

The Quaker Family of Owen.

Concluded from p. 82.

Frances (Ridge) Owen was evidently a woman of some intellectual endowment. She was an editor of a little book, which has been very popular in our Society in the past, and is still valued by those whose privilege it is to possess a copy of one of the six editions. We refer to **Fruits of Retirement: or, Miscellaneous Poems, Moral and Divine, Being Some Contemplations, Letters, &c., Written on Variety of Subjects and Occasions, By Mary Mollineux, Late of Liverpool, Deceased. To which is Prefixed, Some Account of the Author.** London, T[ace]. Sowle, 1702. So runs the title of the first, 8vo. edition, which was reprinted the same year, and again in 1720, 1739, 1761, and 1772, and two of the poems, with a biographical notice, find a place in E. N. Armitage's *Quaker Poets of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1896 (pp. 206-209). The original edition of 1702 commences with *A Testimony Concerning My dear Friend and Cousin Mary Mollineux, Deceased.* Signed, "Rigate, the 20th of the Third Month, 1701. Frances Owen" (10 pp.). Testimonies by Tryall Ryder and Henry Mollineux (the husband of the deceased), both in prose and verse, follow, together with other matter, including some Latin stanzas by M. M., "Englished by H.M." The **Fruits of Retirement** proper occupies 174 pp. These include the following, addressed to Frances (Ridge) Owen before her marriage, *viz.*, six prose epistles, and twelve poetical epistles, 1678 to 1690. There are also three letters addressed to Frances Owen after her marriage. In all, the collection includes six prose epistles and eighty-seven poems by the author (dating from 1663, when only twelve years of age), and one, *Upon Silence*, by another hand. On the whole, the poetry is above the average style of that day, and certainly an improvement on Thomas Ellwood, which perhaps is not saying much, however!

Mary Mollineux, formerly Southworth, born circa 1651, of the very ancient family of that name, joined Friends in early days. She mar., 1685, Henry Mollineux, of Liver-

pool, of another ancient family, and died 3 Jan., 1695/6, aged 44.

Frances Owen commences her *Testimony*, "In a Living Remembrance of the Benefit which I received by her Labour of Love"; and goes on to say that "The worthy Author of these Writings was one whose near Relation to me began our Acquaintance almost with our Lives; she was the only Child of her Mother, as I of my Father (and they own Brother and Sister)." Frances Owen states that she was convinced of Friends' principles through her cousin's instrumentality. Her cousin, in her childhood,

was much afflicted with weak Eyes, which made her unfit for the usual Employment of girls, and being of a large Natural Capacity, her father brought her up to more Learning than is commonly bestowed on our Sex, that she could fluently discourse in Latin, made considerable progress in Greek, wrote several Hands well, was a good Arithmetician, a student of several useful Arts, understood Physick and Chyrurgery and the Nature of Plants, Herbs, and Minerals, made some inspection into divers profitable Sciences, and delighted in the Study of Nature, etc.

Her husband says that she even discoursed in Latin on her deathbed! It is evident that she was a most gifted woman, especially in her day when women's education was so neglected; and, above all things, she was a sincere-hearted, humble-minded Christian, and earnest for the spread of the Truth. Her husband, Henry Mollineux, was in every sense worthy of her; he, like her, suffered persecution. He was the author of several controversial works, etc., printed 1695 to 1718, and could say, what one fears few husbands can, that he had in every respect, through the Lord's assistance, discharged his duty of endeared love to his wife.

Frances (Ridge) Owen died at Reigate, 6th April, 1724, aged 62, and was bur. in F.B.G. there, where her remains rest beside those of her husband. Her Monthly Meeting records that

Frances Owen, the wife of Nathaniel Owen, of Reigate, was seized the 21st day of 1st month, 1723/4 with a return of the jaundice, and followed with a violent fever. She departed this life in a lamb-like frame, the 6th of the 2nd month, 1724, and in the 62nd year of her age. During the time of her illness, through the great goodness and mercy of the Lord, she was preserved in great and admirable patience, fully resigned to His will, declaring she had further assurance of His love and favour than ever she had known, and exhorted those that were about her to love and fear the Lord; rejoicing that from her youthful days her conver-

sation had been godly and holy, and that was the way to everlasting life and peace; with other comfortable sayings so long as her strength remained.

