

**A SOLITARY EVENING  
REVERIE AT  
HOME: IN MEMORIAM  
OF ELIZA WILKINSON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760576561

A Solitary Evening Reverie at Home: In Memoriam of Eliza Wilkinson by Edward Wilkinson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**EDWARD WILKINSON**

**A SOLITARY EVENING  
REVERIE AT  
HOME: IN MEMORIAM  
OF ELIZA WILKINSON**



L 26

A SOLITARY EVENING  
REVERIE AT HOME.

In Memoriam

OF

ELIZA WILKINSON,

FOUNDERESS OF THE LEEDS UNMARRIED WOMEN'S BENEVOLENT  
INSTITUTION.

BY HER BROTHER,

THE REV. EDWARD WILKINSON, M.A., Ph.D.,  
*Rector of Beargate, Kent.*

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

For the Benefit of the Institution.

SOLD BY

BEAN AND SON, 149, BRIGGATE, LEEDS;  
HARRISON AND SON, BRIGGATE, LEEDS;  
AND  
MILLER, ASHFORD, KENT.

1877.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY W. H. AND L. COLLINGRIDGE,  
ALDERSCOTE STREET.

## PREFACE.

---

THE following poem is an extract from a descriptive memorial of a pastoral charge at Saham, in Norfolk, and is now published in a detached form in order to increase the interest of the women of Leeds in an institution founded for their special benefit. The particular incidents narrated in the poem are chiefly interesting to those who were closely associated with the subject of it, yet the spirit of Christ and the fruits of faith and love which were so pre-eminently conspicuous in her life and death, as the effect of grace in her soul, may tend to the spiritual edification of all.

"Lives of good men all remind us  
We can make our own sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints in the sands of time."

Though eminently qualified for society by the loveliness of her person and the graces of a refined and highly cultivated mind of no ordinary mould, her life was spent chiefly in separation from the world, and in devotion to works of faith and labours of love, of which the founding of the "Leeds Unmarried Women's Benevolent Institution" was her last and dying act.

She, like Cowper's Cottager, was little known to the world, but the natural qualities of her disposition, and the graces of the spirit of Christ manifested in her life and conversation,

endeared her to all who had the benefit of her acquaintance, and who were capable of appreciating these. From her childhood to her death, she endeavoured to "adorn the doctrine of her high calling of God her Saviour in all things." Her unselfish disposition and strong natural affection endeared her not only to the members of her family, but also to her relatives, schoolfellows, friends, neighbours, and servants. No person had the temporal and spiritual interest of others—and especially of her family—more at heart than she; and, consequently, none were ever more generally respected, and general opinion of personal character, in this respect, is always correct.

From her childhood she manifested strong natural affection, which caused a discerning mother to commit to her charge the care of her orphan children, when she was but still in her teens; and so lovingly and unselfishly did she discharge this and every other relative duty of daughter, sister, niece, neighbour, and friend, that, in the last day, many will rise up to call her blessed.

Her correspondence was of a very high order, and rarely or ever was a letter written by her without a view to the promotion of true Christian faith in heart and life. Writing on "The Duty of Forgiveness and of Putting away Malice," she says, "Life is too short and too uncertain to be angry with anyone. The sun may not only go down upon wrath, but the hand that writes and the heart that beats may have ceased for ever before the word of reconciliation arrive.

"Life in all its health and pride  
Has death still waiting by its side!  
No lip can tell how brief its span;  
Then oh! the little time we stay  
Let's think of all the best we can."

Writing on "Worldly Distinctions," she says, "Oh, may we all earnestly covet and diligently seek after that immortal distinction which



“ Will stand the test of nature's expiring hour,  
And with armour of proof will shield our breast  
Against the grim tyrant's power;  
Which will gladden the soul and dispel the gloom,  
The horror of darkness which veils the tomb  
When the damps of death to our brow shall start,  
And the life blood stops from our freezing heart;  
And we traverse in triumph the gloomy abyss  
Which divides the eternal world from this! ”

Oh, what a distinction to aspire after! To be “ heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ! ” Oh, may the great and holy Jehovah, of His infinite mercy, grant that this immortal, glorious, and heavenly distinction may be ours, for the sake of that precious blood which was shed on Calvary to purchase for us countless and incorruptible riches and unfading immortal honours.

