

## “The First Publishers of Truth.”<sup>1</sup>

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The Friends' Historical Society has issued its first Journal Supplement, entitled “The First Publishers of Truth.”

London Yearly Meeting in 1676, 1680, and 1682 made minutes urging Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to prepare records of the first spreading of Truth in their different localities, and though this counsel was not everywhere responded to, it resulted in the compilation of a series of local documents relative to the rise of the Society of Friends, many of which have been preserved in the Devonshire House archives, but of which very little use has hitherto been made. The Journal Supplement now published contains about thirty of these records, including those for Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Durham, and Essex and Colchester. Nearly fifty of the ninety-six pages of which the volume consists are devoted to Cumberland, and constitute its most important and interesting section. Cumberland Quarterly Meeting must have been rich in historians two hundred years ago, when these records were prepared, as is stated, by nine different writers.

In reading through this volume we have been agreeably surprised at the variety of interest and detail it contains. Works published by historical societies are commonly the quarries from which the polished stones of the historian are hewn ; but in the volume before us, whilst there is necessarily some repetition, there is but little that is tedious. The editorial work has been well done by Norman Penney. The notes, whilst concise, are distinctly helpful, and have been written with discriminating care. The quaint old spelling with its charming variety has been preserved. For

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Society can obtain this set of five Supplements for ten shillings (\$2.50), if paid in advance ; or, if preferred, members can purchase the Supplements separately at half-a-crown (60 cents) each. Payment in either case should be made to Norman Penney, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, London, E.C., or to Rufus M. Jones, 1010 Arch Street, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

The Supplements can be obtained by non-members for three shillings (75 cents) each from Headley Brothers, 14, Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C., or from Rufus M. Jones, as above. All prices include postage.

instance, the name of a Justice of Carlisle, whose persecuting work is recorded at page fifty-three, is first spoken of as "one Muzgroff," and five lines lower down he becomes "ye sd Musgroff."

Some of the notes of the spiritual gifts bestowed upon ancient worthies are quaintly suggestive. Bartholomew Elston, of Cockermouth, "had a few words sometimes in meetings (though not much concerned yt way) wch was Edyfieing." Thomas Relf, of Caldbeck Meeting, "Received a part in the Ministry, and had a watering testimony." "Anthony, the 4 son of John fell had a watering Testimony att many times, & was an Jnocent Man much given to Retirement." Robert Withers, who was travelling in Cumberland as early as 1653, found his service "was to speak to particular persons, he haveing the spirit of Disserning by wch he could read the states & Conditions of many."

This volume contains several narratives of the unhappy deaths of those who had been prominent in persecuting the Friends. The Yearly Meeting of 1676 suggested that the subordinate meetings should supply particulars of such cases under six heads, the sixth being "to note ye Conwertion of such Enemies as are turned to god." To this the Friends of Falmouth state that they "know of no such persecuting Enemies turning to god with us." But in reply to the inquiry, "What Judgment fell upon persecutors?" they give a remarkable narrative of the tragic death of Thomas Robinson through the violence of his own bull. The story is too long to transcribe, but will be found to supply an unexpectedly sensational element in this sober looking book.

We hope that the Historical Society will be enabled to publish the narratives from other Quarterly Meetings, and that the series may be extensively read. There is always a liability that works like these should be looked at as archæologically curious, rather than practically useful, but we see no reason why these records should not at once satisfy the curiosity of the archæologist and prove suggestive to those who desire, from the records of the past, to obtain guidance how to meet the requirements of the present.

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