

SOME EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL AND
CORRESPONDENCE OF MR. JOHN BURGESS,
OF DITCHLING, SUSSEX, 1785-1815.

COMMUNICATED BY JOHN SAWYER.

In the following pages will be found a number of extracts from entries made in a small parchment-covered book, containing 240 pages, that was used as a kind of Diary from February 28th, 1775, to February 14th, 1790, by Mr. John Burgess, a Sussex tradesman, carrying on business at Ditchling, at the close of the 18th Century. The correspondence referred to in the title consists of a number of letters written by Mr. Burgess after he had emigrated to America and settled in the province of New York; these communications were all addressed to relatives or friends living in Sussex, and include one or two from a son and one from a grandson of the diarist.

The diary extends from 1775 to 1790, the letters from 1794 to 1815.

In some material particulars the contents of the small volume under notice will remind readers of those passages from the "Diary of a Sussex Tradesman," one Thomas Turner, "general shopkeeper" at East Hoathly, which furnished Mr. R. W. Blencowe and Mr. M. A. Lower with materials for a delightful paper in Vol. XI. of the "S.A.C.,"¹ although it will not yield such rich results, or be handled with the skill with which those gifted gentlemen arranged their materials.

I can use no words more fitting wherewith to apologize for the introduction of a notice of a record at once so recent and so lowly than those with which the history of Thomas Turner was prefaced in 1859.

¹ Page 179.

“And here,” say the joint authors, “we take leave to remark that, should the objection be raised, that a paper which records the thoughts and actions of men who lived little more than one hundred years ago, is no fair subject for a work professedly antiquarian; in other words, that the subject to be treated is of too modern a date. It seems a sufficient answer that it is our province to fix and realise habits and customs, which have in many cases changed very much, and in some instances quite passed away, wherever we can find them sufficiently certified. . . . We may consider ourselves justified in disregarding the mere question of years if we adhere to the principle of recording altered habits and conditions of men and things. We must bear in mind, moreover, that notwithstanding its vicinity to the Metropolis and its proximity to the Continent, Sussex was, until a recent period, one of the most secluded and uncivilized districts in England.”

The diary, the publication of which was thus defended, was, we are told, “originally in 116 stout memorandum books.” They extended from 1754 to 1765, Mr. Turner dying in 1789.

It would scarcely be possible to find words more accurately describing the record Mr. Burgess has left behind him than some of those Mr. Blencowe and Mr. Lower use in detailing the contents of the multitudinous memorandum books just referred to:—

“The entries are very multifarious and, for the most part, trivial and uninteresting. The writer tells us, day by day, what he had for dinner; where he went; how trade prospered in his shop; what were his domestic griefs, conjugal quarrels and social pleasures; what books he read; what parish and other public transactions he was concerned in.”

Mr. John Burgess does not appear to have been a very voluminous reader and he mentions in one of his letters (dated May 14th, 1815), that he was “never taught to whright.” It is not until those letters are perused that we find any reference to the domestic trouble that drove him from his home and country.

While Mr. Thomas Turner “records in the plainest terms his many lapses into the sin of drunkenness,” Mr. Burgess has only once to make the humiliating confession of having been the worse for drink; but then he was a Baptist lay-preacher, in addition to his many other engagements, and, as a religious teacher, should have set a good example to the people among whom he lived and laboured.

As was the case with Mr. Turner, our later diarist was "very deficient in the science of spelling," his orthography being, like Lord Duberley's, "a little loose," but he generally managed to express himself clearly.

The book lying before me as I write was probably made and bound by the author, who could work at several trades, and who mentions bookbinding as one of his accomplishments. The volume is simply inscribed with the word "Jernel," but the writer surely has some claim to be included among our none too numerous Sussex diarists; although it may be conceded at once that his self-imposed labours will not be found to yield such valuable matter as some other diaries in our "Collections." The entries are certainly not as interesting as those in the East Hoathly example already referred to.

Mr. Charles Fleet, in his "Glimpses of our Ancestors,"² says, "The range of the Sussex diaries is from 1655 to 1750." The range will now, however, have to be a little extended, if our claim on behalf of John Burgess be admitted; and surely it can hardly be wrong to style a man a "diarist" who recorded for years the events of each day, with occasional comments, and who in addition seldom omitted to give, in a special column, the state of the weather, especially if it were in the least degree exceptional.

Apparently it was among what would be called the "Strict" or "Particular" Baptists that Mr. Burgess laboured, combining, as he did so, preaching and business, oftentimes in a curious fashion. There are entries in the "Jernel" that suggest that there was a degree of laxity at the latter part of the 18th Century among Sussex lay-preachers, which would not be allowed at the latter part of the 19th, although, as we shall see, there were now and again "meetings for discipline" held at Ditchling.

Reference has been made to the only instance in which Mr. Burgess speaks of being overcome with drink. The date of the entry recording this lapse is Thursday,

² Brighton: W. J. Smith, 1878. Page 2 in the paper on "The Sussex Diarist."

February 12th, 1789, and it is curiously "sandwiched" between a note of a visit paid to a conference and an attendance at a grand funeral. The confession runs thus:—

"Mr. Rich was hear and we went to ye Bull. Stop^d all the afternoon I was Some wat disordered with drinking on account that I had no dinner I have not Been so for many years I was ashamed any Body should see me after I Came to a true exercise of my reason, &c."

One of the most puzzling things is to define what John Burgess was by trade. He has been spoken of as a Sussex tradesman, but, although he might be described as a currier, he was a fellmonger, wool-dealer, breeches-maker, jacket-maker, stay-maker, glover, harness-maker, ropemaker, grave-digger, gardener, haymaker, harvester, bookbinder and appraiser by turns; he helped the carpenter when he came to work for him; assisted the builder in repairing his house; dug a well; brewed beer; sold nuts and ginger-bread at Ditchling Fair; and filled in his spare time with such trifles as "Caring oates;" "Work a making a new Hog pound;" "Making a short lader" and other "od" jobs. Taking into account the distances he walked, the weights he carried and the work he accomplished, Mr. Burgess was certainly "not slothful in business;" indeed, his labours must have been well-nigh incessant.

Among other peculiarities in the "Jernel" is the constant use of "&c." at the close of nearly every paragraph—the "&c." being frequently followed by a curling flourish, filling up the line in legal fashion.

Mention has been made of the column in the diary for recording the state of the weather. This is on the right hand side of the page and on the left a similar column is ruled for the date, recorded thus: "Mu. 6," "Tu. 7," "We. 8," "Th. 9," "Fr. 10," "Sa. 11," "Su. 12," the days of the week being entered as in the example selected, the year and month can be found, but only "on closer search," by reckoning backward or forward.

Mr. Burgess appears generally to have spent the morning either in working in his shop—let us say, for example, at breeches-making, or in the yard engaged in

currying—then, as the day wore on, he would not unfrequently set off on a kind of round, either to dispose of goods; solicit orders; take measures for more leather-breeches; call upon friends, or “frends,” as he preferred to write, especially Baptist preachers, partaking of hospitality and smoking one, two or more pipes, as it might happen. Then, having “bagged his game” in the shape of orders; picked up some bargains; done a little in the way of exchange or barter; perhaps bought a dead horse and stopped to flay it, he would (when this was the case) trudge home at night, carrying the hide, and enter his day’s doings in the “Jernel.”

Sometimes these excursions were extended over a greater length of time and a wider area; frequently they embraced religious engagements, or business transactions on a larger scale. For the most part the journeys were performed on foot, or on a borrowed, or very rarely upon a hired, steed. Such exceptionally luxurious travelling was, however, generally called for by some extraordinary weight that had to be carried, or by the long distance to be traversed, while the cost, carefully noted, was never extravagant, as will be evident from examples quoted.