“ With regard to the things of this present world, our ‘ Family Prayers,’ ” said she, “ exactly express my sentiments: ‘ I desire to leave them in Thy hands, for Thou canst best judge what is most expedient for me. Give to me only so much as may tend to Thy honour and glory, and to my present peace and to my eternal welfare ’ (‘ Family Prayers,’ by the Rev. J. W. Brooks, Friday Morning, page 77). I do not ask for more wealth, and all that I have is at the service of those who need it.” Here was no mammon worship or self-seeking, but a firm trust in God's good providence, with a liberal, generous heart, and a frank and open spirit. Her happiness was not in selfish acquisition, but in promoting the wealth or welfare of others; and in this she found it, and fulfilled the apostolic injunction, “ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others ” (Phil. ii. 4); “ Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth ” (1 Cor. x. 24).

Writing on “ The Temptation of Wealth and Position, and Trials of Patience,” she says, “ To sacrifice religious principle

for the sake of wealth, ten thousand pounds or ten millions would be equally powerless to bias my decision a hair's-breadth. Nay, so far from worldly wealth and position being a temptation to me, a life of toil, of hardship, of suffering and privation in the cause of Christ, is more in harmony with my wishes—to me, more attractive, and would ensure an incomparably brighter crown in that world where all my wishes centre. Every night when I lay my head on my pillow, I strive to realise that I am one day nearer to heaven, and I ask myself if I have endeavoured so to live that the day of my death may be the brightest and the happiest of my life. If I have the satisfaction of my conscience that I have done so, then I feel that I am one day nearer to the realisation, the consummation of my highest—nay, my every—wish, and this makes me happy beyond ought of earthly happiness. Is it possible I can be regarded as a Christian—a very imperfect one, it may be—and yet be a worshipper of the golden calf? I can appeal to my life, if it has not borne the impress of a firm unwavering belief in the great truths of Christianity—a something more than the mere assent of the understanding—a belief which has given a tinge and colour to all my words and actions, and has led to the great aim of my life—to dedicate myself, my soul, my body, my talents, my property, and all that I either have or ever shall have, to the service of God, and to the good of my fellow-creatures? This resolution was, I believe, made ere I had attained my tenth year, and since then it has been my daily prayer that I might never, either in prosperity or adversity, in health or sickness, in joy or sorrow, lose sight of it, but ever unflinchingly adhere to the determination of my childhood. Mine was not an inactive belief—it was one which desired to be up and doing. My plans were formed for future usefulness, self-sacrifice, and a life of devotion, and I at once set about taking steps for *their accomplishment*; but God, who seeth not as man seeth,

blighted all my goodly schemes, as He did Jonah's gourd, and called me to exemplify my faith and patience by giving up every long-cherished plan of usefulness and devotion, and marked out for me a totally different round of trials and duties. Yet I seemed to hear a voice saying, 'Hereby shall I know that thou lovest me, if thou do whatsoever I command thee. As to all thy long and fondly-cherished schemes for my honour and glory, it was well that it was in thine heart to do these things; but I will appoint thee a far more difficult sphere of duty than that which thou proposest to thyself, and, if thy heart fail thee, remember who it is that laid these crosses upon thee, and be comforted.' Yet," adds she, in the same letter, "the time may arrive when the earnest longings of my youth may be fulfilled; but, if not, I will endeavour to show all good fidelity in the path appointed me, and I will not doubt that, as of old, one shall be sent who will perform all that was in my heart to have done, though it may not be till I am mouldering in the dust."—Nov. 16, 1855.

The sentiments in this letter have doubtless reference to several objects of usefulness which she had in view, and among them that of founding an Institution for the Benefit of Unmarried Women. She often used to say, "There are Benevolent Institutions for decayed merchants, widows, orphans, and others, but none for unmarried women; and yet, though they are the most helpless, there is the least provision made for them."

These extracts manifest strong decision of character combined with natural affection and a gentle loving spirit; a heart under the influence of grace, producing a religion, not merely in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

After a two years' illness, borne with exemplary patience, her last act was to leave a legacy as a seedcorn for the Leeds Unmarried Women's Benevolent Institution, with instructions for its constitution; and God has signally fulfilled her pre-