

Acland, John Edward



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inmates in the Time
of King Charles I.
with an account of
the Harmonies**

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**LITTLE GIDDING
and its inmates
in the time of king charles i.**

with an account of
THE HARMONIES
designed and constructed by
NICHOLAS FERRAR.

by
J. E. ACLAND, M.A.

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CHAPTER I. [1]

“How happy a king were I, if I had many more such workmen and workwomen in my kingdom! Their art and ability is excellent. Let them know I will not forget them. God’s blessing on their hearts, and painful hands.”

Such were the words and opinions of King Charles I., when speaking of the happy and industrious family whose life and labours at Little Gidding are described in the following pages, a family entirely devoted to good works, under the able direction of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, whose history has happily been preserved for us with great accuracy, and which can hardly fail to be attractive.

Although Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding are names that are invariably associated with one another, it must not be imagined that he spent his whole life there. It was not, indeed, till he was thirty-three years old that he left the busy and stirring scenes for which he seemed so suited; and before describing the twelve years of seclusion with which he ended his life, it is necessary to say something about his more active employments as a young man. They prove beyond doubt that he was endued with abilities of the highest order, which might have led him to positions of great public importance had his inclinations so prompted him.

Nicholas Ferrar was born in the year 1592, his parents being conspicuous for their piety and charity, their conscientious discharge of every duty, and their careful training of a numerous family in every point of virtue and religion, special attention being paid to the study of the Bible, large portions of which were committed to memory.

Mr. Ferrar was a merchant, connected with all the great centres of commerce, especially with the East and West Indies; and being given to most generous hospitality, he was on friendly terms with many persons of eminence, such as Drake, Raleigh, and Hawkins.

Nicholas was the third son, and his talents began to develop themselves very early. His memory, which was naturally very retentive, was carefully cultivated, and he was at all times eager and diligent in his studies. At the age of fourteen he was admitted to Clare Hall, Cambridge; four years later he took his degree, and was before long elected to a Fellowship. But his health now broke down, and it was considered that the only chance of his recovery lay in a complete change, and in leaving England. Just at this time the Princess Elizabeth was starting for the Palatinate, after her marriage with the Elector Frederick, and Ferrar was fortunate in obtaining permission to be included in her suite. They first went to Holland, but before long Ferrar left the Royal party, as he had resolved on seeing some places not included in the Royal programme.

We must, however, hurry over this part of Ferrar’s life, very interesting as it is, and it must suffice to say that in the course of five years he visited many parts of Germany and Italy, then went to the south of France, by sea to Spain, where he had several startling adventures, and after travelling five hundred miles alone, and on foot, reached Saint Sebastian, from which port he took ship to England.

The advantage of these travels to Ferrar was great in many ways. He thoroughly mastered the languages of the various countries; he studied closely their forms of government, trade, and commerce, and acquired an insight even into the handicrafts of the people. He made himself acquainted with the doctrines and discipline of the Churches and religious sects, and procured, whenever he could do so, the assistance of the ablest scholars to instruct him. Being well supplied with money by his father, he was enabled to collect, besides other things, a great number of prints and engravings by all the best masters; in fact, it is stated that he let nothing of this sort escape him that was valuable; and being all relative to, or illustrative of, passages in the Bible, they were utilized to great advantage when in his later years he compiled “The Harmonies.”

On his return home, his natural inclination was to settle at Cambridge and resume his work at Clare Hall; but, partly owing to his father’s advanced age, and partly on account of his elder brother having important work in London in connection with the Virginia Plantation Company, Nicholas Ferrar determined to settle there with them. Here he soon attracted much attention for his many eminent qualities, reports of which had, indeed, been received from abroad, and before long Sir Edwyn Sandys and Lord Southampton, both of them governors of the Virginia Company, having discovered for themselves his great worth, proposed him as King’s Counsel for the Plantation. He thus became deeply engaged in public business; and as his work was continually produced in open court, his reputation increased more and more. Two or three years later his powers were still further tested, for the Spanish party exerted all their influence to overthrow the Company; and as Nicholas Ferrar was at this time the deputy-governor, the chief burden of the defence fell on his shoulders. His efforts were, however, all in vain, and before long the patent or charter was withdrawn, and the Company was dissolved, owing to the false accusations brought against the managers and directors.

Ferrar was now elected Member of Parliament, and was able to bring before the House and the public more fully the iniquity of these proceedings, and by his skilful management cleared the directors, and brought their opponents to justice and punishment.

This was the concluding act of Ferrar's public life, and we shall now turn to a scene of a vastly different nature. But it has been necessary to say thus much to exhibit in its true light the force of character, the wonderful diligence and activity of the man, who (as we shall now see) decided on devoting the rest of his life to religious exercises, to works of charity and usefulness, but living apart and without interruption from the busy world.

There is evidence to show that this had long been his wish, in fact, that from his earliest years some such ideas had been in his mind; but until now he had not seen his way to carry them out.

The first and most necessary step was to find a place suitable for his purpose, and hearing that the lordship of Little Gidding was for sale, he went to inspect it.

It was in an obscure part of the county of Huntingdon, a large manor house and a cottage for shepherds the only buildings, with the exception of a dilapidated church used as a barn. The air was healthy, and the whole estate lay in pasture.

The spot seemed admirably adapted to his designs, and was accordingly bought; and after settling his own business and also his brother's, he moved to Little Gidding in the year 1625.

He now gathered round him a very large family party. His father was dead, but his mother, his brother, and his sister, who was married to a Mr. Collett, with the children of both families, all joined under the one roof. When the establishment was completed and in proper working order, it is said that they numbered forty persons, including schoolmasters and servants.

The meeting between Nicholas Ferrar and his mother, who was now 73 years old, is so characteristic that it must be related. Within three or four days of his arrival, and before the necessary repairs had been carried out, Mrs. Ferrar rides to Gidding from her daughter's home, no great distance off. Nicholas Ferrar meets her outside the manor house, and kneeling on the ground, asks and receives her blessing. He then entreats her to enter his dwelling and repose herself after the journey.

"Not so," she says; "yonder I see the church, let us first go there and give thanks to God."

She is told she cannot even get inside the door, for there had been no time as yet to clear out the hay which was in it. But she persists in her resolve, and thrusting herself in a little way, she kneels and prays. Then sending for the workmen employed in the house, the hay is flung out of the windows, and the church is cleansed as well as might be for the present, and till this is done she will not set foot in her new home.

The following year, 1626, Nicholas Ferrar returned to London for a short while to dispose of his house and bid good-bye to his friends. He now was able to carry out a resolution, which it is believed he had made long before, and was ordained Deacon by Dr. Laud, the future Archbishop of Canterbury. Many people imagined that this was to enable him to seek ecclesiastical preferments, and several valuable livings were soon offered to him; but his sole object was that he might have the necessary authority to carry on the spiritual work of his own home, and thus be of greater use to his family.