Mr. Burgess’s knowledge of Sussex was “extensive and peculiar,” and he seems but rarely at fault in tramping from place to place at any hour of the day or night. On one occasion, however, he was fairly beaten. This was while trying to make his way from Heathfield, where he had been preaching, to Rotherfield, where his father lived, but he says:—

“It began to be dark so that I could not find my way off Hadler down so was obliged to Sleep at the alehouse kept by Mr. Skinner &c.”

There are very few allusions in the diary to the badness of the roads, but nearly at the end of the book, under date January 5th, 1790, Mr. Burgess tells of going to “Stenning” on an unsuccessful journey to see a man who was not at home, when he adds that he

“went to the Chacker inn Wroat a Letter & Left there for him I went afoot very dirty walking.”

The weather, however, was unusually mild, as we learn from an extract given at page 157, *post*.

Out of a great number of concise records of these excursions set down in the "Jernel," let us extract the following specimens. Thus, on Friday, February 25th, 1785, he wrote:—

"I went to Mr Tailer at St. John's Common with a p^r Breeches for Wm. Tailer 17^s. From thence to Mr Buckmans Little wat Hall with a p^r Grain B=4/6. Eat some Breakfast there then to Mr Knights at Weavelsfeld with a p^r old B. 2/- then to Mr Tanners at y^e tan yard then to Mr Drawbridge Scams Hill stop Dinner there Spear rib³ then to Lindfield to meet Mr Garten with a p^r B. 25/- &c. We met at Mr Colbrands & went to W^m. Woods to put them on Spent 9^d."

The "them" obviously refers to Mr. Garten's new breeches. Mr. Woods appears to have been a publican, the 9d. being no doubt spent for "the good of the house;" perhaps also for the hire of a private room for Mr. Garten's use while putting "them" on. In the margin of this entry is written:—

"Mr W^m Knight at Weavelsfeld fail^d with small pox."

There are frequent references to this 18th Century scourge, both in the journal and letters.

On Tuesday, November 29th, 1785, Mr. Burgess records how he

"Went to Chailey with some Wool for the Workhouse 37lb at 5 p^r pound by order of Mr Siffleet came back to Plumpton & took 8 sheep skins of Mr Martens of Stantens &c rid Glazebrooks horse at 0 1=2 &c ~~~~~"

Sometimes, pretty frequently, indeed, Mr. Burgess relieved the tedium of business by a little festivity, thus, on November 23rd, 1785, after "helping make the foot-paths in y^e yard," he says:—

"Went to Mr Chatfields at the Rookery to dinner with Father Edwards⁴ about 2 o'clock had a good peice of Boyl^d Beef 1 rost Duck & Plum pudden for dinner after dinner we had a pot of good punch and smoak^d a pipe or to &c. In the evening went to Mr Agates to a Conference &c."

³ Sparerib, *i.e.*, of pork. Mr. Burgess, as already intimated, often noted what he had for dinner.

⁴ The father of Mrs. Burgess.

For a wonder no business was transacted, of a secular character, at least, in the course of that visit. On another occasion, June 29th, 1786, business, pleasure and edification seem to have been combined very happily, since the entry under that date runs thus:—

“Went to Lewes with some Wool to Mr. Chatfield, fine wool at 8-5-0 p^r pack. Went to dinner with Mr Chatfield. Had boil^d Beef Lege of Lamb & plum Pudden Stop^d there all the after noon. Mr Pullin was there Mr Trimby & the Curyer &c was there we had a good deal of religious Conversation particularly Mr Trimby. I slept at the Star &c.”

The expression, “particularly Mr. Trimby,” is rather amusing.

On another occasion (Wednesday, December 27th, 1786) Mr. Burgess tells us that he

“Went to Mr Drawbridges at Lindfield to dinner we had Lege Mutten & Brad pudden for dinner I stop^d till about 7 o'clock we had some Comfortable Conversation upon morral & religious subjects.”

Mr. Burgess, by the way, always used a capital “C” when commencing a word with that letter.

Although it was winter when the visit just referred to took place, Mr. Burgess records that it “was wet part of ye day” and that on the 28th it was “Mile.”

Another entry under date Saturday, August 26th, 1787, runs as follows:—

“Went to y^e Purchert to Car Mr Billingshurst⁵ a pr. New Breeches Receiv^d 1-1-0 on account Bot. 2 pr old Breeches of him at 7/6 & are to make him another pr New ones on that account &c. In the afternoon went to Huntlers after Sheep Skins &c. Had Henry Woods horse 7^d.”

There are constant references to visits to the Purchert Meeting House. Mr. Burgess preached there on the day following the dealings chronicled here. After giving the text preached from, Mr. Burgess wrote, “Much indisposed to-day for the work,” almost the only remark of the kind in the “Jernel.”

Our diarist took quite a professional pride in the trade of breeches-making and more than once mentions the

⁵ From a note in “S.A.C.,” Vol. XX., p. 233, it seems Mr. Billingshurst was a Baptist minister at Ditchling; he was born in 1717.

satisfaction he gave his customers. Thus, on Saturday, February 9th, 1788, he writes:—

“This morning Went to the Jintler⁶ with a pr. Breeches for Mr Wood doe at $1=7=0$ they fit him well the best that he had any before.”

There are many transactions of a commercial nature set down in the “Jernel” that were not exactly connected with any particular branch of business carried on by Mr. John Burgess. We might, for example, refer to his frequent purchases of pigs. On the last day of January, 1788, a certain cold, windy Thursday morning, he has recorded one such transaction:—

“Went to Master Pelvins at St. Johns Common Bot a Pig at 7/- 6 & $\frac{1}{2}$ weeks old he will be 7 weeks old the 4th of Feb.”

Mr. Burgess seems to have had no idea of “buying a pig in a poke,” nor, as the next entry shows, did he readily part with money if he could “make it an exchange.”

On Wednesday, November 19th, 1788, he writes:—

“Work in y^e yard &c in the evening Went to Broad Street Green Bot 2 pigs of Steven Marten 9 weeks old for 6/- Each. Went to New Land spent the Evening there.”

Next day he details how he completed the purchase:—

“Work in y^e shop & yard in y^e Evening Went to Broad Street for my 2 pigs Stevin Marten Came home with me Smok^d a pipe & Bot a pr oil^d Breeches 2/6 a few Books 3/6 So I had but 6/- to pay him for the pigs &c.”

It is curious to note that on the 18th November Mr. Burgess was at a fair, where pigs were plentiful and cheap, but he does not seem to have invested. For some reason he evidently preferred to purchase by “private contract.” The entry relating to the fair is as follows:—

“Went to Hewwards Heath fair smok^d a pipe with Wm. Beal⁷ Wery Large fair Great Number Hogs and pigs young pigs Low all sorts Cheaper much than Last Spring &c.”

⁶ On a tomb in the burying ground attached to the Unitarian Chapel, or Free Christian Church at Ditchling, a building, which now stands on the site of the Baptist Meeting House, so constantly referred to by Mr. Burgess, there are inscriptions to the memory of Thomas Wood, Esq., late of London, who died in 1788, and to John Wood, Esq., late of the “Jointer,” in this parish, who died in 1802. No doubt this would be the “Jintler” of the journal.

⁷ In a letter, dated from Mount Pleasant, New York, August 14th, 1815, Mr. Burgess says, “I often think of my Cosin Beal & about Barkham meeting.”

Still, he did not buy, cheap as they were, probably having his eye upon Stephen Martin. It is worth remarking that Mr. Burgess had bought "2 old books for 9^d" at a Mrs. Mercer's sale about a month before the fair. While on the subject of Mr. Burgess and his bargains, two or three other transactions in the way of "exchange and barter" may be given. On Thursday, September 25th, 1788, he placed upon record the following:—

"Went to Plumpton Green stop^d 2 or 3 hours geting some apples down then went to Huntlers after Skins. I Change dogs with Richard Edwards I Be to have his Bich & 8 Bushals of good apples for my Spannel dog that I had of Linfiel at Keymer he stood me in one Shilling only when I had him."

