

Clerkenwell in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Quaker Attitudes in Education

(Address to the Friends' Historical Society, London,
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NOTES ON SOURCES

IN dealing with the early history of Quaker education—before the eighteenth century—I have relied largely on Dorothy G. B. Hubbard's unpublished London M.A. thesis, entitled "Early Quaker Education". This, completed in 1939, is a most valuable piece of research: it seems a great pity that it remains unpublished.

The Saffron Walden Friends' School archives include a complete set of Committee minutes from 1701 to the present day, and a nearly complete set of rough minutes. The eighteenth century is covered by 12 volumes of "fair" minutes, closely written by hand and not always very easy to read. In addition, there is a unique manuscript, the personal memorandum book kept by the fifth Steward, Richard Hutton, and usually referred to as "Richard Hutton's Complaints Book"; also a large number of ledgers, cash books, etc., from 1701; the first printed account of the Institution, 1746; and the first printed *Rules* 1780. Extracts from these *Rules* are given towards the end of this paper.

The first printed statement, *An Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the School and Workhouse Maintain'd by the People called Quakers, at Clerkenwell, London*, is an appeal for money. The copy at Saffron Walden School is in its original dust cover and gives no printer's name. A young Old Scholar a few years ago succeeded in tracing through the minutes the entire history of this pamphlet from the time when the idea of its publication was first put to the Committee by Timothy Bevan early in 1745, through many meetings when the matter was "continued" to the decision, almost two years later, to have 1000 copies printed, and the final minute of 2.xii.1746.

"T. Bevan reports 1000 of the State and Acc^t of this House have been printed and mostly delivered to the members of the six Monthly Meetings. The charge of which by Railton and Hind is £2.17.0."

In London the Quarterly Meeting included the following monthly meetings:

Devonshire House, Gracechurch Street, Peel, Ratcliffe, Southwark, and Westminster.

The Six Weeks Meeting at the beginning of the eighteenth century included representatives for each of the six monthly meetings. It was regarded as "the prime meeting of the City" (G. Fox) and had extensive powers.

The Chamber where alternate meetings of the Workhouse Committee were held, was at the Meeting House at Gracechurch Street—which piece of information George Edwards supplied to me when I began to read the minute books.

When Samuel Tuke addressed the Friends' Educational Society at its meeting at Ackworth in 1838 on the subject of the early days of Quaker education, he gave a warning which it is perhaps well to repeat:

“Whilst not hopeless of arriving at some sound and valuable inferences, from the facts which come before us, it greatly behoves us to be patient in the investigation of them and slow to arrive at dogmatic conclusions.”

(Education in the Society of Friends. Samuel Tuke, 1871.)

EDUCATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

We have now reached the centenary of W. E. Forster's great Education Act of 1870. Perhaps we should remind ourselves that there were probably fewer illiterate people in the eighteenth century than in the years immediately preceding that Act. In the latter part of the seventeenth century private benevolence was active, especially in the towns. By 1704 there were 54 charity schools in London and Westminster alone, containing over 2,000 children.¹

The old established grammar schools were mainly concerned with the classics and some were in a poor state. In contrast, the nonconformist Academies were flourishing: they offered such subjects as mathematics, modern languages, history, geography, logic and even navigation and commercial subjects. The high standards and the liberal education in the best of these did much to compensate dissenters for their exclusion from the universities.

Nonconformist teachers were liable to prosecution. Those who wished to avoid this had to compromise and declare their conformity to the liturgy of the Church of England. From time to time, Friends, and others, were imprisoned, but persecution of Friends ceased soon after a legal judgement in the case of John Owen, 1718.² Dorothy Hubbard lists 60 prosecutions of Quakers for teaching: the first in 1664, the last in 1728. These include two names I shall mention later:

¹ Sir Charles Mallet in *Johnson's England*, ed. A. S. Turberville, 1933, ii.211.

² D. G. B. Hubbard, “Early Quaker Education”, London M.A. thesis, 1939 (typescript copy in Friends House Library), p. 148.

