CHAPTER XV.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

ONEROUS DUTIES OF MR. MONTAGU DURING THE YEARS 1851-52.
—His Diligence and Application to the Various Requirements Pressing upon Him.—His High Sense of Duty.—Consents to Seek Rest in England.—Sails from the Cape May 2.—Lands in England in June.—State of His Health on Landing, and for Some Months after His Cessation from Business.—His Own Description of His State of Health and Mental Depression.
—Letter on His Behalf from Sir G. Napier.—Serious Attack.
—Symptoms That His Illness Was More Alarming Than He Had Anticipated.—His Firmness of Mind on Hearing This.—Moves to Brighton.—His Sickness Causes Further Apprehension.—His Frame of Mind During His Illness.—His Disposal of His Time and Thoughts.—Close of Self-Examination.—Rev. Mr. Maitland's Account of His State of Mind in His Sickness.—Testimony of the Bishop of Cape Town.—Nearer Approach of Death.—He Solemnly Nerves Himself to Meet It.—Great Bodily Exhaustion.—Tranquil Death.—His End Premature.—The Funeral.—The News of His Death Received With Every Mark of Regret at the Colonial Office.—Generous Conduct of the Duke of Newcastle.—His Despatch to Governor Sir G. Cathcart.—Regret and Sympathy Manifested at His Death, and for His Widow and Children.—Testimony of Sir George Arthur.—Memorial from Cape Merchants Resident in London, On Behalf of the Bereaved Family.—News of His Death How Received at the Cape.—Sermon Preached in Cape Town, Referring to His Character and Death.—Closing Remarks.

It is scarcely possible for one unacquainted with the amount and diversity of business, which during the years 1851 and 1852 passed through the Colonial Office at the Cape, to estimate the demand upon the
time, and the strain upon the anxieties, of Mr. Montagu during the last two years of his secretaryship. Each monthly mail brought fresh instructions from the Home Government connected with the constitutional changes; every post from the frontier was laden with new apprehensions from the movements of the Kafirs, or the progress of the rebellion at the Kat River and other Hottentot localities; and an alarm was spreading through the West, that the colored races were in conspiracy to make an outbreak against their masters and employers. It now appears that this alarm was unnecessary, or had little ground for its existence, but, at the time, the current rumors were considered of sufficient moment to cause a commission of inquiry to be instituted, in order to investigate the extent and reason of them.

Probably at no moment during his service in the Colony was Mr. Montagu’s position so difficult, or so trying, as it was during the whole of the year 1851; and throughout that year he manifested how well-sustained was the grandeur of his self-reliance, how masterly was his adroitness, and how spacious his fund of resources for every emergency which then arose out of the external or internal struggles of the Colony. At this hour, more than all others of his career, he believed duty called him to stand in the gap, and most heroically and devotedly he stood there. Calm, vigilant, ready, he was ever at his post. The duties of his office were not relaxed; all the lesser wheels which moved the vast machinery for carrying on the Kafir war went steadily and systematically on; every minor detail of his department was attended to as beforetime,—yet, as despatch followed despatch, giving orders to proceed
with the Constitution,—as debate succeeded to debate, arising out of these orders,—self-possessed, deliberate, and prompt, his great mind was always prepared for the exigencies of each movement and each change. All he asked, all he labored for, was that the new constitution might be delayed until the close of the war; and in this desire he had but one object, that already stated,—to save the Colony from the consequences of what he believed disastrous haste, and to bring in, after mature consideration, such a Constitution as should secure the peace, and maintain the just rights of every class of the community. And to effect this, which to him was a paramount duty, he was, as we have seen, high-minded enough to be, for the moment, unpopular with the many; he was well contented to stand as a breakwater on which every wave might dash, and to be the buffet of the very wildest, if by so devoting himself, the future position of the Colony, whose interests were his only care, could be secured unimpaired. But all this time the stress and strain of the overwhelming business devolving on him—the pressure upon his mental and physical powers, arising from the anxiety, importance, and experiment of changes so utter and so vast as were contemplated—his sensitiveness of being coldly seconded by some, and being misunderstood by others—the knowledge that on himself singly was breaking all the tide of the popular impatience,—all this pressure and much besides was secretly over-taxing his strength; hourly anxiety, unremitting by night or by day, was silently undermining the natural energy of his constitution; and it was clear to those who best knew him, that if timely rest were not taken, his health would not only be injured, but hopelessly
destroyed. Yet he refused at this time to seek rest. As long as work was to be done, as long as another effort was to be made, as long as another exercise of self-devotion might avert the danger which he believed threatened,—so long he stood in the defence, and never yielded and never faltered, nor even contemplated rest, till, overwhelmed with more than mere ordinary human powers could sustain, his strength of mind and body was so over-wrought, that he was compelled by threatening symptoms to yield to the urgent entreaties both of his medical advisers and his friends, and seek that relaxation which he ought to have sought at least a year before. For now, alas! it was too late. The mischief was already too deeply done; over-work, the lively consciousness of the vast responsibility which was weighing upon him, keen anxiety for the interests of the Colony, and the feeling of which no good and sensitive mind can be heedless, that he was spending himself and sacrificing health and life for the public good, and yet that his good was evil spoken of,—all these causes had effected their consequences more insidiously and seriously than was suspected; and Mr. Montagu retired on leave from the Colony only to die at home, and to find his body's resting-place far from the scene where his heart still lingered, and whose well-being claimed his almost dying thoughts.

