

The Letters of Harriet Jukes

The letters and comments of Harriet Jukes as well as those of others give us insight into the life of the Church, the Maumee Valley Communities, and the lives of the Rev. Mark Jukes and his wife Harriet in the 1850's. How fortunate we are that Gilbert D. Jukes, a grandson, had sent the materials to us in 1955. He addressed it to the Rev. R. Malcolm Ward, then Rector. Descendants of the Jukes family have stayed in touch with our parish and it is blessing to hear from them from time to time. This is an abridged selection, but unaltered to grammar and spelling. There is a wealth of material in the parish library. Mrs. Jukes' letters reveal the life and times of a remarkable family in this heartrending story. Mr. Jukes studied for the ministry at Norwalk, Ohio, and was ordained at Gambier by Bishop M'llvaine on Sunday, August 1st, just two years to a day prior to his death. He was chosen by the congregation of St. Paul's, Maumee City, as their pastor, and took up his duties there in October of the same year, 1852. The following are quotations from some of their letters, written during their residence which gave some light on life in Maumee at that time.

On December 8th, 1852, Mrs. Jukes writes,

Now that I have visiting to do, in addition to my other duties, (seven children) I have little time for writing. I am sorry that my maid is going to be married to-morrow week and she suits me so well that she will be a loss.

I generally get up at five, call the children and servant at six. I dress the little ones while she lights the stoves, then she comes up to help me with the rooms. We have finished breakfast generally by eight; then we have prayers, which occupies about half an hour. Then I send the children to the post-office while I see about the dinner and as soon as they return we all sit down to lessons, and so again after dinner. On Wednesdays we have a reading meeting at our house and on Thursdays; I go to the ladies' Working Society and remain there some hours. Every first Friday in the month I attend a Maternal Association. When you meet with anything interesting on the training of children, either in tracts or sermons, do send them to me, for at these meetings such things are read, and are often very useful. During the first part of the week I take my work very often after tea and we go out to spend an hour or two with some of our people. They are very warm-hearted here and show us great kindness. There are a few who are feeling after the truth and towards these our hearts are much drawn. Every Monday Mark attends a Ministers' Meeting, which is held in each other's houses, when they read and pray and criticize each other's sermons. Neither the Roman Catholic nor the Universalist ministers attend.

You will be surprised to hear that I have not yet read "Uncle Tom's Cabin". If I had time I would do so but I have not. The manner of the people in the different States vary widely. There is as much difference between the Northerners and Southerners as between the English and the Irish. Southerners are more like the English. We see nothing of the horrors of slavery here, but I suppose we should if we were down at Cincinnati, or anywhere along the boundary line. We read soul-harrowing accounts of cruelty of slaves in the papers sometimes. It is a most exciting subject with the Americans; everyone is strongly for or against it. Yet there is great inconsistency in those who speak against it most warmly, both in public and private. While they do so, they would not for any consideration sit down at the same table with a "darky" or rise in the same conveyance; a Negro has to jump down before a white man will ride.

You ask if a minister's duties are the same here as in England. I should say they are, in many respects. Here the Episcopal Church is but one among many bodies of the Protestant bodies and unconnected with the State: Here a clergyman is very differently regarded from what he would be in England. There he is

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looked upon with respect and honour, he has a good name among men, but not so here; where people seem to rank according to their dollars, of which the clergyman has a very small share. Even our Bishop has less than L500 a year, but we are told he is as simple in his habits as it is possible to be. We receive a stipend of \$300 a year. The ladies of the Sewing Society are very kind in working for' us. Henry is nine years old today, I dare say you are thinking of him. I wish you could see him growing. The children are all in bed and Mark is gone to marry a couple. Marriages are performed here in private houses in the evening.

Ever your affectionate sister, Harriet.

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In January 1853, she writes to her Aunt Ellen in England,

You wish to know something of our schools – I believe there are free dayschools in every town, where all classes attend. These are paid for by the State, for which the people are taxed and it is said they are conducted by the best masters. At the free school near our house there are from 500 to 600 children taught daily. All the children of our congregation attend the Sunday-school, which is held in the church immediately after morning service. Young persons do not join the church among us or become confirmed, until they profess to have experienced a change of heart. Mark's style of preaching is very awakening, very searching.

The thing which grieves us most is that so many should be engaged with these 'spirit circles'. Many of these circles meet every day. Some of the 'mediums' are the children and young people of our own Sunday-school. A member of the Baptist Church has declared herself the appointed high-priestess. Mark takes them all on the ground that to have anything to do with familiar spirits is an abomination to the Lord and he has spoken so plainly on the subject that some of the people in the Church have been wishing him to leave.

