

Notes on the early Records of Friends in the South of Scotland from 1656 to about 1790.

Many years ago the present writer had the privilege of looking through the eight volumes containing the early records of the Society in the south of Scotland then preserved at Edinburgh, and of making a pretty full abstract of their contents : and subsequently he compiled from it a *Dictionary* of all the names of persons mentioned in the volumes whether Friends or others. In a work of this kind, especially where the originals are not available for purposes of comparison, some errors and omissions are only too likely to have crept in, but it is hoped they are comparatively few.

On looking through the *Dictionary* one is struck by the small number of Friends, who, during the period in question, nearly 140 years, lived within the bounds of what was then called Edinburgh Yearly Meeting—that is all of Scotland south of the river Tay. The number of names of persons in the volume is about 1,580. Of these, nearly 500 belong to members of Aberdeen or London Yearly Meeting or other stranger Friends visiting Scotland, whilst about 310 are names of those apparently not Friends—“persecutors,” witnesses to marriages, and others ; so that the number of men, women, and children in Edinburgh Yearly Meeting, Friends by conviction or birth, during the long period under review, would seem to have been little over 770. This includes not a few students attending Edinburgh University, and other “casuals.” Registers of births, marriages, and deaths were, during part of the time, not over carefully kept, and considerable gaps occur in the records of Meetings for Discipline ; so that it is probable there were members whose names do not appear in any of the Meeting records. The number thus passed over, however, must, one would think, be small.

As regards the professions or trades of the Friends, so far as they are recorded, it may be interesting to note that there were nineteen gardeners and seedsmen, nineteen weavers, ten servants (male and female), ten “merchants” (shop-keepers), six tanners, six tailors, five glovers, four shoe-makers, three brewers, three bleachers, three tobacco-

merchants, three linen-drappers, two doctors of medicine, two smiths and farriers, two skippers, two wrights, two school-mistresses, two dyers, two hatters, one stocking-maker, one cooper, one coal-grieve, one coach-driver, one printer, one clothier, one sieve-wright, one inn-keeper, one chamberlain (steward). There were also five "portioners" (small landed proprietors), and perhaps not more than three "Lairds," Walter Scott of Raeburn, John Swinton of that ilk, and Anthony Haig of Bemersyde.

There seems to have been a numbering of the Society in the south of Scotland twice during the period: the first occasion was in 1669 when the *men* in Edinburgh Yearly Meeting amounted to sixty-four, and the second numbering was in 1787, when the remnant of *both men and women*, belonging to Edinburgh and Kelso, the only remaining Meetings in the south of Scotland, amounted to twenty-three.

Amongst the earliest gatherings of the Society in Scotland seem to have been those in the West about 1656, probably at Glasfoord, and Friends continued to linger on in that part of the nation till the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Meeting in Glasgow, which was established in 1687¹, appears to have died out; it was not revived again for nearly forty years.² The first record of settled Meetings at Edinburgh³ and at Stichel (afterwards Kelso) was in 1669, and both these Meetings continued to exist till towards the close of the eighteenth century, though with increasing feebleness. In 1788, William Miller of Craigen-tinny—the third of the name in Edinburgh Meeting—who was popularly known as "the king of the Quakers," was disowned for "marrying out" and other irregularities, and an entirely new era in the life of the Society in Scotland

¹The Epistle from Edinburgh Yearly Meeting to that of London, iii. month, 1687, records "Their is a Litle weekly Meeting newly sett up in Glasgow (on of the most considerable Citties of our nation): wher the Bitter and dark Spirit of the professors and presbiterian priests did reign in a mighty dominion of death, To the keeping out of Truth So Long as it could."

²George Dillwyn, who visited Scotland in 1787, communicated to the Meeting for Sufferings "the pleasing account of the little meeting at Glasgow" (Letter from John Pemberton to George Miller): whilst in 1792 Mary Dudley and her companion "made a little stop" at Glasgow and visited "the few there who appear under convincement" (Mary Dudley to George Miller).

³We learn, however, from Gough's *History* (vol. I. p. 168) that a Meeting had been gathered at Edinburgh as early as 1654.

commenced. New record books were procured, Meetings for Discipline were once more regularly held and their proceedings recorded, also marriages, births, and deaths, for the most part, duly registered.

The original records from which the contents of the *Dictionary* have been summarized are contained in the following eight volumes :—

First (Book U). This is the oldest record book of Friends in Scotland, the earliest entry in it being vi. month, 1656, four months after which the first marriage amongst Friends in Scotland was recorded. The volume seems to have been intended as a chronicle of all noteworthy events happening to Friends in the south-west of Scotland, including persecutions, births, marriages, deaths, bequests for the service of Truth, etc., with occasional notices of the course of politics in the nation. These are more or less carefully set down, year by year, from 1656 to about 1703. After that the entries are very irregularly kept up until 1728. Prior to that date, there are few notices in the volume of Meetings for Discipline, but from 1728 until v. month, 1733, the minutes of the Monthly Meetings held at Glasgow and Wester Mucroft are given. After this, there are but few traces of regular meetings in the west of Scotland until that at Glasgow was re-established towards the close of the century. There are, however, in this volume scattered notices of births, deaths, etc., until 1807.