EDWARD POWELL, who was charged together with Richard Claridge in 1707 in London; and JOSIAH FORSTER, at Darlington in 1717.

Clearly there were many who taught without such interference from the law: probably much depended on the area in which they lived and the attitude of the local church authorities.

FRIENDS AND EDUCATION IN THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THE SOCIETY

From the beginning the Society attracted a number of people who were very well educated, and of liberal outlook. Neither they, nor George Fox, condemned outward learning as such, but they saw clearly that it must not, in itself, be regarded as constituting a spiritual authority.

Barclay wrote in his *Apology* (Proposition X, §19):

We judge it necessary and commendable there be publick schools for the teaching and instructing youths, as are inclinable thereto in the languages But this knowledge can no ways make up the want of the Spirit in the most learned and eloquent.

George Whitehead, in 1691, wrote:

Divine Learning in Christs' School, we have ever preferred and loved Human Learning, in its place, we have not denied but owned.

The Committee appointed by Yearly Meeting in 1759 to consider education looked back on this early period and wrote:

The best things are liable to great abuses: But there is no Fault in the things themselves. Isaac Penington, Robert Barclay and William Penn had very liberal education. Many others might likewise be mentioned: indeed there were so many persons possessed of great Talents and great Learning earlily convinced that nothing of this kind was wanting among them.

Human learning was by them very justly condemned, while it was so commonly and unjustly esteemed as essentially necessary to a Gospel Minister. They endeavoured to distroy this False notion: and clearly demonstrated that the most excellent human qualifications availed nothing to Spiritual Worship; nevertheless it seems not to have been their intention to discourage an application to human literature or to set aside the advantages resulting from it in civil life. (Entered in Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings 20.vi.1760.)

In the first fifty years of the Society individual friends set up both day and boarding schools: at least fifteen such boarding schools are known to have existed in 1671. In 1674 the Six Weeks Meeting established a day school in Devonshire House: this is noteworthy as being a Meeting concern. They sought a teacher "skilled in Latin, Writeing and Arithmatick." The next year some Friends were considering the possibility of publishing "suitable" teaching material. The developing idea of a "guarded education" is clearly stated in the Yearly Meeting of 1690:

And yt friends may be carefull of Friends Children to provide Schoolmasters & Mistresses that are Friends (Where they are Capable) & not to send Them to the World's Schools to corrupt them by learning Heathen Authors and the Names of their Gods, But to take care that they may Train them up in the Language of Truth, and ye plainness which becomes the Truth.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century there was widespread interest in the Society in the subject of education, and deep concern for the welfare of its young people. Education was an important topic at every Yearly Meeting. At one time or another schools were carried on *in* nearly all the London meeting houses, and some of these were not confined to Friends' children.¹

On the whole Friends were prosperous, though they were still liable to heavy financial losses through their refusal to pay tithes and church rates. Such Friends were likely to appreciate schools such as that at Tottenham where Greek, Latin and French were taught, with mathematics (not just arithmetic), geography and merchants' accounts. But the practical uses of education were not to be confined to the children of prosperous Friends. In 1695 it was advised in the Yearly Meeting Epistle that "Poor Friends' Children may freely partake of such Education, in order to Apprenticeship" and in 1696 Yearly Meeting suggested that poor children should be educated to become teachers.

This was the climate of thinking into which John Bellers introduced his proposals.

JOHN BELLERS

John Bellers, a well-educated, well-known philanthropist and student of social conditions, was troubled by the

¹ W. Beck and T. F. Ball, *London Friends' Meetings*, 1869, p. 360.

problems of his age—then, as now, including the care of the aged, the poor, the children, and the unemployed. He hoped to establish all over England colonies of about 500 people, old and young, where all could work and live to the advantage of all. In 1695 he published an appeal to benevolent people in his pamphlet *Proposals for raising a Colledge of Industry of all useful Trades and Husbandry with Profit for the Rich, a Plentiful Living for the Poor, and a good Education for Youth*.

