

Richard Lewis, a Newtown stationer, wrote an account of Owen's last days in November 1858 in his Notebook, which is on display in the Museum.

The last days of the celebrated Robert Owen

Nov 8 1858

I first became acquainted with Mr R Owen.

I was introduced to him by Mr Rigby his agent. Mr Owen had read my Essay on the Relation and duty of the Employer and Employed. When Mr O saw me he said, I am glad to see you, and to shake your Hand, then after making a few inquiries about my Family and Business, he told me that he had come to Newtown to live and die amongst them, then he said I thank you Mr Lewis for your kindness to myself and Mr Rigby, I find you are a man of Liberal views, I wish you to be come my Public & Privet Secretary while I am at Newtown and to keep an account of all I say to you, for I am writing my Life, and shall use it for that purpose.

I hope to be able in a few days to come to your house and to make arrangements for future proceedings. I intend to make Newtown the happiest place on Earth.

On the 9th he made many inquiries about the Magistrates and parties in and about the Town, and wished me to ask them to call and see him as soon as he would be able to see them.

After a short pause he said, Mr Rigby is going to London on Thursday and I want you to call and see me many times a day.

on the 10th Mr Owen was rather better and spoke with greater ease, he said "Mr Rigby has been a very faithful servant to me for twenty five years. But he is a materealist and that is a great drawback. Reading my works has made him an infidel, But I hope now by my example to teach him pure Loving christianity."

On the 11th When Mr Rigby left for London Mr Owen was rather better than on the 10th. But as the day wore a way he became rather worse. Dr Slyman was then called in and found him very weak.

During the 12th & 13th he did not say much but on the 14th he was more for talking than I could have wished him to be. Mr Lewis he said, I want you to let me your Siting Room and 2 Bed rooms and I will be removed and come to live with you. My Son Robert Dale Owen will be hear on Tuesday and he shall come and settle for the rooms.

I then requested him not to talk any more lest he would exaste himself, well he said we will leave the matter till my son comes.

I took my wife & Daughter to see him, he expressed him-self pleased to see them and said, I intend to come to see you in a few days and to live with you.

On the 15th he was worse I felt very anxious to see some of his Relatives arriving least he should die with only Strangers to attend him, (altho everybody was kind to him, and he to everybody) and to my great satisfaction on the morning of the 16th his son The Hon R Dale Owen and Mrs [Bugden] came. But were surprised to see the altered state of his health, he was very poorly the whole of the day. I called at ten p.m. and proposed to stay with him that night, but 2 nurses had been provided and my services was not needed.

On the 17th about 7 oclock AM he departed this life. This closed the Earthly Carear of one who during a life of nearly ninty years, laboured hard and I believe sincear to benifit the human race Physically, Morally and Socially.

I only regret that I am not able to say that he was a humble believer in Jesus Christ.

Richard Lewis