

**A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF
HOWELL HARRIS, ESQ;: EXTRACTED
FROM PAPERS WRITTEN BY
HIMSELF. TO WICH IS ADDED A CONCISE
COLLECTION OF HIS LETTERS FROM THE
YEAR 1738, TO 1772**

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A Brief Account of the Life of Howell Harris, Esq: Extracted from Papers Written by Himself.
To Which Is Added a Concise Collection of His Letters from the Year 1738, to 1772 by Howell
Harris

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from the Year 1738, to 1772.

Dan. xii. 3.
*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the
firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as
the stars for ever and ever.*

TREVECKA:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR,
MDCCLXXII.

53. a. 162.



THE
P R E F A C E.

IN giving the public some Account of the Life of a man of an extraordinary character, there is danger, of either saying too much, or too little; of either exposing much of his weakness, or rendering him an object of contempt to the ignorant. Had he no infirmities, he would not be a mere man; if we display too many of his excellencies, we render the whole account, given of him, suspicious. It has been often found, that faithfulness and simplicity, have abundantly supplied the place of bright parts, and great penetration in the historian; and a judicious and candid reader, will feast upon the undisguised relation, of the actions of an open, unpremeditated character, with much more pleasure, than the perusal of a life drawn up according to the rules of art, and with laboured criticism.

THE Compilers of the life, of the late *Mr. Howell Harris*, have not attempted to decorate, what he has written of himself,

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or to illustrate any circumstances, by assigning occult causes of this, or the other, particular action, or event. They knew him many years, not only as friends who occasionally conversed with him, and were distant spectators, but as parts of his family, who saw all his movements, by day and night; who generally heard his first thought, upon every new subject, or proposed plan; and were witnesses of the steps he took to accomplish what he believed, to be right; and they frequently took a considerable share in the execution. Though their esteem for him grew with the opportunities they had, of discovering his principles and practice, yet they did not implicitly, follow his words, farther than they were persuaded in their own minds; and they were not blind to his weaknesses. They received real internal benefit from their special acquaintance with him, and to this day, his memory is dear and valuable, to them: and they are ready to say, that "Though dead, he yet speaketh to them; as well as to many more, who were of his large family, at *Treveska*."

The Compilers, determined to deliver to the public, a short sketch of his life, in all simplicity; hoping that those who possess knowledge, of the ways of God, may reap some benefit, from the perusal; and learn, like Mr. *Harris*, to follow, in simplicity, the leading of the LORD'S Spirit, in their own line of life. And therefore, it is delivered to the reader, in its homely, but intelligible dress. The reader must therefore attend to the matter, and not to the manner, if he intends, either to judge with candour, or to reap any advantage from it.

THEY

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THEY put the draught of this sketch, of Mr. *Harris's* life, into the hands, of the writer of this Preface, for his revision, as they knew, he was acquainted with the man, and some times, visited his house and family; and that though he did not labour in the same field, yet, he honored his character: and approved of the general aim, of his proceedings. After inspecting the copy, it seemed however, best to leave it as when first compiled, with a few verbal alterations, as it will appear, that the dialect is agreeable to the place, of Mr. *Harris's* nativity and education, and with a very few alterations, of any other kind.

THO' the writer of the Preface, found himself disposed to write a kind of apology for Mr. *Harris*, yet he will not take up much of the readers time, with it. He met with the fate of most worthy men, who have stepped out of the common beaten path, endeavouring to march forth in the defence of truth, to reform mankind. For he has been defamed, and many things laid to his charge, which prejudiced some against him, for a time, not only such, who are always ready to believe calumnies, but of well meaning and worthy men. The writer of this, looked upon him once, by means of what he heard, as at least, a suspicious character, but upon close enquiry, he received such well authenticated information, as removed his doubts, and rendered him more valuable in his eyes, than Mr. *Harris*, ever would have been; had he not been, in a measure, misled, by misrepresentations.

