

WOOD
H
PECT



IVES

SONS
LONDON

5

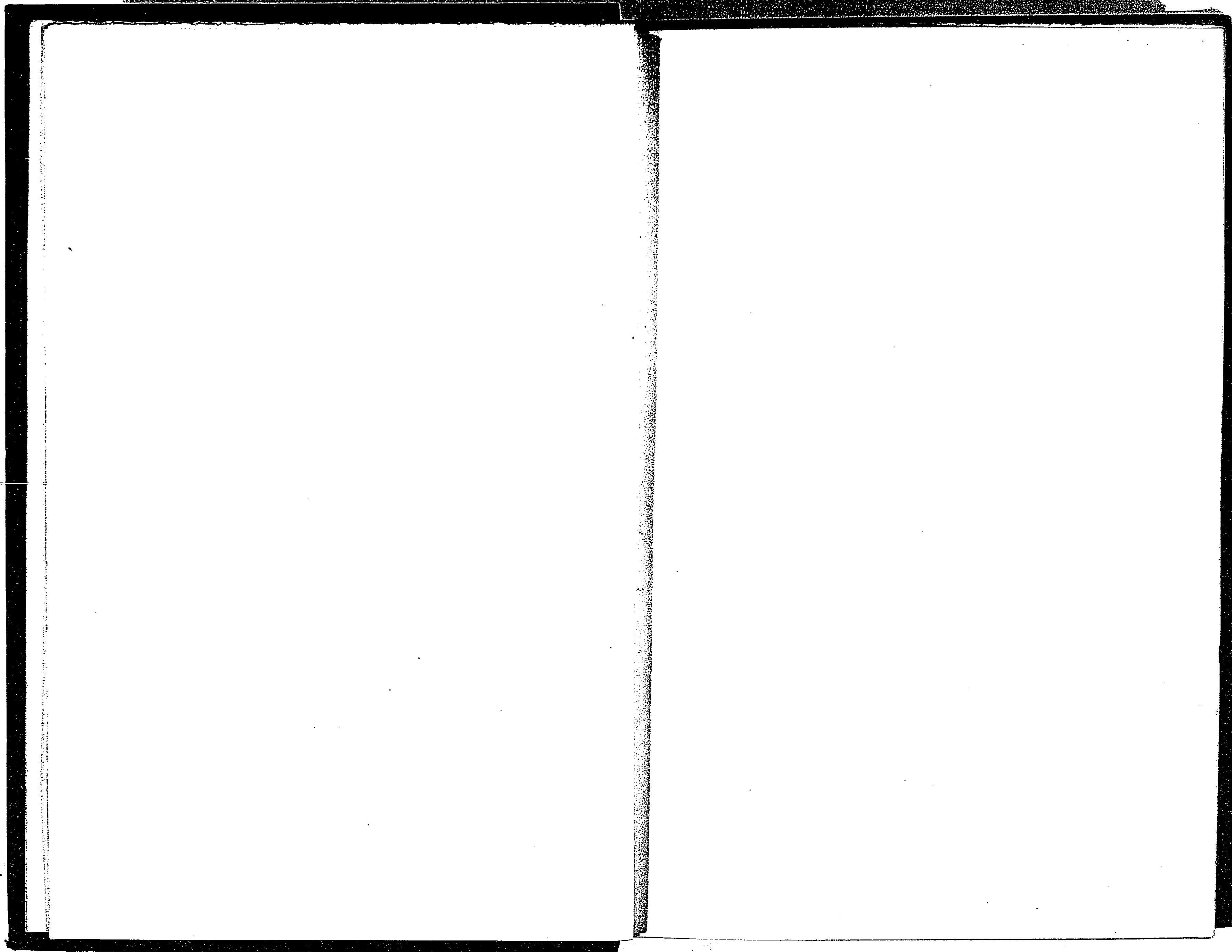
OK

L B II

7/6

Car 222.451

DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH



[illegible]

WILLIAM BLAKEWOOD AND SONS

TELEPHONE: 01-253 6000 LONDON

VIDEO EXCVID:

[illegible]

DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH

A RETROSPECT

BY

HIS GRANDDAUGHTER
MRS C. L. LEWES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCVIII

All Rights reserved

TO
MY MOTHER,
CAROLINE SOUTHWOOD HILL,
I DEDICATE THIS MEMOIR
OF
HER FATHER.

国立公衆衛生院附属図書館	
受入先	
受入日	
登録番号	
所 在	
Library, National Institute of Public Health	

PREFACE.

