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THE HOUSE ON THE HILL.

IN THREE PARTS:—PART I.

BY E. W. C.

IT was the month of June when Burton Peabody stepped from the cars upon the platform of the railroad station at N——. He had been told that this town was one of the most beautiful of the many that hang like gems on the silver thread of the Connecticut. As he looked around, however, he felt inclined to doubt the truth of such a statement. But upon reaching the summit of a steep ascent leading to the village a scene met his eye fully justifying the encomium.

Stretching far away to the north lay a fertile plain, covered on either side the highway with various cereals, giving promise of an abundant harvest. Sloping gently toward the west the table-land was lost in a lovely valley, bearing on its bosom a dancing rivulet, while beyond rose a range of hills, their once unbroken garment of green now interspersed and rendered more beautiful by the evidences of cultivation everywhere apparent. The northern horizon was also bounded by mountains, from whose tops Burton could readily have discerned, through the wonderfully transparent atmosphere, some of the loftier peaks of the

White Mountain range. Indeed, had he followed the various roads that wind over and around these heights, scenes of grandeur and beauty would have revealed themselves scarcely surpassed by the far-famed glories of Switzerland. Toward the south and east the country presented a more broken surface; while beyond the clear, bright waters of the river that wash the eastern border of the town appeared the smaller hills of New Hampshire, resting blue against the sky.

Among these natural beauties nestled the little village; and here Burton received a hearty welcome to the pleasant, shady house of his old friend Dr. M——.

“You must go to bed early, my boy,” were the Doctor’s parting words to his guest that night, as he led the way to a large, cool chamber. “You must rise with the sun if you wish to join me in my morning walk.”

“Never doubt me, Sir, I will be ready,” was the hearty response.

True to their appointment, on the morrow the gentlemen were early abroad; but the cool fragrant air, golden with sunshine, in which spar-

gate; but thousands were there waiting to look on the face of one they tenderly loved, and which seemed radiant already with the reflected glory of heaven. Amid sobbings and tears they bade him a tender, loving farewell. Such an ovation the mightiest monarch of earth might envy. In the dead of night, when the city of London was all wrapt in sleep, nothing but a deep, ardent love, kindled by the Cross, could have collected such a vast crowd, to show their abiding sympathy for a humble minister of Christ.

A strong guard surrounded him. At Smithfield he fell on the ground and prayed. He then took up a faggot and kissed it, and then saluted the stake to which he was about to be chained.

As they bound him with the chain he cried, looking to heaven: "*England, England, repent of thy sins!*" To John Leaf, a young man to be burned with him: "Be, of good comfort; we shall sup with the Lord this night!"

Long since Gardiner and Bonner, bishops, papists, murderers, with blood on hands, head and heart have con-

fronted their victim in the eternal world! What a meeting!

Of Gardiner, the persecutor, it was said:

"He could not dine
Nor drink his wine
Until he saw the martyrs burn."

He waited till four o'clock before he would eat, and news from Oxford came that Cranmer and Ridley had been burned. His disease seized on him, and after terrible agony, he lingered till near twelve, when he was summoned to answer for his crimes.

Fifty million martyrs have been put to death by *Rome Pagan*, and *Rome Papal*.

The Church of Christ, however, opposed this bloody work. Infidels have endeavored to fasten the odium on John Calvin; but that holy man did what he could to save the wretched Servetus, but the Council insisted on executing him as a bold, ribald blasphemer of the Sacred Trinity. The spirit of Christianity has ever won its triumphs by love. These are the only weapons known to the sacramental host, in their conflicts with sin.

NOTABLE WOMEN OF CHRISTIANITY. No. V. LADY HUNTINGDON.

BY PROF. L. J. HALSEY, D. D.

WE pass from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, from the glittering pageants of France and Italy, and the heroic scenes of the Reformation, to glance for a moment at the private life of a noble lady of England, the Countess Selina Huntingdon, the friend of Doddridge and Watts, of Berridge and Romaine, of Whitefield and the Wesleys.