He had doubtless by now worked out the general plan of life, and put his house and the church into proper order. Certain glebe lands and tithes which had been alienated from their rightful owners were restored; and to prove the honesty of his purpose he even pulled down a very large dovecote upon the premises, which contained a great number of pigeons. The reason for this was that all his property was laid out as pasture, and therefore the pigeons fed on his neighbours' corn-fields. In the place of the dovecote he made a school-house, and permission was given to the people of the towns and villages within reach to send their children to be instructed under his supervision, and without payment or expense. For this purpose he provided three resident masters; one was to teach English to the poor children and Latin to his nephews and nieces, another superintended the writing and arithmetic, while the third was for instruction in the theory and practice of music.

There was also especial inducement held out to all children of the neighbourhood to learn the Psalms by heart. Each one was given a Psalter, and had to go to Gidding on Sunday mornings to repeat his portion learnt during the week. There were sometimes more than a hundred children, and they were given a penny for each Psalm learnt, and a dinner served in the great hall.

It will be as well now to describe in detail the "particular and more punctual actions of each day in the week," which we get with great exactness from the records left us by John Ferrar. To begin with Sunday—early rising was encouraged on this day, as throughout the week, namely, five o'clock in winter and four o'clock in summer. The younger children first assembled in the great hall, where was always a good warm fire in the winter. Here they found Nicholas Ferrar awaiting them, to whom they repeated such chapters or Psalms as they had been given to learn. After this they returned to their rooms to make themselves "more comely in their best attires." Breakfast, and private reading or conversation in their own rooms, went on till nine o'clock, when the bell called them together again. They all met in the great hall, and, having sung

a hymn, proceeded in decent order to the church.

The three schoolmasters led the way, wearing their black gowns, the youths (also in gowns) following two and two, John Ferrar and Mr. Collett came next, and then Nicholas Ferrar leading his aged mother; immediately behind her came Mrs. Collett and the daughters, and the procession closed with all the servants.

Each as they came into church made a low obeisance, and took up their allotted places; Nicholas Ferrar, in surplice and hood, saying the service. This over, the "Psalm children" went to the manor house and repeated their Psalms.

At half-past ten they went to the church again, when the minister of the neighbouring parish came for the Communion Service and to preach. That done, dinner was served in the house, first for the "Psalm children"—old Mrs. Ferrar herself very often bringing in the first dish—and afterwards for the rest of the family.

Recreation or walking in the garden was permitted till two o'clock, when the bell called them together again for evening service at the nearest parish church. Supper-time was five or six o'clock, and while it was being prepared the organ was played in the great hall and an anthem was sung. After supper each one could occupy himself as he wished, indoors or walking abroad, or "passing the time with good discourse." At eight o'clock there was more singing to the organ, followed by prayers, and then the children, after asking the "old gentlewoman's" blessing, all bid each good night.

Mr. Ferrar also made it his special care that no work in the house should prevent the servants attending church; there were none left behind; and on the Sundays when the Holy Communion was administered, "the servants that had feasted with them in the church were not thought unworthy to eat with them in the parlour," sitting at the end of the same table.

It would be tedious and uninteresting to attempt to follow the week-day employments in the exact order in which they were carried out, but the general plan may be given with advantage, as illustrating the principles inculcated at Gidding.

The day began early—at four or five o'clock—by the children repeating to Mr. Ferrar what they had learnt by heart the day before. At six o'clock the recitation of the Psalms began, and it was so planned that "certain members of the family repeated certain Psalms at every hour of the day, every one knowing his turn and hour of attendance; and thus, without undue interruption of other work, the whole book of Psalms was repeated once in the twenty-four hours." In addition to this, the children had to say one of the chapters of the Concordance, or Harmony of the Four Evangelists, which was arranged purposely by Nicholas Ferrar, so that it might be gone through once in every month.

Three times during the day the bell rang to summon them for a short service in the church, on each occasion the proceeding being as described for Sunday.

Every hour of the day had some special employment, some of the children sitting in the great hall watched by Mrs. Ferrar, some in the new school-house with the masters. Their occupations were as varied as possible: English, Latin, and other languages, writing and ciphering, and learning by heart being interspersed with singing, playing the organ, and other instruments, making the Concordances, bookbinding and gilding, and embroidery. At stated times the boys were encouraged in active outdoor exercises, running, leaping, and archery. As the girls grew up they were made to perfect themselves in good housewifery. A month at a time each one had control of the housekeeping, all expenditure being carefully booked; at the end of the month her accounts were looked over, and her duties handed on to the next in rotation.

A room was set apart as an infirmary for any member of the family who might require nursing, and another room for the reception of any poor person who might be brought in sick or hurt. The ladies were taught to dress their wounds, and to do all things necessary for their relief, but the prescribing of medicines Mr. Ferrar kept for himself, as he had many years studied this science. They distilled "cordial waters," and kept in the dispensary a good supply of balsams, oils, and all things needful for the cure of their patients.

At meal times the custom prevailed of reading aloud, the person whose turn it might be, first having some light food, and after the reading was finished, "in regard of his forbearance, always having the advantage of some more food than his fellows!"

The reading was to be something "delightful and easy, such as stories of sea voyages, descriptions of foreign countries, their rise and fall, and illustrated by the particular actions of eminent persons." And in order that these stories might not be forgotten, it was further arranged that notes (or "a summary collection") should be taken of everything worthy of attention, and that these notes should afterwards be transcribed, and put into language fitted to the capacity of the children, who then had, in turn, to recite the stories. This practice brought the boys into a habit of delivering any speech with assurance and good manner, and of expressing themselves in a becoming and elegant style.

They also became thoroughly acquainted with ancient and modern history, and knew and understood the great affairs of life better than many who lived more in the world.

Analogous to this, and no doubt a development of it, were "The maiden-sisters exercises." These were conversations or dialogues recited by the Miss Colletts, illustrative of some special virtue, and always enforced by examples taken from history.

The sisters, for this purpose, were known by such titles as The Patient, The Cheerful, The Affectionate, etc., and formed themselves into what they called "The Little Academy," of which Mary Collett was "The Chief," Mrs. Collett was called "The Moderator," John Ferrar "The Guardian," and Nicholas Ferrar "The Visitor."

The subjects and the substance of the exercises were supplied by Nicholas Ferrar himself, but the sisters were left to compile them in their own words. They were prepared some time beforehand, and after they had been recited were transcribed into books kept for the purpose.

Four folio volumes of these "conversations" are still in existence, and are, no doubt, in the handwriting of Mary and Ann Collett. They are bound in black leather, stamped with gilt lines, and with gilt edges, and have been passed on from one member of the family to another to the present owner, a Mr. Mapletoft Davis, living in Australia. [\[20\]](#)

Some idea of the general plan of these "exercises" may be gathered from the following notes taken from the manuscripts.