A response to this scheme came from London Quarterly Meeting which evidently had a number of poor Friends, about 178 aged poor and 53 children needing help. An appeal for £2,000 was made. Nearly all this amount was raised and “an extraordinary convenient hous at Clerkinwell” was leased. A Committee of thirty Friends was appointed, five from each of the six monthly meetings, and rules were made to “Methodise the Committee”.

e.g. That all debates be desided by the majority and the Chairman put the question both for and against: if an equality of hands the Chairman to give it as hee please.

The building had been a Workhouse, and the name continued. The first inmates arrived at the end of 5th month 1702. The Institution, out of which the present school at Saffron Walden was to grow, had begun.

CLERKENWELL—THE EARLY DAYS

The building—of which a plan remains—was a large two-storey brick building joining three sides of a square. The fourth side of the square was occupied by a prison. There were forty-six rooms, the largest being 85 ft. by 20 ft. This was eventually used for the boys dormitory.

Who were the first occupants? Some “ancient Friends” and a few children. It is difficult to make a correct assessment of the exact numbers at first. The first Minute Book records the names of those from the six Monthly Meetings “to come into this Workhouse” but the Admissions Register records only two of the seven from “Horslydown” and three of the seven from “Ratclif”. J. B. Crosfield in his short account of the School, written in 1902, quotes (p. 9) the names of five boys and one girl, but only three of the boys’ names appear, and not that of the girl. The Register records two

girls as entering in 1704, but as nine names were added in 1746, as having been previously omitted, it cannot be regarded as entirely reliable.

What is probably the earliest list of "ancient Friends", gives thirty-five names and the ages of twenty-two of them. Of these ten were aged between 70 and 80, and three were over 80.

Some examples:

THOMAS PRIEST, from Devonshire House, "winds silk", admitted 1702, died 1721.

WILLIAM ELKINGTON, an old man, expelled after about a month on account of his bad behaviour, but given 5s. because he was poor.

PHILIP NIBLETT, aged 79 from the Bull, admitted in 1703 and died in 1709, whose occupation in the House was stated as "dos something".

ELIZABETH HOBDAV, aged 85 on admission from Devonshire House, picked oakum, and lived 4 more years.

MARY ENWOOD, only 47, "washes and gets up the clothes".

Some of the women were as troublesome as some of the men: 7.x.1702 "Severall Complaints Being made against Bennett Hall, She was Called up Before the Committee and Reprehended by them, and Discharged from attending on the Boys for the future, (Excepting washing their Linen) & is to pick oakam or do such other work as Geo. Barr shall put her to." She was 75! Before the same month was out there was another Minute about her using "awfull language" and Daniel Quare, the famous clockmaker, was desired to speak to her about her work and language.

And the children? There was:

GEORGE GORDON, whose misbehaviour is quoted at length in David Bolam's book *Unbroken Community* (pp. 22-23).

SAMUEL THORNTON, who suffered from "the crookedness of his body" and Rachael Armstrong took him into her home to try to cure him.

H. CROFT, who had a "hair-lip". His parents requested that "Our surgeon Daniell Phillips Dose the Best he can to Cure him."

16.vi.1703 A minute states clearly, "there being no girles come in as yet, the Committee thinks it proper the suspending the Girles coming In till another or two offer".

4.x.1704 The Committee "finding convenient Room in this house" invited applications for "girls about 8 years of age and sound of health". Two were admitted soon after this. According to the Admissions Register the two sisters died after a few years; Joanna Macklin in 1711 and Elizabeth Macklin in 1712. So presumably both were there in 1707 when a Report to the Quarterly Meeting (1.xi.1707) stated: "There are about 34 aged people and 16 boys and one Girle who are all carefully looked after and ye Children have a suitable Education."

THE STEWARD was at the head of this strange family, or Institution. He and his wife had under them a maid, a cook (who left fairly frequently): in 17.v.1707 after a month without, "a poor inmate Ann Brayley", aged about 50, offered her services and was accepted: and a "hostler" who was expected to "keep the boys in order" as well as to look after the stables where visiting Friends found accommodation for their horses.