In the story of Margarete of Navarre, Olympia Morata, and other heroines of the faith, we have seen how much the cause of Protestantism was indebted to woman. Now, after a lapse of two centuries, we see her influence again in one of the greatest

movements of the age. The Reformation had done its work, and given to Protestant England an enlightened and evangelical faith; but during the years which had passed, corruption had crept into the Church, until at the beginning of the eighteenth century little was left but a nominal Christianity. It was at this period, when vice and folly reigned in the court, and the proudest nobles in the realm were godless and unbelieving, that the gospel, as preached by Whitefield and Wesley, came with saving power to Lady Huntingdon, and she became the powerful advocate of their cause. The exigencies of the times required that the friend and patron of a new and

unknown ministry should be a woman of rank and influence, brave, resolute, and devoted, fearless of the scoffs of the world, and ready to carry the gospel into the strongholds of fashion and frivolity. All these qualifications were found in Lady Huntingdon. The daughter of an Earl and wife of a nobleman of the same rank, she numbered among her friends the courtly Chesterfield, the famous Duchess of Marlborough, the brilliant and witty Lady Mary Wortley Montague; and she moved in a circle of the most accomplished men and women of England. Among the luminaries of the fashionable and literary world, her rank and talents entitled her to a high position. But she had no desire to shine as a queen of society, or a leader in political intrigue, and her name comes down to us enrolled among those who have lived and labored for the Redeemer.

Selina Shirley, afterward Lady Huntingdon, was the second daughter of Earl Ferrers, and was born at Chartley Castle in 1707. Here, amid the grand old trees, and ivied ruins of her ancestral home, she grew up to womanhood, remarkable for an unusual thoughtfulness. It was a deep seriousness, which, while it did not amount to melancholy, isolated her from her young companions. Her nature craved something higher and better than she saw in the lives of those around her; and with no friend to direct her to the source of that higher good, she searched the Scriptures for herself, hoping to find in them the light and joy for which she longed. But while she sought to live a virtuous life, and struggled with temptations within and without, her heart was not at rest. She lacked the faith which could see a Father's hand in the dispensations around her. Her religion was one of creed and ritual, without the assurance of peace and pardon through a crucified Saviour.

At the age of twenty-one she was united in marriage to Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon, a man of congenial tastes and character. And now society allured her in its most attractive guise.

Her aunt, Lady Fanny Shirley, was one of the reigning beauties of the court of George the First. At her residence at Twickenham she had gathered around her the most accomplished wits, and poets, and authors of English literature. This brilliant circle received the young Lady Huntingdon in the most flattering manner. But although she moved among them she was not of them. The pleasures of the world could not satisfy the cravings of her heart. In this state of unrest passed the early years of her married life. At Donnington Park, at Ashby de la Zouch, in town and in country, she discharged the duties of her high position with grace and dignity, was a devoted wife and mother, revered by high and low, but still her conscience was not satisfied.

About this time, Lady Margaret Hastings, sister of the Earl, visited his house. Her gentle, thoughtful spirit had always made her welcome there, and now her visit opened a new era in Lady Huntingdon's life. Lady Margaret came from Ledstone Hall, where a new minister had been preaching. Under his searching appeals her conscience had been awakened, and she was now a joyful convert. In this state of mind she could not rest without communicating to those she loved the glad tidings of salvation. One day, in conversation with Lady Huntingdon, she said: "Since I have known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, I have been as happy as an angel." Lady Huntingdon was startled. She had thought that she was religious, but she knew she was not happy. Could it be that she was deceiving herself? She saw the contrast in her own and her sister's faith, and felt that she was an exile from her Father's house. "It was to no purpose," writes one at this time, "that she reminded herself of the morality of her conduct. Her best righteousness, so far from justifying her before God, appeared only to increase her condemnation." The struggle in her mind was so great that she was thrown upon a sick bed, and her life was despaired of. It was at this crisis when

the most devoted care and skill could do nothing to alleviate her mental anguish, that she determined to cast herself on Jesus Christ for salvation. Earnestly she prayed to God for pardon and mercy through his Son. Her prayer was answered, the conflict was over, and when she rose from her bed it was with the resolution to devote the remainder of her life to God.

The minister who had preached a saving faith to Lady Margaret Hastings was Benjamin Ingham, the friend and co-laborer of Whitefield and the Wesleys. They had been together at Oxford University, and while there had determined, with the help of God, to show to the world that there was something purer and holier in the religion of Christ than the hollow pomp and shallow piety of the Established Church. On leaving Oxford they had commenced a course of itinerant preaching, Whitefield at Bristol, Ingham in Yorkshire, and Wesley at London. On Lady Huntingdon's recovery she sent for the Wesleys, expressed a warm interest in their work, and from this time aided them by her name and influence. She felt that a new ministry was needed. The fervent and thrilling appeals of the new preachers contrasted strongly with the cold indifference of the sporting clergy. The working classes flocked in crowds to hear them, and people began to wake up to the conviction, that the lower ranks, as well as the gentry and nobility, needed moral and religious culture.