The first meeting of the "Little Academy" was on Ash Wednesday, 1630, when the subject was "The Folly of Delaying Repentance." The next meeting was on Easter Monday, a speech being made on "Happiness," illustrated by stories of King Philip of Spain, King Henry IV. of France, and Popes Marcellus and Adrian. On other occasions the following subjects were selected: "Humility towards God, and moderation to equals and enemies is most beneficial," illustrated by stories of Charles V.; "We must overcome evil with good," illustration, John of Alexandria, etc., etc.

At first it seems that the recitations were given on five festivals, which days naturally provided suitable subjects, and afterwards it was decided to increase the number to twelve days, and they pass the following resolution: "Every day must handle a new matter, that's the injunction; and because the days afford not any special occasion, the particular names imposed on us shall be the subjects successively of our several exercises." The titles were (1) "The Chief" (who chose for her subject "Humility"); (2) The Patient; (3) The Affectionate; (4) The Cheerful; (5) The Submiss; (6) The Obedient; (7) The Moderate. Generally the conversations were enlivened by music and singing, but when the subject was "Patience" this was omitted, and there was much less anecdote. The discourse was also somewhat longer, so that the virtue which was being illustrated was at the same time practically enforced. It is not quite clear how long the exercises were continued, but in the second volume of the manuscripts it is stated that many home troubles had helped to break up the "Little Academy," especially old Mrs. Ferrar's death, which was in the year 1634, and that the actors were reduced to three, when their cousin, young Nicholas Ferrar, "took upon himself to revive their antient practises." But after this the actors all appear with fresh names.

Not content with the most careful and minute regulations for the employment of every hour of the day in some secular or religious matter, (for we read that "every hour had its company for the performance of some special duty,") Nicholas Ferrar further arranged that those so inclined should pursue their devotional exercises also at night. Two were to watch together in a room set apart for the purpose; the womankind had a room at one side of the house, and the men had one on the other side. The watching lasted from 9 p.m. till 1 a.m., and during those four hours the whole of the Book of Psalms was said over carefully, verse by verse, alternately.

Mr. Ferrar himself generally watched twice in the week, the others never more than once; and in the winter special precautions were taken to prevent them suffering from cold.

At one o'clock, when the watch was finished, they lay down till six o'clock, but did not actually go to bed at all, as on other nights.

It was apparently some account of the "Harmonies of the Four Evangelists" which first attracted King Charles' attention to the family living at Gidding, and about the year 1631, being not far off with his Court, he sent a gentleman to ask for the loan of the book. This was conceded with some hesitation, and the King, having once got it into his hands, would not part with it again, until he had obtained a promise that another similar volume should be made for him. The work was promptly executed, and may now be seen in the British Museum.

The careful study of the Harmonies or Concordances is most interesting, and even in these modern times one at least is used daily as a means of instruction for the children of the family where the book has an honoured home, in much the same manner as the children at Little Gidding used it two hundred and fifty years ago.

No more need be said about the Harmonies here, as a full account of the manner of their construction and the history and resting-place of all the specimens that can be heard of at the present time will be related in another chapter.

But in close connection with the making of the Concordances must be mentioned the art of bookbinding, and

embroidered covers for books, as well as embroidery for other purposes.

The Concordances are all bound in velvet or leather, and are nearly all stamped with designs in gold, on much the same plan. The stamps chiefly used are *fleurs-de-lis*, acorns, sprigs of oak, etc., and the amount of ornamentation appears to depend upon the rank of the person for whom the book was intended, and also partly upon the date when the book was made, the earlier copies being much less elaborate than the later volumes.

It is also evident that books printed in the ordinary way were bound, or re-bound, at Gidding. One of the most remarkable of which there is any authentic account is a large folio Bible, printed by Barker, of London, in the year 1639. It now belongs to the Marquis of Bute, and, as a rule, is in his library at Cardiff; but he is most kind in allowing it to be exhibited, and it has recently been shown at Bath, and before that at Glasgow. The binding is of blue silk, elaborately decorated with designs in gilt and silver thread, and in the centre are the royal arms and initials C. R., which prove clearly enough for whom the work was originally done. A competent authority, one of the great professional connoisseurs, has declared the binding to be one of the most magnificent specimens with which he is acquainted.

It would ill-befit one of the ruder sex to attempt to write critically about the needlework of the maidens of Gidding, but we may sing their praises for the skill, the industry, and the artistic results exhibited by this branch of their daily occupations.

The specimen most easily examined by any one wishing to do so, is a cover for a dressing-case in the South Kensington Museum; another similar piece of work was lent by a gentleman in London to an exhibition in Dublin a few years ago; he kindly supplied the information afterwards that he had been for many years a collector and admirer of the Gidding needlework, and had one or two Bible covers and some other pieces of their embroidery in his possession.

A gentleman at Brighton has also a small 32mo New Testament, printed by R. Barker, of London, a.d. 1640, which has a Gidding embroidered cover. The design is a simple floral pattern worked in fine close stitches on white silk, with a foundation of coarse canvas or holland, which was perhaps glued on to the original boards. He has also a portrait of Charles I. made in the same kind of stitch on a satin ground, but it is not certain whether this was worked at Gidding or not. A great deal of needlework of that date is wrongly attributed to the Miss Collets.

An altar cloth, shown at Dublin in 1888, was also stated to be their work, and it is extremely probable that they would have done such things, for it is mentioned "that they were expert with their needles, and made them serve the altar and the poor."

In making the embroidery it would appear as if the pattern was first drawn on paper, then cut out, and finally worked over, the designs being for the most part in somewhat high relief.

It is worthy of remark that, almost invariably, whenever this embroidery is put up for sale or is exhibited, it is marked as the work of the "Nuns of Little Gidding." Now, it may be said that all those who at the present day take any interest in the life, methods, or work of Nicholas Ferrar and his nieces, do so with feelings of admiration, and are, at least, not to be numbered amongst their detractors. Yet it is curious how the one name which helped more than anything else to work their ruin is even now, as a rule, attached to them. Within a few years of Nicholas Ferrar's death, some of his enemies had a pamphlet printed and distributed "not by hundreds, but by thousands, and given into the hands of the parliament men as they went daily to the House of Commons." The title was, "The Arminian Nunnery; a description of the newly erected Monastical Place, or the Arminian Nunnery at Little Gidding." The books were also given to the Puritan soldiers when near Gidding to excite them to offer violence to the family. But why should the title "Nuns of Little Gidding" be still the name most often given to the Miss Colletts? Few persons can realize that it is the name invented by their enemies, earnestly repudiated by themselves, and entirely devoid of truth.