Mr. Burgess was evidently pleased with this bargain, but, if possible, was even better satisfied with another transaction, in which a dog of his figured.

The following extract is perhaps as remarkable as any in the "Jernel" and throws incidentally a curious light upon the details of a popular 18th Century "sport." It was on Friday, March 14th, 1788, the day being "misty, with some rain, &c.," that Mr. John Burgess, tradesman and lay-preacher, as we have seen, sets down his day's engagements thus:—

"Went to Fryersoake to a Bull Bait to Sell My dog I sold him for 1 guineay upon Condition he was Hurt but as he receiv^d no Hurt I took him again at the same price I had all my Expences paid Because I had a dog there was 5 or 6 dogs but mine was Call^d the best. We had a good dinner a round of Beef Boild a good piece roasted a Lag of mutten & Ham of Pork & plum pudden plenty of wine & punch all the after Noon there was a great many people."

Like Mr. Pickwick and his friends, John Burgess had a weakness for punch. There are numerous other references to it in the diary. Thus, in describing a Harvest Supper at the Rookery, where there was "a great company," and after he had "Supt^d in y^e hall" and "come away between 12 & 1 o'clock," he tells us

"We had 2 Large Bowles of punch & upwards."

While only a few days before, when he was appraising the stock-in-trade of a Mr. Young at "Arndle," he and Mr. Young, after a good dinner, drank between them a

"Half crown^d Bowl of Punch and 2 pots of strong Beer."

The following series of commercial transactions is perhaps curious enough to merit insertion. On the 19th December, 1788, he writes:—

“Went to y^e Common Bot a Horse of J. Caffen 9/- &c.”

On the 27th he makes an entry showing what became of this *nine shilling* horse:—⁸

“Had the Horse over to Mr Marchants Street that horse I Bot the 19 Instant kill^d him for the Dogs after I had flawed I went in & smok^d a pipe with Mr Marchant he is to Send me 2 Bushels oates for the flesh.”

A little punctuation would have improved this entry. Let us hope the poor beast was killed *before* it was “flawed.”

The following agreement is perhaps worth quoting in this connection:—

“Let Richard Burgess the Lower part of my Garden for one Crap for 14 Bushels Hog potatoes & 2 Bushels of Kidneys to eate he is to deliver the potatoes home he is to do all the workmanship of his garden &c.”

Here are other curious examples of our diarist's method of doing business by “exchange or barter.” It is recorded, for instance, under date Wednesday, October 28th, 1789:—

“Went to Plumpton green for the old Black mares Hide Chang^d my White dog away for the Hide & 1 Bushel Apples &c.”

A special entry, written across one of the pages of the diary between July 1 and July 2, 1786, ornamented with several rows of flourishes, runs thus:—

“Settled accounts with Mr Streat paid him for 2 quarters shaving due last Midsummer Day he paid me for altring a pr Breeches 4 pence &c.”

It is perhaps rather remarkable that so thrifty and ingenious a man as Mr. Burgess did not contrive to shave himself. In an entry, Thursday, December 29th, 1785, we get to know what this luxury cost a year:—

“Paid the Barber for 2 quarters Shaving all that was due which was 4/- &c.”

⁸ On another occasion he speaks of buying an old horse of C. Watford, at “Claiton,” for 5s. 6d.!

Mr. Burgess, on one occasion, when making a note of a visit to Brighthelmstone, wrote:—

“Bot 1000 pranes 7^d.”

If by this he intended to convey the information that he had purchased a thousand prawns for the sum of sevenpence, which seems tolerably clear, those delicate crustaceans must have been considerably cheaper in Brighton than they have been lately. Eighteenpence per 100 for prawns would now be considered a reasonable price. On another occasion, when visiting Brighthelmstone, this entry was written:—

“I Bot 7 Mackril for 6^d & Quart of Rigrels for 2^d.”

I have not yet found out what is meant by “Rigrels.”

The price of mackerel varied in Brighton in Mr. Burgess's time just as it does now. On March 30th, 1785, there is an entry:—

“Went to Brighthelmstone Bot 6 Mackeril at 2½ that is 15^d.”

On another day Mr. Burgess “went up to Brighthelmstone” and while there, to be for once in a way in the fashion,

“Washed in ye Sea.”

Mr. John Burgess sometimes resorted to curious expedients for parting with goods. On a certain wet Saturday, October 13th, 1788, there is an entry to the following effect:—

“Working in y^e Shop & Yard in y^e Evening went to ye Bull to a Baffling⁹ mach for sute of Cloths & gloves of mine &c.”

The next day he was preaching at “Barkham” meeting, and on the following Wednesday he writes:—

“This after Noon Went to Plumpton green to see Father Edwards my Wife & yungest Boys Master & Mrs. Sifflet was there at dinner had Rost Goose & Lage of fresh pork & aple pudden for Dinner stop there smoking till past 6 o'clock Came home went to y^e Bull Ruffled a way some gloves.”

Perhaps an extract or two relating to the price Mr. Burgess paid for his own clothing might not be uninteresting. From an entry in the diary we learn that on

⁹ Was this what is now known as a “jingling” match?

one occasion, when at "Scain's Hill," he called on Mr. Drawbridge, at Lindfield, where he

"Stop^d tea Bo^t a Coate to ware Every day 3/6 &c."

On another occasion when he went, during one of his rounds, to call on Mr. Drawbridge, having sold several things and taken orders for others, he adds:—

"Bo^t a pr spackeld stockings 2/6 for my self &c."

Presumably Mr. Burgess wore buckles in his shoes, as he records the receipt of a present when dining at Mr. Drawbridge's hospitable table. His brother-in-law,

"Richard Edwards was there gave me a pr plated shoe Buckels at 2/6."

Another entry runs thus:—

"Bo^t a Coat & west Coat of Richard Burgess 0-3-6."

In another entry, dated Wednesday, July 5th, 1786, a most unusual price for a coat is given at what Mr. Burgess calls "Scains Hill."

"Bot an old Coat Gave 2. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ for it."

There must, one cannot help thinking, have been some hard bargaining before this sum was arrived at.

Mr. Burgess was evidently fond of attending sales and often records the purchase of odd "lots;" perhaps one of the most curious entries relating to these transactions is one in which he tells of going to "a Sale of Mary Hammans furnurniture down at Mr. Warden's House," where he

"Bot. a Settle for my Corner at 4^d & Several other tryfils &c."

One purchase in the regular way at a shop is interesting; it is thus set down:—

"Went to Herbens (Lewes) Bot a Cast Iron Boat to Greace Rushes in 8/ &c."¹⁰

Another entry informs us that Mr. Burgess

"got a Bundle of Candle Rushes in a pon a few fields off Huntlers."

Among other extracts from the "Jernel" bearing upon domestic economy the following may perhaps be worth

¹⁰ Two such iron boats are in the Society's Museum.

quoting. It relates to Friday, May 2nd, 1786, and informs us that:—

“This Morning Jhⁿ Godden’s Sweepd or Chimely & I begin to Burn Coal to day Bot a pr Grates of Harebrook Gave him 6/- for them was all most New &c.”

In his legitimate business our diarist was considerably hampered by the restrictions placed by a jealous Government upon the sale of leather and wool. Over and over again there are such entries as that dated Monday, 17th April, 1786:—

“Went to Lewes to y^e Setting at the White Heart to take out a Licence to dress leather Gave twenty shillings for it.”

Or again, a little later on:—

“Went to Lewes to pay sum duty for Leather 0-18-3½ Rid Great part of y^e way home in ‘Jintler’¹¹ teame.”