In the society of her Christian friends Lady Huntingdon did not forget her old associates. Frequently by letter and personal appeal did she urge upon them the claims of the gospel. The following are specimens of the replies she but too often received: "The doctrines of these preachers are most repulsive, and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect toward their superiors, in perpetually endeavoring to level all ranks, and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl upon the earth. This is

highly offensive and insulting, and I can not but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding." Thus wrote the haughty Duchess of Buckingham while the aged, yet scoffing, Duchess of Marlborough responded to Lady Huntingdon's friendly warnings in the following style: "Your concern for my religious improvement is very obliging. God knows we all need mending, and none more than myself. I have lived to see great changes in the world—have acted a conspicuous part myself—and hope, in my old age, to obtain mercy from God, as I never expect any at the hands of my fellow-creatures. Good, alas! I do want; but where, among the corrupt sons of Adam, am I to find it? Your ladyship must direct me. But women of wit, beauty and quality can not bear too many humiliating truths—they shock our pride. Yet we must die—we must converse with earth and worms. I have no comfort in my own family, and when alone my reflections almost kill me, so that I am forced to fly to the society of those whom I detest and abhor. Now there is Lady Frances Sanderson's great rout to-morrow night; all the world will be there, and I must go. I do hate that woman as much as I hate a physician; but I must go, if for no other purpose than to mortify and spite her. This is very wicked, I know, but I confess my little peccadillos to you; your goodness will lead you to be mild and forgiving."

How thankful, on reading this sad confession of a soul grown old in the service of the world, must Lady Huntingdon have felt, that she had early turned away from such unsatisfying pleasures, and anchored on the only sure foundation. In what a different strain she writes to Charles Wesley: "What blessed effects does the love of God produce in the hearts of those who abide in him. How solid is the peace and how divine the joy that springs from an assurance that we are united to the Saviour by a living faith. Blessed be his name. I have an abiding sense of his presence with

me, notwithstanding the weakness and unworthiness I feel, and an intense desire that he may be glorified in the salvation of souls, especially those who lie nearest my heart. After the poor labors of the day are over, my heart still cries, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I am deeply sensible that daily, hourly and momentarily I stand in need of the sprinkling of my Saviour's blood. Thanks be to God, the fountain is always open. O what an anchor is this to my soul!"

When Whitefield and Wesley first appeared before the public, there seems to have been as little genuine piety among the dissenting churches as among the Episcopal, although, in both, there were bright exceptions to the prevailing spirit of unbelief. Whitefield and his associates met with as little favor from one as from the other. In all their trials Lady Huntingdon stood their firm friend, not only assisting them by her rank and wealth, but by her own personal influence. The Earl's death, which took place in 1746, released her from many duties to society, which, as the wife of a peer, she had been called upon to perform, and from this time she devoted herself with increased ardor to the cause of revived Christianity. Lord Huntingdon showed his entire confidence in her judgment and ability by leaving her in the sole care of his children and immense fortune. Well and nobly did she discharge the trust. Left a widow at the age of thirty-nine, she gave her whole time to the welfare of her children and the cause so dear to her heart. No considerations could ever induce her to change her position, or again enter into the pleasures of the world.

A letter written to her friend Dr. Doddridge, in the freshness of her bereavement, gives an insight into her feelings. We quote the following extract, remarkable for its intense spirituality and the triumph of faith over the terrors of the grave:

"I often look to that bed which promises me a refuge from an evil world, and from a yet more evil heart; but how does it bound, as the roe or hind over the mountains, when that all-

transporting view presents itself; presents, O glorious! an eternity of joy, to follow this glad release from time; everlasting triumphs sounding throughout the angelic thrones, to welcome my arrival. Such love and pity dwell in heaven, and only there, for misery and poverty like mine. What liberty, to delight in that which is most excellent; how enlarged those faculties which can take in celestial purity; and, by sweet attraction, engage and eternally maintain a union with it! Thus do I look on Death; he is called a monster, a king of terrors, but as a Gabriel's salutation shall my soul meet him: he can bring no other message to the redeemed in Christ, but, 'Hail! thou who art highly favored of the Lord!' and though it is true so great a stranger may surprise for a little, yet his smiles of victory will clear even the ignorance of flesh and blood, and make the grave appear a consecrated dormitory for sweet repose. O! glorious Emmanuel! how do I long for that immortal voice to praise thee with; and, till then, that mortal one which may sound through earth thy love to man!"