This may be proved in several ways. The house at Little Gidding contained two *married* families, the boys and girls all growing up together. The girls were purposely trained in such domestic matters as would fit them for *good wives*, and five of them did eventually marry. The two eldest alone, having reached the ages of thirty and thirty-two, resolved to remain unmarried, but in no way took vows. Nicholas Ferrar himself was once taxed with having started a "nunnery," and replied that the name of "nuns" was odious, and declared himself against such vows of single life with great earnestness.

Again, a visitor to Little Gidding, describing the place and the family, says, "I saluted the mother and daughter *not like nuns*, but as we salute other women."

Probably when the phrase "Nuns of Little Gidding" is used at the present time, it is used in no reproachful sense; but the name is misleading, and should be avoided, if for no other reason, because it was invented by the enemies of Mr. Ferrar's family and objected to by themselves.

The family, as a matter of fact, were by no means recluses; they went about amongst their neighbours, and were "very well reported of by all who knew them." They purposely selected a quiet part of the country to live in, that they might not be interrupted in their manifold employments; but they appear to have been always ready to receive visitors, and to treat

them with hospitality.

Ferrar's rules for his own life were certainly somewhat austere, and as time went on he increased its rigour, more especially after his mother's death; but he never enforced on others what he did himself, and every hour of the day appears to have been spent usefully and happily.

It may be interesting to give here the opinions of some of his more notable friends. Mention has already been made of the important persons he lived amongst in his public life, and besides them at this time there was Dr. Laud the Archbishop, who was so delighted to ordain "such a man as he never had before nor believed he ever should again." There was Dr. Williams the Bishop of the Diocese, who often went to Gidding and "much magnified all that Nicholas and Mrs. Ferrar had done;" and not to mention others, there was George Herbert, "his very dear brother," who, "seeing he could not draw Gidding any nearer to him, he would draw nearer to his brother Ferrar," and was endeavouring to exchange his living merely to carry out this wish. These two good men were indeed very similar in their religious views; they "loved and trusted one another most entirely, and drove a large stock of Christian intelligence together," and when George Herbert died, he sent his manuscripts to Ferrar to publish or to withhold, as he thought right. Chief amongst them were the poems now such favourites in many a house. These, when Ferrar had many and many a time read over, he kissed and embraced them again and again, saying, "they were most worthy to be in the hands and hearts of all true Christians that feared God and loved the Church of England."

The words of the Royal Friend who once or twice visited Gidding in person stand at the commencement of this sketch, and sufficiently prove what was his estimate of Ferrar and his works.

It may be easily conjectured, however, that this unusual life, conducted by a man so well known as Ferrar, attracted a great deal of attention—and that in the days when religious differences prevailed to a sad extent, there were many persons eager enough not only to find fault, but to misrepresent what was done by this family; who, to say the least, did a great deal of good to their poorer neighbours, and did harm to no one. But a closer acquaintance with Mr. Ferrar generally dispelled the calumnies which report had spread of him and his ways. And one gentleman who went to Gidding purposely to make out their case as bad as possible, came away full of their praises.

In the end, however, their enemies prevailed; for the Puritan soldiers (about the time of King Charles's death) did drive the family away, ransacked the church, plundered the house, and destroyed many very valuable books and manuscripts, and, in fact, everything that had been left behind in a somewhat hasty flight. It is related that the organ excited their anger more than anything, and that they relieved their feelings by breaking it up, setting it on fire, and then roasting some of Mr. Ferrar's sheep over it.

But he was not spared to see these distressful times himself, as he died in December, 1637, having lived at Gidding about twelve years. The accounts of his last illness are very interesting, as throwing a strong light on his intensely religious character. In November, 1637, on his return from the little church, he had an attack of faintness, and never afterwards left the house. He knew from the first that he would not recover, and said to those around him, "In former sickness I have had a strong desire to live, and an earnestness to pray to my God to spare me, which He hath to this day done, when all hopes of life were past by the judgments of the most skilful physicians; and I may further say to the Glory of His great name, I never earnestly set myself to beg of God anything, but He fulfilled the petition of His most unworthy servant. But now and of late, I have not, nor do not find in my heart any inclination to beg longer life."

During his illness he continually exhorted the family that they should "constantly adhere to the doctrine of the Church of England, and to continue in the good old way;" he forewarned them of coming oppositions and of danger and trouble, and urged them to shrink not to rely on God, to serve Him with soul and body, for "He made both, and both must worship Him in sincerity of devotion." "He will have both inward love, and outward reverence of body and gesture."

About three days before his death, he made John Ferrar mark out the place for his grave seven feet from the west end of the church, leaving space for his elder brother's grave nearest the church. He then directed that all the books of comedies, tragedies, love-hymns, *etc.* (three great hampers full, which had been locked up for many years), should be burnt on the place marked for his grave. There were many hundreds in various languages, which he had collected when a young man, but which he had abjured as dangerous, full of idolatry, and apt to undermine the Christian religion.

He retained full power of mind, and suffered no pain throughout the whole illness, and passed away at one o'clock on the Sunday night, the very hour that he constantly rose up every morning to praise God, and to pray unto Him.

The family carried on all the good works in the which they had been instructed, until they were driven away by the military zealots of the Puritan party; but in later and more peaceful times they again assembled in the old home, though there is no authentic account of the date, nor of the particular members of the family that returned; but their exile does not appear to have been of long duration, as there are entries in the register of Gidding church, and inscriptions on brasses or tombstones, which record events in the family history of the Ferrars and Collets (such as baptisms and burials) as early as the year 1650—and at frequent dates afterwards. The Gidding estate, which had originally been

bought by old Mrs. Ferrar, passed to her eldest son John, which is proved by his being described on his tombstone as "Lord of this Manor," and he was succeeded by his eldest son, who was resident there in the year 1715, as stated by Dr. Mapletoft in one of the Concordances.

CHAPTER II. THE CONCORDANCES OR HARMONIES.

Of all the work carried on at Gidding, nothing attracted more favourable notice at the time, than the Concordances of the Four Evangelists, and of other portions of the Bible, and at the present day they are also highly valued by those who possess them, partly no doubt from a feeling of admiration for Nicholas Ferrar himself, who designed them, but no less for their intrinsic worth, and for the skill and industry employed in their making.

Even in the books which treat of Ferrar's life with the greatest exactness, reference is made to some six or seven Harmonies, but several of these have been either lost or destroyed, or cannot now be traced; while within the last few years, several not mentioned in the printed biographies have been discovered, and in the following pages much interesting matter will be brought forward about them, and the histories of the various volumes will be given. [35]

The notoriety attaching to the Concordances can be easily accounted for by the great interest shown in the work by King Charles I. There does not appear to be any evidence to show that the King knew Nicholas Ferrar personally, before he first heard of the Concordance which was in daily use at Gidding. The family had settled there the very year King Charles I. began to reign, but in Ferrar's early life, as already stated, he was a distinguished public servant and Member of Parliament, and had, moreover, travelled in the suite of the King's sister; so that in all probability Ferrar's name and character were not unknown to him.

