

“The First Publishers of Truth.”¹

The second instalment of “The First Publishers of Truth” is a slightly smaller volume than the first one, but is in no way inferior to it in interest. It continues the story of Halstead, Coggeshall, and Colchester, and afterwards goes on to deal with Gloucestershire (Bristol is treated separately in Part 1), Herefordshire, Kent, London, and Norwich. There are a few pages concerning Hampshire, Huntingdonshire, Lancashire, and Lincoln. It is prefaced by a photographic reproduction of an ornamental title page of the Kent Quarterly Meeting MSS.; at the foot of the page there is a Latin quotation followed by two Scripture passages appropriate to the contents, “The Righteous shall be in Euerlasting Remembrance,” and, “The memory of y^e Just is blessed: But y^e Name of the Wicked shall Rott.” The way in which the latter quotation is written shows that at the date in question (1690), the writing of *the* as *ye* (which ought always to be pronounced *the* and not *ye*) was being given up.

In reading these accounts, we cannot fail to be impressed by the simplicity and directness of the narrative; they are a recital of one fact after another; the story of atrocious persecution is not set off with words of indignation or pity, and is none the less effective on that account; the judgments which fell upon the persecutors are told with a bald severity which speaks for itself. The light of simple honesty everywhere shines through. Of Hereford we read: “About ye 11th moneth, 1655, John Audland, *and annother frd whose name is forgot*, came on a first day morning on foot into ye City of Hereford. . . [they were] brought before ye then mayor, who discharged ym, desiering ym to depart ye towne in peace (they made no promise to aney thing).”

¹ Members of the Historical Society can still obtain this set of five Supplements for ten shillings (\$2.50), if paid at once; or, if preferred, members can purchase the Supplements separately for half-a-crown (60 cents) each. Payment in either case should be made to Norman Penney, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, London, E.C., to Dr. Rufus M. Jones, 1010 Arch Street, Philadelphia, or to Friends' Book and Tract Committee, 51 Fifth Avenue, New York.

The Supplements can be purchased by non-members for three shillings (75 cents) each from Headley Brothers, 14, Bishopsgate Without, London, E.C., or from Philadelphia and New York as above. All prices include postage.

The report concludes, "Wt is heare inserted is truth, except there be aney mistake in ye time, as witness my mark." It would appear that the Clerk, Thomas Merrick, could not write! We are reminded of the account given by Papias concerning the Gospel of Mark; how the writer set down nothing that was not fact, but was not particular as to the chronological order of the events which he related.

The idea of "seeing to the end," a fine thought which we come upon elsewhere in early Quaker literature, is to be found in the report of Ross Meeting—certain persons "did see ye End of ye Preists Teachings." George Fox² tells of a soldier who saw "to the end of fighting" and laid down his arms, the dying James Naylor speaks of that spirit which "sees to the end of all temptation."³

Many are the quaint and beautiful expressions scattered up and down these pages. We cannot refrain from telling of the Friends who had planted meetings at Foulstone (Folkestone), Hythe, Romney, and Lydd, and who came again later "To view the Feild in which ye seed was sowen. . . . and all was as a greene Feild of Corne growing vp." But of Hythe we read later, "Friends grew as ye Garden of ye LORD. But in time, for want of Watchfullnesse, The Fowles of ye Aire pickt vp the Seed in some, And the Thornes choaked it in some, And ye sun scorched it in Others."

The most shocking account is that of the prisoners at Norwich; it bears out the stories of suffering which are to be found in the early minute books of that Monthly Meeting. From those books it would appear that in that town the greater number of Friends were at one time in prison, since several Monthly Meetings are stated to have been held in the gaol.

The frequent mention of the trade or calling of individuals who are named in these reports is of value in showing us the social status of those who came to Friends.⁴

The numerous foot notes appended by the Editor, Norman Penney, show the same minute care and research as distinguished the first instalment of these proceedings.

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² *The Journal of George Fox*, 8th edition, i. 68.

³ Sewel's *History*, 5th edit., i. 269; Gough's *History*, i. 247.

⁴ A list of the trades, etc., mentioned will be included in the *apparatus criticus* to the book.