



Elizabeth Horsfield

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3. *Memoirs of the Life of Sister Elizabeth Horsfield late Benezet, who departed on the 30th of August 1836; written by her Children.*

Our dear departed Mother was a descendant of one of those Protestant families, denominated Huguenots, ~~and~~ who during the reign of Louis XIV. King of France, suffered persecution from the Church of Rome. — Her Grandfather John Stephen Benezet seeing the imminent danger to which he and his family were exposed, if they remained in France, ~~he~~ determined to leave his native country and seek refuge in Holland, although he knew that his removal ~~would~~ ^{would} be the cause of the confiscation of his property, & could only be effected at the risk of his life. — He secured the services of a young man, upon whose fidelity he could rely, to accompany him beyond the frontier of France. Nothing occurred to interrupt their progress, until they approached near the boundary, where a centinel was placed, whose orders were, not to permit any fugitives to pass over to Holland. — Here the adventurous companion boldly stepped up to the centinel, displaying in one hand an instrument of death, & tendering

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with the other a purse of gold, he said: "Take your choice; - this is a worthy family flying from persecution, and they shall pass." - The guard accepted the purse, and their escape was accomplished. From Holland the family soon removed to England, where they resided sixteen years. - Here her Grandfather became acquainted with different members of the United Brethren's Church, for which Society he always retained a great regard.

In 1731 he removed from England to Philadelphia, where the family was permanently established.

His acquaintance with the Brethren was here continued; - Count Zinzendorf and Br. Spangenberg frequently made his house their home.

His confidence to these servants of God was so great, that he permitted his son Daniel, the father of our dear Mother, to accompany them while they were bearing the glad tidings of Salvation to the poor benighted inhabitants of these then Western wilds. -

At 20 years of age her father settled as merchant in Philadelphia, where our dear mother was born on the 30th of September 1754.

She was baptized in the Episcopal Church, of

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She received a liberal education, and attended the best schools.
As a child she was of a serious turn of mind, and had a particular delight in attending the meetings of different denominations, and was soon convinced of the vanity of all earthly pleasures. — She occasionally accompanied her parents when visiting at Bethlehem & Nazareth, where, becoming more acquainted with the Brethren's Church, she was convinced that this was the people to whom she belonged, and therefore desired her parents to permit her to move to Bethlehem. — Although her parents would rather have seen her remain with them, they gave their consent.
She moved to this place the 17th of June 1775 being in her 21st year; was received into the Congregation the 26th of December following, and admitted as a communicant the 1st of March 1777. — After having lived in the Sistershouse for nearly 9 years, she was married to our dear deceased father Joseph Horsfield on the 2nd of December 1783; with whom she had one Son

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who departed this life in his infancy, and three daughters who survive her. It was always a source of great pleasure & comfort to her, that two of her daughters who were married continued to reside at this place; — by them she has lived to see six grandchildren.

In the year 1797 her parents died at the same time, and were buried in one grave. Having loved them tenderly, this sudden & unexpected loss was a cause of great & lasting grief to her.

On the 9th of September 1834 she became a widow, after having lived in matrimony above 50 years. During the last sickness ~~of our dear~~ of our deceased Father, our dear Mother's health and bodily strength seemed to decline so fast, that we sometimes expected to lose both parents at the same time as she had lost hers, but although in a very feeble state, she survived him nearly two years.

All her life she had been subject to nervous affection, which seemed to increase with age. About 9 years ago, she was afflicted with a severe sickness, which so much affected her head, that she became extremely forgetful, of which she was however

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sensible; and she would frequently say: "Should I even forget every thing of this world, if I only do not forget our dear Saviour;" this wish was certainly realized; for through all the weakness & infirmity of old age, she never lost her confidence in the Saviour, whom she so ardently loved; and she used to say: "I cannot possibly repeat any long prayers, but my constant supplication is, "Lord! be merciful to me)." — She would frequently & with peculiar emphasis repeat her favorite hymn,

O tell me no more
Of this world's vain store; etc:
but particularly the following two verses,
And when I'm to die,
Receive me I'll cry,
For Jesus hath loved me,
I cannot tell why!

But this I do find,
we two are so join'd,
He'll not live in glory
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texts of Scripture, and verses out of the Hymn book, has made so deep an impression upon her children and grandchildren, that we trust no time will be able to efface it.

During the last winter her bodily weakness increased, and she grew very feeble. - About five weeks ago her debility became so great, that contrary to her inclination and custom, she could not keep up during the daytime; & since then she was entirely confined to her bed; often expressing a wish, soon to go to her Saviour. - This her ardent desire was granted her on the morning of the 30th of August, having obtained the age of 81 years & 11 months.

Although sincerely sorrowing for the loss of a kind and dear mother, yet we are enabled to join with all our heart in the following verses:

Rejoice for a mother deceased,
Our loss is her infinite gain,
Her soul is from prison released,
And freed from its bodily chain.

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With songs let us follow her flight,
And mount with her spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,
And lodged in the Eden of love.
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Our mother the haven hath gain'd,
Out flying the tempest and wind,
Her rest she now has obtained
And left us, her children behind,
Still toss'd on a sea of distress,
Hard toiling to reach the blest shore,
Where all is assurance and peace,
And sorrow and sin are no more.
#

There all the Redeemed will meet,
Who followed the Saviour beneath;
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph o'er trouble and death:
The voyage of life's at an end,
The mortal afflictions are past,
The age, which in heaven they spend,
For ever and ever shall last.

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