But in order to prove the real value of the work, not only as a clever contrivance, but as an aid to religious instruction, and to the study of the Gospel history, it is necessary to put on one side the prestige of the royal patronage, and to give an accurate description of some one volume.

The Harmony selected for this purpose is one of the earliest, and least elaborate; it was made for a private friend of the Ferrars, and is no doubt almost an exact reproduction of the volume which was used every day by the children at Little Gidding; for it was a part of their daily duty to repeat portions of the Harmony to Mr. Ferrar—the book being so divided that “beginning still at the first day of the month, and ending at the last day of the month, all the heads or chapters were said over in every month's time.”

The principle of the work was this—to make one continuous history of all the actions and discourses of our Lord wherever related, and this to be so arranged that the Gospel of any one Evangelist could be read straight through from first to last.

To do this without confusion was no easy task, for every word of all four Evangelists is in the Harmony, and yet in reading them as one connected story there is no repetition. The whole of the Gospel history is divided for this purpose into one hundred and fifty heads or chapters, each chapter containing some special subject, and being made complete by the bringing together the words of each Evangelist treating of that subject.

The following selection will show the manner in which the subjects were chosen—

54. Christ's second going about Galilee and sending the Apostles.

55. John's beheading.

56. The five loaves.

57. Jesus walking on the sea.

58. Discourse of the Bread from Heaven.

The method adopted throughout the work was very simple and ingenious. It was this: the words of each Evangelist were marked in the margin by a distinguishing letter, *viz.* St. Matthew, by A; St. Mark, by B; St. Luke, by C.; St. John by D, so that to read any one Gospel straight through, it was only necessary to read all the passages marked by the same initial letter, omitting all the others. But when, as often happens, two or more writers use identical language, the words which had been inserted before, were put in different type. The body of the work was given in ordinary Roman type, but the words which occurred a second time and were, therefore, unnecessary for the continuous history were given in old English lettering.

To make this contrivance quite clear the following directions were written at the beginning of the concordance—

“If you would read the Evangelical History keepe on still from one of the marking letters to another, reading onely that which is in the Roman letter. But if you would read the Evangelists severally, then you must keepe still from section to

section in the same letter with which you begin, reading both context and supplement, that is the Roman letter and the English letter annexed. Where you find any one word or more streaked under, you are to omit it in the reading of the context to make the clearer sence; but it is necessarily left remaining for the reading of the Evangelist severally."

To carry out this scheme in the first instance required a complete acquaintance with the text, a clear idea of the sequence of events, an ingenious head to plot out the work, and no small amount of purely mechanical skill to bring it to a successful result.

Nicholas Ferrar himself planned the whole Concordance, and also superintended his nephews and nieces while they did the work; but the system adopted may well be given in the words of the old manuscripts. A large room was set apart purposely for the work, and called "the Concordance room," which was all coloured over with green, pleasant colour, varnished for the more pleasure to their eyes, and round the upper part of the walls were sentences written, suggested by each person of the family and some good friends, such as "Glory be to God on high," "Prosper Thou, O Lord, the work of our hands," "Innocency is never better lodged than at the sign of labour," "The industrious man hath no leisure to sin; and the idle man hath no power to avoid sin."

In this room Mr. Ferrar "every day spent one hour in contriving the Concordance, and directed his nieces that attended him in what manner they should cut the pieces out of the Evangelist, and so, and so, to lay them together as to make and perfect such a head or chapter. When they had first cut out those pieces with their knives or scissors, then they did neatly and exactly fit each verse that was so cut out, to be pasted down on sheets of paper; and so artificially they performed it, that it looked like a new kind of printing, when it was finished; so finely were all the pieces joined together, and with great presses for that purpose, pressed down upon the white sheets of paper."

Even this description scarcely conveys an adequate impression of the labour involved, for in many cases only two or three words are taken out of one Evangelist, and added to the account given by another.

And, besides the letterpress, every page is supplied with engravings, relating to the subject in hand; and when, as often happened, they could not find an engraving to suit exactly, parts of different prints were combined, so as to make a suitable illustration; and so cleverly is this "splicing" carried out, that it is almost impossible to be sure where the pictures join.

It will give some idea of the work if a few details are given from the volume under consideration. In one place the narrative is composed of five verses from St. Matthew, seven from St. Mark, and four from St. Luke; but there are forty-four separate cuttings pasted in; in another case seventeen verses required fifty-three cuttings, and in another, fifteen verses from the four Evangelists are inserted with thirty-four cuttings.

But even when whole verses, or perhaps whole chapters, could have been put in entire (as would occur in the discourses related only by St. John), the Miss Collets did not save themselves trouble if the appearance of the page could be improved. Some of the most attractive sheets are those where each line has been cut out, and pasted in again in the original sequence, but with open spacing, so as to occupy the full page. In one case fifty-six lines have been treated thus, in another fifty-eight, in another fifty-one, where each passage might have been inserted entire.

Some instances may now be given to show the clever compilation of connected sentences out of the accounts of different Evangelists, *e.g.*—

"And came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized, and there He abode, and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there, and as He was wont He taught them again" (*vide* St. Matt. xix. 1; St. John x. 40; St. Mark x. 1),

which reads as if it was one sentence, but is in reality four extracts from three Evangelists.

Again—At the supper at Bethany—

"She annointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and she brake the box, and poured it on His head, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (*vide* St. John xii. 3; St. Mark xiv. 3).

Or this:

"Ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, whereon never man sat; loose them and bring them unto me" (*vide* St. Matt. xxi. 2; St. Mark xi. 2).

In both these extracts a little incident supplied by St. Mark is introduced into the main narrative of another Evangelist, who had not mentioned it.

The following also is interesting, taken from the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke—

“Is not this Joseph’s son?” “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” (*vide* St. Luke iv. 23; St. Matt. xiii. 55; St. Mark vi. 3).

It must not be thought that in the Concordance these extracts are printed straight off, as they read here. If that were the case, it would be open to objection that something like a new Gospel history was being compiled; but in every case, without exception, wherever words are introduced from another Evangelist, a space is left, a fresh line commenced, and the distinguishing letter placed in the margin. One short extract, printed as in the original, will make this quite clear.

C. 8. 23. But as they sailed He fell asleep.

A. 8. 24. And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea.

C. And there came down a storm of wind on the lake.

B. 4. 37. And the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

C. And they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

Thus far the instances have been given to illustrate the plan of making the Gospel history continuous. One or two examples may now be selected to show how the two distinct types of print were used, which became necessary for the reading of any one Evangelist alone.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

C. 9. 28. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James.

A. 17. 1. And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.

B. 9. 2. And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John,
And leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves,

C. And went up into a mountain to pray.

THE TEMPEST STILLED.

