

The Quaker Family of Owen.

Continued from p. 39.

We now revert to Nathaniel Owen, the younger, who was born probably at Cranbrook, circa 1652. He resided firstly at Sevenoaks, as a Mercer, in business with his father. He mar. firstly at the house of John Blatt, Tanner, of Red Hill in Reigate, 9 Aug., 1676, Ann Green, of Coulsdon, perhaps a daughter of Samuel Green, of Oxted, a sufferer in 1666, 1673, and 1683. There was some little difficulty about this marriage so

that a particular meeting be apoynted at y^e house of Anthony Shephard in Rygate parrish [A. S. was a Quaker sufferer in 1670 and 1671] the 20th day of the 5th month being 5th day next come two weeks ; about y^e 10th hour of y^e same day ; of w^{ch} meeting wee doe desire the said John Dew and Jonathan Lambull [of Reading] to give notice to all whom they judge have anything to object against y^e proceeding of y^e above named Nathaniel Owen and Ann Green in order to Marriage.

But those objecting “not producing any weighty Reason why Ann Green might not proceed (as above) to marry whom shee pleased,” and none appearing at the next Monthly Meeting “to impeded the same,” it was their judgment they might proceed to “marry in the Truth’s order.” Nathaniel Owen produced a certificate of cleanness from “Sevenoake.”¹³

Nathaniel and Ann (Green) Owen had issue an only daughter, Ann Owen, born at Coulsdon, 19 June, 1677. Whilst there she penned an interesting letter given in the recent *Memoir of John Roberts* (1898), from the original in possession of Lawson Thompson, of Hitchin. It is dated “Coulsdon in Surrey y^e 20th 7 mo 1699,” and is addressed to Daniel Roberts, of Chesham (son of John), with whom she was evidently on terms of great intimacy and religious and spiritual sympathy. Ann Owen mourns the deprivation of her friends’ company, which includes Daniel Roberts’s wife, begs the favour of a letter, and asks their prayers.

Oh that thou wast but Senciabile how much I long for some of thy company. I have so good an opinion of y^ee as to think thee woulds endeavour to aford me more then I have had lat[e]ly, for true bosom frds are realy very scarce to find. I am now very lon[e]ly for my fath^r and moth^r are both at Reygat, and have been much there this Severall weeks, and

¹³ Dorking Minute Book, v. month, 1676.

great part of our goods are gon, and I expect that in a lettell time yt we shall all go, and before that hurry, made use of this oportunity to send yee a few lines, . . . desiering thee to give my Dr Love to thy wife and Lettel ones, hoping thee wilt except of the same from me, who lives in hops of seeing you at Reigat before it be very long, and In the mean time shall

Rest thy ever obliged and most Constant

Friend to Searve thee or thyne, ANN OWEN.

Pleas to give my Respects to Mary and Jacob. ¹⁴

The above letter is excellently written in a kind of engrossing hand then prevalent.

Ann Owen mar., at F. M. H., Reigate, 20 Jan. 1713/14, Thomas Belch, of Cheapside, Linen Draper, and Cloth Worker, son of George Belch, late of Charlwood (Chorleywood), psh. of Rickmansworth, Herts, yeoman, decd., and Susanna his wife. Amongst Friends present at the wedding were Ambrose Rigge, Thomas Upsher (of Colchester), Daniel Roberts, aforesaid, George Vaux, etc.

Thomas Belch died in 1741, and Ann (Owen) Belch died in St. James's, Clerkenwell, 29 March, 1743, aged 65, bur. in in F. B. G., Bunhill Fields, 5 April.

Thomas and Ann (Owen) Belch had eight children of whom Mercy mar. Walker Pilgrim, and had issue; Anna Lucia mar. her cousin William Bell, of Leadenhall Street, Druggist, s.p.; and Susanna, the eldest married daughter apparently, born in Cheapside 19 Aug., 1709, mar. at Croydon, 11 March, 1736/7 as his second wife, Isaac Vaux, of London, Citizen and Surgeon, son of George and Lydia Vaux, of Reigate. It is said that their daughter Anne Vaux, of St. Dionis Backchurch, spinster, mar. by licence, at St. Paul's Cathedral, "by me William Reyner," 7 Dec., 1736, as his second wife, William Penn, of Withyam, co. Sussex, esquire, grandson of the founder of Pennsylvania, but it will be seen that this is impossible, as Susanna Belch only mar. Isaac Vaux this year. The latter, then of Uxbridge, Physician, mar. 9 March 1721, as his first wife, Mary Walker, dau. of William Walker, of St. Martin's in the Fields, Westminster, and if Anne Vaux was his eldest child, born say in 1722, she would only be in her 15th year at the time of her marriage with William Penn. The account of this marriage however has been several times printed, and we have also two family notes about it,

