THE FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

Fourth and Arch Streets

Philadelphia

A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

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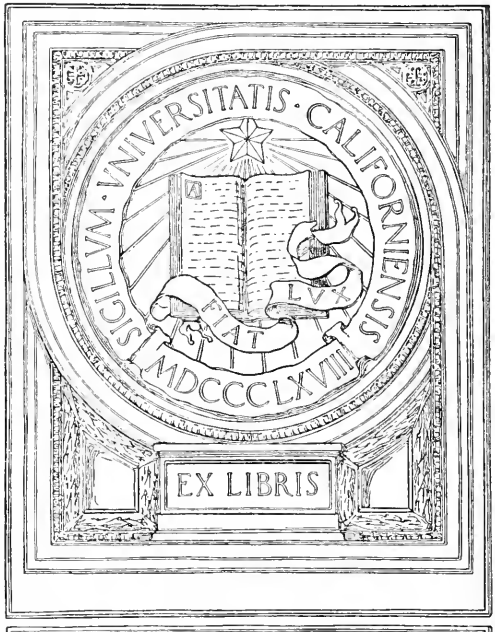
AT LOS ANGELES



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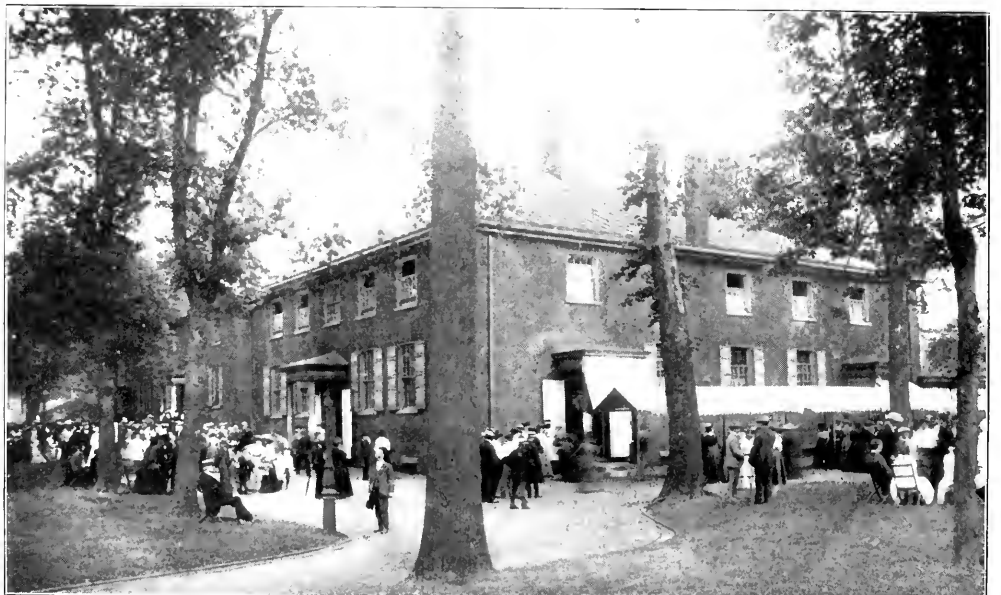

The Friends' Meeting-House
Fourth and Arch Streets
Philadelphia

A Centennial Celebration
Sixth Month Fourth, 1904

Illustrated by numerous interesting and rare portraits and pictures of early meeting-houses.

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INTRODUCTION.

BY ISAAC SHARPLESS.

On Sixth month 4th, 1904, there met in and around the old meeting-house at Fourth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, about twenty-three hundred people to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of its erection.

The chairman of the committee in charge of the arrangements was Jonathan Evans, whose grandfather of the same name was clerk of the Yearly Meeting one hundred years before. Meetings were held in both ends of the house in the afternoon and evening, and papers were read, which papers are here collected. Between the sessions the Friends indulged in social intercourse and partook of a supper in a tent erected on the plot to the south of the house.

An interesting feature of the occasion was an exhibit of historical pictures from the collection of George Vaux, embracing those of a number of early Friends' meeting-houses (some of which were water-colors), and including a pen-and-ink drawing of Fairhill Meeting-house and a rough pencil sketch of the meeting-house erected by the followers of George Keith. The last two are believed to represent the two earliest structures of the kind of which pictures have been preserved. There was also a colored drawing of Arch Street, west from Third to midway between Fourth and Fifth Streets, showing its appearance at the time of the erection of the oldest part of the meeting-house, including the residences of several Friends' families then living there. In addition there was a water-color painting of the domicile of another Friend who resided in that street. What is believed to be the earliest ground-

plan of the east wing of Arch Street Meeting-house, together with an elevation showing the building as it was afterwards erected and as it now appears, was also included in the exhibit. In addition to the above there was shown a small collection of portraits of prominent Friends living at the time of the erection of Arch Street Meeting-house.

An outcome of the deliberations which preceded the meeting was the formation of the "Friends' Historical Society." The purpose of this movement was said to be the preservation of letters and other documents which would throw light on the history and customs of the Society of Friends, and the encouragement of historical effort by its members. It is proposed to hold meetings for the reading of papers, and a series of publications will be entered into if sufficient good material is presented. The present volume is the first of these publications. The

portraits and other illustrations are from pictures loaned for the purpose by George Vaux and Sarah Emlen.

It is well occasionally to look back into the past, and gather up the standards and principles of our ancestors in the faith. It is well if it leads us to reconsecrate ourselves to the cause for which they wrought—the pure religion of Christ. We may not adopt all their methods; the testimonies which they upheld may in part be replaced by others more vital to our day. But those among us who see beneath the surface will feel no disposition to build on any other groundwork than theirs, nor to adopt modes of action essentially out of harmony with their principles. The lack of historic background, while compatible with much Christian goodness and zeal and openness of mind, seems, when applied to congregations, to lead to opportunism—the selection of methods dic-

tated by the emergencies of the present and to destroy that continuity of principle so essential to the preservation of the type. If the spirit and motives of the best Friends of the past were known and read of all of us who bear the name of Friend, they would be interwoven through our lives as through the pages of prophecy is interwoven "thus saith the Lord."

This fidelity to type need be no bar to adaptation to condition and circumstance. With our confidence in the ever-renewed teaching of God we, of all Christians, ought to be open to new methods.

> *"The manna gathered yesterday*
> *Already savors of decay,"*

and the slavish copy of the good deeds of our fathers, the slavish subjection to their modes of thought and expression, are no necessary part of Quakerism. If we approach the history of the times of old, with pro-

found devotion for the solid characters and enduring principles which dominated them, and with the unselfish resolve to build the same characters and apply the same principles by the most efficient means in these times, for which we are responsible, we shall learn the lesson of our history.

As a little contribution towards this end these papers are offered to the public by the

FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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Illustrations.

EARLY FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSES AND THEIR RELATION TO THE BUILDING AT ARCH AND FOURTH STREETS.

BY GEORGE VAUX.

In preparing a paper appropriate to the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the erection of Arch Street Meeting-house, it seems to be suitable to refer to the several houses which antedated it, as well as to others occupied by Friends for meeting purposes. In the first instance it was inevitable that the immigrants should resort to dwelling-houses, and perhaps to structures erected for store-houses, to hold meetings in until some more suitable place could be provided.

The earliest building in Philadelphia erected by Friends especially as a place for public worship was the first Bank Meeting,

or, as it was sometimes called in the early records, "the Meeting on Delaware Side." It was built late in 1683 or early in 1684, and was located on the west side of Front Street, about sixty feet north of Arch Street. It was of wood and must have been of a temporary character, and it may have been the same building described in the minutes as the "boarded meeting-house," and if so the first General Assembly of Pennsylvania met there. It was probably the scene of many of the exciting incidents connected with George Keith's separation. It is certain that on one occasion Robert Turner (who lived about one hundred yards away), a disciple of Keith, with one or more of his followers, entered the meeting-house and demolished the ministers' gallery. He was visited by Friends on account of his violent and disorderly action, but gave them no satisfaction, but stated that he always had a testimony against ministers' galleries, and that he was well satisfied with what he had done.

Bank Meeting House, Front St. New York.

In 1698 the first Bank Meeting-house had so far gone to decay that it was in danger of falling, and it was taken down. For some years afterward the lot remained vacant.

The meeting-house at Centre Square was commenced in 1685, and was located approximately where the southwest corner of the City Hall, at Broad and Market Streets, now stands. The procuring of mechanics to build, and of money to pay for the erection, severely taxed the resources of the colonists, but the structure was finally so far completed in 1689 that meetings could be held in it. It soon became apparent, however, that the building was so remote from the population, that Friends generally could not be induced to attend there, and it is evident that the project was a failure.

In 1700 the building was considered to be useless for meeting purposes, and it was sold to William Penn, who was then in the country, for one hundred pounds; but Friends soon after, whilst glad to have the money, were sorry that they had not the house, and

induced William Penn to give it back to them without consideration. Not long after, the building was pulled down and the materials removed to the Bank lot, where the house was again erected, it is believed, substantially as it was at Centre Square. It thus became the Second Bank Meeting, and it may be assumed that the pictures which we now have of that structure give us a fair idea of the appearance of both buildings.

The Second Bank Meeting was removed in 1790 and the premises sold. In its place what was called North Meeting was erected in Key's Alley, east of Second Street (Key's Alley was just south of Vine Street), partly on a lot which had been given to Friends by George Fox. That structure continued in use until the new meeting-house at Sixth and Noble Streets was completed. I remember being in the old meeting-house when a child and have a distinct recollection of the general appearance of the interior, though not sufficient to describe it in detail. The property was sold to the city of Philadelphia

for a public school-house, and the building was ultimately destroyed in the great fire of 1850. The last meeting in Key's Alley appears to have been held on Third-day, Eighth month 7, 1838. The new North Meeting at Sixth and Noble Streets was built in 1837, and the first meeting for worship was held there Eighth month 12, 1838, and the first Monthly Meeting, Eighth month 28, of the same year. It was sometimes called St. Isaac's, from Isaac R. Davis, a member of the meeting who had taken an active part in its erection.

In 1693 Friends purchased a lot of ground at the southwest corner of Market and Second Streets as a site for another meeting-house. The title to this ground was afterwards found to be defective, being only that of a squatter, which occasioned a good deal of uneasiness in the minds of Friends, but subsequently a quit-claim deed was obtained for a moderate consideration. Upon this lot in the Twelfth month of 1695 the erection of the "Great Meeting-house" was com-

menced, and it was so far completed in the Sixth month, 1696, that meetings were held in it. The architect of this building was Thomas Jaques, a French Huguenot, engaged in architecture, who seems to have brought his ideas of building from France. The character and appearance of the building are unknown, as it is believed no picture of it is in existence, and the descriptions in the minutes are wholly inadequate to give any idea of what it looked like.

In 1755 the "Great Meeting-house" was pulled down to make way for the "Greater Meeting-house," which was erected on the same site. Of this structure we have several authentic pictures giving an excellent idea of its appearance, which was not greatly different from that of the present Twelfth Street Meeting-house, erected in 1812, largely with the materials from the "Greater Meeting-house" which had then been pulled down.

The Hill Meeting, so called from its erection on or near Society Hill, was located on

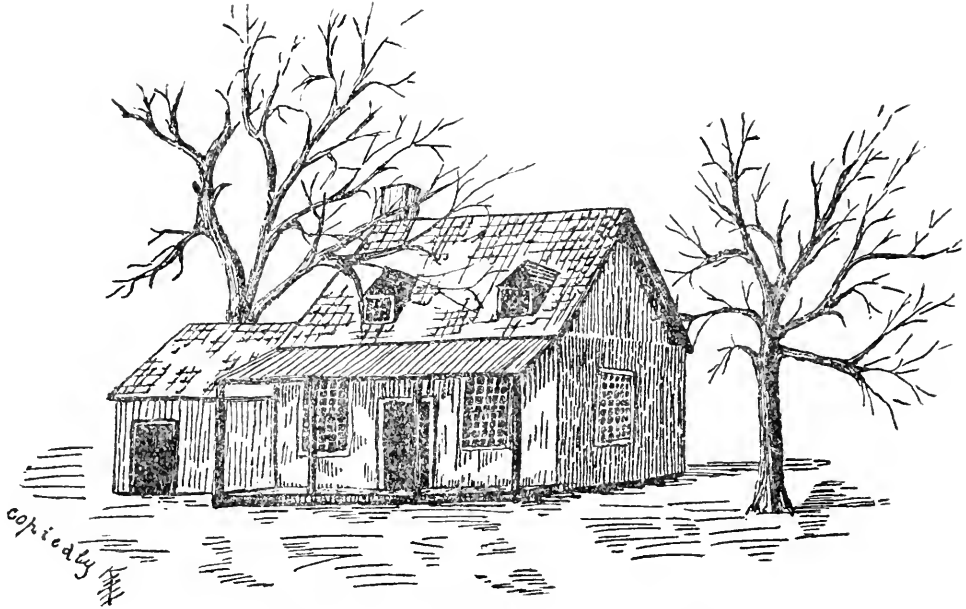
PINE STREET MEETING-HOUSE, BUILT 1753.

the south side of Pine Street, east of Second. The principal part of the site was bequeathed to Friends by the younger Samuel Powell, who died in 1747. The building was so far completed in 1753 that the Yearly Meeting was held in it in the Ninth month of that year. The holding of meetings there was discontinued soon after the erection of the present Orange Street Meeting-house in 1832, and an attempt was made to sell the ground, which failed, owing to a claim to it made by the heirs of Samuel Powell, Jr., who originally bequeathed it to Friends, which claim was, however, disallowed by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania by a decision handed down in 1851. The property was sold several years later, quite within the memory of some now living. We have authentic pictures of this meeting-house.

