

Our Recording Clerks.

No. 2. RICHARD RICHARDSON, 1681-1689.

Among the 491 prisoners liberated by Charles II.'s "Charter of Release" in 1672, appears the name of Richard Richardson, of the county of Essex. The cause of his imprisonment is given by Besse¹ as follows :

At the Quarter Sessions at *Chelmsford*, on the 1st of the month called *July*, *Richard Richardson* and *Christopher Taylor*, having been bound to appear there for teaching School without License, appeared accordingly : But the Justices not finding sufficient Cause to proceed against them on the Matter they were charged with, tendred to *Richard Richardson* the Oath of Allegiance and committed him to Prison for refusing to take it ; at the next Assizes he had Sentence of *Premunire* past upon him, and was continued in Prison about two Years and a Quarter, where he suffered much through Extremity of Cold and cruel Usage, being often shut up among the Felons.

It seems highly probable that the R. R. above referred to was the same who became the second clerk to Friends, but, as there were other Friends bearing the same name at the same period, the statement must be received with reserve till absolute proof shall be forthcoming.²

After his liberation R. R. seems to have moved his residence nearer to London, for, in the register of his marriage on the 23rd of 3mo., 1676, to Anne Mullins, of Bow, widow, at Ratcliff, he is described as of Bishopsgate Street, London, schoolmaster.

The following letter from George Fox was addressed, "For Richard Richardson, School Master, Wheeler Street, Spitalfields, London." It is an interesting example of the way G. F. made use of the book learning of his friends.

der richard with my love to thee and to thy wife and to all the rest of frendes in the holy see[d] of liefе now der r r j deser that thou would search all the liberys consaring mareges and what the doe say of them &

¹ *Coll. Suff.*, 1. 204, anno 1670.

² A Richard Richardson who may be referred to by Besse (*Coll. Suff.*, 1. 462, 463) lived in the west of the Metropolis, and another signs, with a number of Cumberland Friends, a testimony to John Wilkinson (*D. Port.* 16.66). There was also a Nottingham Friend of the same name. George Fox in his *Journal* mentions the presence of "Richard Richardson" at Swarthmore in 1660. I have gone on the assumption, as yet unproved, that the references to the name which appear in connection with several places in the neighbourhood of the east of London, are to one man and that one the subject of this sketch.

the fathers and how the [?] did befor the the [?] monkeish sort came in in the britens time and when marring with the prest came in soe search heasterys and lawes and see what thou canst bring out both good and bad and wat maketh a mareg and doe what thou canst in thes thing for it hath ben upon mee som time to wright to thee of this thing and did recve thy leter by r. bartleet which I did let thomas loson see it is a not[ab]le thing soe in hast with my lov gff.

Swarthmore, 8mo. 16, 1679.3

THE CLERK AND HIS ASSISTANTS.

The clerkship to various Meetings, national and local, left vacant by the early and lamented death of Ellis Hookes on the 12th of 9mo., 1681, was quickly filled by the appointment of Richard Richardson, who took up some of the duties of the office on the 25th of 10mo. At a Six Weeks Meeting held on the 11th of 2mo., 1682, his salary (as far as payment from that Meeting was concerned) was to be "at ye rate of 20lbs. p. an. to be paid Quarterly and he to have ye profits of certificates of marriages."

Joseph Miles, who acted as assistant to E. Hookes, continued in his office and the Six Weeks Meeting granted *him* "24 lbs." per ann! Presumably at his retirement or decease, Mark Swanner joined R. Richardson, at any rate we read that at a Six Weeks Meeting held in 1mo., 1683/4 "The deciding of ye matter between R. R. and M. Swaner is left to ye meeting yt keeps ye poors money," and shortly afterwards that "M.S. is to have 30 lbs. per year to be paid half by ye city and half by ye country."

