

“William Miller at the King’s Gardens.”

William Miller, “the Patriarch,” as he was called by his descendants, was the first of five generations of the family, who, for nearly two centuries, were leading Friends at Edinburgh. According to family tradition, he was born near Hamilton about 1655. Probably he was a convinced Friend, as his name first appears in the Meeting records in connection with his marriage, in 1680, to Margaret Cassie, a connection of the Barclays of Ury, and for many years resident in their family. The marriage took place, “be for many wittnesses,” at the house of Hew Wood, a worthy friend, a minister, and gardener to the Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton Palace. For nearly ten years after his marriage he and his family were resident at various places in the West of Scotland, where he doubtless followed his vocation as gardener; but in First Month, 1689, we find his name, with others, appended to an account of the assault by the Cameronians on Edinburgh Friends, and before the end of the year, he was certainly resident in the city, “at the Abbey of Holyrood,” where his son, Hew, was born in Eleventh Month. He was probably already gardener at Holyrood Palace, having been helped to this comfortable position, perhaps, by his friend, Hew Wood, whose patron, the Duke, was “heritable keeper” of Holyrood House.

William Miller’s name soon becomes of frequent occurrence in the minutes of Edinburgh Meeting. Very often he was on Meeting appointments for drawing up the Epistle to London, and letters to individual Friends who had applied to the Quarterly Meeting for advice, and on other weighty business. Early in 1695, he seems to have been Clerk of both the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and for the next ten years his laboriously penned, quaint minutes enrich the record books. In Third Month, 1697, we learn that Friends of Edinburgh

doe now keep there mittings in the stritts, where they feell the a sisting arme of the Lord to suport them under there present exersis ; That there mittings are raither more quiet on the first day then formerly they were whill within the mitting house, and that we hop that this suffering will have some Impression, and be ane oppertunity to reach many.

Next month, W. M. explains that the meeting was held at the Abbayhill, by reason of the magistrets taking our own house from us, and that for the cause as foloueth. . . . On of our number goeing to the provist and on of the bayles to complin of som a buce that was don to us, such as som yung men offering to beat som, offering to pick a woman's pocket, with all the Ethisticall languish that ther witse could invint, liping and dansing the tim of our mitting ; and for our complining of these things, they have taken our Just right and propertie. So they punish the rightiouss and lets the wicked goe frie. . . . And when Bartholemew Gibson and William Miller went to the toun counsel of Edenburgh to demand the key of our Mitting house again acording to Patrick Heliburton his promise [he was a bailie and was "the man that took the key"], Heny. Lun, a lette bayley, and John Miller, present bayley, spok to us, and said that we should not have our key again, and lickwise said they would buld up our house dour, and that we should have no mor mitting in that place.

It was at this time that, according to family tradition, the Patriarch's wife, when preaching in these open-air meetings,¹ used to stand up, with her husband and eldest son on either side to protect her from the assaults of the rabble. Meanwhile the Meeting for Sufferings in London had drauen up a brewiat of frinds sufferings, with which they had attended the secritarys of steats, who shoued there dislick thereat, and promised to writte to this place to give redress, and desire[ing] us to attend the Chansler and advocat in order to procure it.

This, Bartholomew Gibson and William Miller, "or any other frind," are desired to do "as they see fridom." A year later Friends appealed to William III., who promised them fair, but in three months' time (Sixth Month, 1698), W. M. has to record

the tumultouse rabel continoueth to molest us at our mittings notwithstanding of our dear frinds in England of ther representing of it to the King and to others that is in athority. . . . yet no ease hath been as yett not withstanding of all pretences to that efect.

The meetings were kept "at the futt of our own turne picke in the oppen stritts for atestimony against the unJust actings of the magistrets of Edenburgh, and that from the 8th day of the Second Month to the 3rd day of the 8th Month, 1697." Friends then moved into the room below their own Meeting House, "by reason of them that lived in it is taken away by death, and it being standing emptie we have made it our mitting house."

The Monthly Meeting for Second Month, 1698, had to be "aJurned . . . by reason of the disturbance of the

¹ This would make an interesting subject for a picture.—Eds.

rabbell to Bartholomew Gibson his hous ” ; and in Ninth Month, 1698, W. M. records

frinds weall every way, only the rabbell contineueth abusing of us both at our first dayes mittings, and allso at our fift dayes mittings, with all mainer of ungodlyness, with casting of fire bales of pouders amongs us while within the house, they working out ther own shame, it being astain to christianity yet hood winked at by the magistrats of the city.

Three months later, the Clerk reports that Friends of Edinburgh are in love and unity,

but there outrageous adversaryes, the rabbell, is still abusing of us at our mittings and more especially the Colegions with the suttmen and others that, as we may call, Scum of the whol citty, and although that som of us hath spok to som of the maisters of the Coladg yet they are still raither worse then better.”

At the end of 1701, there was a very great riot, som of the Colidgens breaking up our duers with forr hamers . . . that the oak planks was broak to peeces, and after the Colidgens the moab that followed them, being several hundreds of them, men and boyes, offering wealence to som, draging som by the heals, holding up the forr hamber to kill a man a bove seventy-four years of eadg [whilst] the Capten of the tounes gaird [being appealed to] raither smiled at it.

At last, however, in Third Month, 1702, the Clerk was able to record some improvement ; those in authority

have now sent ther searcers with ther officers and putteth away the rabbell from amongst us. So as befor we recorded there disorderly miscariadges and ther unchristian behaviour, therfor wee are wery glead to record som beginnings of amendment.