THE natural warmth, of every man, of Mr. *Harris's* complexion, would, and must naturally produce something *eccentric*,

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eric, in the most ordinary walk, or station of life; but when we consider the extraordinary course he took, it is not to be wondered at, that there not only appeared, but that something really was eccentric, in several parts of his conduct. He believed, he was called by GOD, to the work in which he spent himself, and indeed, if we are to judge by the fruits, it must be owned, by those who believe that GOD has a special influence upon, and has the direction of his servants, that he had that particular call, from GOD. He was still a man, and liable to mistakes, and some of his mistakes arose, from his zeal to accomplish speedily, the work, to which he was called. His natural impetuosity, made him at times forget, that he that believeth will not make haste. But is it right, to expect more, from a man acting in such a sphere, in our days, than from those who have been made instruments, in the hand of GOD, to the greatest purposes, even such as relate to the kingdom of GOD? Was *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or any of our *English* Reformers, without some strong marks of eccentricity? and is it not evident, that even their very eccentricity, tended to the accomplishment of the great work, to which they were appointed? Had they formed an eccentric plan, knowing it to be such, they would have been inexcusable, but the necessity of the case and time, produced an unpremeditated conduct,—which to cold speculation appeared very eccentric, but which was in reality, all circumstances considered, regular, and necessary for that period. *Luther*, was a man of warm passions, and his natural temper, would have been productive of the greatest injuries, to himself and others, had not God appropriated his warmth, and made it subservient to the great purposes of the reformation. It seems that the same may justly be
said

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said of Mr. *Harris's* temper, in relation to the purpose, for which GOD prepared him.

Mr. *Harris*, was naturally of an open and choleric disposition, he was no politician, in the general, or vulgar acception of the word. He was undisguised, in his words and actions, impetuous in his proceedings, would flatter no man, nor give up a particle of what he was persuaded to be truth, to please his dearest and nearest friend. The grace of GOD made a great alteration in his temper, and notwithstanding his activity, he would often retire, and spend many hours alone, in prayer, and in making supplications for his own soul, and the souls of his people, &c. His zeal for the house (that is the work) of the LORD, might be said to eat him up. He frequently neglected his health, and was indifferent to food, at the stated times, and even to sleep. He neither attended to heat, or cold, if called to do something, which he believed, to be the will of GOD. Such was his indefatigableness, in the work of the LORD, during the space of thirty-nine years. Seventeen of which he spent in travelling through *Wales*, and great part of *England*, preaching, and exhorting, in the high-ways and hedges, wakes and revels, &c. and though he had much opposition and persecution, yet he was more than conqueror, through CHRIST, that loved him. The remainder of his life, he mostly spent at *Trevecka*, where he faithfully ministered, to a large family, collected to him there, by means of his ministry, in former years. It appears from his life, that the collecting of this family, was unintentional, and a candid infidel, who takes a view of that house, and considers its beginning, progress, its state at his death, and present condition, must say, that there was a particular hand of GOD in it.

THO'

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THO' he himself had as much opposition as any, by the Rulers in the established Church, he saw that these things, in some measure, forced some out of the Church, tho' others left it from various motives, which were less excusable; yet he remained immoveable in his attachment to it, and was notwithstanding far from bigotry. He loved and honored all who he believed they were children and servants of GOD, of every denomination. (The writer of this was an instance of it.) And according to his full persuasion, on this head, he regulated every thing, in his large family, conformable to it.

Mr. *Harris*, was looked upon by some, as a designing, and self-interested man, his life and death have proved the contrary. And if we are to judge of causes, by the effects, we shall find that his principles and practice, have produced no bad moral, civil, or religious Facts; but on the contrary, his doctrines have produced virtuous men, good fellow-citizens, good subjects, and devout members, of the established Church.

It is hoped, that the following simple relation of his life, will be a blessing to some, in leading them to the Fountain of Salvation, in our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Your Devoted and affectionate

Servant in the Gospel,

B ——— ** T ———