3 Where the original of this letter was in 1859, the following letter (D. Dix MSS.) will show:—

"JAMES DIX,

"Esteemed Friend,

"My Cousin Benjn. Candler forwarded me thy letter to him requesting to have the perusal of a letter of Geo. Fox in my possession. I was from home at the time and since then I have thy letter of the 5th inst. on the same subject. The letter in question is in a dilapidated condition so that it has been pasted upon a card for preservation, and cannot be sent by post. I have had it copied out for thee and also send thee a facsimile of the original as nearly as may be. —Thy Friend,

"MARY REED.

* * * *

"The answer to the above is written in a very small hand and is in places much obliterated by being worn away by folding."

* * * *

The letter, which is entirely in George Fox's writing, is in parts practically illegible and his meaning can only be conjectured. R. Richardson's reply, which Mary Reed transcribes but with many blanks, appears to be full of allusions to ancient and modern writers on marriage,

His work consisted of entering wills and trusts relating to Friends and also copying records of sufferings into the "great register booke of sufferings," a continuation of the work of Ellis Hooke.⁴ In 1685 the Meeting of Twelve ordered "Mark not to trouble abt finances but get on with the Records"! The Chamber used by E. Hooke, and even after his death called, at times, by his name, was presumably used by his successor, and letters of a public nature were still addressed to "3 Kings Court in Lumbar Street."

It is not known whether R.R. attended daily at his office, but we can imagine him making his way on foot or otherwise over the two or three miles of country which separated Bow from London, and entering the city through the Bishop's Gate, or first calling at the extensive house and grounds belonging to the earldom of Devonshire, which formed a noticeable feature in the landscape to the east of London, a portion of which estate Friends had occupied since the Great Fire.⁵

In 1684 a kind Friend purchased some useful articles for the clerk's office and application for payment for the same was made to the Meeting of Twelve:—"Wm. Chandler desireing of this Meeting money for y^e watch and Larum at Richard Richardsons chamber, wee not knowing who ordered y^e buying of it were not willing at present to pay for it," but the Six Weeks Meeting finally agreed to pay.

That a time-keeper was needed in The Chamber to regulate the speed at which the clerks worked is clear from the occasional evidence we have of the suddenness and urgency of work required at their hands, of which a sample may be seen in a letter⁶ in the handwriting of George Whitehead, and showing signs of having been dashed off at high speed, a copy of which is here given:—

DR, R. R. and M.

We do very greatly want a List of the names of frds throughout the severall counties, who are prosecuted, convicted and seized on y^e exchequer writts of Recusancy for 20lbs p mens. The List is Inquired for at y^e Attorney generals.

⁴ See *Journal*, i. 15. We owe a debt of gratitude to R. R. for his very full indexes to these two volumes of *Sufferings*.

⁵ See William Beck's *Historical Account of the Acquisition of the Devonshire House Property in Bishopsgate Without, London*. London, 1903.

⁶ D. Portfolio 16.24.

Tis an Intire List of names we want, of so many counties as ye have undr these heads of

Prosecuted for Recusancy,
Under seizures or Distresses,

Pray do each of you your parts without delay we have almost gotten an ordr of Reference to ye Attorney Genl. Make a Distinct List of those that are given in to ye K. with this last [*word obscured by a blot of ink*] and make up ye List with ye rest behind, put ye names only, with ye year: Under ye distinct heads as above and Counties as whethr undr prosecution or undr seizure (or distraind) or writs out agt them

as Surry,
Prosecuted,

1688 A. Fielder, etc.

sure remembr Surry frds. Counties wanting must be taken as they come.

Some such occasion as this, perhaps, was the means of introducing another person to The Chamber, one who was to occupy a position of responsibility and trust for half a century. I have failed to find the exact time at which Benjamin Bealing entered the service of Friends but I have traced him back by his writing to the early part of 1687. In the 4th month of that year the Six Weeks Meeting appointed several Friends "to consider and conclude with the Meeting for Sufferings whether 3 Clarks shall be continued, or whether of ye two Mark Swaner or Benj. Bealing should go off." The former was evidently dismissed, as we read later: "When ffrds have occasion for Mk. Swaner they will send for him." Mark Swanner died in 1713 in Shoreditch at the age of eighty.⁷

