

Transcription of
Johnson Atkinson Busfeild's Accounts of
the death and funeral of Emily Priscilla Busfeild, née Harris,
and of
the baptism of her son Guy Ferrand Busfield

Notes: This account was entered into one of the volumes of Johnson Atkinson Busfeild's source books of family history references. In it he placed all sorts of background information and research that were used to make his published "Fragments of Bingley Parish ..." family history. He continued to add to these volumes after the (private) publication of the book in 1875 and these pages were added and signed by him a mere year before he died.

The volumes and other records went to his son William who continued to add to them. Now they are in the hands of David Ferrand, his great-grandson who, too, has continued to add to the content and with the same concern for content and accuracy. It remains a marvellous Ferrand family heirloom.

[Start of the Account, page 1]

An account of the death of my dear daughter in law - Emily Priscilla Busfeild - (née Harris)

On Thursday the 14 July 1881, at 5.30 p.m. my poor son's most dear wife, "Emmie" gave birth to a boy at No 4 Magdala Place, Edinbro', where they had gone to reside for a couple of months for her confinement.

All went well until until 2 of Saty morning when alas! a change had duly occurred, and at 9.30 Saturday Evg, the 16th, her sweet spirit passed to realm of bliss in heaven!

Sunday morning 9 o'clock brought to Upwood the dreadful news by telegram, and words would fail to express the anguish which the shock occasioned. Being Sunday, no trains to Edinburgh were running, but I instantly telegraphed that I should leave by the midnight train & reach Edin. at 8 a.m. Monday morning. Her poor sisters, who in their grief had hurried up from Oxtou with poor Lillie

[page 2]

and her Governess (Miss Sparke) were already at the Palace Hotel.

At Magdala Place I found William in the agonies of grief, wrecked and heart broken. The loved one, as we stood by her bed, lay calm and sweet as she died - an angel - and as I Kissed her cold forehead she seemed to smile a sad and last farewell! To me it was heartrending - but my poor son had lost the precious darling of his life and as he gazed for the last time on her

placid features - what agony!

Her death was singularly touching and beautiful. To the last moment she was perfectly conscious and when she felt that the end was rapidly approaching, she expressed a wish once more to receive the holy sacrament with her dear husband & a clergyman from the Cathedral Church attended for the purpose. There was now indeed little time; her precious life was fast ebbing away, but her pure mind continually dwelt on prayer to God and for the dear ones she was so soon to leave sorrowing.

To her poor husband she spoke of the happy life which they had been permitted to enjoy together and she blessed

[page 3]

the Giver of all good from it. She then asked they her dear "Billy" might be brought to her that she might once more kiss and bless him before she died.

Thus passed away this sweet good creature, of whom it might justly be said -

"The first and only grief she ever caused her relations was when she died!"

To the whole family - and to all who knew her intimately - her loss was the occasion of unbounded grief, alas! still more intensified by the lamentable fact that the dear creature had been carried off in puerperal fever - unquestionably conveyed to her by her Doctor (D^r Macdonald) who at the same time was attending another patient (M^{rs} Taylor Innes) who died on the 17th July in the same deadly complaint, a week after her confinement & within 12 months of her marriage!

[A painful correspondence with D^r Balfour who had been called in by D^r Macdonald a few hours before the close, took place on this subject - but it can serve no good end to enter further upon it in this

[page 4]

account. The circumstances made a painful impression in Edinburgh. D^r Macdonald, who at the time was not in good health, and who must have felt deeply the lamentable events, retired for a time from Edinbro' and in Sept I heard that he was either dead or dying.]

Never did I pass a week in a house of such weeping & mourning, and as each succeeding post brought beautiful letters of sympathy & affection the bitterness of grief seemed day by day renewed with increasing anguish,

On 21st July the Motherless infant was registered in Edinbro' by the name of

"Guy Ferrand"

a name chosen by its own departed mother, who expressed a wish that its Great Uncle - my brother Ferrand, should be a sponsor.