On the eventful day when he bought the “Rigrels” at Brightelmstone (see page 141, *ante*), he had gone there

“After a letpass to Car 2 packs Wool to Lewes to Mr. Chatfield &c.”

As a glover Mr. Burgess had not only to get a license to make gloves, but when made it would appear that the paternal Government of the day put in a further claim. Thus, under date Tuesday, August 2nd, 1785, our diarist writes:—

“Went to Lewes to Get a Liceance to Sell Gloves &c. Some Stamps &c.”

At first sight I was disposed to connect these stamps with the Revenue, but as they were purchased of an ironmonger it is most likely they were tools used in the manufacture of gloves, and were rather what would be called “punches” than what we now understand by “stamps.” The stamps appear not to have been very costly, as the writer tells us that at Lewes on Wednesday, November 16th, 1785, he

“Bot 2 Shillings worth of Glovers Stamps at Harbens.”

After arriving in America—as the letters dated from thence conclusively prove—a great change came over Mr. Burgess in many ways; his quiet matter-of-fact entries gave place to a certain recklessness of expression, while his

¹¹ See page 138, *ante*.

religious views became quite revolutionised. Writing to his son John, on September 18th, 1794, he thus contrasts the freedom of the New World with the restrictions of the Old. After asking his son to send him some instructions as to "the English manner of Tanning the Butt Sole Leather, &c.," he adds:—

"I wish to Lern something of the English manner of doing these things for we Call it a good Bissiness in this Country for we have no License to pay Nor duty of any kind If We Can Bye a Hide we can dress it as we please with out Consulting the Divil or any of his jmps about it This is one great advantage in doing Bussiness in America."

With all its advantages it is not a little surprising to find that so far as the correspondence extends there is nothing to show that Mr. Burgess was ever anything but a journeyman in the New Country, whilst in the Old he was a master-tradesman, employing men and boys.

Mr. Burgess, I may proceed to remark, has supplied us with some curious, if rather gruesome, details of his experience as a grave-digger. The year 1786 appears to have opened rather briskly in the funeral line. The following entries relate to the proceedings on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 16th, 17th and 18th, of that year:—

"Master Hallet & I did open a Steen Grave where in Mrs Chatfield was Buried in ye year 1766. She was 54 years of age we took her Coffin out & set in the meeting House all night we opened it there was Nothing to be Seen but a perfet Skilliton she was Grandmother to Miss Sally Matt who is to be buried there to-morrow &c."

The cool proceeding of opening this coffin out of mere morbid curiosity will not pass unobserved. It ought not to have passed unreprieved.

The next entry is a little oddly worded, the italics are mine:—

"Was Diging a grave for Mr Danil Pannett *he was hear about 4 o'clock* his age was 7=5 years Mr Agate preach^d his Sermon Mat 24=46 after that went to the Rookery as Sally Matt was to be brought to be Buried about 5 She died at the Rookery aged 17 years M^r. Dendy preach^d her Sermon upon Heb=13=14 there was a great many people the Service was performed by Candle light &c."

This is followed by a note to the effect that there was "Snow in ye morning," and that it "freezed in ye Evening."

Nothing daunted, Mr. Burgess records on Wednesday that he was "finishing the graves" and after working in the shop, &c., and going over to New Land, he writes:—

"Came Back to Mr Whites to hear a funeral sermon for Mrs Buckman preach^d by Mr H=Booker 1=Cor=15=57 She was buried in y^e Church yard aged——38 years."

On July 29th of the same year there is the following entry:—

"Was assisting in opening a Steen Grave in order to enlarge it for to put Mr Chatfield in it was his Fathers Grave & he had Been Buried 50 years the Coffin was very much decayed but not so much but we could see the Date &c."

On the following day (Wednesday), which, like the preceding one, was "fine," the funeral was performed, and this is how Mr. Burgess chronicles it:—

"This day was Jobing about the Grave &c. Mr Chatfield was Buried this evening I was at the house about half past one oclock we got down to the meeting house a bout 5 oclock Mr. Dendy preach^d 1 Thess. 1. 15. 19 12 men to Car Each a Silk Hatban I had one & pr Gloves. Mr Chatfield was 67 years of age &c."

In a side note there is this addendum:—

"The Meeting was very full of people."

Mr. Burgess appears not to have been paid for his work in connection with this funeral till the 16th January in the following year, when, while "settling accounts" with Mr. Chatfield, he remarks:—

"Recei^d for opening Toomb 5/-"

On March 29th, 1787, there is this entry:—

"Diging Grave for Mrs Boadle."

And on the next day:—

"Work in y^e Shop in y^e fore noon in the after Noon went to Curt Gardens¹² to Dinner Mrs. Beadle Was Buried this Evening Mr Sanders preach taxt Isaiah 25=9 her choice I had a Silk hatban & Black Gloves She was 82 years old. She was a woman of an acceeding good Charcter."

The next day, for Mr. Burgess, as we have seen, could turn his hand to anything, was at

"Work for Mr Godard the Brassure mending his forge Bellows &c."

¹² Mr. Burgess was a frequent visitor here.

But the record of funerals is by no means exhausted in the foregoing extracts, as witness the following entry, under date Thursday, June 29th, 1786:—

“Digging of a large Vault in the meeting house for Mr Marten we took up the old Vault where his Father was Buried about 11 years sence put his Coffin into a new Case made the Vault much Deeper & larger it is above 10 feet wide.”

This job spread over several days. On June 30th he tells us he “Was helping a bout the Vault.”

On July 1st the entry runs thus:—

“Do & Cleaning the meeting house &c.”

The next day was Sunday, and instead of going out to preach, our diarist tells us he

“Was at Home Mr Peter Martin was Burried hear to day was a very large Number of Spectaters Mr. Drowley¹³ preach his Sermon Mat 24—44.”

The next day Mr. Burgess “was filling up the vault.” I cannot find what he was paid for this work, or even that he was paid.

On Saturday, August 28th, 1787, he buried Mr. Agate, with whom he had smoked many “a serious pipe,” as Thomas Turner would have expressed it, and had been very friendly. After working in the shop part of the day he says:—

“The other part oppening Mr Billinghurst Vault to Bury Mr Agate he died last Mundy Evening died very suddenly never was seen to have the least motion he stood talking to his workmen they perceived him about to drop Mr Evershed preach^d his sermon Philip 1—21—aged 50 years great many people.”

On Thursday, December 6th, 1787, Mr. Burgess

“In the Even Went up to Mrs Agates Settels^d accounts with her Smoak^d a pipe or 2 &c.”

And, it may be, was paid for his services in connection with Mr. Agate's interment in the previous August.

On Friday, December 21, 1787, Mr. Burgess was busy

“Digging a grave for Mr Brumfield of Plumpton, Crossways”

¹³ Mr. Drowley was evidently a popular preacher and, even without the attraction of a funeral, generally had a crowded congregation. He afterwards went to America.

The next day, Saturday, 22nd December, 1787, we have:—

“Went to Mr Brumfields Funerel he was Burie^d hear¹⁴ Mr Evershed preached Job 7=3 & 4 Verses taxt of Mr Brumfield’s Chusing there was a great Number of people at y^e house 16 Selk Bands &c—a good dinner for many that was invited & plenty Bread & Cheese & Plum Cake for all that Came Mr. Brumfield was 65 years of age.”

On Sunday, July 13th, 1788, the funeral of Mr. Burgess’s father-in-law took place, and is thus recorded:—

“Was at Home at our meeting Both parts of y^e day dancy from Cuckfield preached——in the evening my Father in Law was Buried at Ditchling in the Same Grave that his last Wife my Mother in Law was Buried in he was 75 years of age Mr Evershed preach^d his Sermon Romans 14=12—he died at Wisboro Green Was Brought from there to day in a Waggon Brought to the Bull Was Car^d into the Bull parler proceed to meeting a bout 7 o clock after service we went with Mr Evershed to the Bull smok^d with him there &c.”