On the 2nd of May, he embarked with his family for England. That day being Sunday, and the time for the vessel's departure being within the hours of divine service, comparatively few persons conducted him to the ship. But conflicting were the feelings of those who did! Feelings of pain that he should leave at such a juncture, and for such a cause; feelings of misgiving as to whether or not he would ever
again set his foot on the shores he was then leaving. And by many of those who did not witness his embarkation, earnest prayer was offered in the services of that hour; and while in the beautiful litany the petition rose to heaven for "all that travel by land or by water," he and his family were not forgotten.

Early in June, Mr. Montagu arrived in England, much recruited in strength and spirits by his voyage, but still very much shattered. The following letter, written at this time, explains that he was then aware to how great an extent he had been over-taxing his powers, both mental and physical.

"London,

"1st July, 1852.

"My dear _______, I have been three weeks in London without writing to inform you of my departure from the Cape; and if I were called upon to say how this has happened, I must reply by saying, that it is an instance of that kind of procrastination which arises from deferring day by day what ought not to be deferred a single day, till the mind begins to find excuses, and gets in a manner reconciled to its negligence. * * * * *

"My departure from the Cape was at last very sudden: my health broke down so rapidly, and my mind, from over-tension, gave way so much more rapidly, that my medical adviser told me he could do no more for me, and that I must take my choice between rest and paralysis. To hesitate under such a state was impossible, and as a Lieutenant-Governor was appointed and had already arrived, and, inasmuch as he was to reside permanently at Cape Town, and take over those duties of the Government which, in the absence on the frontier of the Governor, had devolved on me to perform, there was no great difficulty in my way, and so I made the most of circumstances and came away. We came home in the steam-packet in thirty-five days very pleasantly, and during the voyage, I improved greatly; but on my arrival in London I had a relapse, and, for the first
few days, could not move out of the house. Dr. Squibb is attending me, and thinks the congestion of my brain not chronic; but he will not speak decidedly for two or three months. My plans are all unsettled. England appears to me a great blank! How many changes have taken place in the last ten years! What with the removal of many friends, and the death of others, I seem truly most desolate! In my weakness and painful state of mind, I feel without a point d'appui, without a centre to draw to,—poor ——'s death, and the death of —— and ——, now make themselves sorely felt, and all around me seems vacant.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"J. Montagu."

A letter written by him at a later date, Christmas Day, 1852, makes further mention of his state of health:—

"In the last few weeks I have been improving in bodily health, but very little in mind. Dr. Bright has lately examined me, and says, that from the rest I have had, I ought to have improved in mind very much more. His opinion now is that my complaint is not organic, and that I shall in time be quite restored, but always be liable, upon any unusual pressure upon the brain to a return of it. He says I am quite unfit for the duties of my Cape office, and that I can never resume them without much risk. He has advised me on no account to return to the Cape. He says, it would be folly to attempt that work again! My mind is in consequence made up not to return, and if I can obtain any employment here I will take it."

From the time of his landing in England, until April 1853, very nearly a year from his leaving the Cape, he complained continually of his head; and, as his letters show, was weak in body and in a most unhinged and nervous state of mind—nervous rather from a recollection of its powers having been overtaxed, and from a sensitive dread of recurrence to what
could again so overstrain it, than from any degree of irritability, or disturbance from what was passing about him. Here is his own account:—"I find no alteration in the powers of my mind. Any attempt at thought or application upsets me as much as ever; yet I can bear noises, conversation, and the laugh and play of the children pretty well, and am very much less nervous in many ways. So you see there is some amendment; and time and patience and trust will, I hope, do the rest."

From his own expressions, and casual allusions to his impaired powers of strength, thought and application, as well as from the testimony of his medical men, it is now clear that, at this time, he was breaking up, day by day,—a slow sacrifice to those pressing exertions which the stimulus of duty enabled him temporarily to bear, but whose subsequent reaction and effects were too manifest when the excitement of public activity was gone.* He still tried, however, by quiet and change of residence, and social conversation, to recruit his spirits, and mind, and body, all of which exhibited a strange contrast to that elasticity, collectedness, control, and energy, which were formerly their peculiar and marked characteristics.

At this time, Sir George Napier (under whom as Governor, Mr. Montagu had served during his first years of office at the Cape, and from whom he received, to his very last hour, every sincere token of kindness,) wrote the following letter on his behalf to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle; with the view of pressing his claim for some office of emolument in England. Sir George took this kind step, from the opinion

* See Appendix—Letters from Drs. Bright, Bickersteth, and Squibb.
expressed by Dr. Bright, that Mr. Montagu would not recover to a sufficient degree to undertake anew the onerous duties of "Colonial Secretary at the Cape of Good Hope."

"Nice, Piedmont,

"January 15th, 1853.

"My Lord Duke,—I trust your Grace will not consider me either officious, or presumptuous, in intruding on your time, in order to promote as far as in my power, the interests of an old and deserving public officer, Mr. John Montagu, the Secretary to Government at the Cape of Good Hope, but at present in England, in consequence of illness brought on by over work in the performance of the important duties of his office at the Cape.

"When I had the honor of being Governor and Commander-in-Chief of that Colony, Mr. Montagu served in his present capacity under me, and I can truly state that a more active, independent, and able public servant I never met with —his honor and integrity are unimpeachable, and his character and conduct as a gentleman perfect.