We must now revert to Jeremiah Owen, third son of the above Nathaniel and Frances Owen. He was born at Coulsdon, 26th Nov., 1695, and was a salter and oilman, of 17, Pudding Lane, Fish Street, London, and by company a Citizen and Tallow Chandler. He had a country residence also at Croydon. He mar. at Devonshire House, 31 July, 1719, Susanna Ayre, dau. to John Ayre, late of London, Citizen and Tallow Chandler, and Hester his wife, the latter being a daughter of William Ingram, son-in-law to Margaret (Askew) Fell-Fox, of Swarthmore Hall, by his first wife. Amongst those present at the marriage were Thomas Story, Ambrose Rigge, Lethieullier Tooke, Theophila, wife of John Bellers, the social reformer, and daughter of Giles Fettiplace, Esquire, of Cold St. Alwyns, co. Gloucester; etc., etc.¹⁹

In possession of Miss Strettel, of Clifton, in 1889, was a family Bible, the gift, in 1721, of "F[rances] O[wen] to her son J[eremiah] O[wen]."

Jeremiah Owen died at Hepworth (*alias* Hopwell) Hall, near Halstead, Essex, the residence of his dau., Susanna Sparrow, 26 Aug., 1768, aged 73; bur. in F.B.G., Bunhill Fields. Susanna (Ayre) Owen, born circa 1700, died 24 June, 1766, aged 66, and was bur. there also.

Jeremiah and Susanna (Ayre) Owen had issue one son and 8 daus. Of these Nathaniel Owen (quartus) was born at Pudding Lane, 1723, was in partnership with his father there as an oilman in 1766, etc., and was deceased in 1786. He mar. Mary (Mason?) and left Friends. His son, Nathaniel Owen (quintus), is named in the will of his Kinsman, John Strettell, in 1786 as living ["helpless,"], as also was his brother, John Mason Owen. Their sister, Mary Owen, mar. 1787, John Kendall, of Colchester, a cousin to the eminent minister of the same name; Jeremiah Owen appears to be another son of Nathaniel Owen (quartus), and was living also in 1786.

Of the daughters of Jeremiah and Susanna Owen, Frances, born in 1724, mar. 1745, George Vaux, of St. Margarets, Fish Street, London, Surgeon, son of George

¹⁹ The Ingrams were eventually the heirs of this estate, now the property and residence of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bart.

Vaux, of Reigate, Physician. He died in 1803, she in 1793. They were the ancestors of our Friend, George Vaux, of Philadelphia, and of Roberts Vaux, the judge, author, and prison philanthropist, of Philadelphia, and Richard Vaux, Mayor of that city, and many others of this family; also of the English branch of this Vaux family, some of whom are eminent as High Churchmen, scholars, and antiquaries, of whom is the present Rev. J. E. Vaux, M.A., etc.

In possession of Walter Robson, of Saffron Walden, is a silhouette of Susannah Vaux, executed by her kinswoman, Susanna (Crafton) Day, in 1770; she was a daughter of George Vaux, of London, Surgeon, by his wife, Frances Owen, was born in 1750, and died at Croydon in 1843, at the advanced age of 93.

Her brother, Jeremiah Vaux, of Birmingham, M.D., mar. Susanna Bowyer, whose daughter, Frances Bowyer Vaux, an author, mar. 1816, William Miller, of Ipswich. They became parents of the famous William Allen Miller, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., Professor of Chemistry at King's College, born 1817, died at Birmingham, 1870.

Sarah Owen, sister to Frances (Owen) Vaux, born 1726, mar. 1760, Joseph Taylor, of London, Citizen and Tallow Chandler; they were both living 1786.

Other daughters were Rebecca, born 1727, died 1750; Susanna Owen, above named, born 1729, mar. 1760, John Sparrow, of Halstead, both of whom were living in 1786. This is the Quaker branch of the well-known ancient county family of Sparrow, of Gosfield Place, Essex, and of the banking firm of Sparrow and Tufnell.

Three other daughters of Jeremiah Owen, of whom the eldest and youngest of the family, born 1720 and 1733, were Hesters, appear to have all died young.