On Friday, November 9th, 1787, there is the following entry:—

“Work in y^e Meeting House Mr Rowland made an end of seting up of Toombs—He & 2 of his men came last Thursday. Set up one for Looker Chatfield 1 for Mrs Beadle 1 for Mr Joseph Chatfield and Mrs His Wife &c.”

In the burying ground at Ditchling, already referred to, there are inscriptions commemorating Joseph Chatfield (late of Middleton), who died 17th June, 1784, aged 47 years; and Elizabeth, his wife, who died on February 12th, 1776; while either here or in the churchyard are memorials of members of the families of most of the persons mentioned in the “Jernel.” The old names, too, will be found well represented upon the signboards exhibited by the Ditchling tradesmen of the present time. During a recent visit the names of the following were noted gathered from the various sources just indicated:—Burtenshaw, Dancy, Gearing, Denman, Martin, Mott, Beal, Lidbetter, Edwards, Collings and Lindfield.

With one or two other extracts describing funerals, this somewhat gloomy department of the “Jernel” may be brought to a close.

¹⁴ *i.e.*, at Ditchling.

In January, 1788, on Saturday, the 12th, there is this entry :—

“ Was digging a Vault to bury Mrs Wood & her Children in Mrs Wood was daughter of M^r Chatfield Curtgardens she died in y^e 31 year of her age Left 2 Children &c. Burye^d 3 which were all taken up & Reburied with her John Watford Help^d me a most part of ye day.”

On the following Thursday the history is thus concluded :—

“ Went to Curtgardens to dinner Mrs Wood was Buried to day She died at Curtgardens Mr Borkly from London preached her Sermon upon a Very Crowded Congregation after the people was gone we Buried the 3 children with their Mother & Stop^d up the Vault master Bucher was Brick Layer the Vault was Built with 9 inch Walls width 6 feet & 7 Length in the Clear 21 Hundred Bricks used in all &c ~~~~~.”

Mr. Wood was more ready in paying for his wife's funeral than some of those who employed Mr. Burgess, since next day he set down in the diary :—

“ Was Leaveling ye Ground over y^e Vault Mr Wood paid me for digging the Vault l.=11 : 6 &c ~~~~~.”

Leaving, for a time at least, the temporal concerns of Mr. Burgess, let us now, by the help of the “Jernel,” trace his career as a moralist, a seeker after improvement and as a preacher of the Gospel. It is of the latter the MS. volume he has left behind him mainly treats. It would appear, it may here be remarked, that this book was one of a series of similar records, judging from the abrupt manner in which it commences without heading, introduction, or prefatory word of any kind. The entries, too, have all the appearance of being set down in continuation of a habit of long standing. Just as in business so in religious work, Mr. Burgess appears to have gone on a kind of circuit. Besides preaching at home (*i.e.*, at Ditchling) our diarist went to “Barkham,” Purchert, Heathfield, Waldron, Cuckfield, Lewes, Tunbridge Wells, Shipley (Blonks Green) (see page 152, *post*), Crawley, Jouetsfeild (Jolesfield), Billingshurst and West Grinstead. The first three or four mentioned were very frequently visited, the rest only now and again.

Although there are such constant references to preaching, we can get no information from the "Jernal" as to the kind of preacher Mr. Burgess was, nor as to the estimation in which he was held by those among whom "he discovered his gift," but as he was pretty regularly engaged year after year and was hospitably entertained at the places he went to, we may suppose his services were acceptable. His method of recording his Sunday duty was generally something after the following brief fashion:—

"Went to Waldron meeting Father Edwards went with me p^r. upon Psalm 107, 31."

This, with the date and state of the weather, is all the information given.

Sometimes, but very rarely, when he was the preacher, Mr. Burgess gives the number present; thus, on April 24th, 1785, he writes:—

"Went to y^e Purchert meeting was above 50 people there ph. Mat. 24=44 &c."

Near the end of the diary the text is given in words, as well as chapter and verse. This, however, does not help us, nor did he always quote correctly; thus, when preaching at West Grinstead Meeting, he writes:—

"Preached upon Psalms 84 & 11 the Lord is a *Son* & Shield &c."

It is when other preachers "held forth" that we find the diarist's critical faculty coming into play and that fuller details are supplied. Thus, on a certain showery Sunday, August 27th, 1786, there is the following elaborate record:—

"This morning Mr & Mrs Drawbridge was hear at Breakfast we then went to Brightelmstone to ye prestbeirian meeting¹⁵ to hear Doct^r Price & Mr Johnson. Price preach^d upon Luke 21 & 24. We went to Mr Pobgees to dinner had Rost Mutton for dinner we got back to Ditchling about 7 of y^e Clock."

¹⁵ Now known as Union Street Congregational Church. Perhaps as Mr. M. A. Lower was wont to say, "I may be excused here if I indulge in a little piece of self-quotation." In the "Churches of Brighton," part III., when writing upon Union Street (page 253), I remarked, "It may surprise some persons to hear Union Street Chapel described as a Presbyterian Chapel; but it appears tolerably clear that for the first century after its erection it was held by the Presbyterians. The great body of Dissenters created by the Act of Uniformity practically

“Mr Johnson preach^d a very Good Sermon But Doctor Price preach^d a most Excellent Rational Sermon as ever I heard.”¹⁶

Some of the allusions to the visits paid to various small meetings held in the villages are very quaint. It was a kind of service, especially in winter, when the engagements had to be carried out on foot along the notoriously miry Sussex roads, that must have tried the sort of stuff the preacher was made of. Occasionally Mr. Burgess gave up in the face of a regular downpour of rain, but not often.

The following extracts will convey a graphic idea of certain phases of religious work in Sussex in the closing years of the 18th Century.

The service at Heathfield was carried on in the house of the father of Mr. Burgess until Easter Sunday, March 27th, 1785. The day was rainy and snowy, but our diarist was there. He says:—

“Went from Mr Sanders to Heathfield Meeting there was but one Sermon by reason there was a disciplen meeting I P^r. Acts 20. 24 my Father proposed to quit the house the next Friday & go to Rotherfield to a farm called Rundens I came to Plumpton Green Stop^t there all Night Father E & I came together we Baited at Framfield Street &c.”

Some of the meetings Mr. Burgess attended were sadly interfered with by the weather, especially in winter. On Christmas Day, 1785, for example, we read that there was “Snow all day.” Our diarist says:—

“Went to Barkham meeting But we had no sermon by reason there was But 2 or 3 people & very late it being very bad weather Mr. Drawbridge was there and Brought a New Desks (*sic*) with him to fix to y^e table for the use of y^e Minister &c. ~~~~~”

divided into three parties—one branch adhering to the principle that the Churches should be governed by a Presbytery; another contending for the right of each Church to govern its affairs independently of any outside control; and the Baptists. The Presbyterians of 1688 must not, however, be confounded with the Presbyterians of 1880.” The Mr. Johnson referred to by Mr. Burgess was the third minister who occupied the pulpit at Union Street. His name appears thus in the list of pastors:—The Rev. William Johnston, 1775-1797. It appears that this gentleman came from Christchurch to Brighthelmstone and succeeded to the pastorate in July, 1774, resigning after twenty-one years of service, but whether he retired to Newington Green or went to live at Lewes seems to be uncertain.

¹⁶ In a letter (quoted from on page 161), written by Mr. Burgess from Mount Pleasant, America, on August 14th, 1815, he says, “How happy should I be to receive one more letter from Mr. Dawbridge if he is yet alive. I want to hear from Mr. Loid were he liveth & wheather he preaches as yet for he was one of the best preachers I ever heard in all my life time.”