A. 8. 25. And his disciples came to Him, and awoke Him saying

B. 4. Unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish.

A. Lord save us, we perish.

26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith. Then he arose and rebukes the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

C. 8. Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they ceased and there was a calm. 25. And he said unto them

- B. And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40. And
 39. he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?
- C. Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, what manner of man is this?
- A.
 27. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?
- B.
 41. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?
- C. For he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

It is interesting to read these passages in the various ways intended by the compiler, first taking the Evangelists separately, and reading all the verses marked with the proper letter, in both sorts of type, and then reading only the common type, straight on, irrespective of the marking letters.

There is still another way in which the value of the Harmony may be tested. It is of course well-known that the historical sequence of events varies greatly in the records of the different Evangelists. To reconcile these discrepancies, is often a very difficult matter, and when combined with the other principles on which the Harmonies were constructed must have caused a great deal of trouble, and required much skilful adaptation. This part of the work can be tested by examining some one chapter of the Authorized Version, and we can then discover how the subjects are treated. The eighth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel will be a good example—

Vers. 1–3: "A general account of Christ's ministry and followers," appear on p. 102 of the Harmony.

Vers. 4–15: "Parable of the Sower, and explanation," come on pp. 90–93, being composed of the narratives of the other two Evangelists interpolated with St. Luke's.

Vers. 16–18 follow in natural order, but

Vers. 19–21: "Christ's mother and brethren," are found on p. 90, *before* the Parable of the Sower; while

Vers. 22–25: "The Storm on the Lake," come still earlier in the Harmony, on p. 45.

Vers. 26–39: "The herd of swine drowned," following on p. 47.

Ver. 40. Stands by itself on p. 50, preceeding the events recorded in St. Luke's fifth chapter.

Vers. 41–56: "The raising of Jairus' daughter," come prior to the events narrated in St. Luke's sixth and seventh chapters, and appear on p. 56 of the Harmony.

If we may take Nicholas Ferrar's chronology to be correct, it is clearly seen that the Harmony is a most valuable aid to the study of the Gospels.

Mention has been made already of the engravings with which the Concordances are nearly all supplied. On the title-page, after describing the contents of the book, these words always occur: "to which are added sundry pictures, expressing either the facts themselves or their types and figures, or other matters appertaining thereunto."

These "pictures" are in many cases delightfully quaint, and are probably of considerable value, having been collected by Nicholas Ferrar on his journey through Holland, Germany, Italy, and Spain in the years 1613 to 1618, it being expressly stated that they were by the best masters of that time, and that he let nothing valuable of this sort escape him.

Unfortunately, many of these prints have been cut, to make them fit into the pages, but on others there are the names or monograms of the artist and engraver. On one the date 1564 appears after the name M. Heern, invent. Other names occurring are M. de Vos, Joannes Strada, Th. Galle, Phl. Galle, Crispin Van de Passe, Brvegel, etc., etc.

The most usual arrangement is for the engraving to occupy the upper half of the page, and the letterpress to be put in two columns underneath; but occasionally there are two or three prints in the same page. In the copy under consideration now, being one of the smaller volumes, there are 138 folio pages, and about 220 prints, varying in size

from 12 inches by 8, to small delicate engravings of about 2½ inches by 1 inch.

It would be useless to attempt to describe the pictures, so as to give an adequate idea of their interest, but some of the subjects may be mentioned.

There is a series of small engravings of the eleven Apostles (a blank space being left in a conspicuous manner for Judas), which represent each one with his proper emblem, and in the background of each picture a very small illustration of the manner of his death; for instance, St. Peter on a cross, upside down; St. Thomas being killed by the spears of savages; St. Simon being sawn asunder. Near the beginning of the volume is a print of the Blessed Virgin with a sword piercing her body, and surrounded by seven medallions, showing "the seven griefs." The parable of "The mote and the beam" is quaintly depicted by two men standing near together, one with an enormous log of wood, equal in length to a third of his height, projecting unsupported from his own eye, attempting to pull a small bit of straw from the eye of the other.

In the pictures of the Resurrection is one with a small representation in the background of our Blessed Lord appearing to his mother, "who had remained at her own home."

Perhaps enough has now been said to give a general description of the design of the Concordances. They were all made on one plan, but no two were exactly alike. The actual sizes vary considerably, and the number of pages also, from sixty-five up to four hundred. By far the greater number deal with the Gospels of the four Evangelists, but in addition to these there are Concordances of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and the five Books of Moses.

Some slight account may now be given of all the volumes known to be in existence at the present time. With the exception of the original book, made for the instruction of the home family, which was in daily use at Gidding, the splendid copy made for Charles I. is the earliest of which there is any authentic history.

As stated on a previous page, it was at the King's urgent request that this was put in hand, and, after twelve months' hard work, was safely delivered to his Majesty, who declared it to be a "rich and rare jewel, and that there was no defect in the skill, care, and cost used in it, but a superlative diligence in all about it."

This fine volume is now in the British Museum, having been sent there from Windsor by George II. It is a large square folio, measuring 1 foot 7 inches by 1 foot 2 inches, and has 287 pages, bound in leather, with a great deal of gilding on the sides; the date on the title-page is 1635.

The Concordance described on pp. 36–47, and from which the extracts were taken, has the same date on the title-page, and the words "done at Little Gidding" added also. It is much smaller than the Royal copy, with less than half the number of pages. Its history is not quite so clear, but on the inside of the cover appear the arms of Sir R. Cotton, who commenced the library given by his grandson to the nation. The Cottons were near neighbours of the Ferrars, and nothing is more likely than that a lover of books should have procured one of the earliest of the works which were rapidly becoming famous. From the Cottons it passed to the family of Bowdlers, one of whom married a daughter of the last baronet; and the grandson of this Mr. Bowdler left the book to the father of the writer of this sketch, now living in Dorchester, who still makes use of the book in the religious instruction of his children.

The next volume made was a Harmony of the Kings and Chronicles, the idea being originated by Charles himself. He is reported to have asked for it at the very time he received his first Harmony, saying, "I would gladly have these skilful persons to make me another book that might be so ordered, that I might read these stories of Kings and Chronicles, so interwoven by them, as if one pen had written the whole book, and to make it a complete history; yet so ordering the matter that I may also read them severally and apart."

This was faithfully carried out. The date on the title-page is 1637, and the book is now at the British Museum. It is bound in leather, curiously gilt, rather smaller than the first volume, and without any illustrations; but a great deal of care was taken in its compilation, especially in the construction of three tables relating to the contents and to the various passages related in the Books of Kings and Chronicles "severally or jointly."

A third volume was also sent to the British Museum by George II., as being a Little Gidding work; but it is not, strictly speaking, a Concordance, being in many ways different to all the other Gidding works.