"Understanding that his medical advisers tell him he must on no account return to his official duties at the Cape, I consider myself called upon as an act of public duty, to address your Grace in favor of Mr. Montagu’s claims, as a public servant, and to state my conviction that should you think proper to appoint him to some suitable situation at home, you will find him equal to the duties of any place, however important, which your Grace may bestow upon him.

"I took the liberty of writing to Lord Derby officially, as I now do to your Grace, when his Lordship was in office, and I had reason to believe, from his answer, that Mr. Montagu’s claims would be taken into the most favorable consideration, had his Lordship remained in office.

"As I have no motive but the wish to be of service to an old and able civil servant whose claims are great, and who also fought as an officer at the Battle of Waterloo, I trust, I may hope for your Grace’s favorable consideration of Mr. Montagu’s case, and of what is due in your Grace’s judgment to services of no ordinary stamp, as the official
records of the Cape Colony, for the last ten years, will, I am fully convinced, satisfy your Grace. I again request your Grace's pardon for this intrusion, as I beg to assure you, nothing but what I consider my duty to Mr. Montagu, as a public servant of great merit, would have made me take the liberty of addressing you.

"I have the honor to be, with much respect,

"Your Grace's obedient humble servant,

"GEORGE NAPIER, Lieut.-General.

"His Grace the Duke of Newcastle."

To resume our narrative. On the 7th April, after a severe attack of influenza, Mr. Montagu unadvisedly ventured out of doors: the day was cold, and on returning home he complained of a chill which he had felt on getting into an omnibus in London. The serious illness which terminated in his death commenced that day, and continued until the 4th November. Of the progress of this illness the interesting letter of Dr. Squibb* furnishes the fullest particulars.

Dr. Bright was at this time called in for consultation, and in his several visits to the patient's sick room was greatly struck with the calmness and clearness of mind with which he analyzed his complaint, detailing every symptom and the danger he rightly anticipated from each. In August, he was removed to Brighton; Dr. Bickersteth, then on a short visit to England, and who at the Cape had been his long tried friend and occasional medical attendant, accompanied him. Up to this time Mr. Montagu did not apprehend any serious termination to his sickness, but Dr. Bickersteth, being well acquainted with his constitution, readily conjectured that it was completely broken, and that his life was in

* See Appendix.
considerable danger. A close and minute examination confirmed his opinion, and he then communicated to Mr. Montagu, freely and frankly, what he believed the state of his health to be. This was the first clear intimation he received that his life would, in all probability, not be of long continuance, and he received this intimation with the firmness which might be expected from him.

During his stay at Brighton, his health again seemed for a short time to improve; but all his medical advisers strongly urged on him not to pass the winter in England, and it was then decided that he should return to the Cape without delay. In order to make the necessary preparations for his voyage he went to London in October; and there it soon became apparent that his state of health was becoming every day more alarming; but he was still sanguine that he should return to the Cape and ultimately recover.

On 21st October, water on the chest began to manifest itself; and a few days after he was seized with convulsions, and suffered from extreme pressure on the brain. This attack convinced him that his recovery was hopeless. He survived it but a fortnight, during which period his mind was as calm and composed as it had ever been at any time of his life;

"And like rich hangings in a homely house,  
So was his will in his poor feeble body."

When he was aware he could not recover, he put in order all his private papers and accounts; wrote to the Duke of Newcastle the unfinished letter already mentioned; made arrangements respecting his funeral, which he requested might be conducted with the least possible expense; and gave directions concerning all he wished with regard to those who
survived him, with the tenderest feeling, and yet in the same quiet and systematic manner in which he had ever conducted matters in the soundest moments of his health.

It must not, however, be imagined that his serious thoughts, at this time, were given only to the trying work of "putting his house in order;" he was also earnestly seeking to be "prepared to meet his God." During his illness his mind and conscience were soberly passing under very strict self-examination. A lady who took a lively interest in his religious impressions at this time, furnishes the following account of the changes she perceived to have passed over him in a few months.

"When he first visited us in London, he appeared broken in health; his manly frame much shattered by the cares and anxieties of a long career of official labor; but there remained that vivacity of manner, that brilliancy in conversation, that vigor of intellect, graced with a simplicity of address, guileless mind, and child-like humility, which at once stamped him the very personification of an innate gentleman; while much added to this led to the belief that he was a Christian living in the fear of God. And yet, at times, I could perceive a dejected look, which was afterwards accounted for. His moments of sadness arose from the consciousness of his declining health, and inability to secure—what had ever been, next to his duty to his sovereign, his uppermost earthly aim,—an independence for his family. It was the intensity of feeling as a husband and a father that preyed upon his sensitive heart.

"The next time we met nearly a year had elapsed, and it was within a few weeks of his death. The change was great and decided. What an eloquent history did it tell of the power of that secret
which is the 'secret of the Lord.' The careworn and anxious look was exchanged for the utmost placidity and composure; he seemed as one who had already escaped from the trammels of this world, and was tasting of that peace which truly 'passeth understanding.' His great delight now was a desire to impart to others the way and the means of obtaining that peace which had taught him what is the true meaning of happiness.