The funeral

These melancholy arrangements devolved upon me on behalf of my poor unhappy son, &

were carried out with his approval. The usual Coffins, Shell, lead and Oak. A brass cross on the

[page 5]

lid and a brass plate engraved:

Emily Priscilla Busfeild

Born 18 Dec 1845

Died 16 July 1881

The mournful party left Edinbro' by the 10.30 Express Train, on Friday morning July 22nd. A carriage with four compartments - and attached to a clean neatly painted Van in which the coffin was placed. Lovely wreaths of flowers had been prepared in Edinbro' to accompany it. The family travelling consisted of my poor son, his little "Billy" and Anna & Sophia Harris with one in one compartment, joined at Appleby by W^m's kind friend M^r Benton, Rector of Cliburn. In another compartment poor dear Lillie, with her Governess, Mrs Addis the nurse in charge of the infant, and Eliza the faithful maid of the departed.

Reaching Bingley at 4.4 p.m. a large crowd of spectators & mourners were assembled at the Station. The bearers were tenants on the S^t Ives Estate

[Page 6]

who carried the body to the Church followed by the mourners on foot:

William and his poor child Lillie

Myself and Anna Harris

Brother Ferrand and Sophia Harris

E Townley Woodman & wife (May)

Col^l Busfield & wife (Louie)

Several of the Harris family

Dearman Birchall, Miss Harrison

Etc, Etc

No carriages, except the S^t Ives carriage and mine. No Scarfs, hatbands nor pall, everything plain simple and unostentatious.

The most lovely wreaths of delicate flowers, emblems of her own sweetness, some laid on the Coffin & others carried by mourners to be placed on the Coffin in the Vault. One of these, sent by Mrs Ferrand, who was in London, "to be placed on the Coffin by her husband's own hands in token of her love", such was her loving message.

On reaching the Church Gates, the Vicar, his Curate & the Church Choir met the funeral procession, the Choir singing a hymn^y. After service within the Church, which throughout

was "Choral", the body was conveyed to the Vault, the choir leading & singing a beautiful hymn. The vault had been prepared and

¥ The hymns were, on entering the Church, 400 "Christ with gather in his own", During the service 225 "Brief life is here our portion" and when walking to the grave 140 "Jesus lives, no longer can any terrors, death appal us".

[page 7]

decked with ivy leaves & flowers by brother Ferrand's head Gardener, and little children provided flowers to strew in the path in token of respect and affection, added to all these, numbers of beautiful and costly wreaths of flowers were placed on the Coffin and cast into the Vault, as the mourners took their unhappy and final departure.

When all was over, poor William and Lillie came to Upwood, where the dear babe and Billy drove on the arrival of the Train. The Woodmans also came to Upwood. The Col^l and Louie over the Moor to Ilkley. Some of the party including the Miss Harris's, Miss Harrison, W Alfred Harris of Lunefield, Dearman Birchall etc drove to St Ives and partook of hurried refreshments before departing to their homes by the Evening Train, & thus passed one of the most mournful days I can ever remember.

The Christening

The babe, a singularly sweet pretty looking child (may he be spared to read this at some future day, and to be a comfort to his bereaved father, not less than

[page 8]

a credit to the name he bears) was baptised and Christened at Bingley church on Thursday the 11th August 1881, by the Rev^d C. W. Burton, Rector of Clipburn, poor William's kind friend (whom Ferrand invited to stay at St Ives for a few days grouse shooting).

The child was named - Guy Ferrand - as already mentioned, the Sponsors being:

W Ferrand of St Ives, great uncle, after whom it was called,

Col^l W^m Busfeild, bis uncle

Anna Harris } of Oxton Hall,

Sophia Harris } his aunts

They were all present (except Col^l Busfeild whose children were in Scarlet fever & whom I represented as Proxy at the Ceremony), and after the Christening the Miss Harris's came to Upwood along with Miss Harrison of Mickley, the very kind and intimate friend of Anna Harris. Grandmother Busfeild and also Aunty May Woodman were also present at the Christening.

The dear child remained at Upwood

[page 9]

until the 8th Sept, when it left (the picture of health and sweetness) in charge of Aunt Woodman by Train for Morland Hall.

[Included here is a Notice cut from the Penrith Observer of Tuesday July 26, 1881:]

We regret to announce the death of Mrs William Busfeild, of Morland Hall, in this county, which occurred at Edinburgh on Saturday [the 16th]. Mrs Busfeild was the youngest daughter of the late Alfred Harris of Oxton Hall, near Tadcaster. Her death, which followed a few days after the birth of a son, will be deeply lamented by a large circle of relatives and friends, by whom she was much beloved.

"In the sight of the unwise she seemed to die and her departure is taken for misery - but she is in Peace." 3 Wisdom Ver: 2.

[signed]

J A Busfeild

Upwood, Sep: 16 1881