IT is now nearly forty years since the death of my grandfather, Dr Southwood Smith, and with this distance of time lying between him and us, it may not be uninteresting to this generation to look back upon the origin of some of the great social reforms which have now reached such wide proportions, and to see these reforms as gathered round the life of a man who was in the forefront of the noble army which promoted them.

He, one of the first to seize a truth, one of the most indomitable to persevere in the promulgation of it when perceived, went straight forward until it prevailed, and thus became instrumental in conferring some of the widest benefits which have come to us in this century.

From his great grief in early manhood he but emerged the stronger. The force of his con-

densed sorrow produced an energy which carried all before it, and resulted in the strength of his middle age and the serenity of his latter years. In order that such a life—crowned by its humility—might not pass away without some permanent record of its nobleness, the following memoir has been written.

I must apologise for the frequent allusion, in the midst of grave public questions, to my own recollections; but since all the early years of my life were passed at my grandfather's side, it has been difficult to avoid this.

Moreover, I have hoped that something picturesque and touching would be found in the relation of the strong man and little child, who worked together at various public causes, playing together in the bright intervals, and that something of the reverent enthusiasm he inspired in that child might pass, through her, to those who read these pages.

GERTRUDE LEWES.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY GRANDFATHER

PAGE
I

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, 1788-1820.

Education. Marriage. Death of his wife. Edinburgh University. Publication of the 'Illustrations of the Divine Government.' Yeovil 7

CHAPTER II.

FIRST YEARS IN LONDON—DAWN OF THE SCIENCE OF MODERN HYGIENE, 1820-1834.

Appointment to Fever Hospital. 'Westminster Review' articles in 1825. Laws of Epidemics. Principles laid the foundation of Sanitary Reform. Its practical importance. Devotion of himself to the cause. Parliamentary attention attracted to articles. Publication of the 'Treatise on Fever,' 1830. Its phenomena, treatment, and causes. Causes the most important. Contagious and epidemic diseases. Universal origin of epidemics stated to be bad sanitary conditions . . . 16

CHAPTER III.

LONDON CONTINUED—LITERARY AND OTHER
WORK, 1820-1834.

- 'Penny Encyclopedia.' The Medical Schools and dissection.
Body-snatching. Lectures—physiological, forensic, and
popular. Lecture over the remains of Bentham. Publi-
cation of the 'Philosophy of Health' 35

CHAPTER IV.

WORK ON THE FACTORY COMMISSION, 1833.

- History of Factories. Laws previous to 1833. Apprentice-
ship system. Appointed Commissioner. Description
of state of factories in 1833. Passing of the Factory Act.
Subsequent additions to Act. Visits to see result of its
working 49

CHAPTER V.

RISE OF THE SANITARY MOVEMENT, 1837.

- Outbreak of fever in London. Personal inspection of
Bethnal Green and Whitechapel. First Report to
Poor Law Commissioners. Ventilation in crowded
districts. Overcrowding of children in workhouses.
Second Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1839.
Takes the Marquis of Normanby (Home Secretary) to
see spots reported on at Bethnal Green. Takes also
Lord Ashley. Press and public men take up the cause . . . 60

CHAPTER VI.

PHILANTHROPIC AND MEDICAL WORK, 1840-1848.

- Children's Employment Commission, Mines and Collieries.
Improvement in the condition of women working therein.
Report on Trades and Manufactures. Homes of eastern

dispensary patients. "Sanatorium" founded. Letters
from Charles Dickens. First model dwellings founded.
Life at Highgate. My recollections of first "Health of
Towns Association" Meeting. Feeling of public men . . . 72

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEN YEARS' STRUGGLE FOR SANITARY
REFORM, 1838-1848.

- Causes of delay. History of the sanitary movement at this
time a series of inquiries and defeated bills. "Health
of Towns Association" founded to spread knowledge
and guide legislation. Address to the working classes
calling upon them to petition Parliament. Final passing
of the Public Health Act 102

CHAPTER VIII.

OFFICIAL LIFE—GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH, 1848-1854.

- Appointment to the General Board of Health. Letter to
Lord Morpeth. Work at Whitehall with Lord Ashley and
Mr Chadwick. Cholera epidemic of 1848-49. System
of "house-to-house visitation." Lord Brougham's com-
ments on it. Cholera Report. Quarantine Report. In-
terment Report. Attacks on the Board in Parliament.
Fear of centralisation. Triumph of the sanitary prin-
ciple, but to be carried out by local authorities. Lord
Palmerston's letter of thanks 127

CHAPTER IX.

RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC LIFE—ST GEORGE'S
HILL, WEYBRIDGE, 1854-1860.

- "The Pines," Weybridge. Happiness in its beauty. Need
of rest. Study of modern physiology for new edition
of the 'Philosophy of Health.' Publication of 'Results
of Sanitary Improvement.' Lectures in Edinburgh on

"Epidemics." Visit to Alnwick. Happiness in the work of his granddaughters Miranda and Octavia Hill. Appreciation of former fellow-labourers. "Recognition." His words of thanks. Joy in the success of his great cause 139

CHAPTER X.

THE SUNSET OF LIFE—ITALY, 1861.

Visit to Milan. Death of his second wife at "The Pines." Florence. Sunset from Ponte Vecchio. Last illness. Death. Porta Pinti. "A Knight-Errant" 147

CHAPTER XI.

THE AFTERGLOW.

Spread of the social reforms Dr Southwood Smith originated. Improvement in the public health and saving of life. Memorial bust in the National Portrait Gallery. Lines upon it. A people's gratitude 153

APPENDICES.

I. LETTER FROM MR TAYLOR, ASSISTANT RETURNING OFFICER OF THE WHITECHAPEL UNION 159

II. RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OF DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH 164

INDEX 167

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
PORTRAIT OF DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH <i>Frontispiece</i> (From a chalk drawing by Miss Margaret Gillies.)	
DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH AND HIS GRANDCHILD GERTRUDE	2
OLD WOMAN CARRYING COAL	72
CHILDREN AT WORK	74
WOMAN DRAWING TRUCK	74
CHARLES DICKENS'S LETTER <i>Facsimile</i>	84
DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH'S LETTER <i>Facsimile</i>	104
FIRST MEETING OF THE HEALTH OF TOWNS ASSOCIATION (From an old print.)	106
VIEW FROM PORTA PINTI, FLORENCE, 1861	152

DR SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

INTRODUCTION.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY GRANDFATHER.

My first recollection of my grandfather is of him in his study. As a little child my bed stood in his room, and when he got up, as he used to do in the early mornings, to write, he would take me in his arms, still fast asleep, carry me down-stairs to his study with him, and lay me on the sofa, wrapped in blankets which had been arranged for me overnight.

So when first I opened my eyes in the silent room I saw him there, a man of some fifty years, bending over a table covered with papers, the light of his shaded reading-lamp shining on his forehead and glancing down upon the papers as

he leant over his writing, and the firelight flickering on the other parts of the room.

The silence and the earnestness seemed wonderful and beautiful. It was strange to watch him when he did not know it. It seemed to me, then, that he had been working so through the whole night, and that some great good which I could only dimly understand was to come of it.

My lying quiet, however, did not last long, for I knew the loving merry welcome I should have when, climbing—as I hoped and believed quite unperceived—up the back of his arm-chair, I should throw myself down into his lap with a loud cry of joy, and then we should have a famous game, until either he persuaded me to go back to my blankets to await a rational hour for getting up, or sent me up-stairs to be dressed.

These two things—the intent, absorbed purpose, and the power of putting it aside to give himself up completely, with simple delight, to whatever he loved, whether to a child or to the beauty of nature—are the two that seem to me specially characteristic of him in all that later part of his life which comes within my remembrance.



Dr Southwood Smith and his grandchild Gertrude.

At this time we lived in Kentish Town, then field-surrounded, he going daily to his consulting-rooms in Finsbury Square, returning late and giving the early mornings and Sundays to public work. These hours were at that period (1840 to 1842) chiefly devoted to the question of the employment of children in coal-mines, the more deeply impressed on me because the report which he was then writing had illustrations showing the terrible condition of people working in mines.

I remember long bright Sunday mornings when he was at work endeavouring to remedy these evils. He let me do what little I could, such as the cutting out of extracts to be fastened on to the MS. report with wafers—and very particular I was as to the colour of these wafers! Sometimes all I could do to help was to be quiet—not the least hard work! Yet I loved these still Sunday mornings, and would not willingly have been shut out from them any more than from the afternoon ride which came later, when, perched up in front of him on his own horse, in the little railed saddle he had devised for me, we rode along the lanes towards Highgate. I can see

now the sunset light falling on the grass and tree-stems of the Kentish Town fields as we went along.

Then came the day when the Act was brought into operation which was to regulate the employment of children in mines, and I tied blue ribbons on to his carriage horses and thought, with a child's hopefulness, that all the suffering was at once and completely over. "Then, now, they are all running over the green fields," I said.