"Almost the last time I saw him was at Brighton; he spoke with veneration of Mr. Maitland, and said he was a 'heavenly minded' man. It was his great pleasure to send us books from which he derived spiritual comfort and help. His countenance was now emaciated and worn, but the expression was something heavenly, which spoke eloquently of peace and joy in the heart. One felt in looking at his face that he was freed from the conflicts of this difficult life, and was near his home. All the benevolence and tenderness of his nature seemed as if full blown,—the love of God, the spirit of Christ Jesus filled his heart,—and he earnestly desired that others should have the same happiness and know the same Saviour in whom he trusted, and to whom he carried all his cares and pains, and to whose guardian care he could leave those beloved ones who watched and tended him with trembling anxiety and affection."

He spoke at this time of having read the Psalms of David with calm admiration; and remarked on the great difference with which he now regarded prayer. "Feeling," he said "my own sinfulness I have prayed all my life;—since my illness I have fully felt and known the necessity and privilege of
prayer. In times past my lips expressed my feelings, now my soul prays!"

"Truth is deposited with life's last hour;"

And Mr. Montagu was too much a lover of truth and sincerity not to listen to the strictness of the one and the secrets of the other on his dying bed. Nor was he in that scene and hour of self-searching a self-deceiver, or one who uninquiringly rested on a vague hope. "Of his own heart he made diligent search;" and his conviction of his state as a sinner, and of his unworthiness of all that Christ has promised to those who live and die in His faith and fear, for a time pressed so heavily on him, that he likened it "to a canopy of lead" intercepting his prayers to heaven. He expressed repeatedly the most earnest satisfaction in hearing the Bible read to him; some of the Psalms of David he especially requested to have repeated several times in the day, according as he had strength to listen; and after a close conversation with the Rev. C. D. Maitland, of Brighton, mainly with regard to his confidence in Christ Jesus for his eternal salvation, his daily reading was a portion of the first eight chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Mr. Maitland, in a letter written subsequent to Mr. Montagu's death, thus describes his state of mind during his last illness:

"I found him, in his daily meditations, reading portions out of the Psalms; these seemed to speak to his feelings, but he lacked that justifying faith which David had, on the ground of which he conversed in those Psalms with his God; and therefore was not in a state of mind to read them with profit; the foundation required laying in his soul on which
he might build up a hope towards God. In this
light his case appeared to me on first visiting him,
I therefore led him to the Epistle to the Romans,
and hastily (as he could bear it, for the poor wasted
body soon got exhausted) sketched out to him the
matter contained in a portion of that Epistle, from
the third to the eighth chapter inclusive, and to the
elucidation of these chapters I most confined myself
in my after visits, that I might possess his mind
with the wondrous scheme of grace and mercy as
there unfolded, that so he might clearly see what
God had wrought for man, and what ground there
was for faith and hope in Him: and rejoiced was I
to see how his mind kindled at the prospect afforded
him, and how, as one truth after another presented
itself to his now eager gaze, he was filled with
admiring thoughts of that wisdom and goodness
which had devised a plan of salvation, so glorious in
itself, and so, in every way, suited to the necessities
of a poor sinner of mankind such as he increasingly
discerned himself to be. He now only complained
to me of the hardness of his heart; that he could not
feel, as he should, towards God in the view of His
great mercies, and that the sins which he now
detected on reviewing his past life did not give him
the pain and shame they ought; his cry was for a
broken and contrite spirit, and his frequent inquiry
was how this might be obtained. But this crying
sense of his need of this brokenness of heart encou-
raged the belief that the thing was there, and that
God had given him repentance unto life. I directed
him to seek of God what he felt the need of, and to
approach Him as God in Christ, who had given, in
him, such an encouraging manifestation of His name
and nature, and thereby encourage a believing ap-
proach to Him. At this period he was hastily called away, and I saw him no more, but I humbly trust that his end was blessed."

This hope expressed by the Rev. C. D. Maitland is fully confirmed by the testimony of the Bishop of Cape Town, who, while he was in London, was almost in daily attendance at his dying friend's bedside, and was admitted to the very closest confidence of his heart and soul, the Bishop, giving an account of his visits to him, thus writes:—

"There can be no doubt that his long illness was a great blessing to him; and he felt it so to be. It brought him nearer to God; led him to think and to read far more on religious subjects than he had ever done before. Under his affliction he seemed to me to grow daily in all Christian graces. He saw himself to be a sinner, and that there was one only name through which he could be saved; and he had a calm and enduring conviction that his sins were forgiven, and his soul saved through the merits of his Redeemer. He told me that he was not afraid of death; that he was contented to die, and that he trusted he was not deceiving himself about his spiritual condition, or building his hopes upon a wrong foundation. I saw him as often as I could amidst my many pressing engagements, and prayed with him daily. This was a great comfort to him, and he would send for me if he was depressed or worse than usual; I administered the blessed Sacrament to him and Mrs. Montagu shortly before his death. One thing only seemed, at times, to disturb him,—the thought of his widow and his orphan children destitute and unprovided for, but even this he dismissed from his mind, content to leave them in God's hands; and knowing that he had deserved well of his
country, and that his friends would not suffer the memory of his deeds to be forgotten. I loved and admired Mr. Montagu much in the days of his health and vigor, not so much for his great abilities as for his uprightness, his truthfulness, courage, firmness, determination to do what was right, let who would gainsay it, his entire freedom from all selfish considerations, and the cheerful readiness with which he sacrificed popularity to the performance of what he deemed to be his duty. But I can safely say I never admired or loved him so much as on his sick and dying bed: I think I never saw a more beautiful or affecting spectacle than he presented as he lay, propped up, worn, exhausted, gasping for breath, day after day, and yet in mind just the same that I remember him in the days that are past. He analyzed his own case with the same calmness and precision that he would have examined into some ordinary matter of old. He was ever thinking of others, attending to every little thing which could save his wife trouble after he was gone. There were none of those little infirmities that so often pain us in a sick-room to be seen in his case; no one saw even an impatient look or heard a hasty word during his whole illness; I have never seen so much cheerful patience and resignation on a sick-bed. He was great in his death as he was in his life."