¹⁴ *A Quaker of the Olden Time*, edited by Edmund T. Lawrence, pp. 440-443).

but there is something wrong somewhere, and poor Anne also came to grief.¹⁵

Ann (Green) Owen, the first wife of Nathaniel Owen, of Coulsdon and Reigate, did not long survive the birth of her only child, Ann (Owen) Belch, and was bur. in F. B. G., Reigate, 4 Aug., 1677, some 6½ weeks later.

A minute of London Yearly Meeting reads :—

Nathaniel Owen being here present acquainted the meeting that his wife, late Ann Green, of Surrey, was presented upon the statute for £20 per mensem, and in her life time had two thirds of her estate, valued at £50 per annum, and seized into the King's hands, and nine months after the seizure departed this life leaving one Child living by the sd Nathaniel, after whose decease there was an affidavit made before a Baron of the Exchequer, that his said wife was educated in the protestant religion, generally known and reputed a protestant, was married to him the said Nathaniel, had one child now living ; upon pleading the child's right, being an infant under age, before the Barons of the Exchequer a quietus was granted, and the Land discharged from the seizure and sequestration except only for the nine months the said Ann was being after the seizure.

This minute is entered in the Guildford Minute Book and dated vi. mo., 1680.

In the possession of her collateral descendant Rachel Priscilla Robson, of Saffron Walden, is a long narrow sampler, beautifully and elaborately worked in rich colours, as fresh almost as the date of execution, viz. "December the 17, An. Greene, 1660." The name of the fair worker appears also again at the side. It was long supposed to have been the work of an ancestor of the present possessor's mother (who was a daughter of the late Joseph Markes Green, of Saffron Walden), until seen by the compiler.

Nathaniel Owen appears to have removed from Sevenoaks to Limpsfield, two miles W. of Westerham, and on the borders of Kent, for although the birth of his first child took place at Coulsdon in 1677, there is no evidence that he was resident there at that time, although this may have been the case. Limpsfield and Oxted were close together, which goes to show that Samuel Green of the latter town was, as we suggested, N. Owen's wife's father.

In 1683, at the Assizes held at Kingston, the 12th of July, George Vaux of Rygate, Nathaniel Owen of Limpsfield, Samuel Green of Oxted, Thomas, John and Elizabeth Blatt

¹⁵ See Howard M. Jenkins's admirable work, *The Family of William Penn*, 1899.

all of Reigate, with thirteen other Friends, were all indicted for six months' absence from the National Worship, and most of whom were ordered to be returned into the Exchequer. On the 9th of September, in the same year, John Blatt (father of the above John apparently) was taken preaching at a meeting in the house of Nathaniel Owen, of Limpsfield, and fined £20, and suffered the loss of fifteen Butts of Leather and other goods.

In 1685, we find a letter from "your loving Neighbours and Friends to the King and Kingdom, Ambrose Rigg, George Beale, and Nathaniel Owen," "To the Knights and Burgesses of the County and Borough Towns of Surry, chosen Members of this present Parliament," being "The suffering Case of the People called Quakers in the said Towns and County humbly presented"; in which letter they say that "many of us have been long and still are Prisoners in the County Prison for no other Cause than peaceably serving and worshipping the All-seeing God." The letter goes on to show the grievous spoils under the Conventicle Acts and the cruelties endured, etc.

Nathaniel Owen remained a widower over fourteen years, and then took a long journey to Chester to find a bride amongst his father's North Country Friends. He mar. at Chester, 15 Oct., 1691, Frances Ridge, dau. of John Ridge, of Chester, "Marchant," and Elizabeth his wife. She was baptised at St. Olave's, Chester, 18 Nov., 1662. John Ridge appears to have died at Chester, 1683, when his will was proved. In the *Journal of the Life of John Gratton*, who died 1711/12, we read on page 122:¹⁶ "After this I went into *Cheshire* and to *Chester* again, where I had formerly been Exercised, and where there was now more Openness than formerly; and there was a brave young Woman, called *Frances Ridge*, her Father was dead, but her Mother very kindly entertained Friends at her House, and her daughter was [now] married to a Friend called Nathaniel Owen, of *Rygate* in *Surry*."