The steward bought the provisions, sometimes helped by a Committee Friend, and carefully noted his expenditure in the Cash Book.

Examples from 1702:

2 legges of Mutton	5s 6d.
16 stone of Pork	£1 10s 8d.
Bringing of it home	3d.
Eggs. 2 women very sick	3d.
Ale. 2 sick women & Ea. Cook(80)	1½d.

He bought the materials needed for the industrial work of the inmates: wool and cotton for spinning, silk to wind, materials for making "mopps". The steward also arranged for the sale of the products. He did the bookkeeping. He coped with those who needed special care and attention. He reported the worst cases of grumbling, or misbehaviour to the Committee—and they had many such to deal with. He helped the new arrivals.

In 1708 Peter Bayle (or Bayley), a Frenchman, was presented for admission by Six Weeks Meeting "to be here intertained if thought best". The Committee agreed to accept him "at 3d. per week with necessarys while capable to doe sum thing towards his support" (14.iv.1708). He spoke no English, and four months later had to have an interpreter when he went to the Committee to ask if he might be "bourded

out where he may have Conversation in his own language". He stayed in the institution till he died.

And there were orphans such as "John Rogers a poor boy and Fatherlesse, of about 12 years of age" admitted in 1708, and Scipio Africanus, a "black boy" in 1728. He had come into the care of a Friend.

It is clear that non-Friends were admitted. Was the Frenchman a Friend? It seems unlikely. A minute notes that a Friend seeks admission for "a poor boy who has come into his care"; another refers to "Two taken in on security, not Friends' children."

It was not until 1738 that a ruling was made.

5.iv.1738 The Minute relating to taking in Children into this House whose Parents are not Friends being now considered, it is the opinion of this Committee that Children so Circumstanced should not be admitted into this House.

But this was followed:

31.v.1738 On reading the Minute of last Committee day relating to children being taken into the House, whose Parents are not Friends, it is agreed the following words be added thereto. Viz. Except such Child or Children, being destitute of Parents, and are related to a Friend in our Society, and falls to his lot to maintain.

Is it surprising that there were five Stewards in the first ten years?

GEORGE BARR, 1702-1704: was discharged, no reason being minuted.

JOHN POWELL, 1704-1709: died.

JOHN DAVIES, 1709. Resigned almost immediately, "his Wife is preposed against ye Workhouse y^t shee is not comply with his settling their".

SAMUEL TRAFFORD, 1709-1711: could not cope with the accounts and "misappropriated" some money. Then, after his dismissal,

RICHARD HUTTON was appointed and continued until his death in 1737. It is his "Complaints Book" which throws so much light on the day to day life of the Institution: the problems of the Steward, and his relations with the Committee.

By 1710 the Committee had had to ask themselves some searching questions both about the aims of the place and the finances. Their report at the Chamber 28.x.1710 is most

revealing. There were thirty-four ancient people in the home, some so weak and helpless that "they are constantly kepe in their chambers & divers others are continually imployed to tend them". Their earnings averaged less than a penny a week. "Therefore we conceive . . . it will be for all ye Monthly Meetings to remove ye Antiant peoples from thence or allow ye Home suffishant to mentaine them. And to continew ye workhouse only for Boys and girles which would be of great benifit to pore freinds children for it both kepes them out of idlenese . . . and also thay have an opportunity of suteable iducation and larning fitting ye Boys for trades and ye girls for servants." Then, having given this opinion, the Committee seems to have had second thoughts and the minute concludes: "yet when we behold and seriously consider how well they [the Ancient Friends] lived and what a comfortable provision is made for them . . . we thought fit to signifie it to be our Judgment that if freinds are desierus to have an Hospitall to maintaine their aged yt. are reduced to poverty they must be content to pay for their main-tanance."

So the charges went up and the Old People's Home continued.

What about the School? Little has been said so far about education. Can we now trace how much teaching there was, and to what effect? When were the first teachers appointed and what did they teach to the boys who were to be fitted for trades and the girls for servants?