As the time of his soul's departure drew nearer and nearer, his wish seemed to be that no earthly or distracting matters should be intruded upon him; as if he desired that he might

"Walk thoughtful on the solemn, silent shore
Of that vast ocean he must sail so soon;"

and the day before his death he said that he had
then arranged his worldly matters, as far as he could, and expressed an inclination to be left quite alone.

From the testimony of those who watched him through his last days, and from the tenor of his whole conduct at this time, there can be little doubt that this solitude, which he desired, was to him both sacred and serene; and that his sick chamber was to him, in his last hours, a scene of wrestlings and prayers with his Divine Chastener; a solemn Lesbian,—holy ground,—whereon he talked with God "face to face;" there he calmly reviewed God's many mercies for the Past, there he hopefully aspired to the realization of the glorious promises for the Future, while faith and communion with his Saviour

"The world excluded, ev'ry passion hush'd  
And opened a calm intercourse with heaven."

On the morning of his death, it occurred to him that the Will he had made at the Cape would not hold good in England, and this his opinion being confirmed, a fresh Will was drawn up; and he gave every direction about it with the greatest precision and tranquillity of mind, although at the time his bodily strength was so exhausted that the slightest conversation wearied him; yet within two hours of his death he attentively and collectedly listened to the reading of the whole Will, and with quiet deliberation confirmed it with his signature. This was his last visible act. He then gradually became more exhausted, and at twenty minutes past one o'clock expired without pain or a struggle. So calm was his dissolution, that Mrs. Montagu, who was watching beside him, was obliged to put her ear to his heart to ascertain if he was really dead. Such was his soul's tranquil departure!
“Death laid his hand
Upon his heart gently, not smiting it,
But as a harper lays his open palm
Upon his harp to deaden its vibrations;”

Or, to adopt the more beautiful imagery of Divine Inspiration, to describe his peaceful “falling asleep,”—the “silver cord was loosed,” but affection’s watching eye could not discern when the shadowy hand unwound it,—“the golden bowl was broken,” but attention’s listening ear could not catch the feeblest sound to tell when its brittle mechanism was snapt, or when the “wheel” stopped revolving “at the fountain.”

During his last illness Mr. Montagu suffered greatly from extreme exhaustion. His bodily frame had been in his health robust and athletic, his gait firm and decided, and his countenance fresh and indicative of a sound constitution as well as evenness of mind. His habits were regular and abstemious, and few men in their appearance gave greater promise of a “green old age” than he did a few years before his death. Yet during his closing sickness, his weakness was almost that of a child’s; he sat propped in his bed, with his head bowed and sunk upon his breast, and it was with difficulty he could breathe without being fanned. Few who had known him in his best days could have recognized in that feeble form the man of energy, and the promoter of so much active usefulness that he once was,—but the mind, the forethought, the coolness, the greatness of John Montagu were the same; according to the testimony above given,—“He was great in his death as he was in his life!”

Of Mr. Montagu, whose peaceful departure was a striking contrast to his toilsome life, it may be truthfully said that “he did not waste out, but was worn
out"! His unwearied exertions and overtasked anxieties in the trying discharge of his duties, especially for the latter period of his career, made his life though long in labors short in the days of his age; and opened for him a premature passage to the grave. He enjoyed not a single day’s perfect health after his return to England; and sunk “bowed with cares, but not with years,”—for he had numbered but fifty-six at the time of his decease. Yet his life was a striking example that “honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.”—Wisdom iv. 8, 9.

The removal of his body to its last rest was without unnecessary pomp or expense, as the deceased requested it should be. This very act was characteristic of him: shortly before his death he called the undertaker to his bedside, and with the greatest composure gave orders how his funeral should be conducted, which he strictly charged should be “in a manner becoming his circumstances.” He died as many a patriotic and public spirited man has died—poor. Nor did he desire that it should be thought otherwise: unostentatious in his mode of life, it would have been a contradiction to his character, to have exhibited aught but what was necessary and respectful at his death. The expense of his obsequies was the costly love and deep sorrow of the many illustrious friends who mourned his loss and sympathized with the widow and orphan children he left behind him.* He himself named the few friends