Some time after her husband's death we find Lady Huntingdon traveling through Wales with a large party of friends, consisting of her daughters, her sisters, several clergymen, and other religious friends. Unlike such trips generally are, this was taken for profit not pleasure. At the towns and villages where they stopped the ministers addressed the people, who flocked in crowds to hear them, and it is probable that this tour was the means of bringing many to Christ. At what time she became acquainted with Whitefield is not known. On his return from his third visit to America she sent for him as soon as he landed, and had him taken to her house at Chelsea. On her return to London she appointed him her chaplain and threw open her elegant mansion in Park Street to his ministrations. The highest nobility thronged to hear him. Many were fascinated by his eloquence who remained indifferent to his doctrines. Lady Huntingdon writes of this parlor preaching: "Some of the great ones

hear with me the gospel patiently, and thus much seed is sown by Mr. Whitefield's preaching." A female prayer-meeting was established and attended by those ladies of rank who had been converted under his ministry. Among these was Lady Frances Gardiner, wife of the celebrated Colonel Gardiner, Lady Chesterfield and Lady Fanny Shirley. In regard to the increase in the number of converts, Horace Walpole writes to a friend on the continent: "If you ever think of returning to England, you must prepare yourself with Methodism; this sect increases as fast as ever almost any other religious nonsense did. Lady Fanny Shirley has chosen this way of bestowing the dregs of her beauty. The Methodists love your big sinners, and indeed they have a plentiful harvest." But ridicule could not shake their faith. They had tasted of the joys of redeeming love, and nothing could turn them back to the hollow pleasures, which they had found to be but vanity and vexation of spirit. While thus devoting herself to those of her own rank Lady Huntingdon did not neglect the welfare of her more humble neighbors. Her house was open to them also, and she was known as the friend and benefactress of the poor.

In 1749 she went to Clifton on the celebration of the majority of her eldest son. The young Earl soon after set out on the customary continental tour. He was pronounced by Lord Chesterfield to be one of the first peers in England, with merit and talents equal to his birth. His prospects were brilliant and flattering, but he had no religious principle to sustain him, and his mother trembled for him. She looked on the future of her daughter, Lady Elizabeth Hastings, with more pleasure. In relation to her, Horace Walpole writes in his usual frivolous style, "The queen of the Methodists got her daughter named for lady of the bedchamber to the princesses, but it is all off again, as she will not let her play cards on Sunday." What a comment on the worldliness of crowned heads. It does honor both to Lady Elizabeth's heart and principles. She

was much admired for her vivacity and intelligence, and afterward married the Earl of Moira, a branch of the Huntingdon family. Lady Huntingdon was blessed in both her daughters. The youngest, the lovely and accomplished Lady Selina, was the idol of her heart. She was taken from her in early womanhood, but not before she had chosen the better part, and shown by her life and character the faithfulness of her mother's teachings.

The friends whom Lady Huntingdon gathered round her were among the most distinguished men of the period. Dissenters and churchmen were both welcomed to her house, and the ministers preached in her chapels indiscriminately. Among the names in this gifted circle we find that of Dr. Watts, of Philip Doddridge the distinguished dissenting preacher whose "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" has been instrumental in the conversion of many, of William Romaine, and Dr. Stonehouse, afterward the spiritual guide of Hannah More, and the Mr. Johnson of her "Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." Here too we see the name of Colonel Gardiner, that brave officer and upright man who fell at Preston Pans, of the gentle Hervey, of Henry Penn, John Berridge, Toplady, and Rowland Hill. To all of these Lady Huntingdon was a devoted friend and they regarded her with feelings of affectionate reverence. The greater part of her large income she gave to religious objects. Wishing to build a chapel at Brighton she disposed of her jewels which she had ceased to wear, and devoted the proceeds to the erection of a house of worship which was the first of the chapels she afterward established all over the country. A chapel was also soon erected at Bath, the great summer resort for the fashionable and the afflicted. Manypaused in the search after health or excitement to attend the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley, and Romaine, and some of Lady Huntingdon's dearest friends were converted.

In 1768 the expulsion of six young men from Oxford for holding peculiar views, and reading, praying and ex-

pounding the Scriptures at private houses, brought to maturity a scheme which Lady Huntingdon had long contemplated. This was the establishment of a college where young men might be trained for the ministry, without the restrictions of a university course. Trevecca in Wales was chosen as the seat of the institution, and many received into it who could not afford an education at more expensive schools. Here Lady Huntingdon resided the greater part of the year, and encouraged the students by her cheerful Christian sympathy, and lofty energy of character. This college is still in existence, and has sent out many missionaries to preach the gospel. On the death of Whitefield it was found in his will that he had bequeathed his orphan house in America, and all his buildings, lands, and books to Lady Huntingdon. These possessions added greatly to her anxiety and labors, but she did not shrink from the burden. She at once inquired into the state of the institution, sent out her own house-keeper to take charge, and appointed a teacher for the school. At the same time a mission to America was organized whose headquarters should be the orphan house at Bethesda. On the breaking out of the Revolutionary War in America this institution was destroyed.