In his controversial writings⁸ Francis Bugg has a good deal to say of Richard Richardson (whom he describes as "this learned champion," "G. Whitehead's learned Friend," "Recorder General," etc.) and his office. On a scrap of paper in the pointed, cramped writing of R. Richardson, which has recently come to light,⁹ are the words:—

"ff Bug sayes Ellis Hookes had 50 lbs p an and R^d Rdson is his successor. this charge is false and ye information also and preposterous ffor R R has laid out more for ye country, since concerned in their business, than he yet recd:"

Our Friend's public service continued to shortly before his decease. As he did not sign the Epistle of the Yearly

⁷ Mark Swanner's name occurs on the title page of the enlarged edition of Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, 1682, but I know not what exact connection he had with the issue of this important work.

⁸ *De Christiana Libertate* and *The Painted Harlot*, etc.

⁹ D. A.R.; B. MSS., 183.

Meeting which was held on the 21st and 22nd of 3 mo. [May], 1689, it is probable that by that time he had resigned his post of clerk ; though I find him still acting for the Society two months before he died.

LEARNING AND LITERARY LABOURS.

There is abundant evidence that F. Bugg's description of R. R. as a "learned Friend" was correct. His position of schoolmaster presupposes more than ordinary education. G. Fox's application to him to look up literature on the marriage question confirms this. The following letter,¹⁰ written when Friends were busily engaged on behalf of their brethren, captives in the Barbary States, is interesting in this connection :—

DR FRDS,

17, 5mo., 86.

J[ohn] O[sgood] Theod. E[cleston]. Not Knowing whether I may have opportunity or liberty to speak of it again, and being it is desired by ye meeting you may draw vp a paper about ye return to ye paper for limitation of contribution towards ye captives redemption, I take this way to impart what has been in my minde about it. And that is, this limitation makes our charity fall far short of that of ye primitive Xs, who of their generall contributions, assigned a part for ye redemption of captives, and I remember one Bishop, I think his name was Acatius, did send very largely to redeem such as were taken captive, I think in war (but I may search further for that), and those heathen.

And reading last night, I met accidentally with a place in Doctor Cumber, how that ye Church at Carthage sent 800lbs for redemption of captives in Numidia about where Argiers is and Sully. Now may not those African Christians condemn us, if we restrain charity from our Brethren, they contributing so largely to heathen, further note. I have read in Ecclesiastical writers, that ye same Acatius by that means brought very great advantage to ye Christian faith, and great favour to Xns from ye heathen I think in Persia.

Thus much I can croud in this little paper, more than I could do in a meeting. So leave it with you, to make vse of as you have occasion, and see meet. R.R.

There has been an objection, though unjust, among people that we are Charitable onely to our own, very false. But this limitation, if admitted and known, may give occasioⁿ to say, we are not charitable to all our own.

Unlike his predecessor in office R. Richardson entered fully into the polemics of early Quakerism, in defence of G. Fox and his associates against Francis Bugg, William Rogers, Thomas Crispe, and others. His *Few Ingredients against the Venom in William Rogers' Book, stiled The Christian Quaker Distinguished*, etc., 1681, and

¹⁰ D. Portfolio, 17.12.

its sequel, *Another Ingredient against the Venom in F. B.'s Book*, 1683, are frequently quoted in the later writings of these two Separatists. William Rogers describes the *Few Ingredients* as a tract in which "Heathenish, Papistical and Protestant authors of divers sorts are quoted to vindicate George Fox his saying in his *Book of Womens Meetings* that *Micahs* Mother spoken of *Judges* 17th, was one recorded for her Wisdom and her Vertue." *William Rogers's Scourge of Tow fired*, with reference to Rogers's *Scourge for George Whitehead*, was issued about 1684, and *A few Notes on some Principal Passages in Babel Builders* (a book written by Thomas Crispe in 1681) were added as a postscript to Stephen Crisp's *Babylonish Opposer*.