* Mention has been made in a former page of the signal kindness and commiseration exhibited by the late Sir P. Maitland towards Mr. Montagu in his seasons of difficulty, and to his widow and orphan
whom he wished, to use his own expression, "to lay him in his grave." His pall was borne by Sir P. Maitland, Major Bower, Mr. W. Hawkins (ex-member of the Legislative Council), and Mr. Pinney (Resident Magistrate, Simon's Town), Cape of Good Hope. His little son Arthur was chief mourner; and a relation of Mrs. Montagu's, Major Arthur, who met the funeral train at the burial ground, was also present. Charles Bayley, Esq., who was specially named by the deceased to be one of his pall-bearers, was unavoidably absent from illness. Thus those "who laid him in the grave" were few, but they were those who had loved and esteemed him for years. All of them had known him in distant lands; yet there they stood round "the narrow house" which was to be his body's last resting-place, and witnessed all that was mortal of him committed to the ground in the land of his early days, and in a spot, over which probably, in all the elasticity of hope and joy, his opening boyhood had sported. He was buried on the 8th November, 1853. The Bishop of Cape Town officiated at the funeral, and most solemnly and with deep feeling read the burial service. The last remains of the deceased are deposited, as regards the world to come, "in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," but as regards their consignment from the sight of the present world, in children in their bereavement. It is an act of justice to mention here, that in Mrs. Montagu's affliction, Lady Sarah Maitland's kindness, attention, and consolation were those of a friend, a sister and a Christian. Those who witnessed, as well as those who experienced, her innumerable and considerate acts of tenderness on that occasion never will forget them. Lady Sarah is herself now a widow, and those who know her amiable and pious character have this sure consolation, that the spiritual comfort and trustful hope which she administered to Mrs. Montagu in the hour of suffering, have been bestowed manifold on her own heart and soul in her bereavement, from a gracious and merciful God.
the cemetery at Brompton; and over them has been erected a plain stone, with the following inscription:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOHN MONTAGU,
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,
BORN AUG. 21, 1797.
DIED NOV. 4, 1853.
CURA ET AMORE
ROBERTI EPISCOPI CAPETONIENSIS.

The tidings of Mr. Montagu's death were received at the Colonial Office, Downing Street, with every mark of regret and esteem. Those who had held the office of Colonial Secretary gave their ready testimony to the public loss;* and the Duke of Newcastle, then at the head of the Colonial Department, ordered an official despatch to be forwarded to the Cape, announcing the death of its Secretary to the Colony which he had so faithfully served, and which would have most reason to lament his decease. This was a mark of distinction and appreciation seldom shown in such cases; and reflects no less honor on the illustrious duke who so generously bestowed it, than value for the deceased, whose memory and services it was duly intended to record and honor. Yet his Grace did not let the matter rest here, but sent the following considerate despatch to the Governor Sir G. Cathcart.

"Downing Street,
"11th December, 1853.

"Sir,—I greatly regret to learn that the decease of Mr. Montagu, late Secretary to Government for the Cape Colony, has left his widow and a portion of his family very

* See Appendix—Letters of Earl Derby and Sir J. Packington.
scantily provided for. Mrs. Montagu leaves England by the present packet, and will, I have no doubt, be received with the regard due to her misfortunes by the many, whose friendship had been acquired by her deceased husband, in the course of his public and private career.

"2. Mr. Montagu's claims on this department, arising out of peculiar services rendered before his connexion with the Colony under your Government, and out of the serious loss of fortune occasioned by his removal from Van Diemen's Land, have justified me in taking the unusual step of making application to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, for such slight assistance, by way of gratuity, as they can furnish, consistently with their rules, towards the necessities of her family, and you will perceive by the annexed letter that they have awarded her a sum of 300£.

"3. But the more important portion of his public life was spent in the service of the Cape, and its particulars are so much better known to the community there than they are to myself, that it would be idle on my part to recapitulate them in detail. When I have merely stated, that for several years, in consequence of the prolonged absence of the Governor on the frontier, it was on him that the care of the Civil Government chiefly devolved,—that his first performance is understood to have been the re-instatement of the finances of the Colony from a condition of great depression and confusion,—that to his exertions and superintendence are mainly owing the admirable roads, and the excellent convict and other public institutions, which have rendered the Colony in those respects a model for imitation,—that almost in the last year of his secretaryship, his forethought and diligence in collecting, arming, and despatching to the field of action the levies of the Western districts, have been acknowledged by the military authorities as one of the chief causes which checked the further spread of the Kafir rebellion,—I have mentioned services such as it very rarely falls to the lot of a public officer in his station to render; and yet there is no one familiar with the affairs of the Colony who cannot probably make many special additions to the slight catalogue here given.

"4. There can, I fear, be little doubt that the severity
of these labors, and still more his acute sense of the responsibility latterly thrown on him, over-tasked his physical strength, and produced the disease which inflicted on his family this irreparable loss, by removing him while yet in the middle of life, and in full mental vigor and fitness for duty.

"5. It has appeared to me that no fitter case could be pointed out for the exercise of a liberality which, I am bound to admit, can only be shown with caution, and on rare occasions, by a legislative body, and that the commencement of operations by the representatives of the people in the Colony under your Government could not better be inaugurated than by the grant of some pension to Mrs. Montagu, as a tribute to the memory of one whose life has been so intimately and usefully connected with one of the most critical periods of its history.

"6. And I must here touch, however briefly, on one circumstance respecting him, which may deserve explanation. Mr. Montagu, as is well known, was opposed to the introduction of the Constitution at the Cape Colony, at the particular time when it took effect; as well as to certain disputed provisions contained in it. Of the mode of his conducting that opposition in the Colony, I say nothing; it was public and direct, and all are able to judge of it. Nor do I for a moment suppose that the remembrance of his hostility on this point, however mistaken they may think it, would affect the deliberations of the legislature on the subject of any testimonial, which they might otherwise deem befitting the occasion. That Her Majesty's Government did not agree in his opinion is sufficiently proved by the course which they adopted in overruling it. Nevertheless, I am led to believe, that a not unnatural suspicion has been entertained that, although the counsels of Mr. Montagu did not prevail, yet his influence, while absent on leave in this country, was exercised in behalf of his own views, and that it made itself felt in respect of minor details of the administration of the Colony.