The Fourth Street Meeting-house was located on the east side of Fourth Street, just south of Chestnut, on the property belonging to the Forrest Trust. The Central National Bank, a part of the office build-

ing of the Trust, now stands on the former site of the meeting-house. It was built in 1763, with the object of providing a more convenient place for business meetings, and also to accommodate the Quarterly Youths' Meetings, which Friends then had a concern to hold for the benefit of the scholars attending the adjoining school. The building was placed with its broadside on Fourth Street, and with its gables facing north and south. It was finally removed in 1859, when the present building was erected.

Whilst Fairhill Meeting, strictly speaking, was not a city meeting, yet it was so closely associated with them that this paper would not be complete without some reference to it. George Fox had given a small plot at Fairhill to Friends, and it was somewhat increased in size by purchases of adjoining land. This plot was on Germantown Road, now Germantown Avenue, near Cambria Street. Here was early built the small structure known as Fairhill Meeting-house. It must have been erected prior to 1700, but I am



FRIENDS' FAIR HILL MEETING HOUSE, 1722–23.

unable to give the date. I have a picture of it as it appeared in 1722, and it was removed comparatively recently, being in the line of one of the streets. If anyone knows of a photograph of it, I shall be glad to be informed of the fact.

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the circumstances connected with the acquisition of the estate at Arch and Fourth Streets, and the erection of the buildings thereon. It came into possession of the Society in 1693-94. Of course before that date there was a burial place, and it was probably within the limits of this site, but it cannot be said with certainty that such was the case. The plot is L-shaped and contains about two and one-third acres. There are two small private graveyards adjoining. One of them, the Say Burial Ground, which is located exactly in the angle of the L, is about forty feet square, and is surrounded by a high brick wall. The other, known as the Fox or Jones Graveyard, lies to the east of the Say Ground, but does not adjoin it.

It is only about seventeen feet square, and is also closely walled. The access to both of these burial places is by a private alley running west from Third Street.

There is reason to believe that the west end of one of the lots on Third Street was also used as a private burial ground, as there is a monument there consisting of a marble slab, about six feet by two and a half feet, upon which are recorded the name and date of decease of a person who died in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Although Friends came into possession of the property at the date above mentioned, it was not until William Penn arrived in Philadelphia on his second visit that he confirmed his previous gift and the title was perfected.

On the "first day of October," 1701, William Penn issued his patent over his own signature, and with his great seal attached, by which the estate was conveyed to Edward Shippen and Samuel Carpenter in trust for Philadelphia Friends. This patent contains the following words:

"To the use and behoof of the people called Quakers, in Philadelphia, with whom I am now in communion, and who are and shall be in union and fellowship with the Yearly Meeting of the said people at London, for a burying place."

There has been considerable speculation as to the meaning of this clause and the reasons for introducing it. A little consideration of the circumstances of the time, however, will make it clear what William Penn's design was in placing this limitation upon the grant.

George Keith had occasioned a separation among Friends in 1691, as heretofore mentioned, and his followers set up a separate meeting, which claimed to be a meeting of Friends. This organization in the early part of the following year issued a number of documents in defense of its action, including a "Confession of Faith," and a few months afterwards what it called the second edition of the same work. A year or two after this, Keith returned to England and

appealed to London Friends to vindicate him in his action. He did not succeed in this effort, and in 1695 was disowned by London Friends. Failing to obtain any following in England, within a few years he renounced all claims to being a Friend and hired himself out to the Episcopalians to abuse the Quakers. The separate meeting in Philadelphia was continued, however, and although the disintegration soon began the organization survived for some years, having its meeting-house on the west side of Second Street, a little south of Arch Street. There is no doubt that William Penn's design was to have the grant for the Arch and Fourth Streets lot in such form that the Keithean Quakers could have no claim to it.

The whole plot at Arch and Fourth Streets has been used as a burying ground; much of it has had two layers of graves placed in it, and some parts even three. The remains of the worthies of more than a century lie within the enclosure which has suggested the name of the Westminster Abbey of the

Society of Friends. The number of interments has been variously estimated, and some have guessed as high as twenty thousand; but the question is one of pure speculation, as many were buried there besides Friends, and the names of these do not appear to have been included in the imperfect records kept by the Meeting. Many such were interred during the yellow fever visitation of 1793. In the erection of buildings on the plot extensive evidences of burials were disclosed. Many gravestones have been placed in the ground at early periods, some of which have been discovered from time to time when digging was necessary.

At the Monthly Meeting held in Fifth month, 1738, the question of the erection of a meeting-house on the burial ground at Arch and Fourth Streets was first suggested, and that location was then definitely settled upon. A subscription was started to pay for such a building, to which Friends in Barbadoes contributed fifty pounds. The erection of such a meeting-house was before the

meeting for several years, but was finally abandoned and does not appear to have received serious consideration again until 1795. To account for this the following reasons may be assigned. The gift of Samuel Powell, Jr., of the lot on Pine Street required that a meeting-house should be erected there. The Fourth Street Meeting-house had been built and the "Great Meeting-house" at Market and Second Streets had been removed and replaced by the "Greater Meeting-house" on the same site. The Bank Meeting had disappeared, and the commodious meeting-house on Key's Alley, known as the North Meeting, already alluded to, had taken its place. There had thus been a gradual increase of meeting-house accommodations, which probably kept pace with the growing number of Friends, and were sufficient without an additional structure at Arch and Fourth Streets. It must have become apparent, however, in 1795 that with the great increase of the number of Friends in the city, these accommodations were insufficient. Also that the

inconveniences of holding the Yearly Meeting of Women Friends remote from the building where the men convened, as had been the case, had become a serious question, and one that could not much longer be set aside, and it was then decided to take the preliminary steps necessary to carry out the plan which had been suggested in 1738. The following year the meeting directed that a plot in the burial ground should be staked out as the site of the building, and that no more interments should be permitted within its limits. The plot so staked out was two hundred feet long, east and west, and one hundred feet wide, north and south. Active steps appear to have been taken in the year 1800 to prepare for the erection of the centre building and east wing of the present structure. There is in my hands what was probably the earliest plan for the building, which seems to have been prepared by Owen Biddle in that year. It shows the ground-plan of the centre building and east wing, substantially as now erected, but no indications of

youths' galleries are found except at the north end. The west wing is shown by lead-pencil lines, apparently put in later. There is also an elevation showing the exterior of the whole building, almost exactly as we now see it.

Early in 1803 preparations were made for commencing the building. The foundations were laid in that year, and the structure was proceeded with in 1804. It was completed early in 1805. The first meeting held in it was the Women's Yearly Meeting, which convened there Fourth month 15, 1805. A careful count made at the time showed that between sixteen and seventeen hundred women Friends entered the meeting-room, and the crowd was so great that some went away.

The western wing was a later construction, though evidently a part of the original design. It is perhaps somewhat more commodious than the eastern wing, and better arranged, showing the results of the experience obtained in the meantime. It was first

occupied in 1811, when the Women's Yearly Meeting convened there on the morning of Third-day, the 16th of Fourth month, having the day before been held in the east wing. On Second-day morning the Men's Meeting had convened in the Key's Alley Meeting-house, where it had long been held, and adjourned to meet in the east wing at Arch Street, on Third-day, Fourth month 16th, so that on that date the whole structure was occupied for the first time by the Yearly Meeting.

The whole length of Arch Street Meeting-house, from east to west as we now see it, is one hundred and eighty feet. The two large meeting-rooms are eighty-five feet each, from north to south. The centre building is fifty-five feet from north to south. The structure thus embraces within the limits of the two large meeting-rooms and the centre building, ground of the area of considerably over a quarter of an acre, and is believed to be the largest meeting-house accommodations occupied by Friends in any

city in the world. If the descriptions of the Devonshire House Estate in London, where London Yearly Meeting is held, are correctly understood, it covers an area almost as great as all the ground owned by Friends there, upon parts of which are erected many other buildings besides the meeting-houses.

It has been suggested that some of my personal recollections as to the neighborhood of Arch Street Meeting might be interesting.

I was born in 1832, on the north side of Arch Street, a few doors above Fourth, almost under the shadow of the meeting-house, which was the most prominent object in view from our front windows, and I lived there till after I was twenty-two years old. My earliest recollection relative to meeting affairs was the visitation of Joseph John Gurney to Friends' families in Philadelphia, which was in the Second or Third month of 1838. I distinctly remember his visit to our family, and as I write can see him sitting at my mother's fireside in the very chair on which he sat when he picked

me up and placed me on his knee. My general recollection, however, begins about 1839, when I was seven years old. Our neighborhood was then a quiet residential district. Many Friends lived on Arch Street, on Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets. Of course there were no street-cars, not even an omnibus line, only one of which, or at most two, then existed in the city. The travel on the street of any kind of vehicles was not much more than occasional. There was a fine row of linden trees on the north side of Arch between Fourth and Fifth Streets which was ultimately destroyed by the devastation of the measuring worm. A single whale-oil lamp hung on a wooden post was located close to our residence, and was all that lighted the spot at night. The old-time watchman with his ladder and flaming torch could still be seen in the streets, and even the watchman's midnight cry had not entirely ceased. On summer evenings the older children sat on the front doorsteps and talked with their friends, and the younger

ones romped and played on the pavements. Meetings were held in the western wing of the meeting-house both on First-day mornings and afternoons, as well as in the middle of the week. In the morning the main floor of the building was well filled both on the men's and women's sides, and even the afternoon meetings, though smaller, were fairly well attended. At the head of the meeting was Thomas Kite, dressed in brown with knee breeches. At his side was the elder Samuel Bettle, who continued with us until the early sixties, and is no doubt remembered by many. Next to him was Thomas Stewardson, an elder, a veritable Quaker of the olden time, clad in a full suit of drab, with knee breeches and silver buckles on his shoes, probably at his knees also, but of this I am not sure. He wore a black hat of prodigious size, and when persons appeared in supplication he would stand holding his hat over his face. He died in 1841. Beside him was Caleb Pierce, also an elder, quite a contrast both in appear-

ance and character to the aged veteran next to him.

At the head of the second gallery was George Williams, a tall thin Friend, dressed in brown. Next to him, much shorter in stature, sat Benjamin Albertson, and beside him Nathan Kite, still shorter in stature and very broad, giving him a comical appearance, which provoked a nickname that I forbear to mention. Caleb H. Canby and William Hodgson, Jr., I think, were the only other Friends that sat on that seat. I well remember when Benjamin Albertson and Nathan Kite were appointed elders, and removed their seats into the top gallery.

At the upper end of the remaining seat facing the meeting sat Isaac R. Davis, a very fat man, who had recently brought his certificate from Northern District, and on the same bench John McCollin and Abraham Haines.

At the head of the women's gallery was, I think, Elizabeth Mason, a minister who rarely appeared in her own meeting, but was

said to preach at some length when visiting other meetings. Next to her was the sainted Catharine W. Morris, an elder, and for some time clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting. Born in high life and with social surroundings of the most attractive character, she early renounced the world to bear the banner of the cross. She lived till 1859, and was buried at the rear of the meeting-house, her body being carried from her house to the grave on a bier by a number of young men, the last funeral of its kind among Friends in Philadelphia. I think that Jane Pierce, also an elder, wife of Caleb, sat on the same bench.

The second gallery was filled throughout its whole length, but I can recall the name of only one, and she sat at the lower end. This was Hannah Logan Smith, who occasionally had a brief communication to make to the meeting. She would rise to her feet, remove her bonnet and hang it on the end of the gallery rail in front of her, and then deliver her message. When finished she would replace her bonnet and take her seat.

Meetings were sometimes held on First-day evenings by agreement between the four Monthly Meetings. The meeting-house was then lighted with oil lamps hung on the posts and on the walls between the windows. After some years gas was introduced. These evening meetings were largely attended, the room being often filled not only on the main floor, but many seats occupied in the youths' galleries. Friends generally from all parts of the city attended. The North Meeting Friends would come down past our house in squads of eight and ten at a time, closely following one another. William Evans and his wife Elizabeth generally came up from Orange Street, and were often engaged in the ministry, both being forcible and effective speakers.

I will now close this paper with a brief reference to West Philadelphia Meeting-house, at Powelton Avenue and Forty-second Street, which is the youngest of all.

In the early part of the last century William Hamilton owned a considerable body

of land in West Philadelphia. There he laid out what he called Hamilton Village, and for the purpose of encouraging the sale of the lots he donated plots of ground to various religious denominations as sites for meeting-houses. Among these Friends were included. The lot given to Friends was on the north side of Chestnut Street, I think, between Fortieth and Forty-first Streets, but it may have been further east. No meeting-house, however, was ever built there. This lot greatly improved in value and to such an extent that it was thought, in the sixties, were it sold the proceeds would be sufficient to purchase another lot in a less expensive neighborhood and erect a meeting-house upon it. It was also apparent that the Chestnut Street lot was very unsuitable for the purpose, being next to an edifice built by another religious denomination. It was decided to dispose of the lot, but it being supposed that this could only be done by order of the court, application was made to the Common Pleas for authority to sell.

The court referred the case to Joseph A. Clay, Esq., as Master, who was a gentleman of high character and a leading lawyer, also a personal friend of my own. He courteously showed me his Master's report recommending the sale, and one of the chief points which he referred to as ground for authorizing it was that the noise occasioned by the music and other ritual in the adjoining place of worship belonging to another denomination, rendered the site unsuitable for a meeting-house for a denomination whose worship was largely devotional silence, thus showing his appreciation of the character of our method. The court ordered the sale, which was consummated, and the present location with its grove of ancient oaks, probably the most attractive of any of our meeting-house sites in Philadelphia, was purchased to take its place. Several years afterward, in 1873, the present meeting-house was erected, which, as Friends already know, has been greatly enlarged and improved in the past year.