Not many visits to Crawley Meeting are recorded in the "Jernel," which may account for the following excursion under date July 8th, 1787, being given in detail:—

"Went to Crawley Meeting got to Mr Deneyers Hogs Hill by 9 o'clock Drink Tea before I went to Meeting. Pr. Rom. 14. 17. 18. 19. Went to Mr Tamplings y^e Shop keeper to dinner had veal pudden for dinner. Smoak^d a pipe or 2 then went to Mr Deneyers to tea again Mr Isard was there Came to meet me I went home with him to E. Grinstead got there about 10 o'clock. fine day."

The next day he tells us that he

"Got up about 6. Bot some Leather of Mr Isard Stop^d there dinner Had Rost Veal Line for dinner &c—Came away about 1 o'clock Mr Isard came with me to Hapsteed green with me (*sic*) rid in y^e Cart and got home a bout 10 o'clock &c—Fine day wet evening."

Sunday, September 25th, 1785, appears to have been a memorable day at Heathfield, and Mr. Burgess took "a full note" of the proceedings:—

"Went to Heathfield Meeting it was the day apointed to hold a Disceplen meeting in order to Settle sume Divitions & disturbances that have happened among them Mr Evershed Mr Doble & Mr Boreman was all there the Dispute was Between Mr Edward & Mr Sanders things were Settled upon better terms than I expected but (not?) upon so good as was wished for.

"One Sermon was preached by Mr Evershed the remains of time was spent in Disciplin after service we went down to Mr Vines had some dinner there was some provided for a few that Came from a far. Mr Boreman Mr Doble Mr Evershed Mr Edward Mr Jame & Richard Sanders Mr Fox & I. & the 2 Mrs Sanders all Stopped there Dinner we had a Large mutten pye & aple & Damson pye all Cold for Dinner &c.

"Mr Evershed Mr Edward & I went to Waldron to Mr Goslings & stop all Night it was a very wet & windy Day it rained great part of the Day & the wind remarkable hight. Notwithstanding we had upwards of 30 people at meeting—"

Rather an eventful meeting also was that recorded as taking place on Sunday, May 27th, 1787. Mr. Burgess shall tell the story in his own way:—

"Went to Heathfield Meeting the day was spent as follows. I preach a sermon upon Titus 2. 11. 12. after that y^e Sacrement was administer^d by Father Edwards¹⁷ after that we had a disciplen meeting James Sanders begun in prayer it was Concluded & agreed to take up y^e Baptizery & Car it to Waldron to Mr Goslings & put it down in one of his fields, it was likewise agreed that y^e Church Should excommunicate John Dan for disorderly walking. John Gosling concluded

¹⁷ His father-in-law (see page 136, *ante*, note).

by prayer &c. we broke up about 3 o'clock then I went to Mr Sanders at Brumfields¹⁸ there to stop all night Though I called at Mr Richard Sanders there drink Tea Mr Richard Sanders came to his Brothers in y^e evening we concluded the even by Prayer & then went to Bed &c."

The precise form of inconsistency that led to the excommunication of John Dan for "disorderly walking" is not given, but at another meeting at Ditchling, held on Sunday, September 5th, 1787, the day preceding the memorable trial chronicled on page 160, *post*, the following record, in spite of the careful way in which the entry is made, tells its own tale as to the prevalent immorality of the times:—

"Was at Home it was our Communion day Mr Evershed was hear there was 3 persons Excommunicated Namely Samuel Dennan for A—d Wm Beal for F.—n & Mr Browne for Do—Mr Isard was hear Smok^d a pipe or 2 with me after Service &c."

A visit to Tunbridge Wells in July, 1786, is described in characteristic fashion. After working in his shop all day, the weather being fine and very hot, Mr. Burgess went on the Saturday evening, July 22nd, to Mr. Drawbridge's, and the next day he writes:—

"Went to Tunbridge Wells Meeting went with Mr N. Drawbridge in his Cart & Slept there last night we went to Mr Currys at Stone Land part (? *Park*) to Breakfast Mr Curryes is Steward & Game Keeper to y^e Duke of Doset we left our Carrage & Horse about 2 miles before we Came to y^e Wells so went afoot &c went to dinner down at y^e wells we had rost Lambe & french beans for dinner & porter to drink went to meeting again about 2 oclock I Pr Acts 20—24 after Service we went home with Mr Hayns Stop^d there 2 or 3 houres got to Scains Hill a little after 10 oclock I Slept there this Night &c."

Mr. Burgess got home by seven o'clock the next morning, and, after working steadily all the week till Saturday, when he went to Lewes Races, had another Sunday out, which is thus chronicled:—

Su 30.	Went to Shiply to Blonks green meeting Went to Bentens to dinner had Beef & Mutten Turnups & french Beans & apple pudden for dinner	fine day
		Romans 1=16
		14=17. 18. 19 Romans

¹⁸ In an entry, dated April 4th, 1786, we have, "Went to Mr. Brumfield's to a Conference, &c."

Things temporal and spiritual could hardly be more oddly combined than in this unconsciously quaint entry.

On the Tuesday following, August 1st, Mr. Burgess writes:—

“Went to Brighthelmstone Races.”

In the margin the weather is marked as “showery,” but whether the preacher went to the races on business or pleasure, or both combined, there is nothing to indicate. Mr. Burgess, in his anxiety not to lose sight “of the main chance,” seems sometimes on Sunday to have acted a little in the spirit of the well-known anecdote and to have “supposed it were Monday.” Thus, on Sunday, June 10th, 1787, we find him writing:—

“Went to Barkham Meeting P. Mark 13=33 34 &c—After I came home went up to Mr Agates then to Curt Gardens with Mr Sanders & Mr Agates Mr Sanders took his Breeches home with him a new p^r Cloth Culler^d oil at 13/- &c.”

In the Church the Sunday was utilized at times for secular purposes, it would appear, from the following entry:—

“Sunday September 21st 1788 Went to y^e Purchert Meeting P. Genne 45—24 ‘See that ye fall not out by the way.’

“Went from thence to Chapple Church heard Mr Rideout Preach Eccleas Last Verse. after Service there was a Vestery to Settle about Sarah parsons Living with me to learn to Glover we agree^d for her to Stay one year & a quarter & to a low her 6^d p^r week to pay her quarters with the parish to a low her 2/6 to Live upon &c.”

Mr. Burgess, for a wonder, appears to have been quite as fond of hearing others preach as of preaching. There are almost innumerable references to his visits to meetings where his friends occupied the pulpit. The following is a characteristic record and will be of use in perpetuating the memory of two former inhabitants of Lewes. It was on Sunday, June 18th, 1786, that Mr. Burgess writes:—

“Went to Lewes Meeting Mr Drowly preached both parts of y^e day in the Evening Went to Clift Chapple to hear Mr Barnard &c. eat my dinner at Mr. Lampprier boiled Beef & Gusbery pudden for dinner.”

The atmospheric conditions are carefully recorded in two side notes; one runs thus:

“We have had a very dry time for a great wile but Good Shower to day.”

The other :—

“Thunder and rain in the evening.”

Sometimes the services in the meeting houses seem to have assumed a slightly different form, when, instead of preaching in the ordinary way, a lecture was given during the week. From among several similar entries I select one dated Tuesday, October 3rd, 1786, which seems to refer to Ditchling :—

“In y^e Evening we had a Lactter preach^d by Mr Drowly of Lewes after Service he read a letter as a petition from one of our Sister Churches to build a meeting house.”