"It is due to the memory of Mr. Montagu that I should place it on record, that those suspicions had no foundation whatever. Since I have held the seals of this office, I hav
not only myself had no communication with Mr. Montagu respecting the conduct of affairs at the Cape of Good Hope, but I have the fullest reason to believe that he purposely and scrupulously abstained from any endeavor to influence the counsels of this department, or even to make his sentiments known here respecting the many important questions which have been in agitation.

"7. I have, therefore, to authorize you, subject wholly to your own discretion as to time and manner, to bring before the House of Assembly, when in session, the proposal of the grant of such pension as you may deem proper to the widow of Mr. Montagu.

"But I should much prefer your not initiating this proposal, if it is at all probable that it may be made by others, and may proceed by way of address or resolution from the House itself, being satisfied that such an act of grace would be much enhanced in the estimation of this afflicted lady and her friends if it came spontaneously from the representatives of the people.

"I have, &c.,

"(Signed) Newcastle."

When it was known that Mr. Montagu's losses in former years had hindered him making any provision for his family, the sympathy and regret expressed for them were universal amongst all who were acquainted with the public acts and domestic and social

* Notwithstanding this just tribute to the memory of the late Secretary for the Cape Colony, and the kindness and feeling regard evinced by His Grace in his despatch for his widow and orphan children in their affliction; and notwithstanding a hope intimated by the Cape merchants resident in London, that a pension might be authorized by the local legislature, the House of Assembly at the Cape, on the above despatch of the Duke being laid before it, rejected the recommendation of a grant of 2,000L. on behalf of the widow and family. How strikingly does this act stand in contrast with the honorable and gracious manner in which the Duke of Newcastle advocated the widow's claim, and to which the Earl of Aberdeen has with equal considerateness responded, on the part of the Home Government, by placing Mrs. Montagu on the Civil List with a pension of 300L. per annum, in consideration of her husband's services.
virtues of the deceased. Numerous friends at once came forward to interest themselves in obtaining a competent provision for those so suddenly and undeservedly left thus painfully circumstanced. The Bishop of Cape Town drew up a full statement of Mr. Montagu's services, and from data gathered from the last feeble efforts of the husband when dying, pointed out the grounds and just claims of his widow for a pension from the Government. This statement was forwarded to the Duke of Newcastle and was received by his Grace with the promptest interest and kindest expressions of condolence. Each Governor, under whom Mr. Montagu had served, represented also in the strongest terms the deserving case of the widow and children, and none more touchingly and earnestly than Sir George Arthur (whom Mr. Montagu at the outset of his official career accompanied to Van Diemen's Land). Sir George was himself on the brink of the grave at the time of Mr. Montagu's death; yet when apprized of the circumstances in which he had left his family, he could not forbear adding his testimony to that of others. He forgot the feebleness of his frame in the strength of his sympathy, and with firm feeling though with trembling hand, wrote a moving appeal on their behalf. In this appeal he made allusion to the painful anticipation with which Mr. Montagu's last hours were at intervals clouded:—"I have watched with the utmost gratification his career of services at the Cape of Good Hope. I have been delighted from time to time to learn his conduct had elicited the high eulogy of more than one Secretary of State, and I entertained the expectation that the close of so useful a life would be attended by consolations of every kind; but I am grieved to know that although
he looked on the approach of death with the firmness of a Christian, his mind was painfully affected by the fear that owing to the failure of persons to whom he had intrusted his property, his widow and children might suffer great privation when he was taken from them."—*Letter to the Duke of Newcastle.*

In England Mr. Montagu was not so widely known as in the Colonies where he labored; yet the English journals were not slow to give publicity to the fact, that a great man and a faithful public servant had fallen a sacrifice to the zealous discharge of his public functions. The London merchants connected with the Cape, to whom, therefore, the deceased was well known, at once opened a subscription for the immediate aid of Mrs. Montagu and her younger children; and also memorialized the Duke of Newcastle on their behalf—"that such provision might be made, either by royal bounty or grant from Parliament, as should, conjointly with any pension that might be authorized by the Colonial Legislature of the Cape, place the family in such a position as is befitting the station of the widow and children of so distinguished a man, and faithful a servant of his Sovereign and his country, and so prominent an example of real worth as the late Mr. Montagu."* The Cape papers† were also unanimous, and even vied in expressions of acknowledgment, that the Colony had indeed lost its greatest man. The news of his death, when many were looking for his arrival, as it spread from home to home throughout the Cape, cast a gloom

* See Appendix—London Merchants' Memorial.
† See Appendix—Extracts from Cape papers.
over every face, and drew an utterance of regret from every heart.