It is not easy to trace exactly the facts about the appointment of teachers in the early days. Some minutes are very brief, others are retrospective. Sometimes a matter is left without a concluding minute, and one is left to assume that the instruction in the previous minute was, in fact, carried out.

A minute of 15.xi.1702, "Order'd it be Proposed to Each monthly Meeting that if they have any Poor Children capable to work the Committee will take them In, the Meeting paying 12d. a week for each . . . and the Committee intends to Provide a Schoolmaster to teach them Reading, Writing and Arithmetic."

A year later they were still looking for one:

Minute 14.xii.1703, "This Meeting doth unanimously agree that Inquiry be made for an able Schoolmaster both for Writing, accounts, and also for Latin etc to **keep** a schoole in a Parte of the Workhouse distinkt from the Poor."

Richard Claridge (1649–1723) was at this time keeping school at Barking, and he was asked to help. But by 8.iii.1704 the Committee was still minuting, each month, “a reminder to be given to R. Claridge about getting a Schoolmaster.”

Towards the end of 1705 some Friends appointed “to give an account next Quarterly Meeting of ye boys progress in larning” were able to report: “in their instruction in reading and writing . . . we have A very good account.”

On 4.ix.1706 two Friends were appointed to examine the boys each month and to report on their “progress in Writing and reading”.

I can find no minute of appointment for the first schoolmaster, but in 1707 the examining Friends were asked to report what Edward Powell “should have for his Care for the time past and what for a year to come”. They decided “he deserves 4s. a week, and seven pounds for the time that is past”, and shortly afterwards it was agreed that “He is to be paid at £8 for one year and to attend three times a week two hours at a time.”

In the same year comes the first reference to a Schoolmistress. 11.vi.1707: “having a Mistress com into this home who is capable to teach Scoole . . . and one Girle being com into this home, the Committee desirs that ye monthly meetings may be acquainted therewith that they may send more as they see Acasion.”

In 4th Month 1710 the Ratcliffe Friends appointed as visitors for the month were “desiered to mind ye Boyes are better instructed in their writing”. Later in the year three boys, ready for apprenticeship, one about 16 years of age, the others about 14, were described as “all prity well grone lads and writs prity well”.

But Edward Powell’s teaching seems no longer to have been quite satisfactory. A minute of 25.x.1710 reads: “The Bull freinds to visset ye house and to speke to Edw. Powell yt. ye boys be beter looked after, they declineing in their writing and very small progress in their arethmetick.” Edward Powell was the son of the former steward, John Powell, who had died in 1709. He had been prosecuted for teaching in 1707, together with Richard Claridge (see Hubbard, p. 138). After his father’s death he was much occupied in settling his affairs and may have found difficulty in continuing with this part-time appointment at the

Workhouse. So the Committee settled their accounts with him, paying him £17 for "1 yeare $\frac{3}{4}$ Teaching ye Boys" and he "offered for ye futer to send Two persons twice a week and 1 person once a week instid of sending on person 4 times a week as heretofore".

But in 1712 it is recorded that Edward Powell is no longer a teacher and a new one has been found.

This was William Hill, who was asked in addition to teaching to attend committee meetings to write the minutes "he having promised fidelity ann Secrecy in yt. Trust." I can find no record of his leaving his post, but in 1719 the appointment of Josiah Foster is recorded.

7.vii.1719: Josiah Foster offering his services as a School Master to the House, this Committee agrees to give him after the Rate of £10 a year . . . upon tryal for one month.

Later it was reported that "his manner of Teaching ann bringing the Children forward seems to be pretty agreeable ane his Qualifications Tolarably Answerable to his Station". By this time there were thirty-seven boys and eighteen girls. By 1722 he had been pressing for increases in his salary and he wanted these to be back dated. The Committee would not agree and decided to "discontinue him" but eventually refrained from giving him formal notice "his having given us Expectation to do it himself next Committee Day".