SOME PHILADELPHIA FRIENDS A CENTURY AGO.

BY SUSANNA S. KITE.

In looking over the annals of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting a century ago, we are impressed with the number of remarkable people that were active in the Society at that time—people of marked personality and perhaps of some we might say peculiarity—who walked among their fellowmen without fear or favor doing their Master's bidding, in many cases enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. In their religious visits to distant parts even delicate women often rode hundreds of miles on horseback, and encountered many perils both by land and by sea, so that it seems fitting for us at the present day to bring them to our remembrance. It is to a few of these

worthies that I wish to introduce you this afternoon.

It was for many years common within the limits of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to hold a meeting for worship the day after each of the country Quarterly Meetings. These gatherings were called Youths' Meetings. "On Sixth-day, the 11th of Eighth month, 1797, such a meeting was held at Abington. After the meeting had been sitting awhile in silence, a tall slim man in the preacher's gallery, whose head had for some time been bent down between his knees, slowly rose. His bent form, his silk cap and white dress might have drawn a smile from the heedless stranger who had dropped in out of curiosity or for amusement, but there was an earnestness about his countenance which bespoke attention and respect. He spoke briefly, yet forcibly. Apt at illustration and felicitous in expression, he caught and enchained the attention of all, strangers, children, babes in the truth, and fathers and mothers in the Church. Guiltless of writ-

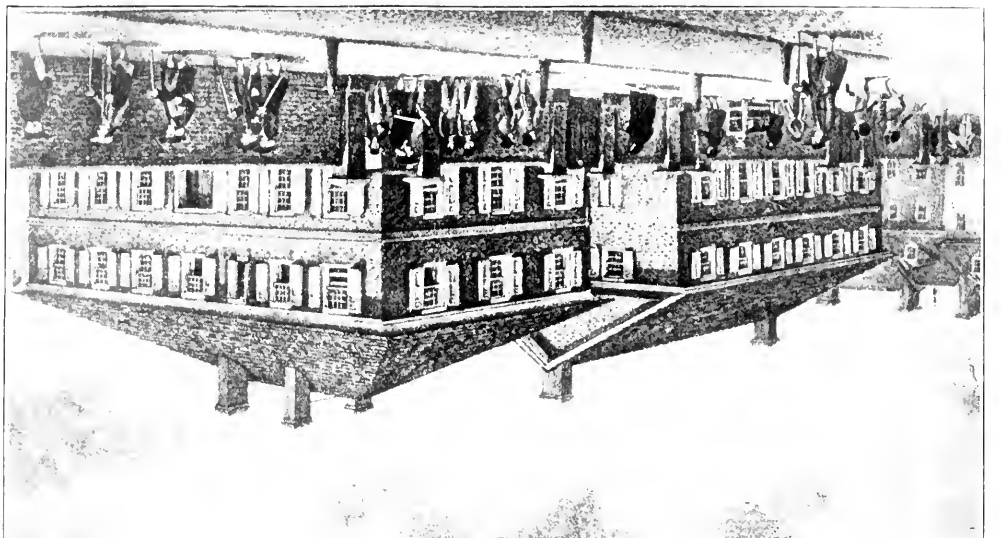
ing rhymes he was yet a poet, and throngs of bright images, carrying forcible conviction and Christian instruction flowed from his lips. His name was James Simpson. He sat down and a deep silence came over the tendered assembly. After a solemn pause Nicholas Waln rose to his feet. His voice seemed filled with Gospel love, to which his richly melodious voice gave utterance in tones so sweet, and yet so forcible, that every ear was pleased and every intellect was charmed, whilst the baptizing power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the word preached softened the hearts and moistened the eyes of those who were gathered. He stood and ministered for about an hour, after which he fell on his knees and lifted up the voice of prayer and praise. A solemnity very unusual covered those assembled as he ceased to offer on their behalf supplication to the God of mercy and grace. The solemnity continued and they remained sitting together, baptized into oneness of feeling. Those at the head of the gallery at last

shook hands in token that the meeting had closed. The solemnity was still unbroken, and no one felt like rising to depart. A pause ensued, Nicholas Waln then spoke out, 'Under the solemn covering we are favored with Friends had better separate.' A few young men near the door then rose to their feet, but the solemnity was still over them, and observing none follow their example they sat down again. Sweet, awful silence continued, until Richard Jordan, standing up, broke forth with the song of triumph which greeted the Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem, 'Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' A few sentences followed, setting forth the blessedness of these merciful visitations, these seasons of favor, wherein the Saviour makes Himself known amongst His people. He sat down again, and, shaking hands with the Friend beside him, the meeting closed. Most persons were so tendered in spirit that few words of conversation passed among them as Friend separated from Friend."

Perhaps the most remarkable of the three Friends mentioned in this extract, taken from "Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Friends," is Nicholas Waln. He was born at Fair Hill, near Philadelphia, in 1742. His father died when he was but eight years old, but he was carefully trained by his mother and uncle. He attended one of the William Penn Charter Schools, where he was well grounded in ordinary English branches, with Latin and Mathematics. After leaving school he studied law, devoting also some time to acquiring German, which was afterwards very useful to him in his law practice, as the fluency with which he spoke the language, his cheerful, pleasing and amiable manners, with their confidence in his integrity, made him a favorite with the Germans in Lancaster County and other German-speaking parts of the country near Philadelphia. He was naturally vivacious, witty and sarcastic, delighting in gaiety and merriment, but suffered nothing to interfere with his studies, and was admitted to the Bar

while yet under age. Not long after this he went to London to work in the Temple Law Schools. Here his early studious habits helped to preserve him from idle pastimes and the dissipations of a great city. The absence of his old associates gave him, during his hours of relaxation, leisure for reflection and retirement. His early religious impressions were here revived, and he determined to lead a different life. Upon his return home he resumed the practice of law and was very successful.

In 1772 he was favored with a renewed visitation. He says that his whole life, even every day of his life, was laid open and all his sins brought to remembrance. He had many times before consulted with flesh and blood, and reasoned away strong convictions, but now, through the power of constraining grace, he gave up to the heavenly visitation. He was so overwhelmed with sorrow and contrition that he was totally unable to attend to his business, and remained in this unsettled state of mind until he felt it his duty



one morning to go to the week-day meeting at the old Market Street House. Here he offered that remarkable prayer which has been so often quoted. It seemed to be altogether on his own account, but had a powerful effect on all present. He left his seat in the middle of the meeting, and going up to the preacher's gallery, there knelt down. For some minutes, although the congregation rose, no sound was uttered. At last, with a tremulous, but powerfully melodious voice, slowly, sentence by sentence, came forth his confession of his sins, and his dedication of himself and all that he had to the service of his Divine Master, even if it should lead to persecution or to martyrdom. Such was the solemnizing effect that his hearers were bathed in tears. After meeting he went quietly home and kept much retired for a time. He left the Bar, gave up his business, put on the garb of a consistent Friend, and in fervency of spirit sought to fill up his measure of religious duty. He was at this time about thirty years old.

He was a very remarkable man in many ways. His great natural talents had been highly cultivated and he had an unusual fund of humor and ready wit, and although he said a great many queer things, he very likely refrained from saying a great many more than some Friends ever thought of. One person said of him that, as a great man, a wise man, a learned man and a rich man, he knew no one possessed of such childlike simplicity as Nicholas Waln. Although a man of no ordinary talents, and of great influence in society, he was remarkable for his condescension. He was an original, being no man's copy and feared no man in doing what he thought was required of him. Faithful friends, and even children, loved him, but hypocrites feared him. Although a rich man, he lived a life of self-denial. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous, which sometimes led him to say things for which he was afterwards sorry. We are told that he appeared at all times with a smile of sunshine on his countenance. As an example of his aptness

of reply, the story is told that in his first case at the Bar he had his old law preceptor as his opponent. His old master, when endeavoring to reply to the clear legal argument and close reasoning of his late student, exclaimed, "Have I brought up a young eagle to pick out my eyes?" "No," forcibly and distinctly, though in an undertone, spoke out Nicholas, "to open them."

Arthur Howell, an eminent minister, was in the habit of leaving his communications till late in the meeting, often beginning when it was nearly time for meeting to close. One day Nicholas walked up to him and said,

"Arthur Howell, what's the reason,
Thou art always out of season?
When it's time to go away
Thou must always preach or pray."

A woman Friend, a minister, was subject to fits of depression. Nicholas calling one day to see her, she began, "Nicholas, I am going to die." "I think there is no doubt but thou will," said he, "and when thou gets

to heaven give my love to the Apostle Paul, and tell him I wish he would come back to earth and explain some of the hard things in his Epistles." His jovial humor roused her from her depression and set her to thinking of something besides herself.

Another Friend being ill, and thinking she was near her end, sent for Nicholas Waln. After sitting by her bedside awhile he began,

"There was an old woman lived under a hill,
And if she's not gone, she is living there still."

He then went on to preach her a sermon on placing her dependence on man, and pointed her to the true source of strength in such an hour. The Friend recovered.

On one occasion, Nicholas having gone somewhat astray in some way, the elders came to visit him. They rang and rang the front door bell, but no one came. At last the second-story window was opened and Nicholas put his head out and said, "Friends, you need not come in, the Master has been here before you."

And so we might go on with many more stories about him, for an unusual number seem to have been preserved.

He died in 1813, aged 71 years.

Of a very different sort was simple-hearted, humble-minded James Simpson. Some one has said, "We cannot think too lowly of ourselves if we do not despair." The same doctrine is characteristically set forth by our simile-loving Friend: "Friends, be as little as the snowbirds, and then the devil can't hit you."

He was born in Bucks County in 1743. Although a birthright member, as his mother after his father's death had married a Presbyterian, he was not brought up under Friendly influences. On the marriage of his elder brother he went to live with him, and became a diligent attender of Buckingham Meeting. He passed through deep baptisms, and when almost sunk into a state of despair he was favored with a wonderful visitation of Divine light to his soul. This he compared to the sun breaking from under

thick clouds and darting its rays into a room which might have been supposed to be clean and in order, discovering not only what was out of order, but also cobwebs, spiders and the insects that had taken an abode therein, thus showing there was much to be done within the chamber. This Light also showed him an extensive prospect of labor without, and he felt that he was commissioned to preach the Gospel to all mankind. From this time he believed that he was anointed, and in due season was called to the work of the ministry.

He was a man of feeble constitution, and he found that coopering, the trade in which he had been trained, was too hard work for him, so with a partner he opened a small retail store. It was customary at that time to sell liquor in all country stores, and the use of it was general among Friends. About this time James was engaged, in company with several other Friends, in paying family visits in Buckingham Monthly Meeting. Just before starting he had bought a hogs-

head of rum and left it for his partner to sell. But while sitting in a Friend's family, in the course of the visit, the idea of the harm this rum might do came before him with such force that he thought he must return home. But the other Friends were not so willing to let him go, so he went with them to several more places, but with the hogshead of rum continually before his view, he was silent. Soon all vocal service ceased, and they sat in several families in silence. At length they took an opportunity together to examine into the cause. James said that he was the Jonah, and upon being pressed to explain he told them about the rum. They allowed him to go home and tell his partner to be very careful to whom he sold it, and he determined that no more should be bought in his name, after which the visit was finished to satisfaction. Not long after this he gave up his store and tried brush-making, but was not very successful for the want of a good market. Feeling much discouraged as to the means of livelihood, he was instructed by

a dream. He thought he was working at a flour cask, when a man appeared to him and told him how foolish it was in him to do it when he knew it injured his health. James asked what he should do; the stranger then gave him full instructions as to how to make brooms, beginning with the raising of the broom corn, the preparation of it for use and the whole process throughout. When he awoke he thought this was so remarkable that he proceeded at once to carry out the directions he had received. He soon finished some brooms and took them to Philadelphia to sell, but purchasers were few as he stood in the market, and as he noticed other peddlers crying their wares through the streets, he concluded that it was only pride that was keeping him from doing the same thing. So he started out and soon met Nicholas Waln, who did not altogether approve of the plan and bought all his brooms. But he seems to have continued the business notwithstanding Nicholas's advice to the contrary. After a time he moved to Hatboro, within the

limits of Horsham Meeting, and was married to Martha Shoemaker in 1790. He travelled about in the ministry to a considerable extent, making sometimes long journeys and frequently appointed meetings for those of other societies, or among those who seldom went to any place of worship. His meetings were always largely attended and his ministry was often very remarkable. Those not our members often attended Horsham Meeting in order to hear him speak, and some said that even if he said nothing they were satisfied just to see him. He used, as we have before said, wonderfully beautiful and often poetic language, delighting in metaphor and simile, often using the most simple things as illustrations. He was often himself instructed by dreams and visions, and he had intended to have the most remarkable of these written down for the help and encouragement of others, but unfortunately it was never done.

Though endowed, as we have seen, with a remarkably baptizing gift in the ministry,

he was often greatly depressed. Once in the course of a religious visit, after attending a meeting at Springfield, Delaware County, he was visited with deep discouragement, and said he must go at once home, thinking himself unfit for the work of a minister of the Gospel. His companion said that they had appointed a meeting for the next day at Providence and must attend it. He passed a most distressing afternoon and night, and arose the next morning still determined to go home. But the friend suggested that they sit down together and wait upon the Lord for counsel in the matter. In a short time James, with a bright countenance and cheerful voice, expressed his willingness to go to the meeting, saying, "My Master has been here and said to me, 'Go, and I will send my servant Eli Yarnall, and he shall come and pray for thee.'" And the Master did send Eli Yarnall, who very unexpectedly felt a call to go to Providence, not knowing of the appointed meeting. He left his ploughing, however, and went, get-

ting there a little late. He was soon called to intercede for his friend, that his faith might be strengthened and help given him to prosecute his religious service. This help was granted and James soon arose and preached a powerful sermon, many being greatly affected and contrited to tears.