There is a pedigree of Ridge, of Manchester and Marple, co. Chester, Esquires, in Dugdale's *Heraldic Visitation of co. Lancaster*, 1664-5, of whom Robert Ridge, of Marple, Esquire, was aged 77 in 1664, and was the father, by Helen Shepheard his wife, of Jonathan Ridge, of Manchester, aged

¹⁶ See First Edition (1720).

42, who mar. and had issue, and of John Ridge, who mar. the widow of Samuel Smith, of Chester, etc.

Nathaniel Owen was resident at Coulsdon on this his second marriage, and had issue a large family as follows :— (1) Nathaniel Owen (tertius), born at Coulsdon, 2 Aug., 1692; apprenticed to John Wilcox, of Cheapside, and died 1709, aged 17. (2) John Owen, born at Coulsdon, 19 Sept., 1693; he was a Merchant of London, and mar. late in life Elizabeth, widow of George Prothero, who survived him, s. p. Her portrait was in possession of Miss Strettell, of Clifton, in 1882. (3) Jeremiah Owen, of London, named after his uncle at Stockport, born at Coulsdon, 26 Nov., 1695, of whom hereafter. (4) Philotesia Owen, born at Coulsdon, 17 July, 1697, of whom hereafter. (5) Frances Owen, the younger, born at Coulsdon, 24 June, 1698, mar. at Reigate, 29 Nov., 1722, William Chamberlin, of Cheapside, Citizen and Glover, son of William Chamberlin, late of Theobald's Road, Holborn, Joiner, and Mary his wife. William Chamberlin died at Croydon, 17 May, 1739, aged 40; his widow Frances, 23 Sept., 1782, aged 84. They had issue four children of whom Mary Chamberlin, born 1723, mar. 1747, Calvert Bowyer, of Westmill Bury, Buntingford, co. Hertford, gent., son of Calvert Bowyer, of Coles in the said psh., gent., and Susannah his wife. This was an aristocratic alliance, both the Bowyers and Calverts being of ancient county lineage. The former is represented by Sir William Bowyer-Smijth, Bart., of Hill Hall, Essex, and many other families, the latter by the Felix Calverts, of Furneaux Pelham, Herts, and anciently of Calvert, Lord Baltimore, so familiar to those acquainted with William Penn's history. Susanna Bowyer of this branch of the family, who were Friends, mar. at Cottered, Herts, in 1700, John Dimsdale, of Essex, of the family of the late Lord Mayor, three of which family were present at Mary Chamberlin's wedding. The Bowyer Strettells (Owen descendants) are also named after this race. Calvert Bowyer, Esquire, who was born at Westmill, 29 March, 1719/20, died at Coles aforesaid 20 March, 1783, aged 64, and was bur. as a non-member at F. B. G., Bishop's Stortford. We do not appear to have the date of his wife's decease. His sister, Susanna Bowyer, mar. at F. M. H., Hertford, in 1778, Jeremiah Vaux, of Birmingham, Surgeon, son of George Vaux, of London, and Frances Owen his wife. (6) Thomas Owen, born at Coulsdon, 18 May, 1699. He was a Brewer, of Bermondsey. He mar. as her first husband, at

F.M.H., Bull and Mouth, 19 Aug., 1725, Frances Zachary, dau. of Thomas Zachary, Citizen and Skinner, of London, Theodor Eccleston being present at the wedding amongst many others. Readers of Thomas Ellwood's charming autobiography will recollect his account of Thomas Zachary, of Beaconsfield, of this family, of whom Elizabeth Zachary, widow of Daniel, of Chipping Wycombe, was bur. at Jordans. Thomas Owen died before 1743, leaving issue a daughter, Elizabeth Owen, born 1728, who mar., 1746, Jonathan Bell, of Tottenham, "an eminent shopkeeper," son of Daniel Bell of the same, Shopkeeper, and Elizabeth his wife. He was born at Tottenham in 1719, and died at Hertford, 1791, aged 72. He had retired many years, and was elder brother to Daniel Bell, of Stamford Hill, Coal Merchant, grandfather to Elizabeth Fry, and father to Priscilla Wakefield. "Mr. Bell's communicative and friendly disposition will make him remembered with esteem by all who knew him." (*Gent's Mag.*) A silhouette of Jonathan Bell, executed in 1760, by Susanna (Crafton) Day, a descendant of the Owens, is in possession of her great-grandson, Walter Robson, of Saffron Walden. Elizabeth (Owen) Bell died at Hertford, s. p., 1780, aged 52, bur. at F. B. G., Winchmore Hill. Frances (Zachary) Owen mar. secondly, as his second wife, 1743, John Bell, of Lombard Street, Merchant, born circa 1681. died 1744, aged 63. s. p. Frances (Owen) Zachary Bell died at Hertford, 1772, aged 70.