Symptoms of the existence of a desire for mental and spiritual improvement appear, oddly mixed with details relating to trade and all sorts of other matters, in many parts of the “Jernel.” One or two sample entries may be of interest. The first is dated Monday, May 7th, 1787, and runs thus :—

“In y^e afternoon went to Mr Drawbridges Lindfield to meet some Friends in order to Forme a Frendly Society to Meet once a month at his house for the improvement of our minds in useful knowledge & Mr Page from Hapsteed Green was one present and several others got home about 11 o'clock. fine day.”

In June, on Monday, the 11th, the first regular meeting was held, of which the following record is given :—

“In the afternoon went to Mr Drawbridge to spent 3 or 4 hours with some frends in Conversation upon Moral & religious Subjects the inquiry was the most easy & natural evedences of y^e existence & attributes of y^e supream Being—in discussing upon the Subject we was Nearly agreed and propose meeting again every first monday after the fool Moon to meet at 4 & break up at 8.”

Judging from another entry bearing upon this gathering for mutual improvement it would appear to have induced Mr. Burgess to keep rather late hours, since we find that on Monday, July 2, which was presumably the next after the “fool moon,” our diarist says :—

“Went to Mr Drawbridge Scains Hill met Mr Page, Mr Dianle, & Several frends to Spend y^e evening I got home about midnight.”

Profiting by his experience, Mr. Burgess at the September meeting stopped all night, and also combined a little business with his acquisition of—or shall I say search for—useful knowledge.

Occasionally Mr. Burgess, in the exercise of his religious duties, went farther afield than the circle of Sussex Meeting Houses, to which he so repeatedly refers. One such occasion may be given in detail. It was in the nature of a "May Meeting" apparently, and took place in 1785. On Tuesday, May 17th, he writes:—

"Got up about 3 o'clock. Set off with Mr & Mrs Drawbridge to London to ye Assembly as was a pointed Last Church meeting. we Stop^d at God stone & baited at Mrs Days Mr Drawbridge Mother Set of from there about 11 o'clock got to London about 4 eat my Supper at the Spur & then went to the Talbot in to Sleep there were several of our frends sleep^d there."

The weather during this journey is thus recorded:—

"Cloudy & was a little skater of rain."

The next day Mr. Burgess records the proceedings thus:—

"Went Meeting as was apointed Last year. Mr Fenner preached upon Isa. 62—6 & 7 (68 of us went to dinner at the Coffy house Hustson (? Euston) Square were went Last year. We finished our Asembly business by Candle Light I pad for 6 Letters at 2 Each Slept at the Talbot as before &c."

On one side of this entry is written "Fine day," and on the other side the following note:—

"The 0. 10. 0. I ear^d for y^e Book fun I paid to Mr Doble for him to pay to Docter Lowdal!"

On the next day, May 19th, Mr. Burgess continues:—

"Came out of Town about 11. o'clock got to Croydon about 2 were it be gan to rain a little about 3 it wet very fast I had the uppertunity to ride in a cart over the Hill to Godstone it being tilted I got no wet Stop^d at Godstone all night at the Bell at Mr Huggets &c."

The next morning Mr. Burgess was early afoot and he says:—

"Came away from Godstone a bout 4 o'clock got to New Chappel about 7 eat my breakfast there had tea & glas of peppermint which cost me 8^d &c. then came to Grinstead &c then to Dane Hill to Mr Tamplings stop^d there 3 hours. Eat my dinner there &c. Got home about 6 in y^e evening Wetish day."

There are not many references in the diary to events of national importance. Mr. Burgess, however, has set down one or two memoranda that are worth reproducing.

Writing under date Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 1788, he says:—

“In the after Noon Went to the Purchert there was a Meeting kept there on account of Gunpoder plot I preach^d a sermon upon psalms 107=31 there was one Hymn sung after Sermon the first hymn has been sung at that Meeting &c.—”

A side note informs us that it was “remarkable fine dry weather for the time of year.”

On Thursday, April 23rd, 1789, there is the following entry:—

“In the forenoon Went to Church to hear Mr Jackson & in y^e After noon Went to Street to hear Mr Morgan it was a day set apart as a day of Thanksgiving for the Kings Recovery from a state of indisposition in the evening our Town was *Illuminated* on the occation.”

The “Mr.” Jackson mentioned here is not mentioned in the list of Incumbents of Ditchling (“S.A.C.,” Vol. XIII., p. 259). He may, however, have been a curate or an assistant minister, since Mr. Burgess mentions his name in an entry dated “Christmas” Day, 1788, where he remarks:—

“Went to Church to hear our Mr Jackson and in the afternoon went to Keymer Church to hear Mr Turner he preach a good sermon in my opinion.”

An entry of considerable interest occurs on Wednesday, August 19th, 1788, where Mr. Burgess has placed on record the following:—

“Went to Brighthelmstone to see many Divertions on account of the Rial Family that is the Duke of Yorks Berth day Cricketing Stool Ball Foot Ball Dancing &c. fire works &c. 2 Large Beast Rosted upon the Hill a large quantity of Bread & Strong Beer Given with the Beef.”

One side note informs us that it was a “fine day,” and another side note runs as follows:—“Some said there was 20000 people.”

As already intimated, Mr. Burgess was rather fond of amusement; being decidedly of a social turn, nothing in the way of festivity came amiss to him. Here, however, are one or two entries which relate to sight-seeing. On Monday, December 4th, 1786, he sets down the following, after telling how he despatched the business which took him to Lewes:—

“Went to y^e Crown Lewes to see a very remarkable Ox that was their for a show it was Like other oxen in every respect except its Head

and that had only one Horne growed strait out of its Poul of about 3 feet 8 inches or near 4 feet round & was so long as to prevent his grasing so that he Cant get his mouth to y^e ground so that he is obldige to be fed with bran &c. in a difirant manner he is about 5 years old bread in Scotland=gave 2^d to see him—his Horne spread so wide that it Nearly Covered one of his eyes. He is a very Large well mad (*sic*) Ox of a redish Coller &c.”

On one occasion when in London on business with Richard Edwards he says:—

“This morning We went to grinage & took a Vew of the Collage there also took awew of Lord Camden an East indian marchant Loaded with tea & Chainey Cared 40 Guns she was just Come home.”

There are several references in the diary to cricket matches. The first Mr. Burgess tells of was played on Thursday, July 7th, 1785. Our diarist had been haymaking all that and the previous day and writes as follows:—

“After Left work went down to the Common to See a Cricket match Bo^t 6lb Cheryes at 1^d pound &c.”

The entry, unfortunately, throws but little light upon the game. On the 1st of the next month, however, he had business at Lindfield and Chailey, and remarks incidentally:—

“There was a Cricket match at Linfield Common between Lingfield in Surry and all the County of Sussex Soposed to be upwards of 2,000 people.”

But again we get no details as to the play, not even an intimation as to which side gained the victory.

In another special entry after one that is dated Tuesday, September 6th, 1785, we are told that it was

“Wet great part and very remarkable high wind it is said to be the highest wind ever remembered don a grat deal of Dammage to the Buildings & Shiping blowed down a hovil at Willards (?) Great deal of Dammage to the Standing corn and Likewise to the Hops tore down y^e poles very much weat harvest is nearly over about hear.”

Another special record on January 1st, 1790, tells us

“New years day was very remarkable fine warm day so has many more as fine as ever was known for the time of year as pleasant as in may.”

Perhaps, all things considered, the following entry is as noteworthy as any in the diary, when the date is taken

into account. On a page devoted to two special entries only and occurring between January 30th and 31st, 1789, Mr. Burgess wrote

"I paide Mr Attree four shilings what I Subscribed toward the Sunday Scool at Ditchling this is the first year of its been Established."¹⁹

Mention having been made of the other special entry it may be as well to insert it here, although it belongs rather to the general remarks upon the weather Mr. Burgess was so fond of making:—

"We have had a remarkable Sharp Fost Great Deal of Snow likewise the frost began Nov 24 1788 & Lasted about 8 weeks many people say it more severe cold then it was in the hard Winter Water was scarce and very bad many Wells dry has been so very dry for so long time Great Numbers of fish was perished as Well as Birds &c."