The latter part of his life was spent in Frankford, where he died in the Fourth month of 1811, aged about 68 years. He was a tall, thin man, six feet or over, and usually dressed in drab. He was very interesting in conversation, especially with young people, and has left to us a beautiful example of humility and Christian simplicity.

Although Richard Jordan was not a member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting till after 1804, he seems so closely connected with it that a few words about him do not seem out of place. He was born in Virginia, though all his earlier life was spent in North Carolina. He passed through many deep baptisms before he was made willing to lay all at the feet of his Master and give himself up

to do His will. For a long time he thought he would be as good as he could be without preaching, but he found that would not do, and he began to preach when he was twenty-five years old. He married Pharaby Knox, "a young woman," he says, "that had sustained an amiable character in the world, and whose religious education far exceeded mine." She was a true helpmeet to him, and had very often to stay by the stuff alone during his frequent visits on religious service. When he was married, his father offered him several slaves, but he felt best satisfied not to take them, which displeased his father; and at different times later on in the course of his travels we find him much concerned for the welfare of the colored race. On one of his earlier religious visits, upon reaching Baltimore, he found the small-pox prevailing in the city, and upon weighing the matter carefully, and James Carey having offered his house for the purpose, Richard and his companion were inoculated for the small-pox. This detained them

about six weeks. His longest absence from home was during his visit to Europe from 1799 to 1803, during which time he says he travelled 15,000 miles, and encountered many perils both by land and by sea.

Not long after his return he felt that it would be right for him to remove to Hartford, Conn., which he did, and after remaining there some years he came to live in Camden, N. J. He was a plain, old-fashioned Friend and lived in great simplicity. Doubtless many of you are familiar with the picture of him, a short, rather stout man, walking along his lane, with his simple little home in the background.

He was often favored with a powerful manifestation of Divine grace in the exercise of his gift as a minister. During one of the visits of William Williams, of Tennessee, to Philadelphia, whilst sitting at the house of the Friend where he lodged, a person present mentioned that Richard Jordan had been silent for a considerable time in his own meeting. "Perhaps," said William, "he

is making a convert." On being asked to explain, he said that when he and Richard lived near together in North Carolina, a neighbor of theirs, a man of note, conceived a great inclination to hear Richard Jordan preach, and for this purpose attended several First-day meetings, but our Friend was silent. "Well," thought the neighbor, "Mr. Jordan only preaches on week-days," so on week-days he came to meeting, but Richard remained silent. This continued for several weeks, until the neighbor found his desire to hear the preacher subside, but another work had been imperceptibly going on, and he now felt that he was not at liberty to neglect the attendance of either First- or week-day meetings, and he became convinced of Friends' principles. After the desire of hearing Richard had been succeeded by a willingness to listen to the "still, small voice," the seal was removed from Richard's lips and he began again to preach.

One day a Friend was driving down the pike near Richard's house at Newton, and

saw him wheeling his wife Pharaby down the lane in a wheelbarrow. Upon asking what was the matter, Richard said she had been sick and he thought a little fresh air would do her good, and as he had no carriage he concluded to use the wheelbarrow.

In a letter written from Philadelphia, while there on a religious visit, he says, "Notwithstanding the prevalence of worldly greatness and grandeur among many professors here, we find a sympathizing remnant; our way through this place has been much easier than we expected."

In another letter dated New Castle, England, Seventh month 28, 1800, he says, "Friends are very kind, individuals offer me assistance—what I suppose they would think a better polish—but I don't seem free to accept this part of their kindness. They seem also to make some difficulty of my drab hat, but have not as yet forbid the use of it, so I go on much in the old way." He lived till 1826, his faithful Pharaby having died nearly two years before.

A writer signing himself "Lang Syne," thus gives his recollections of the preachers of the latter part of the eighteenth century. He mentions James Pemberton, Nicholas Waln, Daniel Offley, Arthur Howell, William Savery and Thomas Scattergood as the "shining lights" of those days. "From the preachers' gallery, as seen through 'the mist of years,'" James Pemberton sat at the head of the gallery, an immovable figure, very erect and resting with both hands crossed on the top of his cane.

"Arthur Howell always sat shrouded beneath his hat drawn over his face, and the upper part of his outside coat elevated to meet it, like unto a prophet 'in his mantle wrapt,' and isolated in thought from all sublunary things."

James was the only one of the three brothers, Israel, James and John Pemberton, who lived into the nineteenth century. They were all remarkable men, influential in the affairs of the Colony of Pennsylvania and were among the Friends banished to

Virginia in 1776. They formed the "Friendly Association" for preserving peace with the Indians. Israel and James were active in helping the oppressed blacks, and both were at one time members of the State Legislature. James was a man of mild disposition, and of great intellectual powers highly cultivated and of ample pecuniary means. Endowed with sound judgment, and influenced by large benevolence, he cheerfully devoted his powers, his time and his substance to promote the good of his fellow-creatures. To the various benevolent institutions of Philadelphia he was a liberal benefactor, and in their management he took an active share. He was an elder, for many years clerk of the Meeting for Sufferings and filled with ability many other offices in our religious society.

Mary Pryor, a minister from England, writing to her husband from Philadelphia in 1798, tells him that she is making her home with James and Phoebe Pemberton, "who appear as a prince and princess both

outwardly and inwardly," and in mentioning the different Friends who went with her in her different services, she says, "I am favored with companions far, very far, superior to myself in my little visits. There are Samuel Smith, Samuel Emlen, Rebecca Jones, dear Nicholas Waln, Elizabeth Foulke (whom she calls 'my Betsy') and most days my landlady, Phœbe Pemberton, and her choice husband." She also expresses a fear lest she should be spoiled by the attentions received in their most comfortable home. In a letter dated Third month 15th, she writes, "All my pleadings could not get me excused from a fire in my bed-room nights and mornings."

James Pemberton died in 1809 at the advanced age of 85 years.

This same Friend, Mary Pryor, in another letter says, "Yesterday I dined at Arthur Howell's. I think he may be said to be 'zealous for the Lord of Hosts.'" He began to preach before he was 21 years old. He was often remarkably led to minister to

special cases, of which a number of instances have been recorded. His public ministry was peculiar. His voice was loud, and as he only gave utterance to a few syllables with each breath his communications appeared somewhat abrupt. He was often led to attend the funerals of Friends, and not many took place in the city among his acquaintances that he neglected. The story of the wonderful way in which he was led to go to the funeral of a young woman in Germantown, who had been very unjustly accused of a crime, and who had faith to believe that one of the Lord's servants would be sent to her funeral to testify to her innocence, is too familiar to be repeated here. He seemed at times to be gifted with prophetic insight. On one occasion an English woman Friend here on a religious visit, was ready to return home, and went with Arthur Howell on board a vessel just ready to sail to see if she would feel easy to take passage on it. That appears to have been the custom with Friends preparing to cross

the ocean on religious service. Arthur became distressed and agitated, and drawing a circle with chalk upon the deck, he said, "I can see as plainly as I can see that ring that this is neither the time nor the vessel." The Friend did not take passage and the vessel was never afterwards heard from.

A young woman went with some of her companions into Friends' Market Street Meeting-house, out of curiosity, being in the city to see the sights. A minister from England sat at the head of the women's gallery, and her sweet solemnity of appearance attracted the attention of the young woman. She kept saying over to herself, "I wish I was like that lady!" At length Arthur Howell rose in the gallery, and in an energetic manner and sounding voice spoke out, "Leave off wishing and desiring and seek for thyself." Of course she was very much startled and wondered how that strange gentleman could know what she was thinking about. But this short sermon set her to thinking seriously, and she became eventually


Smr. 1723 Gb. 1909.

a useful member of the Society of Friends. Arthur Howell, as well as many other Friends, was active in doing what he could to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow-citizens during the various visitations of the yellow fever in Philadelphia. The following letter from him to his cousin, Col. Joshua L. Howell, shows what he felt to be his duty in the matter:

"PHILA., Eighth month 13th, 1798.

"*My dear Cousin:* My lot from present prospects will be to remain in this city. As thou knowest, dear Cousin, when a soldier in the outward army is fixed at his post by his commanding officer, however dangerous it may appear to him or others, it is death to him to desert it, and so do I view my present situation, and unless I receive a command from my dear Master and Captain to move therefrom I dare not, however hazardous my stay may to myself or others appear. His power is the same it ever was (it is not diminished), whatever the sons of defection may think. He preserved Daniel in the lion's den and Shadrach, Meshach and

Abednego in the fiery furnace; and He can, and I firmly believe will, preserve me and all those whose whole trust and confidence is fixed on Him. Glory to His ever-blessed name, saith my soul, in that He has redeemed me from all sublunary enjoyments, and my soul from the power of the grave, so that to me death has no terror, neither believe I will the grave have any victory. That it may be thy case as well as mine, and all mankind universally, by a steady attention to the precious gift of Divine Grace, is the earnest desire of thy affectionate cousin,

"ARTHUR HOWELL."

Although he did valiant service during this awful period, he entirely escaped the disease and lived till 1816.

Another Friend who was very active in this way was Thomas Scattergood. He was at all times characterized by a desire to do good to his fellow-creatures. This he carried into all the relations of life—in his treatment of his employees as well as in his intercourse in his family circle. We read of his labors among Friends and others at the

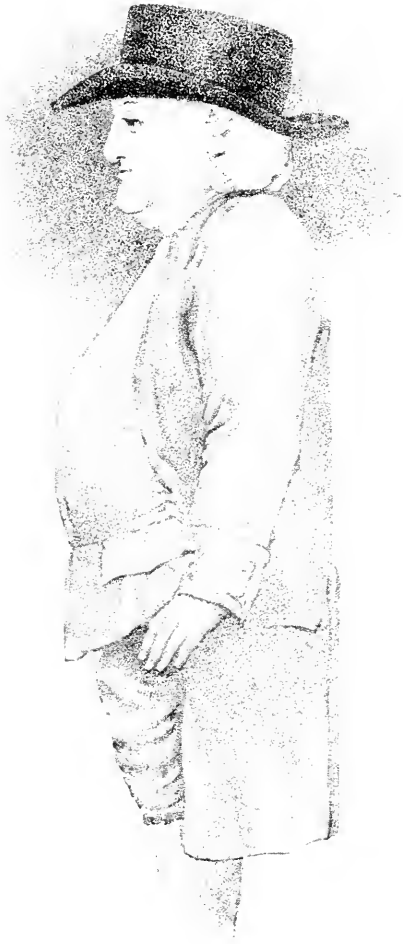
time of the yellow fever in 1793, and in 1798, while he was in England on a religious visit his eldest daughter, a young girl of sixteen died of the disease. His wife and son were also ill at the same time, but both recovered.

The Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders met as usual on Seventh-day, Ninth month 22d, 1798, and the meeting for Discipline met on Second-day and adjourned to the Twelfth month following, but in the short time that Friends from the country were in the city a number took the disease and several died after their return home. After this it was concluded to hold the Yearly Meeting in the spring instead of the fall, as being a time less liable to the fever, and from 1799 to the present time the third Second-day in the Fourth month has been the opening day of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Among the worthies who were prominent a century ago we have many interesting and instructive anecdotes of both George Dillwyn

and William Savery. In 1784 George Dillwyn went to England on a religious visit and was there most of the time for eighteen years. His wife, Sarah, an excellent woman, went with him. When he was about starting she went into the Men's Monthly Meeting in Burlington and asked the advice of the meeting whether she had better go with him or not, saying, "I am resigned to go, or resigned to stay, but most resigned to go." A large part of his service was in and near London. He and Thomas Scattergood were there together, and Thomas felt it right to appoint an evening meeting at which, however, he was silent and George had all the vocal service. When the meeting was about to close Thomas arose and said the language had been running through his mind for some days, "What if thou shouldst appoint a meeting for thy elder brother?" Thus these two brethren labored together in their Master's service.

William Savery was an active, energetic laborer in whatever his Master called him to



do. He said there was no room in the Lord's house for the slothful, and his actions showed that he believed in the truth of the assertion. During the visitations of yellow fever in 1802 and 1803 he devoted himself to caring for the sick and afflicted. Upon one occasion Thomas Scattergood felt a strong inclination to be present at the execution of two criminals in Philadelphia, which hardly seemed like a religious concern. He went to his friend, William Savery, who was at work in his currier's shop and found him disposed to accompany him. They watched the approach of the hurdle in which the criminals were placed, which they closely followed for some time and then got upon it. They felt as if they were dreadfully hardened, never having been sensible of the like before; but they afterwards believed that this feeling arose from a deep sense given them of the state of the minds of the criminals. When they arrived at the platform they ascended the ladder after the poor men, and directly after the execution William Savery

felt a powerful impression to address the multitude assembled. The state of his mind immediately changed into one of deep compassion, so much so that it was with difficulty that he could forbear weeping. It was observed that many among the crowd wept. As soon as he had done Thomas Scattergood followed, and very impressively and powerfully pointed out to the people the evil of giving way to the first temptation to do wrong, closing the whole with supplication. The time thus occupied was about an hour and the crowd quietly dispersed.