My grandfather let me think it, and did not damp my enthusiasm by letting me know that this happy state of things was not arrived at in one day!

But although he often played merrily with me and entered into my childish joys, my grandfather was endowed with a most earnest nature and with a firmness of character which was very remarkable. He never swerved from a purpose, never vacillated. One of his sayings was, "Life is not long enough for us to reconsider our decisions."

It was probably this quiet determination, combined with his unfailing gentleness, that made him inspire so much confidence in his patients. I can

fancy, in a house where illness was spreading anxiety and sorrow, the restfulness there would be in his calm presence, and I can remember the faces of those—often the very poor—who used to come up to him wishing to thank him for the life of some wife, or son, or child which they said he had saved. These things used to happen in the crowded city streets or courts, and sometimes in parts of London far away from the place where the illness had occurred. The fact that these faces were generally forgotten by him, whilst *his* was so well remembered, made a still more beautiful mystery over it. It seemed to me that there was an honour in belonging to one who was a help and support to so many. Such experiences must be familiar to those who share his profession, still I mention it as being my strong childish impression; and even now, looking back upon his life, it appears to me that he did possess, in a very high degree, not only the power of healing, but that of soothing mental suffering.

It was, in fact, this deep sympathy, joined to his remarkable insight into the relations between effects and their causes, which led him to devote

his life to the promotion of sanitary reform, when once it had become obvious to him that all effort to improve the condition of the people would be impossible until its principles were known and acted upon.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE, 1788-1820.

THOMAS SOUTHWOOD SMITH was born at Martock in Somersetshire in 1788, and was intended by his family to become a minister in the body of Calvinistic dissenters to which they belonged. He was educated with that view at the Baptist College in Bristol, where he went in 1802, being then fourteen years of age. A scholarship, entitled the "Broadmead Benefaction," was granted to him, and he held it for nearly five years.

But in the course of his earnest reading on religious subjects he was led to conclusions opposed in many ways to the doctrines he would be expected to teach; and when, in the autumn of 1807, from conscientious scruples, he felt bound to declare this to be the case, the benefaction was withdrawn. If we consider his youth and his

limited means, it is clear that this avowal must have cost him no little anguish. He was at this time only eighteen. It was an early age at which to have been able to make up his mind on questions so momentous, to break away from early and dear traditions, and to face the displeasure of the Principal of the college, Dr Ryland, whom he ever revered. But honour demanded the sacrifice, and it was made.

In consequence his family cast him off at once and for ever.

During his college career, however, he had visited much at the house of Mr Read, a large manufacturer in Bristol, who was a man of noble character, and at that time one of the leading supporters of the college; and an attachment had sprung up between the young student and Mr Read's daughter Anne. This lady seems to have possessed both great personal beauty and much sweetness and strength of character; and though she in nowise changed her own religious opinions, she yet sympathised deeply with him in his earnest seeking after truth, and encouraged him to risk all—position, friends, everything—rather than act against his conscience.

Mr Read also upheld him through all his difficulties, and in the following year sanctioned their marriage, which brought with it some few very happy years. Two children were born—Caroline,¹ my mother, and a year afterwards her sister Emily.²

His happiness was to be but of short duration, for in 1812 the young wife died, and left him alone, at the age of only twenty-four, with two little children. With what deep grief he mourned her death his early writings show, but he met it with a noble courage and an undiminished faith.

The course he took was a strong one. Deprived of the profession to which he had looked forward, cut off from all intercourse with his family, and having lost the wife he so devotedly loved, he resolved—leaving his two children under the gentle care of their mother's relations—to apply himself to the study of medicine. Thus he entered as a student at the Edinburgh University in the year 1813.

¹ Caroline Southwood Smith, married, 1835, Mr James Hill.

Children of this marriage: Miranda Hill, Gertrude Hill (Mrs Charles Lewes), Octavia Hill, Emily S. Hill (Mrs C. E. Maurice), Florence Hill.

² Emily Southwood Smith, born 1810, died 1872.

At first he lived quite alone ; but finding it more than he could bear, he returned to England to fetch his eldest child, then four years old.

The father and child (my mother) went from Bristol to Edinburgh in a small sailing vessel, and encountered a terrible storm, which lasted many days. She tells me that she still remembers that storm of eighty-five years ago, the thick darkness, the war of the winds, the toss of the waves, the flash of the lightning illuminating her father's face ; but, most of all, she remembers the feeling of the strong arm round her, giving the sense of safety.