It contains merely the Acts of the Apostles and the Revelations of St. John. The title-page is very fully and curiously decorated; there is no date, and the form of title which occurs with very little alteration in every other specimen is also absent.

As the King took so much interest in these works, and valued them so highly, it followed as a very natural result that the young Princes should demand similar volumes for themselves; though it is perhaps doubtful if they would have appreciated a Concordance without any pictures.

Prince Charles asked the King to give him the first Harmony, but was met with the reply "that he might not part with it, as he used it daily." A request was therefore sent to Gidding that a Harmony might be prepared for the Prince, and Mr. Ferrar being dead, the Miss Colletts and their cousin, Nicholas Ferrar (junior), decided to complete a Concordance similar to the first, but in four languages, English, Latin, French, and Italian. The book was ready and taken to London by young Ferrar just before Easter, 1640, which date is affixed to the title-page. It was first submitted for the King's approval, and, being greatly admired, was then taken to Prince Charles at Richmond, who was intensely delighted with his new acquisition. It is, indeed, a splendid volume, containing over 200 pages, bound in green velvet, with designs of *fleurs de lis* and sprigs of oak stamped in gold. The book measured 2 feet by 1 foot 5 inches, and has "a store of rare pictures to delight the eye." The four languages are arranged in four parallel columns in each page.

It is now in Lord Normanton's library at Somerley. The name by which it is commonly known is "Monotessaron," which word, in Greek characters, stands at the head of the title-page.

One work led on to another; and no sooner had Prince Charles become the happy owner of an illustrated Harmony, than the young Duke of York, who was with his brother at Richmond, must needs want one for himself. Nicholas Ferrar assured him that he should have one "with all good speed." "But how long will that be?" said the Prince. "I pray you tell the gentlewomen at Gidding I will heartily thank them if they will dispatch it."

And, in accordance with the promise, another work was no doubt taken in hand; but young Ferrar did not live to see it completed, dying (as he did) at the early age of 21, within a very few weeks of his visit to Richmond, and it is almost certain that the Duke of York never had it given to him. But the Marquis of Salisbury has at Hatfield a Harmony of the Four Gospels, there being no record of the person for whom it was made. Now the appearance of the binding and the evidence of considerable care being taken in its preparation would lead to the conclusion that it was originally intended for a member of the Royal family. It is bound in purple velvet, sprigs of oak and *fleurs de lis* being prominent in the decoration of the outside. There is no date on the title-page, and the earliest authority as to the owner is the book-plate of "the Right Hon James Cecill, 1704." In all essential points it is identical with the copy made for Charles I., and may be considered as the book intended for the Duke of York.

The King and his suite visited Gidding in the year 1642, and while there was shown another splendid Concordance, which he had heard was being made for Prince Charles' use, but which was not quite ready for presentation at the time. If the conjecture is correct (and there seems very little doubt that it is so), that this is the volume now in the possession of Captain Gaussen, of Brookmans Park—near Hatfield, it is no wonder that several years were occupied in its completion. One of the King's attendants remarked at the time, it was the "gallantest greatest book in the world," adding, "I never saw such paper before. I believe there is no book of this largeness to be seen in Christendom," and as the Royal party were at this time making a somewhat hasty journey northwards on account of the disorders prevalent in the country, the book would have been a very unsuitable addition to their baggage. The writer can vouch for the fact that it is quite as much as a man can do to carry it comfortably across a room. It is magnificently bound in purple velvet, with the usual gilt stamping, chiefly in patterns made of small crowns. The measurements are 2 feet 5 inches by 1 foot 8 inches, and there are nearly 450 pages of the thickest paper, besides which every page is profusely illustrated by the pasting on of engravings, in the same manner as the other Gidding works.

The contents of this volume are, however, different to any yet mentioned. The first part deals with "the whole law of God as it is delivered in the five Books of Moses" methodically distributed into three great classes—moral, ceremonial, and political—and each of these again subdivided into several heads, *etc.* There follows an "harmonical parallel between the types of the Old Testament and the Four Evangelists' relations of our Lord and Saviour;" also a "discourse of the estate of the Jews," by Dr. Jackson, "The destruction of Jerusalem," and long extracts from a work entitled "Moses unveiled," besides other matter.

The history of this book is very obscure. The account from which the above is taken concludes with these words, "This book hath been preserved at Gidding, and attends the happy hour to be delivered into the right owner's hands." This was probably written about 1653. The next piece of evidence is a note made in the book itself, that the Rev. J. Bourdillon bought it in the year 1776, but did not then know who had compiled it. There is then another break in its history, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was found walled up in a cupboard at the house now belonging to Captain Gaussen. But within the last few years the "gallant book" has had another interesting and dangerous experience, as its home was burnt to the ground. The Concordance was, however, rescued from an untimely fate.

A somewhat similar volume, but much smaller, is to be seen in the library of St. John's College, Oxford. It is dated 1640, and contains only the "Five Books of Moses," treated in the same manner as that last described. There is good reason for saying that it was made for the Archbishop of Canterbury (Laud), and sent by him to Oxford. It is illustrated throughout, and is handsomely bound in purple velvet.

The late Bishop of Bath and Wells, Lord Arthur Hervey, had another specimen of Gidding handywork. It is one of the smaller volumes, containing only 66 pages, bound in leather, and with the usual style of engravings. It is a Harmony of

the Four Gospels, and the different names, or book-plates, of the various owners show that it has been in the Hervey family from the first. The last line of the title page is as follows: "Done at Little Gidding, a.d. 1640, by Virginia Ferrar, age 12." It would be interesting to know how much was actually "done" by this young lady. She was daughter of John Ferrar, and sister of Nicholas Ferrar, junior, and was given her name "out of affection to the remembrance of the plantation of Virginia, and that they might daily have the memorial of it, as not to cease praying for the prosperity of it, and that looking upon her they might think upon both at once." This book is now in the possession of Lord Bristol, at Ickworth, Bury St. Edmunds.

Mention has now been made of nine Concordances; and of the two that still remain to be noticed there is this interesting fact to be stated—that in all probability they were originally made for members of the family, and that until a few years ago they belonged to their descendants, who, for this very reason, regarded them with special affection. They are both Harmonies of the Four Gospels; one, dated 1640, is a small work, and belonged to Miss Heming, of Hillingdon, a descendant of a Mr. Mapletoft, who married one of the Miss Colletts, it is now in the possession of Colonel Garrat, Bishop's Court, Exeter. The other is a somewhat larger book, now in the British Museum, recently in the possession of a Mr. Mapletoft Davis, living in New South Wales, who also had the four volumes of the "Exercises of the Little Academy" previously described; all these works, and some other relics of the Ferrars, having passed on through different branches of the family to the late owner. An inscription in this Concordance is worthy of reproduction here; it runs as follows: "This was the book of my honoured aunt, Mrs. Mary Collet, compiled at Little Gidding by the direction of her uncle, Mr. N. Ferrar, and bound, I believe, by herself. It was given to me by my good and dear cousin, Mrs. Elizabeth Kestian. I give it to my son, and if he dies without issue, to my daughter Eliz. Gastrell, and I desire it may be preserved in my family as long as may be. There were never above two more of the form that I ever heard of—one was presented to Charles the First . . . the other to King Charles II., 1660, by John Ferrar, who is now owner of Little Gidding.—John Mapletoft, Jan., 1715."