Towards the close of the Revolution there was a remarkable visitation to the young men of Philadelphia, and a remarkable closing in with the offers of mercy. Jonathan Evans, strong in mind and decided in character, turned from the evil courses of his youth and offered his talents and energy to the service of the Lord who had by the mighty hand of His Providence brought his soul out of darkness into His marvellous light. One day in search of something he

wanted, he was looking over the contents of an old chest when he picked up a book, and on opening it his eye caught the words, "The Light of Christ." He threw it down and went away. But he could not forget the words, so he decided to examine the book further, and found it to be William Penn's "No Cross, No Crown." He read the book and was thoroughly aroused to a sense of his condition, and sought earnestly for pardon for his past sins. As he could no longer enjoy the company of his former associates he kept much retired. At last Daniel Offley, thinking he had a melancholy fit, tried to rouse him from it, but Jonathan Evans so clearly set forth his true state that Daniel Offley was himself convinced and became a minister in 1781. He did not live into the nineteenth century, as he died of the yellow fever in 1793, when but 37 years old. Jonathan Evans was drafted as a soldier and was confined sixteen weeks in prison for refusing to serve. When but twenty-four he was made overseer of the Southern District

Monthly Meeting and later an elder, and for many years he was clerk of the Yearly Meeting, as was also his wife Hannah, the daughter of David Bacon. She was said to be a woman of a kind and loving spirit, and looked faithfully after the health and training of her children. Being a skillful nurse, her warm sympathies often led her to minister to the sick and afflicted. Jonathan Evans was well versed in the Discipline of our Society. William J. Allinson, writing of the close of the Yearly Meeting in 1836, thus speaks of him: "Next sat the man whose first name is sufficient designation in all the Society of Friends. As he leaned upon his cane he reminded you of Rome and everything that is rendered venerable by antiquity and stern endurance. His very appearance was a grand moral spectacle, the more so to those who knew him. Versed in all the doctrines, opinions and usages of the Society, he detected at a glance the first appearance of whatever is unseemly. The Discipline is an open book before him and he is an oracle

to expound its meaning. When he speaks, and he is not lavish of his speeches, the clerk may safely make a minute, for the question is settled; Jonathan is not mistaken. Not that he assumes dictation, not that he wishes to carry his point, but, as I said, the Discipline is an open book before him, and he knows all about it without thinking twice.

"Be it that he is fallible like the rest, he has overcome more than almost any ten men had to contend with. When he is gathered to his fathers the Society will miss him, and then, and not till then, will they appreciate his worth."

Rebecca Jones was a very interesting character in the early days. Her mother was a zealous member of the Episcopal Church, and tried to bring her daughter up in the same profession. But when quite a child, she often asked permission to go to Friends' meetings and her mother did not object. When asked why she liked to go, she said that Friends were a good people and she liked their way, for there was not so much

rising up and sitting down as there was at church. She did not care for their preaching, but was always best pleased with silent meetings. She became much exercised in mind, not knowing what to do, and finally concluded to write to an English Friend, Catharine Payton, then visiting in Philadelphia. She slipped her letter without a signature into the Friend's hand just as she was going into meeting one day, and when Catharine Payton asked Anthony Benezet if he could tell who wrote the letter, he answered, "I don't know, unless it be romping Beck Jones." She was at this time about sixteen years old. She was afterwards an active member of the Society, a minister for over fifty years. She was a teacher for many years and at the same time active in her calling as a minister. She went on a religious visit to England in 1784, crossing the ocean in the same ship with Samuel Emlen and George Dillwyn, and did not return till 1788. In 1793 she was very low with the yellow fever, but she was raised up

again, and though often in feeble health she lived till 1818. She was one of the first seven women Friends on the Westtown Committee, and was very active in getting the new house ready for occupancy in 1799. In her early days as a member of the Society she is described as "a sober maiden with cap on head and kerchief pinned with mathematical precision. Bright-eyed intelligence and vivacity of spirit, chastened by Christian watchfulness and circumspection beamed in her countenance, where energy and decision sat enthroned. She was a minister of the Gospel, youthful yet wise, fervent yet cautious, nicely balancing submissiveness to her elder Friends with independence of character, humility with self-respect. At that time she was the hope of the aged, in after life the veneration of the young."

But time warns us that we must draw this rambling account to a close, leaving unmentioned many worthies who were useful in their day and generation, the descendants of many of whom are here to-day, and who,

taking the places of their ancestors, are filling up their measure of usefulness and making history for future generations.

The following is quoted from the editorial in the *Friend* of Fifth month 14th, 1904:

"Not non-conformity with the common drift gave our standard-bearers their authority, but Truth's authority gave them their non-conformity. 'Ye shall receive authority after the Holy Spirit is come upon you.' In that Divine influence and power consisted their authority; and into that must we with as single an eye and heart return if we are to have the same authority again."

POEM.

BY FRANCIS B. GUMMERE.

I.

Song calls for heroes, bids the thunder chime
  Subservient rhythm, and on a cloud of need,
That frowns its wrath over some perilous time,
  Writes in swift lightning runes of noble deed.

Song throbs to the indomitable heart
  Of martyred Sidney, and the word he sped
When his grim headsman, loath to play the part,
  Held back the axe, bent o'er the block, and said,—

Missing the message men give ere they die,
"Wilt speak? Wilt stand? *Wilt rise again?*" But like
Arrow or levin came the stern reply:
"Not till the general resurrection! Strike."

Song haunts old palaces, cathedral choirs,
Majestic ruins, mountain crags, the dome
Of sunset vista, and where beacon-fires
Leap from their cliffs and red the tumbling foam.

Song haunts the solitudes of glorious death,
As where, from barren hills to barren waves,
The heart of Scotland sighs and Scotland's breath
Moans dirges o'er the covenanters' graves.

II.

What, then, have we to win the grace of song?
What deed, what passionate word, what storm of tears,
What joy exultant flashes out along
The dim procession of our silent years?

What champions greet us from that petty
strife,
Trim heroes of the basket and the store?
What solitude, what majesty of life,
In this mid-city's dull and futile roar?

And here! Vain quest for organ-music
streaming
With the long chant, for carved and
vaulted fane,
For marbled memories and legends gleaming
Purple and crimson from the sun-flushed
pane!

No chapel solitudes; no mourners kneeling
With sigh and tear before that piteous
form,
To hear His voice of consolation stealing
As once upon the Galilean storm. . . .

III.

House of our fathers, and have these thy
walls
No word of answer for the singer's quest,
No sudden, spirit-traced memorials
Of lives that peered the bravest and the
best?

Of struggles in the wilderness; the word
  Of courage flashed from clash of doubt
    and faith;
The cry of agony; the whispers heard
  From souls triumphant in the gates of
    death?

And we, shall we who hold thy memory
    dear,
  And praise our heritage, and round thee
    throng,
Tune no brave chorus for thy hundredth
    year,
  Compel no paean on the lips of song?

Nay. Song for thee has no insistent strain,
  And writes no epic of thy fates. A thrill
Of deeper harmony shall make us fain
  To stand before thee reverent and still,—

As mountaineers, once gained their cloud-
    girt islands,
  Above the mists, above the broken light,
Take into deeps of silence out of silence
  The ministrations of the infinite.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF YEARLY MEETING WEEK—PAST AND PRESENT.

BY FRANCES TATUM RHOADS.

In sharp contrast with the familiar association of "Yearly Meeting" with "merely eating," are these words from a recent editorial in *The American Friend* on the "Importance of Christian Fellowship":

"In the early days of our Society (note the name) fellowship and social intercourse were the most prominent thing. If anybody suffered, it was an affair of the whole group. Everybody knew everybody. It was a *society*. The members felt themselves united in a great living, active fellowship. There has sometimes been a disposition to laugh at the monthly and quarterly meeting dinners, and at the clannishness of Friends as it

was in the days of our youth. These things were just as important as Discipline or Queries. They did more to hold the Society together than any legislation of business meetings did."

A better understanding of the significance of this contract can be reached if we study somewhat in *detail* the social life of our Yearly Meeting during three periods: that of a century ago, that of what we may call the middle period and that of the present day.

Perhaps the most complete picture of the social life of Philadelphia Friends a century ago, is to be found in the Memorials of Rebecca Jones, a book that will amply repay the study of the young Friends of these times.

Of her it might have been said, as it was of another prominent member of this Yearly Meeting, that she was "good for *both* worlds." Her letters and journal convey not only her deep spiritual exercises and those of her friends, but also many details of

their daily lives, and of the conduct of her school, her "little shop" and her "humble habitation on Brook's Court, convenient to North Meeting."

Her first appearance in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was in 1755, when she was but sixteen; not far removed from that romping girlhood which had earned her the title of "wild Becky Jones." She had attended meetings often before this time, but was not aware that only members attended the sittings of the Yearly Meeting. However, "seeing so many plain Friends she felt uneasy, and as if she had no business there, which was increased by a whispering she fancied she heard near the clerk's table. Catharine Kallendar, leaving her seat, went upstairs and sat by her, and seeing her about to rise, she laid her hand upon her kindly, and presently they both went out, when Catharine informed her that those meetings were exclusively for members, but she believed that the time was not far distant when it would be proper for her to attend them."

This wise and gentle dealing had the desired effect, and Rebecca Jones notes in her journal, "Though I left the meeting in much distress, yet no hardness got in. . . . My love rather increased, not only to this Mother in Israel, but to the whole flock." And it was only three years later, in 1758, that she made her first appearance in the ministry, when "some Friends spake encouragingly to me," she says, "and I met with no opposition."

It is interesting to note her own encouraging attitude toward the young people of the Yearly Meeting, when years after she writes to Henry Drinker, "but, dear Henry, thou knowest we old people cannot see as in the days of our youth, and therefore it is a comfort that there is a lively prospect of a succession among the dear youth. May they be kept down to the immortal root in themselves and preserved as fruit-bearing branches, is my prayer for them."

We may mark as a characteristic of the Friends of a century ago the use made of

their young members in the work of the Church, when they showed a right fitness for it. Jonathan Evans was made an overseer at 24 and an elder at 36 years of age.

John Smith, who married the daughter of James Logan, was made clerk of the Yearly Meeting when but 19. A German Friend, who had gone out while the matter was before the meeting, coming in and hearing its decision, paused as he passed John Smith on his way to his seat, and clapping him upon the shoulder, said, in an audible and emphatic voice, "Stay dy mind upon de Lord, John!"

Perhaps there is no more striking characteristic of the life of that time than the social visiting which was abundantly practiced without the aid of any meeting's committee. Elizabeth Drinker's journal is much taken up with lists of their callers, and the people whom they visited. When an evening passed with "none but our own family" she makes a marked entry, as of a most uncommon thing.

The Philadelphia of that day was like a

country town. Small wooden benches by the door steps on Arch Street were filled on warm evenings with family groups greeting acquaintances who passed by.

On the nineteenth of Sixth month, 1804, occurred the death of William Savery, "our endeared brother," Rebecca Jones calls him. And he was endeared, not only to Friends, but to many others in Philadelphia.

An incident which occurred soon after his death, gives an interesting picture of the time. In Front Street, opposite the end of Brook's Court, stood Peter Brown's blacksmith shop, where was employed as foreman one Jacob B——, an elderly man, and a sober-minded Methodist, who had lost three daughters in the yellow fever epidemic of 1802. William Savery had in this, as in many other instances given his personal attention at the risk of his life. A few days after his decease this man went up the court to fill his noggin at Rebecca Jones' pump, which, on account of the quality of its water, was resorted to by persons from many

squares distant. Seeing her seated by her open window, he thus accosted her, "May be you won't have any objections to hearing a hymn I've made to sing over my work," adding that "it helped his mind to soar while his hands were engaged in necessary labor." He then proceeded to sing his verses with much emotion, which, with no claim to poetical elegance, contained a warm expression of regard for the virtues and value of William Savery; clearly showing that a memorial to the worth of this "disinterested and faithful minister of Christ" lived in the hearts of others than his own people.

Under date of Fifth month 1st, 1805, Rebecca Jones writes, "Since the last note our Yearly Meeting has been held, and though throughout it was a low time, yet a good degree of weight and solemnity attended, and I trust some strength and encouragement were received by the true burden-bearers. The Women's Meetings were held in the new house built for that

purpose in Arch Street burying grounds, and were very large. It was said by some men Friends that took the account, that 1,600 were accommodated in it. G. Dillwyn and W. C—— made us a visit and were lively in their service. Charity Cook and Ann Alexander visited the Men's Meeting, in which the latter had lively testimony. I was marvellously supported in sitting so many long meetings, and for which I desire to be humbly thankful to my ever-blessed helper and sure Friend. The meeting closed on Seventh-day about 11 o'clock, but not as soon as we wished and hoped it would."

She adds, "yesterday a meeting for other societies was held at the Arch Street house at C. Cook's desire." And, again, "Ann Alexander had a large meeting for the inhabitants of this city in our new house on Arch Street and was greatly favored therein."

On the 9th of Fifth month, 1805, was held the Quarterly Meeting for the black people, which was, Rebecca Jones records, "the last

meeting of the sort, as Friends, upon weighty deliberation, were united in the belief that the service of them was over, and they have now several places of worship of their own, of which they were very judiciously and affectionately informed by Nicholas Waln and the meeting ended with solemnity."

Thus the Friends of that time had their share of the "Race Problem" to work out. Many of their trusted servants were found among the colored people, and were made literally a part of the family. When Rebecca Jones writes to John and Hannah Pemberton she sends a message of love to Oranock, their "black man." There were colored Friends and others who habitually attended Friends' meetings. In some houses, as that on Key's Alley, there were separate seats for them, and our late Friend, Israel Johnson, used to bear his testimony against this by sitting with them.

An interesting item in connection with this custom refers to Capt. Paul Cuffee, the story of whose life is told in one of our

Friends' tracts. By his own exertions he prospered greatly in business, and was in 1806 the owner of a ship, two brigs and several smaller vessels, beside other property. He used his means largely in the help of his poor African brothers, making two voyages to Sierra Leone in his own vessel, manned by colored sailors. We are told in the account of his life that "he was warmly attached to the Society of Friends, of which he was a member, and sometimes expressed a few sentences in their meetings which gave general satisfaction." On the occasion of the incident referred to above, he left his seat, walked up into the gallery to a place at the head of the meeting and, standing there, preached a remarkably powerful sermon. At its close William Savery moved his place, and touched his arm, directing him to a seat beside himself, but Paul Cuffee made a gesture of dissent and walked back, down the aisle, to his place among his own people.