His interest in religious matters at this period was greater than ever ; for the change in his opinions, in leading him to take a more loving view of the Divine nature, had increased his ardour for the truth, and his own personal sorrow had heightened his faith and made him wish to carry its comfort to others. As well, therefore, as pursuing his medical studies, he gathered round him in Edinburgh a little congregation for service every Sunday. The sermons preached by him then, seem to have an added depth of feeling when we know the circumstances in which they

were given ; and the following words, written by him at this time, give some insight into the calm sublime faith which upheld him, not only then, but throughout life.

"Can there be a more exalted pleasure," he writes, "than that which the mind experiences when, in moments of reflective solitude—in those moments when it becomes tranquil and disposed to appreciate the real value of objects—it dwells upon the thought that there is, seated on the throne of the universe, a Being whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, and who is perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness? How little can the storms of life assail *his* soul who rests his happiness upon this Rock of Ages! How little can death itself appal *his* mind who feels that he is conducted to the tomb by the hand of the Sovereign of the universe! Yes! there is a reality in religion; and if that happiness, which is so often sought, and so often sought in vain—that happiness which is worthy of a rational being, and which at once satisfies and exalts him—be ever tasted upon earth, it is by him who thus, in the solitude of his heart, delights to contemplate the idea of a presiding Benignity, the extent of

whose dominion is without limit, and the duration of whose kingdom is without end! It is a felicity which our Father sometimes sends down to the heart that is worthy of it, to give it a foretaste of its eternal portion."

Much interest was felt in the young pale student and his little girl. For all this time my mother, the little Caroline, lived with him, cheering his home-coming from the university to their rooms, and drinking in from him at a very early age—as I, her daughter, was destined to do many years after—lessons of self-devotion to great ends.

It was at this time of sorrow, and in the intervals of medical study, that he wrote his 'Illustrations of the Divine Government,' the object of which is to show how perfect is the Love that rules the world, in spite of that which seems to clash,—pain, and sorrow, and wrong—all that we call evil.

His medical studies only added to his impression of the great Whole as one perfect scheme, for he felt an intimate connection between the field of scientific research and those religious studies to which he had formerly devoted himself exclusively. This is shown in his own

words in the preface to the fourth edition of the work, which was published in 1844.

"The contemplation," he writes, "of the wonderful processes which constitute life,—the exquisite mechanism (as far as that mechanism can be traced) by which they are performed—the surprising adjustments and harmonies by which, in a creature like man, such diverse and opposite actions are brought into relation with each other and made to work in subserviency and co-operation;—and the divine object of all—the communication of sensation and intelligence as the inlets and instruments of happiness—afforded the highest satisfaction to my mind. But this beautiful world, into whose workings my eye now searched, presented itself to my view as a demonstration that the Creative Power is infinite in goodness, and seemed to afford, as if from the essential elements and profoundest depths of nature, a proof of His love."

This book came to be a help to many of all classes and creeds, and passed through several editions.

He was often urged to reprint it in later life,

but held it back, wishing to modify it slightly. Not that his opinion of its main principles had altered in the least degree, but that he thought he had passed too lightly over the sea of misery and crime that there is in the world; he thought there was rather too much of the bright hopefulness of youth about it. Sorrow he had known, certainly, in the loss of his wife; but the sorrow that comes from the loss of one who was noble and good, and who has been taken from us by death, is of quite a different kind from that which comes from a closer acquaintance with the mass of sin and misery which exists. He did not change his view that, even this, rightly understood, is consistent with the divine benevolence; but he wished to recognise more fully its existence, and to enter more largely into the subject.

Having completed his medical studies and obtained his degree, the young physician determined to take a practice in Yeovil. The following extract from a letter, dated August 5, 1816, addressed by him to a friend in Rome,¹ shows with what views as to his future profession he quitted Scotland.

¹ The Hon. D. G. Halliburton.

"I leave Edinburgh this week," he writes; "I leave it with much regret, for I have found friends here whom I shall ever remember with respect, affection, and gratitude. I go to Yeovil, a little town in the west of England, where it is my intention to take charge of a congregation and at the same time to practise medicine. This double capacity of physician to body and soul does not appear to me to be incompatible, but how the plan will succeed can be determined only by the test of experience.

"My expectations are not very sanguine, but neither are my desires ambitious."

"The test of experience" proved that he was admirably qualified for the double office he had taken upon himself, and for some years he pursued faithfully the plan he had made.

But this quiet country life was not to be his always. It was decreed that he should come up to London and enter into its teeming life, to think, and write, and labour, until he had done his part towards lessening its mass of misery.