It is certainly a curious fact that this Dr. Mapletoft should have thought that there were only three Concordances made; and the same mistaken idea was entertained by the owner of Colonel Garratt's copy, words almost identical being written in that work by another Dr. Mapletoft in the year 1764. The John Ferrar referred to as giving the Concordance to Charles II. must have been the son of John Ferrar, brother of Nicholas; so it is evident that the estates of Gidding were enjoyed by the family for many years after their return from the flight caused by the Parliamentary soldiers.

It is not known how long the business of making Concordances was continued at Gidding. There is a letter from John Ferrar printed, in which occurs a remark that perhaps if "noble or learned personages knew of them, they would desire to have some made for their own use, or for some library, as rarities in their kind." He also says that this work, "which costs much time and labour, might be an answer to the libel that no work was done at Gidding, but all the time spent in contemplation, as it would make the world believe." There is also a request to a Dr. Basire for two copies each of various editions and translations of the New Testament in many different languages, so it is certain that the work was to be carried on and developed as far as possible; and in all probability it only ceased when the "handy workwomen" went away from their united home to marry, and devote themselves to more serious, and perhaps less pleasant, occupations.

In the library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, may be seen all the materials for a Concordance similar to that at St. John's, Oxford, *viz* "The Five Books of Moses." There are two big bundles of folio sheets, designed and plotted out for engravings and letterpress; but no progress had been made with the work, except (curiously enough) the title-page, which was completed, and finishes with the words, "Done at Little Gidding, a.d. 1641."

This method of bookmaking is not exactly in accordance with modern ideas, but it may throw a little light on the fact that although we know the King's Concordance took a whole year to complete, there are no less than four volumes dated 1640, and one of these is the great Harmony in four languages. Until this unfinished Concordance was brought to light, it was always difficult to explain why four works were dated the same year.

Before we leave this subject, a few words must be said on some wonderful productions of the younger Nicholas Ferrar, which are reported to have been shown to the King when "the Monotessaron" was presented to Prince Charles; but they were afterwards taken back to Gidding.

There was, first, "The Gospel according to the holy Evangelists in eight languages, *viz* Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, High Dutch, Saxon, and Welsh, interpreted with Latin or English, word for word, and at one view to be seen and read."

Second: "The New Testament in twenty-four languages," each language written in its proper characters;

Third: "The Gospel of St. John in as many languages as there are chapters (*i.e.* each chapter in a different language), and interpreted word for word into Latin or English."

These were not printed books, but all in the handwriting of young Ferrar, who at the early age of twenty-one had apparently mastered twenty-four languages.

This brief sketch must now be brought to a close, with the hope that it may prove interesting to some who are unable to peruse the longer narratives on the same subject, and which are, indeed, very scarce at the present time. Should the writer's hopes be fulfilled, it will surely be to them, as it is to him, a matter of great satisfaction that at least a part of the work carried on at Little Gidding should have been of such a permanent nature that, after 250 years, the result can still be seen and enjoyed almost in its original freshness, and can, indeed, be actually used for its original purpose.

The workmanship of the Concordances was so excellent in every detail, even to the paste used for their construction, that the volumes may well last for another period of 250 years. And as we turn over their pages and admire the method, the neatness, and the skilful design therein exhibited, our thoughts are carried back to the days and the scenes of their creation, and we picture to ourselves more vividly the happy and religious family which day by day met in the great Concordance room, the well-ordered procession wending its way to the little church at their gate, the meals in the great hall, enlivened only by the "historical anecdote, easy and delightful," the daily repetition of David's Psalms, and the frequent singing to the organ, which was tuned so low as to be a disturbance to no one, and the words of the hymn which was frequently sung every day—

"So angels sing, and so sing we,
To God on high all glory be,
Let Him on earth His peace bestow,
And unto men His favour show."

But though our fancy naturally dwells on the younger and more active members, we must by no means forget the mother of the family, the source of all the virtues exhibited in her children and grandchildren.

Living to the age of seventy-nine, Mrs. Ferrar "at her dying day had no infirmity and scarce any sign of old age upon her." "There were few women, as all that knew her can testify, that exceeded her in comeliness of body and excellent beauty; of fair, modest, and sober deportment, grave in her looks, humble in her carriage towards all people, superlative in discretion; of few words but when she spoke (as occasion offered itself) no woman passed her in eloquence, in judgement, and wisdom. Great was her devotion to God, and her love to God's word, constant her reading of the Scriptures, and her singing of the Psalms, when she sat at work with her children and maids about her."

An inscription in the great parlour, written by her in the last year of her life, may well be given here as a fitting conclusion to this imperfect narrative:—

I. H. S.

He who by reproof of our errors, and remonstrance of that which is more perfect seeks to make us better, is welcome as an Angel of God.

He who, by a cheerful participation and approbation of that which is good, confirms us in the same is welcome as a Christian Friend.

But

He who any ways goes about to disturb us in that which is and ought to be amongst Christians (tho' it be not usual in the world) is a burden whilst he stays, and shall bear his judgement, whosoever he be.

He who faults us in absence, for that which in presence he made show to approve of, doth by a double guilt of flattery and slander, violate the bands both of friendship and charity.

Mary Ferrar, Widow,
Mother of this family,
and aged about fourscore years,
who bids adieu to all fears and hopes of this world
and only desires to serve God,
set up this Table.

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Footnotes:

[1] The details of the life at Little Gidding contained in the following pages are derived chiefly from "Two lives of Nicholas Ferrar, by his brother John, and by Dr. Jebb," Baker's MSS., edited by Dr. Mayor, of Cambridge, and from "Life of Nicholas Ferrar, by Dr. Turner," Bishop of Ely. Both these works are now out of print. The accounts of the various Harmonies or Concordances are derived entirely from personal examination of the separate volumes, or from direct

communication with their owners.

[20] Three of these volumes are now in the British Museum.

[35] The most accurate accounts are those in "Nicholas Ferrar," edited by Canon Carter, published 1892, and in a paper by the present Author, prepared for the Society of Antiquaries, and printed in *Archæologia* for 1888. Even these accounts are not quite accurate at the present time, some of the volumes having changed hands in the last few years.—
J. E. A.