some

consigned him for Geddington. Closed my blind to have no other company than the thought of her who seems incessantly to beckon me & say 'Come Pappy Come: & of the land whither she is gone.... Notwithstanding precautions and assurances I had to pay in five parts and to make three changes of carriage.

[13 April 1850]

Reached Fasque between 8 & 9 A.M. Welcomed by Helen with deep emotion: & by all: particularly Hayman. At Eleven we had morning prayers, the funeral office, & Holy Communion: after which I saw the coffin set right under the spot where she used to kneel in infant prayer....

My Father did not converse much on business: & having slept ill went to rest after dinner.—I conversed with Aunt J. & again with Helen about our darling's life and illness....

I kept the key of the vault and was able to visit my Jessy there.

[15 April 1850]

... I could only pay one last visit [to the vault] being with my Father so much. Oh that I may carry away with me the seal of that Chamber.

W. Gladstone, *The Gladstone Diaries*, Vol. 4: 1848–1854 (ed. M.R.D. Foot & H.C.G. Matthew), Oxford 1974, pp. 196–8, 200–2.

[12 April 1850: rail journey with coffin]

She and I were alone all the way. It was a great privilege. In the interval we had so deeply enjoyed the presence of her lifeless frame, with the now gentle traces of suffering, and the surpassing peace and purity, and even majesty that invested her countenance.

W. Gladstone's memorandum on the death of Jessy Gladstone, Mary Gladstone Papers, BL Add. MS. 46269.

## 213. Death of a Daughter: Little Emma (1851)

You will be grieved to hear that a slight ailment of our dear little Emma Cecily proved to be scarlet fever or some form of it, and convulsions coming her little life soon ebbed out—God be praised for All his Mercies which are great indeed—I feel this to be a serious call to us and beg your prayers that it may be blessed to us. Dear Mary is well, and able to do all that is required of her. I suppose the little one's remains will be laid by her sister's....

Thomas to Lydia Acland, n. d. [1851], Devon Record Office, Acland MSS (1148 M/16/2).

## 214. Death of a Son: Antony (1902)

Alas, Alas, I can gather him [her son, Antony] no longer, though my arms weary for him, though my heart aches for him... he was tired—too tired—and his heart slowly stopped—no pain, no sign,—only a flickering and flickering, which went out a little before ten... I kept away from the sight of him all through one day, till at last the day before he was buried... the agony of our loss had grown and grown, until it seemed that such a thing could not be borne... when I looked upon his face, the child in it was gone... all at once, swiftly, softly and silently, like falling snow, a wonderful peace and hope descended upon me. My tears were dried, my heart was healed. I felt him,—oh and I felt others too, very near to me. I could almost at the moment have cried for joy. It was Antony's last smile for me....

[17 December 1936]

Some day far hence the messages which have come through about Antony from another life will be known and will bring proof to many that his life is only a stage in a greater journey.... This is no credulous dream of a fond mother: I have been allowed to see the evidence which exists of Antony's continuous life as well as that of others....

Edith Lyttelton, memorandum on the death of Antony, 1902, 1936, Chandos Papers, II, 3/21 [Churchill College, Cambridge].



## 212. Death of a Daughter: Little Jessie (1850)

[29 March 1850]

... Dear little Jessie's illness which has long been tedious, looked serious today: there was a total loss of appetite now for the 3d day, & of energy, and apparently some unconquerable obstruction in the bowels.

[2 April 1850]

... It was a day of much anxiety & pain. Last night the brain was in a fearful state of irritation & dear little Jessie spent it tossing, moaning, & screaming, chiefly in C.'s arms, the rest in mine. With day came some diminution of the excitement: & Locock in the morning still held it most probable that the stomach was the cause. But at night he declared the head symptoms unequivocal. The moaning was much less but the head moved very constantly from side to side. The pulse was low, which he much disliked. The eyes very heavy. He says it is tubercular inflammation of the membranes of the brain, a most insidious form of disease: the danger imminent but the case 'far from hopeless': 48 hours he thinks will bring it to a point so as to make the issue clear. And now O Father can we readily yield her up to Thee? O how much better will she be cared for than in this sad & evil world. His will be done. My Catherine bears up wonderfully.

[8 April 1850]

... While they were here Locock came: and found Jessie in a state almost hopeless. We were deluded yesterday as to convulsions: for I now find Mrs Baker observed some. But without knowing this Catherine perceived through a mother's divining instinct that her darling had begun to give way in the deadly struggle. In the afternoon I prepared some little things by anticipation.

As the evening drew on all the signs grew worse, and our hearts again very sick yet I trust neither of us are so blindly selfish as to murmur at the Lord's being about to raise one of our children to Himself. Dr Locock's last visit left us no hope. C. and I with Mrs Baker sat in the room of death and watched the beloved child in her death battle, powerless to aid her. In the intervals of the thickening convulsions I read Mr Munro's excellent Letter, & wrote the necessary letters for the morning: until latterly when

there was scarcely any spaces of repose between the tearings and tossings of the conflict.