We continue to receive much kindness from many of our people. The week before Ash Wednesday, two of our members came to ask us if we were willing to have a 'Donation Visit' to which Mark replied by thanking them for their kindness, but wished to have nothing to say about it. Having never heard of the custom before, I had to ask for an explanation of it.

Having been all arranged by the ladies of the Sewing Society the visit was fixed for a certain day, on which occasion we were asked for the use of our house. About seven o'clock the guests began to arrive, bringing with them earthenware, glass and provisions for the use of the company and each bringing something as a present to ourselves. Some brought dress pieces, others unbleached cotton, shirting, linen, cloth for a great coat, silk vests; caps, gloves, orders on stores, apples, potatoes, sugar, fish, butter and money. There were a hundred persons came to our house that night, and we received the value of \$120. Our small rooms were crammed. Tea was handed around by the gentlemen, under the direction of the managing ladies in the kitchen. As for myself I knew not what to do, being wholly unused to such a large party. However, after tea Mark called their attention by getting one of the gentlemen to begin a hymn, in which many joined. Then he read an appropriate portion of the Scripture and gave a short but very nice exposition and thanked them all for their love and kindness in seeking to supply our temporal necessities - Soon after they began to leave. The ladies washed up the dishes, cups, etc., and left everything neat in the kitchen. The next day one of them very kindly came and helped me to sweep the house. Everyone we have seen since says that they spent a very pleasant evening. Our company was not confined to Episcopalians, there were Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists; thus the Lord was pleased to provide for us through the hearts of the people.

This is February 25th and I have not yet mailed you this long over due letter. Tomorrow is our little Georgina's first birthday. I can hardly realize she is so old. Maumee is a very pretty town consisting of about 10,000 inhabitants. I much prefer it to Norwalk. It is situated on the river Maumee, which is about a quarter of a mile in breadth, with considerable rapids. This river runs on one side of our house and the canal on the other. It is a very straggling place, with here and there the forest trees still standing. The town is declining in favor of Toledo, which is at the mouth of the river and is going ahead very fast. The people are simple, frank, honest and sociable. There are all kinds of characters, of course, to be found here as elsewhere; some thirsting for the truth, some are very 'High Church' as they are called."

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Mrs. Jukes started another letter to her sister Lizzy which she did not finish until late November:

Maumee City, October 1853.

My beloved L -,

At last I am going to commence a letter to you, having got through my morning's work, which is generally over between nine and ten o'clock; and as the four elder children now go to school, I then take the opportunity of sitting down to make and mend clothes and I assure you I am becoming a first class tailoress. Shall I give you a little insight into the order in which we get through things? I fear it would make some of your particular ladies blush and you would begin to be thankful you were not situated as I am. But I am satisfied and that will satisfy you. In the midst of all my various employments I seem to bear in mind that all that has to do with the body is passing away; and the day is gone with all its trifles of pots and pans, eating and drinking etc. is passed away with it and is as though it had not been, except in so far as these things have been done selfishly, or to the glory of God.

Twice in the year it is the custom in America to have a thorough housecleaning. In the spring when the stoves are put away and in the fall when they are wanted again. I am fortunate in being able to have an old Dutch (Christian) woman to do this for me and she manages it all in about three days. She does the washing and promises to come to me at the end of the year; when I shall most need her.

Con'd. November 28th - Mark has gone to Norwalk to be ordained 'priest. The ordination is to take place on December 2nd and on the 6th the Bishop comes here to confirm. It is a time that we have much need to guard against glorying in the flesh of any. It is so natural to like to add members to the church. The Bishop sent Mark a present of \$100 from an 'unknown friend'. As to help, I have not had one for some weeks. The children are very good and do what they can and are always ready to help mother. Every one knows what children's work is worth, but, they are all the time learning to help me and help themselves, and there are advantages in being sometimes without a servant. The Americans are beginning to feel the great evils arising from the tide of foreigners who come to the States, especially the Irish. In some States they can vote as soon as they set their foot upon the wharf and vote away their rights and privileges, not knowing what they are voting for or against.

In the State of New York the Roman Catholics have succeeded in getting a share of the public money devoted to education under their own management. They have tried the same in this State, but have not yet succeeded. It is thought they may do so some day, and thus make useless one of the noblest institutions of the land, the free education provided by the common schools.

The difficulty of getting 'help' arises, I imagine, from this being a newly settled country. It is the same in Canada, and the further west one goes the worse it is. I understand it is not so in the New England States, there the country has been so long settled that they know their resources, and there, as in England, girls cannot get places unless they have a good character.

Your affectionate sister, Harriet