

OUR FRONTISPIECE

The interesting silk handkerchief of which we publish a photograph was brought to our notice by Rev. W. L. Hannam, B.D.

It belongs to the Misses Scrimshaw of Bingham, who are members of a family well honoured in Nottingham Methodism. They are presenting it to the Museum now in process of formation at Brunswick Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The handkerchief measures roughly 2½ feet square and the design occupies all the space.

Wesley is in the centre; above him is Dr. Jackson, below him Dr. Bunting. On his left are Rev. Wm. Thornton, Rev. John Farrar, Dr. Beecham, Dr. Dixon, Dr. Hannah, Thomas Farmer, Esq, and Rev. John Scott. To his right are Rev. Jonathan Crowther, Rev. S. Waddy, Dr. Newton, Dr. Alder, Rev. Samuel Jackson, Rev. Jacob Stanley and Rev. Elijah Hoole.

On the left side of the design, on a level with the picture of Wesley, is the Missionary Ship "Triton"; on the right side is depicted the Missionary Ship "John Wesley". At the bottom of the design the Wesleyan Institution, Richmond, occupies the left corner and City Road Chapel the right, John Wesley's tomb-stone with railings is in the centre.

CHARLES WESLEY TO "VARANESE"

Last year our pages contained a transcription of one of the most important Wesley documents published for many years—a letter "To V.", written from the *Simmonds* anchored off Georgia, on February 5th, 1736 (*Proc. xxv: 17-20*). Through the kindness of the Rev. Walter J. Noble in furnishing a photostat facsimile of the original letter it is now necessary to bring forward some new facts which completely alter the significance of the document.

On examining the facsimile I saw that the letter was not by John Wesley at all, but by his brother Charles. Though there is a slight family resemblance between the handwriting of the two brothers, one soon learns to distinguish between them. In the present case there is not the slightest doubt that the writing is that of Charles Wesley. As the point is

of some importance, however, it may be well to consider the Wesley brothers from the point of view of calligraphy.

Both John and Charles Wesley throughout their lives wrote a forward-sloping hand, spacing both letters and words similarly. (The infirmities of age or illness naturally brought changes, of course, though the general characteristics are even then not fully obscured.) Whereas Charles' writing is angular, however, John's is more like a round hand which has been vertically compressed into what might be called a square hand. Broadly speaking it can be said that a rapid up and down motion was characteristic of Charles Wesley's pen, whilst his brother's was more horizontal in its steady flow. John's gives the effect of script, Charles' of an impetuous cursive.

Coming to the formation of individual letters, whilst there are many similarities, there are several marked differences. Charles writes his "a" rather tall and thin, and often open, whilst John writes it more flattened, and nearly always closed. Both use the ordinary "e" and the Greek epsilon; in addition Charles uses the old-fashioned cursive letter made like an "o" with the stroke continued across the centre to join up with the following letter. The normal "F" and "T" of the two brothers are quite distinctive; John formed his by writing first a thin s-like stem, to which was added by a separate stroke of the pen a rounded superstructure; Charles formed his "F" and "T" with one stroke of the pen, starting at the top left, coming to a distinct point at the top right, and finishing with a downward flourish. The "r" also is distinctive, for whilst John seems always to have used the "r" resembling a closed "v", Charles frequently used the two other common forms—sometimes his "r" may be mistaken for "e". The "s" is also a good criterion. John nearly always writing it with two distinct curves (as in print, but considerably more elongated and forward-sloping), whilst Charles employed a straight upward stroke followed by a downward curve. John's "t" also was normally made without the introductory upward stroke which Charles almost invariably used. Those who are interested in checking up these broad differences, and others more elusive, can do so fairly easily from John Wesley's *Standard Journal*. Vol. i: p. 108 gives a facsimile of John's diary for October, 1735, whilst Vol. viii: p. 299 presents a photograph of a letter written by Charles Wesley for General Oglethorpe in March, 1736.

These are near enough to the date of the "V" letter to offer first-hand evidence of the different calligraphy of the two brothers at the time of the Georgia Mission.