Samuel Uring was appointed in his place, but stayed only a short time. Then Josiah Forster (Foster) reappeared. His letter to the Committee was regarded as of sufficient importance to be copied into the rough minute book. As here again we have records which appear to complement previous research, I will give the letter in full:

To the Committee at the Work House
Loving Friends,

If you want a School Master at the Work House and would please to accept me for One I am willing to serve you—and the terms I insist upon is £20 p. ann. salery to Continue for One Year Certain and after that to be free by a Quarters Warning given on Either Side and in the Discharge of my Duty when In the place Shall Endeavour to give what Satisfaction I am capable of.

I am your Obliged Friend,
Josiah Forster

Banbury
October 20. 1722

This letter caused the steward, Richard Hutton, to take the unusual step of summoning a special meeting of the Committee, which he was entitled to do by the standing orders. This met at the Chamber on 29.viii.1722. The Committee heard the letter read and decided "to accept of his Service upon ye Terms therein Mention". "Being in hopes (according to ye Expectation given us) that his Endeavours to give us Sattisfaction Will be attended with a Suitable Conduct."

But this reappointment, as presumably it was, did not last. A minute of 22.v.1723 reads: "Josiah Foster [*sic*] our Schoolmaster, having by a letter last Committee desired to be discharged . . . the Steward is order'd to discharge him and pay his Wages to this time."

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

After the first brief mention of one of the Ancient Friends as schoolmistress in 1707 there is no further mention until 1715 when a Report on the State of the House, given to Quarterly Meeting, stressed a "great necessitie" for one to teach the girls and "prevent them being with the boys, which cannot be done while they both Work in the Same Room together". A letter from the Committee to the Women's meeting at Devonshire House, about this, stated that she was to teach the girls "Sewing, Knitting etc."

Elizabeth Sprake undertook the duty. A minute of 2.v.1716 records her as agreeing "to teach any number of Children not exceeding 30 for a Twelve Months Certain commencing Midsummer last". Her salary was to be £8 a year and "one shilling per pound arising out of the earnings of the children".

By 1721 Elizabeth Sprake was in difficulties, and she had to leave. Friends appointed to "speak with her in the presence of the Steward and Stewardess" reported "She acknowledges to them that she is under Severall Intanglements of Debts, and to them She Appears to be pretty much Fatigued and Harrased in her mind and Wholly Unfit to Discharge the Trust Reposed in her."

It is nice to know that the Steward, Richard Hutton, was sympathetic to her difficulties and pleaded for her. She was succeeded by Hannah Hands who had two months trial and

was unwilling to continue: "ye Fatigue being more than she cares to engage herself in."

Richard Hutton, who had the oversight of the Institution, was himself interested in education. He is a person about whom I should like to know more. He had come from Lancashire and settled in Lombard Street as a tailor. On his appointment he had to give "fifty pounds for his fidelity" and was paid at the rate of £20 a year. Several pages in his so-called "Complaints Book" set out in admirable style ideas about teaching, and refer to the writing of a book about accounting called "The Tradesmans' Companion or Tradesmen's Copy Book". As these pages are written in the first person I assumed that they were Hutton's own thoughts and philosophy of education. Now I find that they are a quotation from a book by Colonel John Ayres, published in 1688. Ayres was a teacher of writing, arithmetic and accounts at the "Hand and Pen" in St. Paul's Churchyard, and is credited with introducing the Italian hand into England between 1680 and 1700.¹

It is not necessary to continue to trace in detail the records of teachers. The only mention of Latin was in 1703. The general education referred to earlier as approved by early Friends is replaced by the instruction in the three R's needed for boys going to apprenticeship and girls going as servants, the manual training each needed, and the practical work done in the House.

Minutes such as that of 1710 ordering the steward and the rest of the family that are able to do so to attend Peel Meeting three afternoons a week so that they "have the benefit of 4 Meetings in a week beside seasons set apart to wait upon and worship God in silence", leave us in no doubt about the care being exercised to further the religious life of the community.