That the standard of "plain dress" a century ago differed from what has been cus-

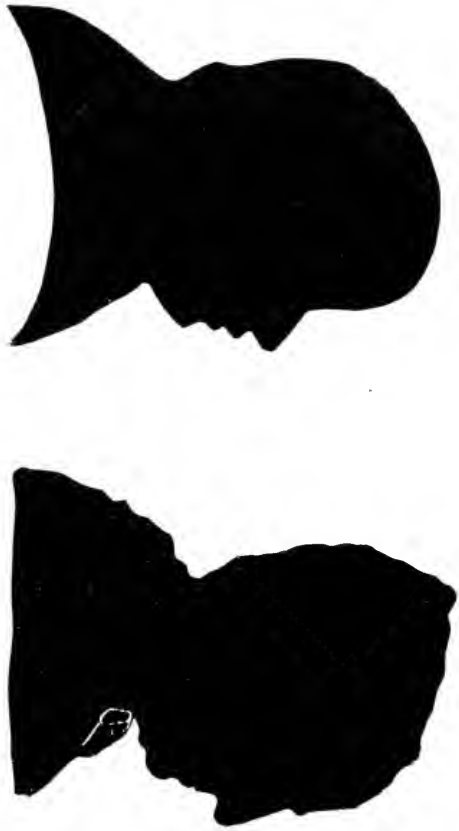
tomary in the Yearly Meeting since, as well as from that which had preceded it, is shown in a quotation from an old diary given in Amelia M. Gummere's book on Quaker costume, which narrates how "Martha Routh, a minister of the Gospel from old England . . . was the means of bringing bonnets into fashion for our leading Friends." After some further details concerning "the hoods on the cloaks of our overseers, and other active members," which "have increased to an alarming height or size," the extract concludes, "how unlike the dress of their grandmothers!"

We are told that Rebecca Jones' bonnet had "a soft crown and a very large cape, spreading in three points, one down the middle of the back and one reaching to the tip of each shoulder."

An imposing structure this must have been, but not so graceful in outline or lovely in coloring as the bonnets of a later period. When we hear the tone in which recollections of the *white,* plain bonnet are uttered,

we feel that there must be a fine choice of words to paint it as it was. "Ah," said a Friend whose hair is silvery now, "if thee could only get some one to describe those white, plain bonnets to thee! I used to sit at my uncle's front window when I was a boy to watch them; Arch Street was lined with them as the young women hurried by to meeting." His tone said more than his words, and one could almost fancy them, gleaming like white lilies, and seeming to bend and sway, like lily-stalks in the breeze, as their wearers nodded to friends or chatted together. No wonder that, as tradition says, the street boys sometimes ran on ahead and then faced about to catch a glimpse of some especially fair girlish face in its pure framing. The gayer Jersey girls had sometimes a hint of pink coloring, like the arbutus of their own woods.

Of the dress of the men Friends less account is preserved. It is recorded of the personal appearance of Jonathan Evans, "His remarkable figure is not easily forgot-



ten, being aptly described by Henry Cope as reminding of a Roman senator. Dressed in a long broadcloth coat and knee-breeches to match, ribbed stockings, shining shoes and silver buckles, overshadowed by a broad-brimmed beaver hat, with a cane in his hand, he was ready for whatever might come in his daily round."

We may carry the comparison to a Roman senator a little further, and say, with Macaulay,—

"The Romans were *like brothers* in the brave days of old," for family affection and the ties of blood were very strong. It is said of one family, prominent in the affairs of our Yearly Meeting, "The children of each household were adopted by all the rest, and the weal or woe of any member of the clan vibrated from end to end."

It is true that many of the prominent Friends of a century ago lived "within sound of the State House clock," but that there must have been a goodly number out of town is shown by the establishment of the

Pemberton fund. The will of John Pemberton, dated 1794, disposes of "Part of my pasture land on the Wissahickon Road in the Northern Liberties. . . . In trust for the use of Friends, members of the same religious Society as myself, for the accommodation of the horses of such Friends who may attend the Yearly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia, the Meeting for Sufferings or other religious service of our religious Society, from what parts soever they may come."

John Pemberton died in 1795, but it was not until 1811 that the first appointment of trustees was made by the Meeting for Sufferings.

Somehow one always fancied the horses grazing on the original "Pemberton lot" and drinking from "Pegg's Run," but, as a matter of fact, the ground seems to have been rented from the beginning, and the Friends' horses quartered in different places. In 1841 the trustees received from the Legislature of Pennsylvania power to sell the prop-

erty and the money has been invested; the income from it being still used to pay the travelling expenses of Friends.

The Jersey Friends often left their horses in the neighborhood of Camden (where one hospitable man entertained a stableful throughout the week, we have heard), and crossed in rowboats to the city. The *weather* of Yearly Meeting week seems to have early acquired its reputation, for an uncle of my mother's used to tell how he remembered the Jersey Friends re-crossing at the close of the meeting and the people on the wharf saying, "There goes the last boatload of Quakers! Now we shall have pleasant weather!"

In regard to the provision of the householders of early days for the Yearly Meeting guests, we may well believe that it was ample. It was David Bacon, of whom Rebecca Jones writes in 1800, "D. Bacon remains an upright pillar, sound and steady," who originated that pleasant anecdote which has been handed down to us about how horned cattle must have plenty of room, but

many *sheep* can be happy in a *small* fold. This when he was asked how he could accommodate so many! He is said to have had a plan for keeping quantities of oysters alive in his cellar.

A family anecdote of this period describes the chairs in a great-grandmother's parlors filled with Yearly Meeting guests, and the young hostess herself modestly seated in the large wooden *cradle,* which after the custom of the day was part of the furniture of the living rooms.

Mary Evans remembered as a child seeing Nicholas Waln choose a bunch of pipes and hand them to her, bidding her take them home with her, as Yearly Meeting was coming on, and these were especially fine ones. Elizabeth Drinker mentions the visit of several Friends to her while her husband was exiled in Virginia, tells how "Samuel Emlen spoke by way of testimony" and adds, "Ye Friends stayed talking with us and smoking their pipes until after three o'clock."

Later she writes, "I went this morning to

H. Pemberton's. Found her smoking her pipe with two officers, one of whom is quartered there." In at least one family "a keg of Pepper's beer" was a part of the Yearly Meeting provision.

Coming down to the middle period we find Friends living in somewhat different style, but no less hospitable, and we are enabled to gather some recollection of the social life of Yearly Meeting week by eye witnesses, which may already seem like scenes from the past to our younger members.

The country Friends arrived betimes, as one of them says, "On First-day afternoon, or on Sixth-day after father and mother became members of the Select Meeting, starting early in the day, so that the one of our brothers who went with us could bring back the horses that night, thus making a round trip of about fifty miles. All who were going to Yearly Meeting went at that time, and that was by no means the whole family, certainly not the children as at pres-

ent. Our driver would come down again on Sixth-day, attend one session of the Yearly Meeting and bring us back. I remember once, however, in the troubled times near 1827, father and mother had to stay in town until Second-day. . . . Clothing was sometimes carried in bandboxes, and one Friend is reported to have carried his in a bureau drawer or a drawer taken from a high chest."

"My father," says another, "was born in 1800. I remember his telling me of being taken by an aunt to an evening meeting in the Arch Street house, whether the very first of such gatherings I cannot say. However, the impression made upon the child's mind was deep. The size of the room, the unusual illumination, the white dresses of the young women, made him think of the 'troops of the shining ones,' and were vividly remembered through his long life."

"There were more young girls to attend then than now. Even in my childhood all the upper galleries were thronged at the

time of Yearly Meeting, and a late-comer was glad to secure a place on one of the staircases. But a great-aunt has told me that in her girlhood there was a great deal more 'unbecoming behavior' than in my early days. These white-robed maids did not hesitate to sit on the backs of the gallery benches and exchange confidences to the dismay of the would-be listeners. And in the course of the past fifty years there is still further improvement in decorous manners. More I think than can be accounted for in mere decrease of numbers."

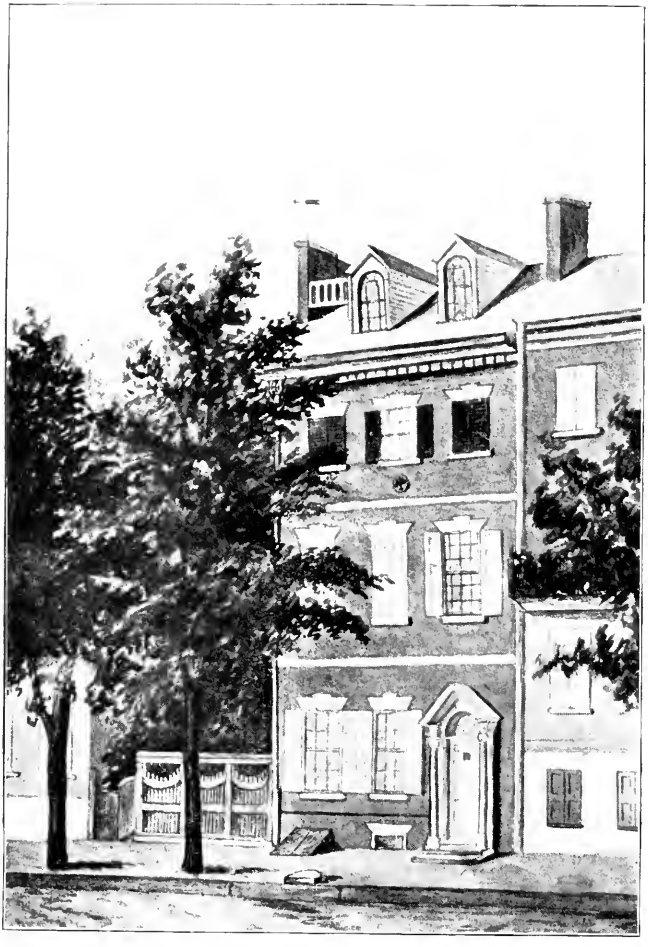
In the middle part of the late century a considerable number of uninterested meeting-comers found the yard a pleasant parading ground, and there were not wanting many attentive and genial youths from "the other side," as companions. I don't remember joining the procession, but glimpses through the open doors were beguiling.

Then, in those days, when, as often seemed to happen, the "Men's Meeting" was released before our own, a large "curb-stone commit-

tee" filled the sidewalk from the women's gate to Fourth Street. Some were there "looking for their wives," and others confessed the same motive for the future. So impressive and formidable was this "committee" that there were those who felt it a great relief and comfort to slip out of the Fourth Street gate if, as sometimes happened, it was found unlocked.

How full Arch Street used to be of Friends, all the way to Tenth and Eleventh Streets, after meetings! So many who entertained lived on Arch Street, and coming out after the afternoon sitting, how the level western sunshine lighted up the new gowns and bonnets!

"In my girlhood the time of Yearly Meeting was like to the gathering of the tribes at Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover. The invitations were perennial, and I had almost said immutable." In one household the bedsteads were put as closely as possible in the chambers, and the washstands removed to the entries. In another a large chest in the



attic served as a bedstead for one member of the family.

Of one Friend we are told that she always made a large baking of pies on the Seventh-day before Yearly Meeting and another during the week, when the holding of the Select Meeting postponed the morning session, "Thirty guests might come to dinner, as many to supper and, of course, the lodgers." Small wonder that the "delicious plum pies and cocoanut puddings" vanished.

The country relatives who were thus royally entertained were sometimes helpful in their turn. Dozens and dozens of fresh eggs were sent in and choice spring veal for roasting in one family. In another, a special variety of sausage, called "Tom Thumb," was carefully prepared and smoked in the autumn, hung all winter, was then sent to town and after long boiling was thinly sliced and gave a delicious flavor to the Yearly Meeting tea. Pickled oysters and damson tarts are choice memories in one mind, in another, oranges, "much more rare then than now."

Of one Friend who belonged to this middle period it was said in his memorial, "His house and heart were ever open to receive and entertain the many who sought his society for counsel or assistance, and in social intercourse his conversation was peculiarly instructive and engaging."

In the opening sentence of this paragraph we strike the key-note to the genuine old-time Yearly Meeting hospitality. (That which dignified it beyond "merely eating.")

"His house and *heart* were ever open!" It was the open heart—the heart "at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathize"—that produced the charm of such evenings as Whittier has sung in "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim," where he says of the hospitality of Pastorius,—

"But best he loved, in leisure hours, to see
His own dear Friends sit by him, knee to knee,
In social converse; genial, frank and free.
Then sometimes silence (it were hard to tell
Who owned it first), upon the circle fell."

"Only the old clock ticked, amidst the dearth
Of sound; nor eye was raised nor hand was stirred
In that soul-Sabbath, till at last some word
Of tender counsel or low prayer was heard."

Such evenings the older Friends still with us can vividly recall. "Imagine," says one of them, "hearing Stephen Grellet telling, with the French accent he always retained, the marvellous story of his conversion, and subsequent journeys in his native land. Or, later, Daniel Wheeler, recounting how the way had been made plain for him amid many perils, and often when his patient heart was aching with the news of bereavement at home. His was truly a victorious faith!

Our Friend recalls the interest with which she heard John M. Whitall tell of the guidance in temporal matters which had been granted to him after a time of waiting, silently and in faith, upon his Divine Master.