We now come to the secession of the connection under Lady Huntingdon's control. Up to this time she had remained in the Church of England. Her chapels under the protection of a peeress of the realm had been undisturbed, and she had employed her chaplains where she pleased. But now she was obliged to take a stand, and decide the character of her chapels as places of worship. In Spa-fields, a suburb of London, a house once devoted to riot and excess had been fitted up as a chapel, and two clergymen of the Established Church engaged to fill the pulpit. Under their efficient ministry the neighborhood was much improved, and many sinners converted. The success of the enterprise aroused the indignation of the curate of St. James, the parish church, at the implied reproach on his ministrations.

He carried the affair into the ecclesiastical courts, and the suit was decided against the Spa-fields preachers, and the chapel closed. At this period Lady Huntingdon was advised to purchase the house and place it on the footing of her other chapels. This she did at once, but the persecuting curate of St. James renewed his attack, and was again successful in his suit. Lady Huntingdon, foreseeing the difficulties which were before her should she remain in the Church, determined to free her connection from its power and take refuge under the Act of Toleration. It was not without a severe struggle that she prepared to take this step. Romaine, Penn, and other ministers of the Established Church could no longer officiate in her chapels, and she felt cut off from much she had loved. The college at Trevecca went with her and was afterward removed to Cheshunt near London. At the time of the secession the chapels in the connection were sixty-seven in number, seven of which were her own exclusive property.

In 1789 Lady Huntingdon, then more than threescore years and ten, was deprived by death of her eldest son. The promise of his early manhood had been fulfilled; he was a brilliant, talented man, honored and trusted by his sovereign; but Lord Chesterfield had been his preceptor, and at the age of sixty years, he died, as he had lived, a skeptic.

Her last years were now drawing to a close in serene and cheerful old age. Her business all arranged, her extensive charities provided for, she looked forward with immortal hope to her crown of joy. For some time she had lived in great simplicity at Spa-fields next door to the church. Here she died in 1791, at the age of eighty-four. In her last illness she was tenderly cared for by her beloved friend Lady Ann Erskine. In peace and tranquillity she passed away, saying; "I am well; all is well, well forever. I see wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory. I am cradled in the arms of love and mercy. My work is done. I have nothing to do but go to my Father. I shall go to my Father to-night."

Her happy peaceful end was in harmony with her useful and beautiful life. It would be difficult to name another woman who has excelled her in active labors for the cause of Christ, and exerted a wider and more permanent influence on the Church. To no one woman perhaps is the whole modern evangelical Church of England and America more indebted for all that now distinguishes it as a Church of revivals, of evangelists, and of vital godliness. Her college still exists at Cheshunt to educate ministers of Christ, and the chapels of her connection now number more than a hundred. Says Isaac Taylor, in his recent work on Methodism, "Much that has become characteristic of evangelic Christianity at the present time, had its origin in Lady Huntingdon's drawing-room, that is to say, in the circle of which she was the center, and her house the gathering point. In a diffusive or undefined manner this religious style has pervaded all religious communions; but within the Episcopal Church the transmission was more determinate, and more sharply outlined, and it may there be traced with more precision, and is pregnant with further consequences."

"In fact, this religious transmission, which connects the venerated names of Penn, Newton, Scott, Milner and others in no very remote manner with the founders of Methodism, might seem too conspicuous to be called in question; nor does it very clearly appear what those manly and Christian-like feelings are, which would prompt any parties to repudiate it.

"As with Wesley, so with Lady Huntingdon, a formal separation from the Established Church was, in each act and instance, submitted to with extreme reluctance, and not until it was felt to be inevitable. When at length the irregularities of the awakened Church could no longer be winked at by the Church authorities, the greater number of them fell back in their places as parish ministers; and this defection while it gave rise necessarily to a new order of ministers in the connection, whose ordination placed them on a level only with the dissenting ministry, it took place at a time when no alternative was left to Lady Huntingdon's congregations but to seek protection under the Toleration Act as dissenters.

"Lady Huntingdon was always the object of a warm personal affection with those who were nearest to her. With them, it was always our *dear* Lady Huntingdon; and putting out of view formal eulogies, it is unquestionable, that if she governed her connection as having a right to rule it, her style and behavior, like Wesley's, indicated the purest motives, and the most entire simplicity of purpose."

For fuller information respecting this excellent and noble woman we may refer to a beautiful little volume issued by the American Tract Society, and compiled by Mrs. Helen C. Knight, to which we have been indebted for the materials of this sketch. It is entitled, "Lady Huntingdon and her Friends, or, The Revival of the Work of God in the days of Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, Penn, and Others."