Though the document was certainly *written* by Charles Wesley, the possibility remained that it might be a copy by him of one of his brother's letters, for the two undoubtedly made free use of each other's journals and correspondence. The letter bears no signs of having been posted, which lends colour to this theory. The numerous erasures and insertions, however, suggest that it was the first draft of a letter by Charles Wesley—such as he commonly made. Consideration of other details confirms this view of the authorship.

The designation of the Island as "Tibey" in the letter does not agree with John Wesley's diary spelling of the name at that period, though John was obviously uncertain about the word, giving it both as "Tibi" and "Tiby". (The contemporary maps included in the *Standard Journal* agree with his later spelling of "Tybee".)

A phrase in the transcription which undoubtedly puzzled many people was this (*Proc.* xxv: 17):—

Besides you Two I have no Relations, no Friends in England, who, I either write to, or find any ease in thinking of.

This sounds rather strange coming from John, who had written to his Brother Samuel on January 21st. and was to write to his mother on March 18th. As far as I can see at present, however (and I am engaged in gathering material for a collected edition of Charles Wesley's letters) the statement is true of Charles.

We come to the sentence (*Proc.* xxv : 18)—

I herewith send you C.'s Journal: which may possibly make you some Amends for ye Pain I put you to in reading this.

At first glance this seems to confirm John's authorship, until one realises that this is a pseudonymous correspondence. As the recipient is disguised as "V" or "Varanese", so "C" may naturally stand, not for "Charles", but for "Cyrus", John Wesley's pen-name in the little circle of friends. The fact that the *published* Journal of Charles Wesley does not commence until March 9th of this year cannot be urged very strongly (though the fact has some weight), for it is practically certain that he kept a private journal before that date.

The writer says (*Proc.* xxv: 19)—

If there be time for transcribing ym I will s(end o)n my Brother's Reasons (O yt I cd say they were mine too) for coming hither.

We know of no details about Charles Wesley's reasons for going to Georgia—except the statement in this letter "In vain have I fled from Myself to America". But we *do* know of the very long statement of John Wesley's reasons given in a letter to Dr. Burton on October 10th, 1735. And I have recently discovered a transcript of this letter written in Byrom's short-hand in one of Charles Wesley's note-books. There seems little doubt that it is this lengthy *apologia* to which reference is made.

The atmosphere of depression which pervades the letter contrasts strangely with what we know of John Wesley's character, and of his enthusiasm for the Georgia adventure. As Mrs. Harrison remarks (*Proc.* xxv: 22-3)—

The nervous turmoil and introspection of this letter seem to belong to a different man altogether from the Wesley of Aldersgate Street.

A different man indeed! The letter fits Charles Wesley perfectly, however, whose rather morbid hankering after death was not removed by his conversion, but was a lifelong trait, for which his wife in later years had to take him to task. That the letter fits Charles' mood at the commencement of the Georgia mission may be seen from the opening words of his published Journal:—

Tuesday, March 9th, 1736, about three in the afternoon, I first set foot on St. Simon's Island, and immediately my spirit revived. No sooner did I enter upon my ministry, than God gave me, like Saul, another heart.

St. Simon's Island was the gateway to the southern settlement of Frederica, to which Charles seems to have been sent as his share of the pastoral work, after hanging about around Savannah for a week at a loose end, a natural prey to depression. Surely the point of his change of spirit on February 14th is that on that day he had at last received a definite commission, witness his sentence (*Proc.* xxv: 19)—

The Work I see immediately before me, is ye Care of 50 poor Families.

The mention of fifty families again suits the smaller settlement of Frederica, where Charles was soon to be in trouble with intriguing womenfolk. Savannah, John's sphere, was much larger.

The internal evidence for Charles' authorship of the letter is so strong that one feels to blame for not having suspected it earlier. Allied with the evidence of the handwriting, we may take it as quite definite that this letter in its

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entirety is to be ascribed to Charles Wesley. Unlike his brother John, Charles usually left his letters to intimate friends unsigned, a further point of confirmation, though weakened by the fact that this is almost certainly a first draft, rather than the actual letter.