Although generally careful and regular in making his entries, there are some lapses in the "Jernel," which Mr. Burgess calls attention to more than once. Such, for example, as when he writes in April, 1789:—

"Some few days past have been showery & some Hail &c though I have not express^d it in perticulers in the collums."

Or, as when after an exciting day at Lewes Assizes, where he went to be "an avoidance" in a civil cause, he says:—

"The a bove is wrote very bad by reason I was so very sleepy I wroat it in y^e Evening after I come home &c."

There is no question about its being "wrote very bad," but the composition is better than the caligraphy.

One more instance of the candid admission on the part of Mr. Burgess of having made a mistake in the "Jernel" must suffice. After setting down sundry occurrences he writes across the page as follows:—

"What I have said a bout bean at Weavelsfield last Thursday was set down rong out of a mistake it was last Wensday I was there and in the Evening went to Mr Agates Confrance & last Friday went to Gravetts with a p^r Breeches 2/2 then to Mr Bromfields Conference &c."

A prodigious number of "conferences" Mr. Burgess attended. The word was apparently used in reference to what would now be called a committee meeting,

¹⁹ It will be remembered that the Centenary of the establishment of Sunday Schools in England was celebrated in the year 1880.

instead of to denote those larger, deliberative gatherings to which the word is so often applied in these days.

Mr. Burgess had several opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Administration of Justice in England, and, on the whole, was not, I think, either successful or very favourably impressed; but he shall tell of his experiences in his own way. On Thursday, January the 19th, 1786, he sets down the following exciting story:—

“This forenoon went to Kymer with Several people in pursuit of the person Soposed to have Rob^d. Mrs Browns Shop it was soposed he was Conceal^d in old Mooryes House and by Virtue of a warrant we Serched his House but did not find the man But found Several things Soposed to have been Stollen a quantity of wheat in the Chafe and a large quontety of old Timber Concealed in a very Secret Place upon the cealing over the chamber &c.”

In the margin is a note to the following effect:—

“A Great number of people was there &c.”

I find no further reference to this exciting but unsatisfactory search. After giving “evidence” in a civil suit at Lewes Assizes on Monday, August 6th, 1787, our diarist next day sets down this further experience:—

“This morning went to Lewes again Heard several Law Suites tryed & heard great part of Philip Ginden tryal he was Convicted of y^e wilful Murder of a person at Preston. Ginden was an officer of y^e Excise y^e deceased was a Smugler they met upon the Sea beach a large body of Smuglers & Ginden 3 other men made a large seasyer the deceased receiv^d a large Cut upon the head with a broad surd a nother man was very much Cut—Ginden was y^e first man I ever see condemn^d to be hang^d he did not seem to be much Effected at his sentence &c.”

There is no further remark upon the fate of this unhappy man.

The following rather lengthy entry, dated Monday, July 23, 1787, casts a lurid light upon the methods sometimes adopted in “getting up” evidence in Chancery suits in the 18th Century:—

“Went to Lewis to the Seting to sware to my Entry. Met Father Edwards there went with him to Mr Smiths y^e Atturoy to inform him what I heard Mary Edwards say the 17 of September 1786 about her been Call^d to go to y^e Bear to witness that her Father deny^d himself to her Grandfather.

“I told Mr Smith I arst^d her how she Came to go & what She knew about the Matter I told him She Said she knew nothing a bout it not

so much as to know the year the month nor the day of the month But Mr Mullen forst her to go & she said she was frightend out of her wits—I told him she Said She was had in to a private rum & Mr Mullen took an Almanick to find out the time she was to say when she appeared before the Comomesaners Scart (*sic*) She Should be Confounded wen she went to give in her Evidence I told him I arst^d her weather she did swear to any thing or not. She said they gave her a book But she told them she did not Know the Nature of an oath Some of the Company Said to her what have you Lived to these years & dont know the nature of an oath I told him She said she put the Book down upon y^e table again I arst^d her if She did not kiss the Book She Said she did not She Said they arst^d her a great many Queshtions but she was unable to answer them She said She was Very much fritened and one of the men that set the other side of the table Spok out sharp & said dont aske the poor garl²⁰ any more about if for you only put words in her Mouth then she soon Came away This very day after I was at Mr Smiths I Cal^d at Mrs Edwards & y^e Gurl Confurm^d what She Said to me before—Mrs Edwards Likewise told me She made not y^e least Question but y^e Morgage was good and that her Husband was a very great deter to his Father——for she knew of his Caring on & She beleft there was £100 Sent to London by way of Bribery a littel before the tryal in Chancery. She Said she Look^d upon it there was Great deal of Rogery betwen Gossen & her Husban this is what I heard her Say this very day.”

On Monday, the 6th of August following, is the badly written entry referred to on page 158, *ante*:—

“This Morning went to Lewes Assizes to be an avidanc on a trial between my Father Edwards & Gason Father was an defendand & Lost his Cause by reason of Wm Edward & another Fellow from London Swaring that Henry Edwarde committing the Act of Bankropsy before the Morgage took place the Morgage which he had upon Some old Houses in Lewes was 700. 0 0 but Lost his Cause on account of 2 people swaring H. Edwards keep out of site for 2 or 3 months &c So the cause was given against my Father in Law. I Got home a bout 1 o clock in y^e Night came home a lone &c. Father Gave me a dinner at y^e Dolphen and Severl other witnesses Namely Mr Trimby Mr Tooth Boxall &c.”

No wonder that after the excitement of the day, the dinner, the walk and the lateness of “ye Night,” our diarist was “very Sleepy” and “wroat very bad.”

The personal allusions in the “Jernel” abound, but these, if transcribed, would take up far more space than I can venture to encroach upon. One or two short extracts must suffice. Thus, on Sunday, May 1st, 1785, after

²⁰ The orthography of this word seemed to puzzle Mr. Burgess. In this extract he spells it “gurl” and “garl,” and in another near the end of the journal he has written it “gearl.”

telling that he was "at home" and "preached both parts of y^e day," *i.e.*, morning and afternoon, he adds:—

"This Evening about $\frac{1}{4}$ past 8 o'clock my Son Jesse died he was a tween Something upwards of a year old never was well from the Day of its Birth to the day of its death &c."

In 1788 this loss was made up. On Saturday, the 13th September, Mr. Burgess went at 10 o'clock at night to

"Hurstperrpoint for dockter weeks"

And the next day Mrs. Burgess presented her husband with

"a nother Son a second Jesse."

It is almost pathetic to read the correspondence from America, to which allusion has already been made. Mr. Burgess seemed to look back upon his life in England with a kind of scorn, and his letters are by turns boastful and querulous, yet almost every one of these epistles reveals a feeling of isolation and a yearning for the sight of the faces of old friends and the sound of their old familiar voices. Almost every page in the "Jernel" tells of the hospitality of friends in the Old Country, and yet he writes repeatedly such passages as this:—

"In England I was poor & Consequently dispised by almost all Except a few frends that knew Common Sence but Providence had not put it in there power to do me much Good only to Pleasure me with their Company & Conversation over a pipe of Tobacco."

This is rather ungrateful and shows Mr. Burgess at his worst. Anyone anxious for an exact and graphic picture of what was involved in emigration to America at the close of the 18th and the opening of the 19th Century, and of the kind of life led by those who settled in that "Land of Liberty and Plenty," would enjoy reading these letters. I have had the privilege of doing so by the courtesy of the great-grandson of the diarist, Mr. Frank W. Burgess, of Ringmer, and I have to tender him my thanks not only for permission to peruse these interesting communications and the diary, but also to make the copious but by no means exhaustive extracts here given from the "Jernel."