In collaboration with William Penn, R. R. wrote a *Treatise of Oaths*, which was published in 1675, and contains in its 166 quarto pages citations from over 200 authors, etc., according to a *Catalogue* of them given in the book. He also published *A Testimony against Tything amongst Christians*, 1680, with many references to "Books, Authors and Persons, whose Sayings, Actions and Writings are herein instanced;" and articles on *The time called Christmas*, on *Adoration in General and in particular of Hat-Honour*, and on *Wigs*.¹¹ This last pamphlet, *A Declaration against Wigs or Periwigs*, is a very curious little production of about 1,500 words, concluding with twenty-one lines of "poetry." It throws ridicule on the use of wigs, with references, either for or against the custom, to Nehemiah, Isocrates, Philip of Macedon, the Emperor Titus, Plato, Solon, Julius Caesar, Tertullian, Homer, etc., etc.

PRIVATE LIFE.

The data for a protraiture of the home life of our Friend are at present very scanty, as, unlike the previous occupant of his office, so little is available from correspondence. At some period between 1679 and 1681 he seems to have settled at Bow, for his name and that of his wife occur on the minutes of Ratcliff Monthly Meeting from 4 mo., 1681. He did not take much prominent part in the proceedings, but frequently acted for the Meeting in matters concerning the Mile End and Bow portion of its area. He does not appear to have been a ministering Friend.

¹¹ All these pamphlets are in **D.** as also numerous MS. notes by the author and papers which do not appear to have been printed (**D.** Portfolio 4; MSS. Bxo. C; A.R.B. MSS.; etc.).

Richard Richardson died at Stratford-le-Bow on the 14th of 4 mo., 1689, of "consumption and ulcer in the lungs," aged sixty-six, and was buried at Ratcliff. A copy of his will, still preserved among the beautifully arranged records of Ratcliff and Barking Monthly Meeting, is here reproduced :—

RICHARD RICHARDSON OF BOW HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

In the fear of God I Richard Richardson of Bow in Middlesex being sick in body but of good and perfect memory do make this my last will and Testament as followeth (vizt.) I give and bequeath to my trusty and wel beloved friends, Phillip Burneat and John Rogers both of Lowsewater, Rich. Head of Mober, Tho. Tiffin of Eaylefield, Jonat. Bowman and Josiah Ribton both of Broughton, all of the County of Cumberland, the sum of one Hundred Pounds, namely that which is secured by land lying in that County, ¹² also I give and bequeath unto Degory Marshall and Edw. Hore both of Ratcliff in Middlesex and William Townsin and Hen. Wilson both of Southwark in Surry, the sum of one Hundred Pounds, and all the rest of my Goods and Chattells I give and bequeath unto Anne Blithe allis Mullens allis Richardson, now my dear wife, whom I make my sole executrix of this my last will and Testament to whose direction I leave my Body to be buried, comitting my spirit to the father of spiritts, through Jesus Christ my Redeemer in whom I have beleaved, and by whose holly spirit I have been comforted. RICHARD RICHARDSON,

May the eight and twentieth one Thousand six Hundred eighty nine, sealed and deliuered in the presence of us, John Monk, Mary Monk, Esther Morter, Joshua Cobham, Moses Fowler. .

Richard Richardson his Instructions as followeth.

Dear friends Degory Marshall and Edward Hore and the rest concernd, that 100lbs that I have bequeathed to you, my mind is, you should suffer my widdow to enjoy, afterwards to pay 10lbs of it into the meeting of men friends at London, and the rest to dispose off, towards the help of Friends disabled thorow sufferings, and their Childrens maintenance in the Citty and also in the Countries as you shall see meet with the advice of friends. RICHARD RICHARDSON.

3rd, 4mo., 1689.

Ann Richardson, widow, died at Limehouse, on the 4th of 8th mo., 1695, aged sixty-two. In her will there is a reference to "Richard Richardson, my late husbands brothers son." It is probable that Richard and Ann Richardson had no family:

NORMAN PENNEY.

¹² This reference to Cumberland *may* prove to connect our clerk with the R.R. of that county referred to in Note 2.