The transcript given in *Proc.* xxv: 17-20 is not absolutely accurate in detail. Apart from numerous but unimportant discrepancies in the use of capital letters, about which it is often impossible to be certain, and also of abbreviations and the ampersand, there are a number of small errors, and one of real importance. The transcript speaks of "J" as the companion of "V". Mrs. Harrison, not having seen the original, naturally assumed this to be Sally Kirkham's husband Jack—for Sally had married the Rev. John Capon, Chapoon, or Chapone in 1725. The initial, however, is not "J" at all, but "S". Nor is the sex of "S" revealed, as is suggested by the transcription "him" on p. 17, line 25. This should be "h" only, an abbreviation correctly given in two other cases in the following sentences. And "h" might equally stand for "him" or "her": Indeed the likelihood is that "S"—who, like "V", is "all Gentleness and Pity"—is a woman.

The identification of "Varanese" with Sally Kirkham is practically certain, although undoubtedly her younger sister Betty was in the picture with John Wesley in the early days. Tyerman's statement that Betty married a Mr. Wilson and died in 1732, is borne out by the Stanton Parish Registers, which record the burial in that year of "Mary Elizabetha uxor Richardi Wilson". But "Varanese" continued to appear on the scene, as the intimate spiritual friend, not only of John, but of Charles Wesley. This is shown not only by this Georgia letter, but by an entry in Charles' *Journal* for March 30th, 1737—

I rode over to Stanton, where they were all overjoyed to see me; especially my first of friends, Varanese.

Shortly before this visit Charles Wesley had spent a good deal of time with "M.G.", apparently Miss (Anne) Granville. She was the younger sister of Mrs. Mary Pendarves, John Wesley's "Aspasia", who had banished herself from the intimate correspondence-circle of the Wesleys' Oxford days. Anne Granville's pseudonym in this correspondence was "Selima", and here, surely, is the identification of the "S" in the Georgia letter.

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In conclusion, perhaps it will be as well to give a summary of other respects in which the transcript needs amending:—

- p. 17, line 22. Omit the words "It appears to me".
line 33. Read "State" for "Hell".
- p. 18, lines 20-1. Read "still spreads" for "shall spread".
line 22. Read "Weak foolish, Wavering Sinful Creature".
- p. 19, line 20. Read "betwixt" for "between"
line 26. Possibly read "(named) Friends" for "home Friends".
line 33. Read "testifying" for "wishing".

The various omissions shown by dots in the transcription may probably be supplied as follows;—

- p. 18, line 28. "all" (?)
line 29. "ye" (?)
line 30. "all yt" (?)
line 31. "and shall I doat on ye scattered Pieces of a (r)ude & imperfect Picture, and never be affected with ye Original Beauty?"
- line 42. "fly to em as my last Asylum."
- p. 19, line 33. "whom I will shortly challenge"
- line 38. "This I submit. (Meet) you I surely shall when or "where" (we) shall part no more !,,"
- line 39. "If there be time for transcribing ym I will s(end o)n my Brother's Reasons"

FRANK BAKER

"VARANESE" TO CHARLES WESLEY

As a pendant to the only letter so far known from Charles Wesley to "Varanese", it may be interesting to read a letter travelling in the opposite direction, again apparently unique. This letter, written on two sides of a foolscap sheet, is preserved at the Methodist Book Room, where I have been able to transcribe it by kind permission of the Rev. E. C. Barton. It is endorsed by Charles Wesley—

"Sally Chapoon, my Friend."

Jan. 5. 1736.

of her Father's Death."

He has also endorsed it similarly in Byrom's shorthand. Although the letter is dated 1736, this should almost certainly be 1736/7, i.e. 1737 according to modern reckoning. According to *Proc.* v. 54, the Rev. Lionel Kirkham died during the year 1736, and other details fit the later date. Charles' letter from Georgia shows that "yt Best of Men" was ill before he left.

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Actually the main subject of the letter is not Mr. Kirkham's death, but Charles Wesley's illness. He had just returned, a physical wreck, from Georgia, but was hoping to pay a visit to his old friends. It was soon obvious, however, that travelling was out of the question. His *Journal* for December 26th, 1736, records—

I called upon my Doctor, and was well chid for so doing. He told me that if I had not had a constitution of iron, I could not have held out so long; that he could do nothing for me, unless I would keep my chamber; through want of which I had undone all he had been doing, and had all to begin anew.