Or Thomas Wistar's lively narratives of his adventures among the Indians, by whom his ready sympathy and unselfish care for them were so fully appreciated that they

called him "the-man-with-the-tear-in-his-eye."

Many here can recall a square parlor on Pine Street where the genial hostess remedied her lack of hearing by a ready understanding, unfailing tact and a love of young people so strong as to draw toward her all that came under influence. She understood how to bring together strangers of congenial character and to draw out the diffident or retiring. The simple refreshment always provided, and the general ease and freedom tended to increase the flow of enjoyment and innocent mirth. To many a shy Westtown boy or isolated country girl these evenings were a happy memory for the rest of the year.

These are pleasant pictures over which we might linger, but rather let us ask, what have we to-day in their stead?

The last quarter century has changed the social customs of Yearly Meeting week greatly and of necessity. White plain bonnets and embroidered crape shawls with all

their grace and charm would have been sadly out of place on Arch Street on the 20th of last Fourth month, when we drew our prosaic winter wraps close and bent our heads before the chilling wind. Just as unsuited to our modern life are some of the old customs.

Our Yearly Meeting is held in the centre of a great city. The homes of Friends once clustered so thickly on Arch Street, near the meeting-house, are largely replaced by great business establishments. Most of our members live in the suburbs, and come and go by train or trolley. "Rapid transit" does not tend to conversation by the way. In the afternoon or evening meetings, a pause is often made to allow those who must take an early train to leave the room. We have not *time* to be entertained as our forefathers were. The *spirit* of hospitality exists just as of old, but it must be exercised in new directions.

To return to our contrast. The modern thinker and writer on Christian fellowship

finds that the breaking of bread together was blessed to higher purposes; was far more than *"merely eating."* He bids us not deride it, but seriously consider its benefit.

Now what have we to promote the social life of Yearly Meeting week?

We have the lunches furnished at the meeting-house, we have the afternoon and evening meetings and the "teas" between them, which are most helpful in this direction. We continue to have the kindly interest of the people of Philadelphia, as is shown by the daily press.

We had in the Women's Meeting this year the presence of many children, and the plan proposed and carried out of the writing of a letter from the Yearly Meeting to its child-members. The time has passed when there is no longer room for the children, and when Friends "are advised" not to bring them. The time has come when we realize that the social life and the spiritual life of our Yearly Meeting in future years will depend upon the loyalty of these children to their religious

Society, and that it rests with us who are parents and teachers to lead them to an interest in and love, for our meetings and our principles.

We had recently the faithful labors of a Yearly Meeting's Committee, which brought about not only a spiritual strengthening of our smaller meetings, but much pleasant social intercourse in our homes with Friends before but little known to us.

All this is encouraging. If our meetings are no longer so thronged or crowded that women Friends needs be "advised to draw up their pockets" (then worn separately from the dress) to make more room, there is evidence in the choice of seats that even our younger members come to listen, and, it may be, take some part in the business of the sessions; not to talk or to look idly about them.

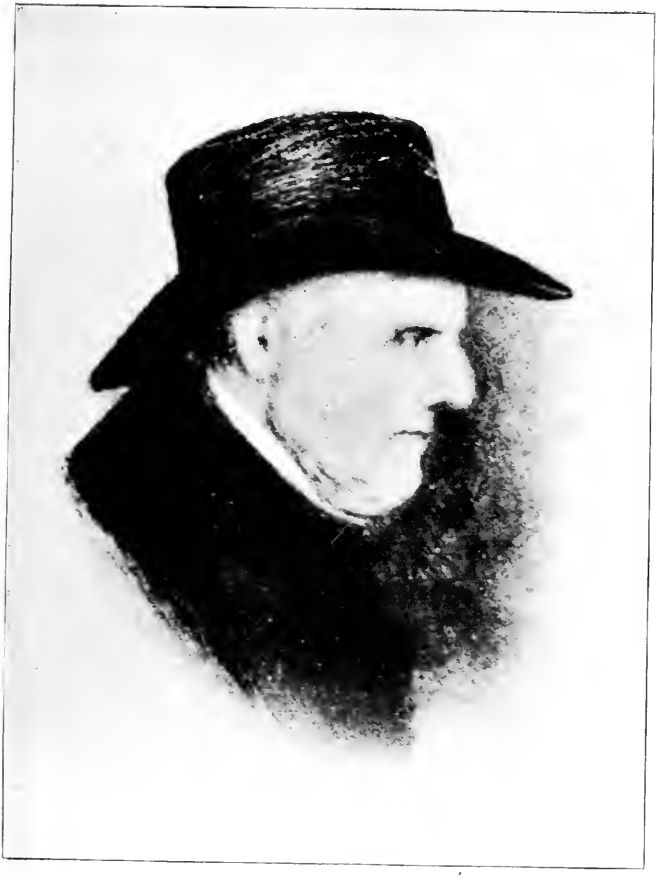
And if a "tea" at a meeting-house, or a lunch in a public room, seems but a poor substitute for the old-time custom of leisurely meals and ample time for conversation, we can only turn for comfort to the remem-

brance that it is "the spirit that giveth life" and that real Christian fellowship belongs to all time, and is the mark of the true disciple whenever and wherever found.

That there is a desire on the part of many of its members to cherish the social life of our Yearly Meeting we have had abundantly proved upon this occasion.

So let us say with our good Quaker poet,

> "I will hold
> With newer light my reverence for the old,
> And calmly wait the births of providence."



THE CONDITION OF THE YEARLY MEETING IN 1804.

BY ISAAC SHARPLESS.

FRIENDS came out of the Revolutionary War with diminished numbers, but a clear record in relation to their non-combatant views. That the most of their leading members were at heart British sympathizers seems to me extremely probable, and equally so that many of the country Friends were on the other side. They were united, however, in stringently disowning everyone who took any part in warlike matters in connection with either party. Those who were lost to the Society, perhaps 400 in number, were of two classes. One was the militant, public-spirited Friend, of social and political importance, who openly sided with the American cause. Such were the Morrises, the Biddles, Thomas Mifflin and Timothy Mat-

lack. They occupied prominent positions in the American army or government. Had they remained Friends, they would have been equally prominent in affairs of the Church. They stood for liberal ideas and intelligent participation in public affairs, and their loss left the Society distinctly weaker in these tendencies. They mostly became Free Quakers, who soon disintegrated. The other company consisted of a number of Friends on the outskirts of the Society, of comparatively low moral standing, who went into the army because they had no principles of any sort. Thus we find given as causes for disownments, the joint charge of joining the army and encouraging cock-fighting, being engaged in street fights or other of the prevailing loosenesses of the times, together with positive immoralities.

When John Adams came down to attend the Continental Congress, he made this entry in his diary, under the date of September 17th, 1774: "Dined with Miers Fisher, a young Quaker and lawyer. We saw his

library, which is clever. But the plain Friend, with his plain, though pretty, wife, with her 'thees' and 'thous,' had provided us with the most costly entertainment." This Miers Fisher, who was a staunch Friend, and afterwards one of the Virginia exiles, met one of the class of dubious patriots with a naked rapier in his hand.

"What wilt thou do with that dangerous weapon?" said the young lawyer.

"I expect to fight for my property and my liberty," said the combatant Friend, with great bravado.

"As for thy property," Fisher replied, "thou hast none, and as for thy liberty, thou owest that to the clemency of thy creditors, me among the rest."

This class was no loss to the Society, and would probably have been disowned if there had been no war. A few of the disowned Friends, like Owen Biddle, acknowledged their misdeeds and came back into full standing, but the total loss to the Society was considerable.

Moreover, the Friends lost in the prestige and influence, which they had held to a very large extent before the war, as the leading citizens of the colony. They went quietly on with their religious work, but for a time their political activity ceased. They represented a lost cause in popular estimation. This, however, soon began to rectify itself, and by the time Washington came into the presidency, in 1789, matters had somewhat changed. He probably represented the popular view when he said, in reply to an address sent to him by the Yearly Meeting, "Your principles and conduct are well known to me, and it is doing the people called Quakers no more than justice to say that, except their declining to share with others in the burdens of common defense, there is no denomination among us who are more exemplary and useful citizens."

It is probable that at no time in the history of the country did the numbers of Friends increase as rapidly as during the twenty years between the close of the revolution and

the building of this meeting-house. Part of this was a natural increase. It was a time of early marriages and large families. It was also a time of a general prosperity in the nation in which the Friends were large sharers. They were continually spreading out into the uncleared lands contiguous to them. It was a time of the settlement of many new meetings. Thus Abington Quarterly Meeting was set up in 1786, Haddonfield in 1794 and Caln in 1800. Horsham Monthly Meeting was established in 1782, London Grove in 1792, Medford in 1793, Catawissa in 1796 and Chester (N. J.) in 1803. While in the score of years preceding our date, the particular meetings of Willistown, White Clay, Marlborough, West Grove, Fallowfield, Cropwell, Westfield, Columbia, Loyal Sock, Berwick and Fishing Creek were set up. A little later than this Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, set off Twelfth Street to the west and Green Street to the north. It was also a time of considerable spiritual interest. During the latter

days of the war there was what we would now call a revival. The common sufferings of Friends had drawn them together and spiritual life was strong. A number of young Friends, who had lived thoughtless and some of them loose lives in young manhood, now became serious Friends. Among these may be mentioned Jonathan Evans, Peter Yarnall, Nicholas Waln, the leader of the Philadelphia Bar, William Savery, and Daniel Offley. All of these were to become conspicuous in the Society.

The year under consideration is probably about the time of maximum numbers in the Yearly Meeting. Just about 1800 there began a considerable migration of Friends to western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. Whole meetings, sometimes carrying with them their Monthly Meeting organizations, would pick themselves up from different parts of the country and travel westward. In 1820 it was estimated that 20,000 Friends were west of the Alleghenies, and a large proportion of them had gone from Philadel-

phia Yearly Meeting. There were now more than 1,000 Friends' families in the city of Philadelphia. As to actual numbers in the Yearly Meeting, it is difficult to give an accurate statement, though there were probably between 30,000 and 40,000. By the time of the separation, twenty-three years later, the number of the two bodies was estimated by Thomas Evans and Halliday Jackson from different standpoints as about 26,500. In this year, 1804, five couples passed meeting at North Meeting in Philadelphia in one day. The possibility of the catastrophe of the separation had hardly dawned upon the meeting, and with a large number of strong men directing its affairs and a continually increasing membership, which even a rigid administration of the discipline did not seriously check, with a feeling of a restoration of confidence toward them on the part of their fellow-citizens, and with no apologies to make for their past conduct, one can readily appreciate that the year 1804 saw the meeting in a hopeful and a

generally satisfactory condition. There were, however, causes of weakness. One of these was educational. Westtown school had been open five years and its effects had not become visible. There had developed as the result of long years of absence of higher training a strong tendency towards a distrust of education. It came partly from the views held concerning the ministry, that human learning was rather a detriment than an advantage. They were, however, saved from some of the evil results of hereditary educational limitations by the character of their principles that led them out into philanthropic and benevolent work in a way which was itself educative to a large extent. We find at this time, therefore, that, with the exception of a few Philadelphia Friends whose education had been taken care of privately and whose business interests kept them wide awake and liberal, there was a condition of intellectual mediocrity prevalent throughout the meeting. There was hardly an adult who could not read and write; there

were comparatively few who were scholars. Some, like Enoch Lewis, were, by sheer force of will and the stimulation of their own intellectual perceptions, pulling themselves out of the ranks of mediocrity, and scattered around over the country one could hear of farmers who spent their nights in the solution of mathematical problems or in reading the classics. But it may be doubted whether any openness of mind, developed in this way, gave them any larger place when it came to the church assemblies.

Let us see now what were the subjects which were agitating the Friends in this year 1804. Westtown, as I have said, had just been opened. The city Friends had declared a little time before that, as they had paid most of the money for an institution which country Friends would more particularly use, they proposed that the recipients of the benefits should also contribute something, and this year there came up a proposition that inasmuch as Westtown was already burdened with a debt of something over £3,000, it

would be desirable that this should be paid off so as to accommodate the family at the school and improve the farm. Encouraging accounts were received of the progress of this movement, and it was deemed certain that in the course of the coming year the fund would be completed. Westtown was beginning to justify the efforts of Friends by the quality of its results, and it was being used to prepare laborers for their fields.

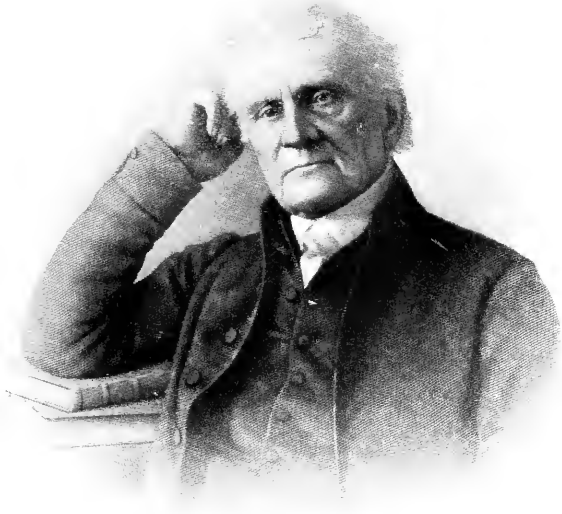
Philadelphia had charge of a number of Friends in upper Canada, north of Lake Ontario. They were suffering from some legislation, requiring of them oaths, which prevented them from taking complete title to their property, except by violating Friendly convictions, and they were anxious that Philadelphia Friends should get the matter remedied. This they succeeded in doing, and, moreover, in order to prevent the Canada Friends from falling into undue ignorance, they received a proposition this year from two young men, who proposed to fit themselves to go there as teachers, if the

Meetings for Sufferings would pay their Westtown bills. This was heartily agreed to. Yonge Street Quarterly Meeting in Canada was this year set up.