THE LATER YEARS

W. A. Campbell Stewart in *Quakers and Education*, described the two middle quarters of the eighteenth century as "the worst years in the Society's educational history, when there was little general conviction about the necessity of a good schooling, and the Society was able to excuse its

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography.*

shortsightedness and apathy in the negative counsels of Quietism”.

Certainly, at Clerkenwell in the middle of the century, the Committee was preoccupied with finance. “The family is conducted with good Order and Decency: the provisions have been provided in the best manner, yet our expenses exceed our intentions and Income.”

In 1747 Dr. John Fothergill became doctor to the Institution and he continued to serve it until 1765. During that time he evidently observed it closely, critically and somewhat sadly. He gave books, goods and advice. The gift of a barrel of rice was minuted with appreciation as “a good and useful hint for ye Benefit of this House, at ye present high price of Corn”. In 1760 Dr. Fothergill presented the report of a Special Committee on Education to Yearly Meeting. His comment on Clerkenwell was: “Too few of the youth educated therein have turned out useful and respectable members of society.” Was this a criticism of the school, or, as David Bolam suggests in *Unbroken Community* (1952), of the employers to whom the children were apprenticed?

RULES, 1780

The Rules of the Institution, evolved over the years, set out in detail the duties and responsibilities of the various officers, the Steward, the Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress. They also give the Clothing Lists and the Bill of Fare. They were first printed in 1780. These state clearly how much time was to be given to learning, and also leave us in no doubt about the moral atmosphere of the time. The “guarded education” continued.

Some extracts from “*Orders for the Schoolmaster*”

Rule 5. One half of the boys is to be at school in the morning, and the other half at work, and to exchange places in the afternoon; and those who are at school in the mornings one week, are to be at school in the afternoons the next week; when there is no work they are all to be in school.

Rule 6. On seventh day afternoons both boys and girls are exempted from work or attendance at school.

Rule 7. The girls of suitable age are to attend the master’s school, three mornings in the week, viz. on the second, fourth, and sixth days; to stay the usual hours; to be heard to read; and to be taught writing and arithmetick the remainder of the time.

Rule 8. He is, at suitable times, to walk with the boys in the fields, for the benefit of the air, at least twice in the week, when the weather

permits; and to take care that they be not out of his call during the time; nor when at play at home, without some inspection. (Page 18)

From "*Orders for the Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress*"

Rule 4. They are to sit down with the children on first-day evenings, reading to them, or causing them to read, suitable portions of the holy scriptures and other religious books; selecting such parts and subjects as are the most instructive and best adapted to their understandings.

Rule 5. They are to be watchful that no improper books, pamphlets or papers be introduced or secreted among the children, this being a source of much evil.

Rule 6. They are diligently to inculcate a modest and humble deportment, to enjoin them to use the plain language; always to speak truth without prevarication; to behave respectfully to their elders; taking due notice of such as speak to them.

Rule 7. Finally, They must be very careful of their own conduct; remembering, example is more prevalent than precept.

ACKWORTH

Meanwhile, in 1779, Ackworth had been founded, through the interest of Dr. John Fothergill. I have had the opportunity to examine the early registers there and find that in the first ten years over 100 children went there from the six monthly meetings in the London Quarterly Meeting. This was about 1 in 10 of the entry. The aim "a pious, guarded useful education of the children of Friends not in affluence", and the subjects taught, were much as at Clerkenwell, but the parents of these children were willing to send them on a four day journey to a place that really was a school.

But reputations tend to linger. Was it a recollection of the old days at Clerkenwell that caused a Committee Friend at Ackworth in 1802 to refer to Islington as "the school where naught is taught"?¹

Those who drafted the Preface to the first printed Rules, in 1780, a document most carefully considered by Quarterly Meeting, were Friends in the area who knew the institution and its children. They wrote: "this establishment has already been attended with beneficial effects to the Society, in this city and its neighbourhood."

As I warned you at the beginning of this paper—"We must be slow to arrive at dogmatic conclusions."

JENNIE ELLINOR

¹ Notebook in the Ackworth Archives.