George Whitefield eager to go to Georgia, had heard with pleasure of Charles' intended journey to Stanton and on to Gloucester, and on December 30th wrote to him—

I hear you are to be in Gloucester next week. Will dear Charles take a bed with me at Mr. Harris's? I believe he will be welcome. You will write next post, if convenient, and direct for me to Mr. Harris's, Junior, Bookseller, in Gloucester!

It so happened that "Varanese", the former Sally Kirkham, and now the wife of the Rev. John Chapoon, was also at Gloucester, visiting their mutual friends the Granvilles, who had removed there. On January 4th, 1736, (? 1736/7) Mrs. Pendarves, John Wesley's "Aspasia", wrote of her—

Sally would shine in an assembly composed of Tullys, Homers, and Miltons. At Gloucester she is like a diamond set in jet; their dulness makes her brightness brighter.

To both George Whitefield and Sally Chapoon went letters informing them of Charles Wesley's illness. Anxious consultation resulted in the following answer, breathing the sincere affection of "Varanese":—

Gloster Jan: 5th: 1736

Alas! my Good Charles.' how shall I describe that tender sorrow, which fill'd my Eyes and heart at reading your letter! Why I should be your Peculiar consolation, God only knows. I am truly sensible that I am not worthy of that happy distinction. I must confess, I found it very difficult, to give up the delight I expected from your conversation. I trust we shall meet—I hope in Paradise—for alas! I have no expectation of that full freedom of soul here. I have had great tryals this last year—but God has graciously supported, and made me happy under them. My father suffer'd more in the flesh, than I ever saw any mortal endure. His last Vocal Prayer was this, Ch! my Lovely God! enlighten me with the Bright Beams of thy mercy, and support me by thy Strength, and accept of my weak endeavours to bear these great Pains as I ought. He not only Dyed without fear, but even with desire; the toils of the longest life, would be well repaid, by the Comforts and Blessing of such a Death. If yours is near, I Pray God, it may be like His, and that we may meet in fulness of joy! I hope and Pray, for your recovery. In order to it, you

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will find on the other Side of the paper, a Receipt (sic) for the disorder, with w(hi)ch your worthy friend Mr: Whitfield, tells me you are afflicted. Mrs: Granville's great concern for you, furnished me with this prescription, which she recommends to you, in the strongest terms.—May God bless it to the health and ease of my Friend! I shall return home soon—direct a line to my mother at Stanton—for I shall be impatient to know your Condition. You may be as openhearted as you please—no one shall see your lines. Our friends in this House are in great Concern for you, and desire their particular respects—Mine you can never doubt of—tho' how few and trivial are the testimonies I have been ever able to give you of it? Be sure to have a full Trust in the mercies of God; heaven and Earth shall pass away, e'er charity shall fail, or a Soul that desires to please God, Perish, Pray for me. God will hear you for me, Since it has pleas'd him to inspire you, with that christian Love for me, which can come only from him. Selima is, I think, as perfect a Christian, as I have seen. adieu.

It will be noticed that although Sally addresses him as "Charles" rather than "Araspes"—probably because of the deep emotion aroused by his illness—Anne Granville is still discreetly shrouded under the pseudonym of "Selima". The identification of Sally as "Varanese" is still further confirmed by the phrase about her being Charles' "peculiar consolation", which links up with passages in the letter from Georgia.

A week or two later Charles was to see both "Selima" and her sister "Aspasia", now Mrs. Pendarves, though his *Journal* refers to both by their real names—

Sat., January 22d, I called upon Mrs. Pendarves, while she was reading a letter of my being dead. Happy for me, had the news been true; What a world of misery would it save me!

In the afternoon I was overjoyed to meet at M. Essen's my old friend M(iss) G(ranville).

The strain of morbidity noticed in the Georgia letter is again seen here. It is also apparent in a second shorthand endorsement to the letter from "Varanese", which should almost certainly be transcribed—"I cannot say I rejoice in being better".
FRANK BAKER.

NOTES ON EARLY METHODISM IN NORTHAMPTON

Concluded

The first Methodist Sunday School in Northampton came into being in December 1816. Until 1828 it met in the