The slave question was not entirely settled even among Friends. The annual query is answered as follows: "One meeting mentions that there are a few cases of members holding slaves, particularly circumstanced, and another that several Friends had purchased slaves for a term of years, all of which are under care. Those black people who live among Friends appear to be kindly treated and some endeavors used for their encouragement in a religious and virtuous life." A committee was appointed to go down to Annapolis and remonstrate against certain legislation against the "grievously injured black people." The Meeting for Sufferings is encouraged by the Yearly Meeting as follows: "The injuries and cruelties which the black people in many parts are exposed to and have to bear in much depression and sorrow, afresh exciting

painful sympathy in many minds, it is desired that the Meeting for Sufferings may weightily recur to the subject and as openings for service in this interesting concern present, endeavor through the persuasive energy of divine love to advocate the cause of the oppressed, holding forth to the understanding of those who are immediately or remotely engaged herein, that our efforts for the promotion of universal righteousness are dictated by that benign spirit which seeks the essential good of all."

Nor were they quite through with their sufferings due to their peace principles. Militia laws were still troublesome and distraints of goods, while not as excessive as in the years immediately following the war, were considerable. Something like £2,000 had been taken from Friends by distraints for warlike purposes during the three or four years prior to this date, and a committee was sent this year to Lancaster, then the capital of Pennsylvania, protesting against the laws which produced these results.



About this time the English Friends, and the English people in general, were suffering from poverty. The Americans were prosperous and took up a collection, which was called the "American Fund," for their relief. George Stacey acknowledged the receipt of £8,326, of which Philadelphia furnished £5,798. He distributed this amount among 810 Friends and 420 others, and sent his thanks as follows: "While contemplating with comfort the assistance that has been yielded, it considers it but just to our American brethren warmly to acknowledge their benevolence and sympathy, and to add that the cases which have been brought to view, and the gratitude and thankfulness which have been expressed, abundantly evince the importance of the aid which has been administered."

Another matter of interest in history came to a head in this year 1804. Very soon after the settlement of Province, Caleb Pusey undertook a collection of letters and documents to be used in writing a history of the Quaker

experiment. He pased it on to Isaac Norris and he in turn to several other Friends, until it came to John Kinsey in 1747. He was clerk of the Yearly Meeting and was appointed officially to write the history. He died three years later, and others worked on it in a desultory sort of way until 1771, when it was turned over to Robert Proud, headmaster of the school, now the Penn Charter School. Proud got it into shape, and in 1785 it was inspected by a committee. For some reason they did not warmly approve of it, and refused to acknowledge it as a Yearly Meeting matter, though, at the same time, they encouraged him to print it as his own production. This was done and everyone is now glad to recognize it as the best history of the times. The unfortunate author, who considered that he was working all the time for the Yearly Meeting, lost his time and considerable money, for without official sanction the sales were not very large. Now the matter came up. The Meeting for Sufferings felt that he had a claim upon

them and ordered the payment of $500, which was approved, and he to that extent reimbursed. It was a tardy acknowledgment in the author's old age, which should have been extended to him twenty years earlier. Friends were slow to come over from pounds to dollars, and while both were in use in this transition period, the old standards were still most commonly employed.

Friends on the continent of Europe were also to be provided for. Chamless Wharton had just left a legacy for meeting-houses and other expenses of Friends in France and Germany. An opening appeared just at this time in Pyrmont, in Germany, where a number of Friends were located, and £1,200 was sent to them. French editions of Penn's "Rise and Progress of the Society of Friends" and Mary Brooks's "Silent Worship" were issued to aid the movement.

To show where they were on the liquor question, the answer to the query for 1804 is given: "The subject of distilled spirituous liquors has afresh claimed the weighty at-

tention and care of the respective Quarterly Meetings. It appears there are 89 members who retail or trade in this article, and who either distill it or rent their stills for that purpose. Some have had their cider distilled and divers use ardent spirits at the time of hay and harvest." While this sounds serious, it is doubtful whether, as compared with the rest of the community, much substantial progress has been made among Friends.

This, too, was the time when the Indian movement in western New York was started. The Yearly Meeting had just ordered the purchase of the Tunesassa tract and the gradual improvement of the Indian natives began to work. We are celebrating the centennial of this institution as well as of Arch Street meeting-house.

Then it was one of the occasions also, when the discipline was being revised. A careful examination might show the purport of the changes made. I do not believe they were serious or important, for among Friends it was not a revolutionary time. Prior to this

Friends were accustomed to report as to their success in making converts among the outside bodies. It is interesting to note that even in the midst of the Revolutionary War in 1780 they could state "that divers persons, of sober conduct, professing to be convinced of our religious principles, have, on their application, been received into membership." No statement, however, appears in 1804. Whether the answers were discouraging, or whether additions to membership had come to be considered as of little moment, I do not know.

The Yearly Meeting of 1804 was held in the Fourth month, from the 16th to the 20th, inclusive. The previous decade had been the occasion of the visitations of the dreaded scourge, the yellow fever, to Philadelphia. It was at its worst in the late summer and early autumn, and just at this time was the historic date for the holding of the Yearly Meeting. With unfaltering regularity the Friends attended, and Warner Mifflin, Daniel Offley and many others fell victims to

their devotion. But the sacrifice seemed unnecessary and unjustifiable, and the date had been changed to the spring, by the rule which still governs it.

While we are on the subject of changing dates, it may be pertinent to suggest that two weeks earlier would be a more convenient time for some of the schools within our body, which desire to honor the appointment of the Yearly Meeting by a vacation, as well also for that considerable, but unfortunately diminishing, class of members who earn their living by tilling the soil.

In 1804, with a certain historic propriety, as if anticipating the inspiration of the present occasion, Jonathan Evans was clerk. There were two sessions daily, and the business was transacted with probably as much promptitude and as little loss of time as at present.

It would be a matter of great interest if we could reproduce the physical appearance, and, still more, the spirit of this occasion. We may assume that the meeting-houses

were full of Friends and that the peculiarities of garb were much more conspicuous than at present. About 2,000 of each sex attended Yearly Meeting in those days. "In this our large and solemn gathering," they wrote the year before, "we have the acceptable company of brethren from all the Yearly Meetings on this continent but one, and an evident increase of weight in our deliberations has been experienced." The country Friends, who then constituted the great bulk of the Yearly Meeting, had driven in from their farms, in their homespun, homemade garments, without any suggestion of sartorial fit. The better dressed, but still plain and peculiar city Friends were scattered among them with democratic simplicity.

One can gather a few facts about some of the leaders. James Pemberton, now an old man in his eighties, whose brother Israel had been called in his time "the king of the Quakers," and who, if anyone, had succeeded to the inheritance, had had a most in-

teresting career. He began his public experience while still in his twenties as a member of the legislature of colonial Pennsylvania. He became a leader there, always advocating the strongest Quaker measures, and in 1756, when the French and Indian War was declared, he, with the best Friends resigned, and then, for the first time in the history of the colony, broke the Quaker majority. His instinct for public life could not, however, be quelled. A few years later we find him back again, doing the old work. When the Revolution came on, he was one of the exiles to Virginia with his two brothers, and his political career was ended. The energy and resources which had hitherto been expended in politics, now went to philanthropy and education. As a director of the Friends' Public School, of the Pennsylvania Hospital and practically all other benevolent institutions in Philadelphia, he did his work for his native city. In 1790, on the death of Benjamin Franklin, he succeeded him as president of the Pennsylvania

Abolition Society, the most active of abolition societies which memorialized Congress most frequently and effectively, and stirred up the southern blood most bitterly. He was active in the establishment of Westtown, and to him John Dickinson appealed in his endeavor to show the Society of Friends that religion and education were not incompatible. And now, in his declining days, full of years and honors, he maintained a clear head and a liberal policy toward oncoming questions.

Thomas Scattergood had just returned from England, where he had been studying the conditions at Ackworth School. He had spent weeks there and had written out in careful detail every item of management, so that Westtown under his influence had become, to a very large extent, a copy of Ackworth, and even down as late as the time when I was a boy there, certain Ackworth customs, impressed by Thomas Scattergood, were still in existence.

Nicholas Waln had just deceased. His

had been a most interesting career. Scholarly and eloquent, he had worked his way up to a position of leadership and great remuneration at the Philadelphia Bar. Suddenly the brilliant lawyer was found on his knees in a quiet meeting uttering the prayer which is still on record and which Dr. Weir Mitchell has placed, in a somewhat garbled form, in the mouth of the mythical Israel Sharpless. He closed out his practice and gave himself up to the work of religion and philanthropy. His talents were given freely to the service of the Society. As clerk of the Yearly Meeting during the Revolutionary War he had a difficult part to perform. He could never get over his propensity for joking, and no doubt truthfully declared, when some serious Friend protested, that he had overcome more temptations in that line than his protestor had ever felt. No other Friend has left such a fund of good stories, told in a quaint way.

Another interesting character of the time was Peter Yarnall. He, too, lived a gay

and careless life. One of his diversions was to mimic, in a ribald manner, to his gay associates, the ministry of his father. Having studied medicine, he went as a surgeon on a privateer during the Revolutionary War. He returned after a successful voyage with a share of the spoils accorded to him. But he, too, was overtaken by a sudden conviction and made a radical transformation, which things seem to have been more frequent in those days than now, into a consistent Friend and effective minister. During all the rest of his life he tried vainly to find the owners of the goods he had secured as a privateer, and in making his will he left the money to trustees with instructions to continue the search, and, if unsuccessful, to apply the money to something as much in accordance with the original ownership as they could devise. I do not know what they did with it, but his will, as George Canby has recently ascertained, is on file in the City Hall.

The clerk, Jonathan Evans, was then 45

years old, in the midst of the greatest vigor of a very vigorous life. His early life also had been thoughtless and had been brought into Quaker lines by reading William Penn's "No Cross, No Crown." The force and honesty of the man brought him into prominence and he was now leading the yearly meeting in its representative position. William J. Allinson says of him, after he had served out his time as clerk of the Yearly Meeting, "when Jonathan Evans speaks, and he is not lavish of his speeches, the clerk may certainly make a minute, for the question is settled; Jonathan is not mistaken." He was to live thirty-five years longer and to exercise a most potent influence upon the life of the meeting, which influence was transmitted to the most remarkable line of Friendly ministers which our Pennsylvania history has ever seen in one family.

Many other men of like strong and positive convictions could be mentioned, but it is impossible to complete the list. A recent writer has said that this is the day of weak

convictions. And she illustrated it with the statement that she had just been hearing a man express very positive views, entirely diverse from hers. "Here," she thought, "is the man that I want." So with all her eloquence she expounded her opposing statements in, as she thought, a convincing and positive manner. Much to her disgust, instead of continuing to argue for his beliefs, he quietly remarked, "Well, there is much to be said in favor of that way of looking at the question also." Such were not these ancient Friends. There was no latitudinarianism about their beliefs. They were sure of their ground and equally sure that the opposing ground was false, and so led the Yearly Meeting in strong and positive ways.

These were the leaders, but what of the rank and file? This is a question which it is difficult to answer from historical data. There is surprisingly little in print to tell of the general quality of our ancestors one hundred years back. My own impression is, however, from answers to queries and from

the few journals of Friends which make indirect references to this sort of thing, that while there were many sober and serious people the general life of Friends in this day is vastly better than it was then; that in the cities there was a gaity and indulgence in doubtful pleasures to a larger extent than at present, and that among the country Friends there was a coarse and careless attitude which we never see. William Forster, who travelled through the country a little later, says of one of these country districts, "the appearance of the young people, as in many other places, was discouraging." Such a statement may indicate much or little. It was not from lack of ministry. With regard to another meeting, he makes the remark, "they have no minister among them, a rare thing in this country." I should think that any facts bearing on the moral and social conditions of Friends in their private capacity, from the time of the Revolution down to the memory of those now living, should be treasured up, and the history of these

times written with more care than has ever been attempted. In the matter of Bible reading, there was evidently great remissness. The concerned Friends knew the Bible well, but among the others it was much neglected. Some applied to it the same rule which they applied to preaching, that it should not be read unless there was an immediate drawing of the spirit to perform the service at the time, and under such a theory they would pass weeks or months without opening the book. William Forster tried to encourage more frequent reading. He wished them to collect their families at least on First-day, but he says, "I fear that even so much as this is not so common a practice as might be desired." The growth of carelessness, the result of abounding prosperity, of lack of intellectual and religious education, and the beginning of a teaching due to a distorted view of a fundamental doctrine of early Quakerism, were having their unhappy effects upon the masses of the Society.

Rebecca Jones, writing in 1796 to an English friend, says, "I expect thou hast accounts of our great works which are in contemplation; such as attempting to civilize the inhabitants of the wilderness; and to establish a boarding school after the manner of your Ackworth; build a large meeting-house (after your example) to accommodate both sexes at the Yearly Meeting; admit black people into Society membership, etc., etc."

The time under consideration seems to me to be a kind of watershed in the history of the Yearly Meeting. For twenty years previously it had been growing in numbers and in the strength of its strongest men and women. From that time forward it became weakened by dissensions and emigrations. Our friends could not see into the future, and, with a fatalism which has not been uncommon in our Society, they were often inclined to trust that a good spirit would deliver them from the evils to come, and which some of them foresaw as of the size of a man's hand on the horizon. But to

most of them the outlook was strong and cheerful, and on this year of last century, the thirty thousand or more of Friends which constituted our Yearly Meeting, were carrying through their business and farm operations, attending their semi-weekly meetings, and going to their religious appointments with a satisfaction born of a large assurance of rectitude of principle and the consciousness of the sheltering care and blessing of their heavenly Father.

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