Second (Book T). This contains a record of the proceedings of Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting from iv. month, 1669, when Meetings for Discipline were first regularly established in Scotland, to xii. month, 1737, also copies of sundry papers by George Fox and others, and the registry of marriages at Edinburgh from 1670 to 1695. The entries between 1680 and 1695 are the original marriage certificates, with autograph signatures. One or two marriages of later date are recorded amongst the Quarterly Meeting minutes. When Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting⁴ was constituted in 1669, the Monthly Meetings forming it were Edinburgh, consisting of Edinburgh and Prestown Particular Meetings ; Glasfoord, consisting of Glasfoord, Dowglass and

⁴ The meetings were held in the iii. vi. ix. and xii. months ; that in the iii. month was in a few years termed the *Yearly Meeting*, and from it were sent Epistles to London Yearly Meeting (commencing in 1686) and Aberdeen Yearly Meeting.

Badcow Particular Meetings ⁵; and Lessudwine, comprising Lessudwine ⁶ and Stitchell Particular Meetings—afterwards known as Kelso Monthly Meeting. From a “List of men belonging to Meetings” under date iv. month, 1669, it appears that there were eight men Friends belonging to Edinburgh Particular Meeting, five to Prestown, twenty-one to Glasgow, three to Dowglass, six to Badcow, twelve to Lessudwine, and nine to Stitchell. In 1692, and for many years after, the Meetings sending representatives to Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting, were Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Kelso, Glasgow, and Hamilton and very occasionally Askin, Dowglass, and Garshore. By 1722, their number was reduced to Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Kelso, Glasgow, and occasionally, for a few years, Garshore. In 1735 and for some years later, the name of the Meeting of Beldivy, a hamlet near Dundee, is added. There are no records remaining of Linlithgow or Beldivy Meetings. The former is first mentioned in 1673. By 1730 it seems to have fallen to a very low ebb, though the Quarterly Meeting continued to pay the rent of a Meeting House there for some years after that. When Catherine Payton visited Scotland in 1752 the Meeting was quite extinct.⁷ Beldivy Meeting never consisted of more than one or two families. but it seems to have been kept up until about 1770.

Third (Book M). This record of the proceedings of Edinburgh Monthly Meeting comprises from iv. month 1669 to v. month, 1706; also copies of sundry papers by George Fox and others, and the cash accounts of Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting from about 1719 to 1777. The few

⁵This Monthly Meeting merged into that of Hamilton, which is incidentally mentioned in the records as early as 1673; and that, in its turn, was superseded by Glasgow Monthly Meeting.

⁶Report was made to Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting iii. month, 1678, “y^t the meeting held for diverse yeirs at Walter Scots house in Lessudwine hes been hastily removed from thence without the advice and consent of their Monthly Meeting, the hurt y^t may come to the truth in generall being upon the mindes of the freinds of the meeting it was proposed that some wold goe and visite these freinds y^t had so hastily w^t-drawen from Walter Scots howse,” Four Friends “offering themselves to be at their monthly meeting at bimerside nixt 4th day, it is recomended to them by the meeting to deale w^t these qo have w^t-drawen to return and Againe keep meeting at Walters house in soe farre as being upon the place they may finde consisting w^t truth and report to freinds.” There is no further mention of Lessudwine in the Records, but from the *Life of Christopher Story* (p. 29) there seems to have been no revival of the Meeting there.

⁷See *Life of Catherine Phillips*, p. 39.

marriages (1693 to 1703) in the book are recorded amongst the Monthly Meeting minutes. A few births at or near Edinburgh (1670 to 1683) have been entered at the end of the volume.

Fourth (Book Q). In this volume are entered the minutes of Edinburgh Monthly Meeting from ix. month, 1730 to iii. month, 1794, with some long intervals during which there is no record of any Monthly Meetings having been held. At one end of the book are the only early records extant of "ye Weemens Quarterly Meeting at Edinr." xii. month, 1688 to iii. month, 1694. These consist principally of notices of relief afforded to poor Friends. A few records of marriages, and one or two of burials, occur in the course of the Monthly Meeting minutes.

Fifth (Book O). This contains "a Register of Burials" in Friends' Burial Ground, the Pleasance, Edinburgh, from 1680 to 1716. The ground was used by Friends of Edinburgh and also by those of Linlithgow and other places at a considerable distance from Edinburgh. There is also a "Register of Births" for Edinburgh Monthly Meeting from 1670 to 1786, and intermixed with these, are several notices of deaths and one of marriage. The volume has also been used to minute the proceedings of Edinburgh Preparative Meeting from 1787 to 1798.

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To be continued.

"1669. Ferdinando Salmon a person not excommunicated was buried in the Bee-garden of George Bayly his tenant upon the 9 of November by Joan Salmon his wife and Robert Salmon and John Salmon his sonnes Quakers."

From the Parish Register of Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire.

London Meetings licensed in 1738:—Brook Street, Ratcliff; Ewer's Street, Southwark; Fair Street, Horseley-down; Little Almonry, Westminster; Peel; Quaker Street, Spitalfields; Sandy's Court, Houndsditch; Savoy, in the Strand; Wapping; Whitehart Yard, Gracechurch; Workhouse, Clerkenwell. *From Besant's "London in the Eighteenth Century."*