Nathaniel Owen as we have seen from his eldest daughter's letter, was removing from Coulsdon to Reigate in 1699, and his next child—(7) Abigail Owen was born there in 1701, dying in 1702. (8) Cornelius Owen, entered in Reigate Register as 5th son, was born at Reigate, 18 July, 1702. He was a Mercer near Chancery Lane in 1754, and is named in the will of his kinsman, John Strettell, as deceased in 1786 (he was bur. in F. B. G., Reigate). He mar. Elizabeth——probably not a Friend, and had a son and daughter, and his grand-daughter, Miss Owen, of Stockwell, mar. 11 May, 1761, John Matthias Weguelin, Esquire, of a very ancient family, formerly Wegelin, of Lindau, on the Lake of Constance in Swabia. A daughter of this marriage, Frances Weguelin, born 1763, mar. a Mr. Vanderkist and had one son and three daughters.

Nathaniel Owen, of Reigate, the father of this large family, is thought by our late honoured Friend and correspondent, Thomas William Marsh, of Dorking and Chelsea,

to have resided at the old house called The Retreat, near Reigate church.¹⁷ He was, with Ambrose Rigge, one of the founders of Reigate Meeting, and of the Society in Surrey. He was a minister, and with his wife Frances, also a minister, frequently visited Dorking Meeting, and often accompanied ministers from more distant parts. As T. W. Marsh points out, his decease occurring just towards the close of the ten years during which the Monthly Meeting of Reigate existed separately, it must have been a great loss in its reduced condition. Nathaniel Owen's excellent writing and signatures occur frequently in the Monthly Meeting books. At Reigate Meeting House is a small vellum book with a curious clasp, mostly in Ambrose Rigge's and Nathaniel Owen's autograph, being "An account of Books kept In our Monthly Meeting at Rygate, 1694." N. Owen has this "Memorandum y^t on ye 12th 9^{ber}. 1705, the Books hereafter named w^{ch} belonge to the ^o_m meeting of Reigate and formerly in the hands of our ffriend Ambrose Rigge, are Now by the Consent of ye sayd Meeting Lodged in the hand of Nath. Owen, for w^{ch} books I think my Selfe accountable." Then follows an interesting catalogue of books both printed and manuscript, including Friends' Registers, Monthly Meeting Minute Books, etc., from 1650, etc. "No Books to be lent for ye future without a promisy Note of ye psons hand whoe borrows, to returne ye same *In one year or sooner*, and all such notes to be kept in ye Chest." "ffriends' Books Lent p. Nath. Owen the 12th 9^{ber}, 1705: To Jacob Butterfield [of the Stone Dean, Jordans' family] Stephen Crisp's Works. Rec^d ye 4th 9^{ber}, 1706," so that ffriend Butterfield kept his book within a week of the time limit!!

Nathaniel Owen died at his residence, Reigate, 7 Jan., 1724/5, aged about 73, and was bur. in F. B. G., Reigate. Shortly after his decease Reigate Monthly Meeting records his death under date "8th mo. 1724/5."

Although thear hath been no bisnes requiering A monthly Meeting since ye 6th 11th mo. Last past; yet uppone the decease of our well be-Loved friend Nathaniel Owen who departed this life the 7th of this Instant In great pease and resignaishon of minde, and was buried In friends Burying ground at Rigeat the next fust day folowing, beeing the 11th of this Instant, many friends from Divers parts, Surey, Kent and Susickes, as Also from Lundun with Many other peopel of note of ye town of Rigeat and pleases adiacent Atending the Buriell at which our friend Wilam

¹⁷ See many references to N. Owen in T. W. Marsh's *Early Friends in Surrey and Sussex*, 1886.