[9 April 1850]

It is all over, and all well. The blessed child was released at two o'clock in the morning compassionately taken by her Saviour into the fold of His peace. I dwell on it no longer in this place: I must try to put together a few recollections of her little life. C. & I got to rest between 3 & 4. I was awakened in the morning by her weeping. The day was occupied with the communications & arrangements necessarily following the Death.

[10 April 1850]

... Today we had Jessie in the Boudoir. Flowers came from Scotland: and C. put them about her.

I wrote today this little inscription perhaps for the stone floor of the Chapel over her.

### Underneath

Sleep the mortal remains of  
Catherine Jessie Gladstone  
Born July 27. 1845

Died April 9. 1850

'And in their mouth was  
found no guile: for they  
are without fault before  
the throne of God.'

Rev. XIV. 5.

Catherine showed nervous weakness a little: but was much comforted by having Jessie near: I mean her body near: for of her spirit we know not: but that may be also near.

[11 April 1850]

... In the evening came the closing of the coffin & the last kiss upon the cold features of our Jessie. It was a pang for me; a deep one for a mother—who is going too too to part from her sooner.

[12 April 1850]

I left C.G. at 5 3/4 AM: & went from Euston Square in a Coupée with the dear remains. Took Willy as far as Blisworth & there

which are known to the medical profession, to accomplish these most desirable ends, been properly and prominently inculcated in their writings and teachings, less would now remain to be done. The opinions of nurses, and the practices which they follow, are too often, in truth, the cast-off doctrines of professional men of a former age. The profession, therefore, lies under the double duty not only of disseminating knowledge, but of repudiating the errors of their predecessors....

Dr John T. Conquest, *Letters to a Mother*, 1848, pp. 111, 116-8.

## 211. Death of a Daughter: Mary (1849)

[Lady Eddisbury to Lord Eddisbury, Sunday night, August 1849]

### MY DEAREST LOVE,

I am so fretted about dear baby I must write to you. Yesterday afternoon the little thing was uncomfortable & when the nurse came she could not suck from wind. She has continued poorly all night & today I was quite shocked when I came upstairs at the change which had taken place in the baby, so thin & its little hands cold & shrivelled. Dr. Locock ordered her castor oil & sal volatile which Williams had given. I had a very bad night, never closed my eyes, first from pain & then from the laudanum.

11 o'clock. I have just sent for Dr. Locock I am so uneasy about dear Baby.

7 o'clock *Monday morn.* Baby no better, pinched & blue Locock ordered brandy in her milk it is the nurses milk put down her throat in spoonfuls

6 o'clock. I think Baby is better, I have more hope.

12 o'clock. I am more & more anxious. Poor dear little lamb it looks so worn & piteous. When Locock comes again he is to decide about her being baptized. I shall be so wretched to lose her she is such a darling & I feel it quite a punishment for having said I did not wish for a child. I did not know how fast love grows for babies but as I sit by its cradle & hear its faint means it goes thro' my heart. I feel very poorly quite knocked up. I am sure you will feel for the little soft thing you have watched the last fortnight as well as for me. She sleeps continuously & when she is roused to

take food her eyes look quite dead.

2 o'clock. It has been a cholera attack without pain, & now she is exhausted. She has no disease. I cannot now say what day I can go I feel I shall not have my little darling to bring.

[Lady Eddisbury to Lord Eddisbury, Monday night, August 1849]

### MY DEAREST LOVE,

I closed my letter before with a gleam of hope, Dr. Locock came just as I had sealed it he said Baby was less *prostrate* than in the morning but he would not say she was at all out of danger—she was not safe. Within half an hour of his going the blue look came on again. I then decided upon having her baptized at once & a curate came & the dear little lamb was baptized Mary Ethelflida, I did not care what name for I fear she will not bear it long here, but you had said you liked that & I thought it would be best....

[Lady Eddisbury to Lord Eddisbury, 25 August 1849]

My dear little one would have been a month old today—you can have no idea how present she is to my mind, I am surprised at it myself, still I do feel most thankful that up to this time we have been spared other losses by this dreadful disease [cholera]....

[Lady Eddisbury to Lord Eddisbury, 15 November 1849]

I am just returned from Church—I at first felt very sorrowful, for the memory of that wee thing is still very present to my heart, but I can feel truly thankful that all the other dear ones have been spared & you my chiefest & greatest blessing. The churches were very well attended & the day observed everywhere. I believe this is the only country in which there has been a national acknowledgement of God's directing Providence in the cholera, & I believe it is not a mere outward form but that more & more are becoming every day religious. At such a time one's heart is very full & many thoughts crowd that cannot be expressed. I hope I may show the fruits of religion more than hitherto....

Nancy Mitford (ed.), *The Ladies of Alderley*, 1938, pp. 205-6, 208, 216.