For many years, however, our chronicler had, from time to time, to pen such minutes as the following :—

Twelfth Month, 1704-5 : This meeting ended in love and unity amongst themselves, [but] ther is more disturbance at the meeting at Edenburgh then ther hath been som years befor at the fifth dayes meettings uswaly by the Colidgeners and in the first dayes meettings by a great rabell.

Third Month, 1708 : frinds pairted in love and unity, and the pouer of the Lord did a pear in ane Eminent mainer, and many testimonys was born to the truth, and although that the provist and bayles sent som officers and souldiers to quench the tumultos rabbell, yet the rabbell, som of them, was wery rude in bricking up [*i.e.* breaking] of windoues, yet ther was many sober peapell was ther, and som of good not[e] and wery attentive, so that ther had not been a greater Meeting of publick frinds and other for many years, and the Lord[’s] power over all it[’s] oposers.

There were no less than eight “publick frinds” from England present on this occasion.

Even six years later, W.M., who had been appointed Treasurer of Edinburgh Meeting in 1700, and in that capacity

was directed, 1714, to see to "the necessary Repparations" to the Meeting House, was told to have the windows "Firlaced to hinder ye stones from coming upon friends when ye wyld Boys do Trou ym."²

At Edinburgh Monthly Meeting, Third Month, 1702, the Patriarch

gave in a peaper declairing his dislick with som men frinds in ther wearing ther Coats oppen in the breast, and of som women frinds, that weareth ther bear breasts in resemblance of the great women that hath ther breasts and there necks wery much neacked, which he is shure that truth ought not to admitt of; and Lickwise he is perswaded that those that was the first profesers of the truth was in Contrary practise with those that doe soe now, both men and women. His paper is recorded in the book of leaters [now alas, non-existent; and very properly] it was ordered to be read in the womens meeting.

In Fifth Month, 1702, the Patriarch had lost "his dear and loving wife," Margaret (Cassie) Miller, "on of the finest women in hir adge, day, and generation," he fondly describes her. After telling of their marriage, and the births of their ten children, he proceeds:—

Hear foloweth William Miller his testimony concerning his wife. At the Abbay the 25th of the 5th month, 1702:—Jt hath often been in my heart; and now for clearing of my conscience I thought fitt to give my testimony concerning my loveing wife, Margrat Miller . . . that now, while J am in a deap sence and sorrow for hir, that it may be amerandom to me and hir children, the two youngest being in that age that they will never remember that they see hir [she died very shortly after the birth of little Benjamin, the youngest. Her husband had been acquainted with her upwards of twenty-four years]; of these [he continues] J have been married to hir on and twenty years, ten months, and about two weeks, which J can say was but as a very short tim, because of the love that wee had on to another; and this I can say ther was never awrong word betwixt us . . . a deutifull wife she was . . . as ever a man had, and a loving mother to her children as ever had children, and I may say amother in this our Jsrael, yea, such an on both as to hir life and conversation, and also by hir sound doctrine that she preached to the astonishment of many . . .

² It appears from the cash accounts of Edinburgh Meeting that in 1720, 48 shillings Scots was paid "to the soldiers that guarded the Meeting house door." Again in 1724, there is an entry that 24 shillings sterling was "paid to the Town Officers and Soldiers for attending the Meeting house door." The latest trace of the custom which I can find is under date, 3. v. 1764, when £1 is entered as "Cash payd for a Soldier attending, preceeding this date." A *very* faint echo of the doings of the untamed "rabbell" of Edinburgh survived even to my young days, when, as we passed along some of the back streets on our way to meeting, we used to be followed by discordant cries of "Quack-quack," from the children in the gutters.

for although some hath come with that intent to catch hir in hir testimony, yet they were disapointed in there atemps, for though that she had not the advantadg of letter learning, the Lord's pouer was the more seen; and what she had learned was from another maister ; and seeing the Lord had given her ane talent, she did not put it under on bushell, nor yet under ane bedd, but sett it upon ane candelstick, that it might give light to all, as many can bear wittness by hir much travell, yea, in all places of this nation, where frinds had meettings, and even when shee was a yung woman, and alwise traveld upon hir foot, and more espacialy wpon hir oun Chargess. . . She was given up to spend and be spent for what she knew of God, for the which it is my faith and belife she hath the answer of peace, " Weel don, good and faithfull servant, enter into the Joy of thy Lord." And seeing it hath been the will of the Lord to remove hir from the trubels of this world [to] my great loss . . . this is my comfort she is at rest with Christ hir saviour. . . What shall J say of hir, " the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh, blissed be his nam for ever,"—" the nam of the rigitious shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

WILLIAM F. MILLER.

To be concluded.

Springett Penn to James Logan.¹

Cap^t Rich^d Hill, Jsaac Norris, J. Logan, R. Assheton,
T. Griffiths,

Gentlemen.

J have received a lett^r from Colonell Jn^o French, whose services to y^e Family J'm very sensible deserve to be remembred, J therefore Heartily recommend him to yo^r notice, & shall approve of w^t ever you do in his favour, so farr as you shall think Consistent wth Justice, & am wth good wishes for all your prosperity,

Yo^r already Obliged fr^d,

SPRINGETT PENN.²

Lond^o, May y^e 23^d, 1724.

¹ From the original in D (Penn MSS. 58).

² Son of William Penn, Jun., and grandson of the Founder. He died in Ireland in 1731.