We now revert to Philotesia Owen, younger sister to Jeremiah Owen, born at Coulsdon, 17 July, 1697, and mar. at F.M.H., Reigate, 18 July, 1716, Robert Strettell, of London, Brewer, then of Dublin, Merchant, son of Amos Strettell, of Dublin, Merchant, and Experience, his wife. Of this well-known Quaker family, mentioned in the delightful *Leadbeater Papers*, was Anne Strettell, another child of the above Amos Strettell, who mar. John Barclay, of Dublin, Merchant, son of the Apologist. Mollison Barclay, dau. to Robert Barclay, of Urie, son and heir of the Apologist, is said to have mar., as her second husband, another member of the Strettell family.

Philotesia's marriage with Robert Strettell was brought about through the connection of the Owens with Cheshire and Mobberley, where a Quaker branch of the Strettell family resided, at Saltersby House.

Robert Strettell was a wealthy man, but lost his property in the explosion of the South Sea Bubble. He and his wife embarked afterwards for Philadelphia, settling there circa 1736/7. Robert Strettell again became prosperous, and was Mayor of Philadelphia in 1752, and, curiously, opposed the Peace policy of the Government and severed his connection with Friends. Both he and his wife died in Philadelphia, Robert Strettell in 1761, the latter many years later.

George Vaux, of Philadelphia, speaks of a silver mug in possession of a descendant of the Strettells in America, marked "N.O. to P.S." (*i.e.*, Nathaniel Owen to Philotesia Strettell, but as he died in 1724 it must have been his gift in her girlhood). Another interesting relic is a silver saucepan, in possession of Rev. Alfred Baker Strettell, M.A., late Vicar of King's Langley, Herts, which he purchased through George Vaux's good offices. It weighs no less than 34½ ounces, was manufactured circa 1695, was the property of the aforesaid Amos Strettell, and the gift probably of the latter to Robert and Philotesia on their marriage.

The eldest son of the latter was John Strettell, of London, an opulent Merchant, born 1721, died 1786, having mar. late in life, 1776, as her first husband, Mary Hayling, by whom he had one surviving son, Amos Strettell, who inherited and dispersed a very large fortune; he was born 1782, and died at Leamington 1855, aged 74. He was a famous book collector, his library being sold in eight days in 1820 in 1,699 lots. His Caxton's Cicero *On Old Age*, 1481, made the absurdly small price of £42. He was the father of the Rev. A. B. Strettell just named. John Strettell, aforesaid, father to Amos, was a philanthropist, and by his will he bequeathed a very large number of legacies to the Owen connection. It is a fine specimen of a genealogical testament.

Whether any descendants of this Owen family, bearing the name, still exist is uncertain, but it is not unlikely.

It will be seen from the above account of the Owen race that amongst other well-known Quaker families who inter-married or were connected with it, are the prominent

ones of Fell, Abraham, Barclay, and Gurney, which goes to show how intimately related are many of the older Friends' families.

In conclusion, we must express our obligations to our kinsmen, George Vaux, and the Rev. A. B. Strettell, for information given from time to time, and to our late Friend, Thomas William Marsh, of Dorking and Chelsea, who took especial interest in the Owen race.

JOSEPH J. GREEN.

Inscriptions in Friends' Burial Ground, Bowcroft, (Stannington) near Sheffield.

Here lies the body of George Shaw, late of Brookside, who departed this life on the 5th day of the 5th month, 1708, in the 75th year of his age. He suffered much for bearing his testimony against the payment of tythes.

Here lyeth y^e body of William Shaw, of Hill, who departed this life in y^e second moneth, 1712, aged 85.

Here lyeth y^e body of Francis, wife of George Shaw, late of Brookside, who departed this life, the 19th day of April, in y^e second month, 1722, in y^e 89th year of hir age.

Here lyeth the body of Fines Mathews, late of Hill, who departed this life, the 11th of the first month, 1728, aged 87 years.

Here lyeth the body of Fines, wido, late of Willm Shaw, of Hill, who departed this life, the 4th of the 5th month, 1731, aged 56 years.

The Burial Ground is situated at the top of the hill on the north side of the Rivelin valley, and commands a very extensive view to the South. From a point a few yards from the Ground can be seen, in the valley to the north, the farms of Hill and Brookside, where the Shaws lived. The graveyard is planted with trees, and forms a conspicuous object for miles.

In 1678, George Fox visited William Shaw, at Hill, and held a meeting, which was attended by Friends from Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

From information supplied by Thomas Henry Watson, M.B., of Pevensey, 1902.