Wraggs his brother-in-law was with him during Illness and have remained hear since to asist his Children In Looking over and aiusting his outward Affears and consarns, haveing Acquainted us thear are several printed bookes beeloning to ye meeting come to his hands together with the Records of friends Marigeses, birthes and burials, and ye minet Book of our monthlv Meeting releating ye bisnes and consarnes of friends for maney years past and Allso sundrey deeds and writings Releating to ye buring ground on part of which the meeting hous was billt, and how friends weare furst Intitled thear unto and upon what terms and Condishons they hold ye seame ; whearupon wee thoat it Absolutely nessesary to Coll A meeting and to desier All our friends both men and women who being but few in number and none of us beeing throoly Aquainted with ye beefore menched matters, have desird our friend Willam Wragg to Asist us, who having veived and considered the said deeds and writings hath at our Request Consented to write for us this presant meeting and resite ye seame for our information." The Minute proceeds to desire certain Friends, or any two of them, to receive from the executors¹⁸ the various books which were to be locked up in a chest at the Meeting House "and Robert Street to keep the key for friends yeuse, and that hee Lend none of friends boockes to aney person whotsoever without a not(e) of thear hand promesing to deliver the seame.

This curious minute is indeed a remarkable specimen of orthography, and is entirely innocent of punctuation ; one can almost hear the vernacular of the good clerk who indited it, and it is itself an evidence of the sad loss which the Meeting had sustained of an educated and gifted Friend.

During the alterations necessitated by the building of Reigate new Meeting House in 1857, the leaden coffin containing the remains of Nathaniel Owen was found but when the coffin was opened the features were unrecognisable, and, "tell it not in Gath," 'tis said a Friend secured as a relic of this ancient saint, the jaw bone or some other portion of the skeleton ! The coffin was removed in 9th mo. 1857, to the right hand corner of the Burial Ground at the entrance to the Meeting House, where also rest, as shown on the admirable plan, the remains of Frances Owen, Cornelius Owen, Nathaniel Owen, Junr., and another Nathaniel Owen, Sen. of Sevenoaks ([?]) and his remains removed from Bunhill Fields).

The compiler has often wondered why Reigate Friends have not put down a simple stone to Nathaniel Owen as the exact spot of his second interment is known, and especially as he was one of the founders of the Meeting, of which he was so distinguished a member.

¹⁸ This action of N. Owen's executors is to be commended. The retention in private hands of public books and documents has been a frequent source of loss, and it should be discouraged. [Eds.]

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

Miss Emma C. Abraham, of Grassendale Park, Liverpool, points out that John Abraham, her ancestor, died at Manchester, not, as stated, at Etchells (p. 32). John Abraham's country house was "The Lower House at the High Grieve" (now called High Grove), in the parish of Northenden Etchells, co. Chester. Daniel Abraham's age at death was 69, not 79.

Thomas Owen (p. 29) was apparently bur. at Manchester parish church burial ground 1st February, 1637/8. There is an inventory dated 5 Feb., 1637/8, at Chester, of the goods, etc., of Thomas Owen, late of Manchester; [*inter alia*] The partabell estate of the decedent in money, debts and wares as it is now in joynt stocke with Richard Owen and Samuel Owen 362li 1s. 7d.; Summa totalis 551li 15s.; Exhibited 26 April, 1638. Proved by Richard Owen his son 15 March, 1637/8. It would appear doubtful from the names of Richard and Samuel whether these entries relate to Thomas Owen, father of Nathaniel, Jeremiah, Rachel, etc.

The will of Elizabeth (Ashton) Owen was apparently proved at Chester, 1695, not 1688, as stated (p. 31), which refers to another Owen will; her age would be 68.

JOSEPH J. GREEN.

To be continued.

An Appeal from Ireland.

Dublin y^e 7 ⁵/_{mo} 1687.¹

Lo. ffriend

Last 7th day ffriends deliver'd an Address to the Deputy here to be sent to the King, Antho. Sharp, Roger Roberts, John Newby, Abraham ffuller, Sen^r., John Edmundson, and another ffriend, with two North ffriends deliver'd it. I suppose thou wilt see it in London; Thy brother (Jn^o. Burneyat) is in the North & hath been these several weeks, sister and Child very well: ffriends here are generally so: some came out of the North, & give the same Account of thy brother & ffriends there. Here is great openness in the country: It might be well for some ffrds of your City to give us a visit, I should be very glad to see thy bro. ff. S. [[?] Francis Stamper] here, I believe he would haue great service here. It would do well for some of your ffriends in the ministry that seldom travels abroad, to come over here, and they would find a necessity to bestir themselves here. Thy Lo. ffrd A.S. [[?] AMOS STRETTELL.]

¹ D. Portfolio, 16.25.