On the Sunday after the information of the death of the deceased reached the Colony, reference to it was publicly made in a sermon preached by the Dean of Cape Town in the Cathedral Church. It was New-Year's day, and the text selected was from St. James iv. 13, 14: "Go to now, ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." In the course of the sermon, the subjoined remarks on the death and character of Mr. Montagu were uttered: "An event which has in the last week pressed itself upon us all, most strikingly illustrates how little we can imagine 'what may be on the morrow,' and which also serves to urge with its full weight on our souls the solemn question—'What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' If physical and mental energy, if steady diligence, if apparent powers to combat in emergen­cies, if sober habit, if system, if regularity, if firm­ness of disposition to throw off what others suffer to undermine both mind and body are qualities and acquirements which, meeting in one character, would cause us to believe that his life would not hastily have been cut off,—then, he who for years knelt and worshipped, and communicated with us in this place,

* This extract is introduced on account of a request made by several of Mr. Montagu's friends that the Sermon might be published. The above extract is the whole of that portion of it which bears on the deceased.
but whose unexpected death has drawn from all mouths an acknowledgment of our common loss, and from many hearts the deepest expressions of regret, was one whose years of usefulness, and whose vigor of intellect and enterprize we might have expected long and efficiently to have done public service. Who thought a year since, much less a month since, that the just ending year, before it closed, would have enrolled his name in its obituary? Yet we now miss him from his place, where we shall see him again no more. The toils of office and the activities of public life will claim his interests no more. Undertakings, and an invincible determination to carry them through, which seemed almost peculiarly his, must now engage others' thoughts, and demand of others skill and management which he so ably displayed; but him they can engage no more, and the very reflection should arouse us all to meet the question—'What is your life? It is even as a vapour.'

‘You will bear with me, I feel assured, if, according to my wont, I dwell upon the loss of a public character, and give my feeble tribute of acknowledgment to the dead. The grave should close in upon all differences; on its hushed and silent shore no disturbing wave should break; there, animosities and bitter remembrances, party strife and angry feud, public antagonism and personal conflicts, should be buried with the buried. I shall not, then, I trust, be misjudged if I speak, as a personal friend I must speak, feelingly, deploringly, and, as I believe faithfully, of him whom we shall behold on earth no more. The career of the deceased, had he followed the course of arms to which he was first called, might have been an illustrious one. He was in all points fitted for a soldier; a disciplinarian, of firmness of
purpose, of great personal bravery,—his name might have stood equally high with the heroes who have become illustrious, and whose names are associated with our great victories. But he preferred other pursuits,—peaceful activity to martial glory,—and brought his discernment of character, and his habits of discipline, and his keen sense of what is public service, into the duties of his office. What, as a public character and a public servant he has done in this Colony and elsewhere, other and more fitting channels must disclose; but I, in this sacred place, may, I believe, be thought not to derogate from the holiness of my office or the hallowedness of the sanctuary of God, if I single out some of those virtues and points of character which adorned him as a private individual. As a friend he was firm and sincere, as an adviser he was open and straightforward; he knew not to flatter, but he never withheld merited praise; as a man he was feeling and sympathizing; a true tale of sorrow or distress could move him to tears; he was sensitive to kindness, and from his very high personal worth few men have had firmer friends amongst those who really knew him. As a husband and a parent he was kind, anxious, and tender. As a Christian and a man of practical piety he was steady, consistent, exemplary. Punctual at public worship; fixed and absorbed in his whole demeanor while engaged therein, and a regular attendant at the Holy Communion; ready to aid in any charities or works of love for the Lord's glory or for man's necessities, he was an ornament and a true support to the Church to which he belonged. He was sincere without vaunting profession; charitable without ostentation; and in his Christian life, as in his public services, in
the strictest sense a conscientious and an honest man.

"But there was something deeper in his hidden Christian life and character than perhaps any one supposed. The sick bed and the hour of death are the truest revealers of man's character to man, and in these he was truly good, truly great, truly all that we can look or hope for in a dying Christian. One who attended him in his last hours thus writes, for I cannot withhold his words:—'I had the privilege of ministering to him in his last days. He died in the faith, and even wished for death. He bore his sufferings very meekly and patiently. His mind was calm and clear to the last. His religious feelings were lively, and his convictions more deep than I was prepared for: he believed himself pardoned and saved through the merits of his Redeemer. His latter days were very edifying, and full of tenderness to all about him. He repeatedly kissed me, and was very grateful for my poor services. I shall ever think of him as one of the most upright, conscientious, able men I have met with in life. He never thought of himself, or his own interests,—duty was the one idea prominent in his mind.'

"Such was the deceased! While among us, from the very stamp of his character, as well as from his official position, he stood as a beacon on the rocks, unmoved while political tempests loudly raged, and the waves of our sea of troubles dashed most angrily,—now the strife of contest and the commotion of life with him are ended, and the still, awing solemnity of Death speaks to us after the whirlwind, let the silence of the grave, and the sanctity of repose hush every murmur into peace, and may the light from that beacon shine down,
calmly and undimmed, and cast its long line of lustre over the scene in unruffled serenity, where it unceasingly burned with steady light amid the perils of the storm."

The death of a public man is not truly felt till honest reflection looks back to the services he has rendered.* Then, even those who differed from him give consent and voice to the general eulogy which illustrates his virtues; the commonweal testifies how great a part it had in his life, how great a loss in his decease; and the country where he did service writes his name among its benefactors; and although few may be the actual attendants at his grave, yet in sympathy and regret the nation follows his last mortal remains, and consigns them to their repose; for

"Not friends alone such obsequies deplore,
They make mankind the mourner; carry sighs
Far as the fatal Fame can wing her way,
And turn the gayest thought of gayest age
Down the right channel through the vale of death."

* When it was ascertained that Mr. Montagu's return to the Colony was fully decided on, in almost every town and district addresses, testimonials, and acknowledgments of confidence and esteem were in preparation to be presented to him on his landing. And though this purpose failed of its accomplishment from the announcement of his decease, yet these public expressions of honor and personal regard, as well as appreciation of Mr. Montagu's services may well find a place in this Memoir. They are printed in the Appendix.