

Large Gatherings of Friends.

In response to the Editors' inquiry in last number (iii. 72) :—

The largest gathering of Friends which I have ever heard of since very early days was the General Conference of the Friends called Hicksite, held at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1896, at which I was present. Three thousand Friends assembled in a tent on the campus of Swarthmore College, on the day of the fullest attendance, and the meetings continued for a week. These Conferences are held every two years. I was present in 1902 at the one held at Asbury Park, New Jersey, at which the largest attendance was something over two thousand, and in 1904, at Toronto, where one thousand five hundred was the most numerous gathering. Swarthmore had the fullest attendance, because it is in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, which is the principal centre for that body of Friends. This year, 1906, the Conference meets at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, in August.

I add some facts concerning the history of the movement represented by the Conferences, from which it will be seen that the present united organisation may be said to date from the Conference at Pendleton, Indiana, in 1890.

“First-Day School General Conferences” were held in Philadelphia in 1868, 1869, 1870; in New York, 1871; in Baltimore, 1872; Richmond, Ind., 1873; Mt. Pleasant, O., 1874; Pickering, Ont., 1875; Clear Creek, Ill., 1881; Waynesville, O., 1883; Mt. Pleasant, O., 1884; Philadelphia, 1886; Yarmouth, Ont., 1888.

“Friends' Union for Philanthropic Labour” was organised at Waynesville, O., in 1882, and held its second meeting in Baltimore in 1883. Since then the First-Day School and Philanthropic Conferences have been held at the same time and place, except in 1888, when the Philanthropic Union met in New York. Joint Conferences were held at Pendleton, Ind., in 1890, and at Lincoln, Va., in 1892. At Chappaqua, N.Y., in 1894, some sessions were devoted to subjects of a particularly religious character. At Swarthmore, Pa., in 1896, an educational department was added. Conferences for the consideration of these four lines of work were held at Richmond, Ind., in 1898,

and at Chautauqua, N. Y., in 1890. At Asbury Park, N. J., in 1902, the four hitherto partially distinct Conferences were merged in one General Conference in which the Young Friends' Associations were also represented.

For a fuller history of Friends' Conferences see the introduction to the proceedings of the Conference held at Chautauqua, from which the above is gleaned.

These gatherings are separate from the organisations of the seven Yearly Meetings, to which they bear the same kind of relation as the English Summer Schools bear to London Yearly Meeting.

At the Meetings for Worship at the Yearly Meeting at Race Street, Philadelphia, three large houses are filled to overflowing and the number must be something like those given above.

JOHN WILLIAM GRAHAM.

Meeting Records.¹

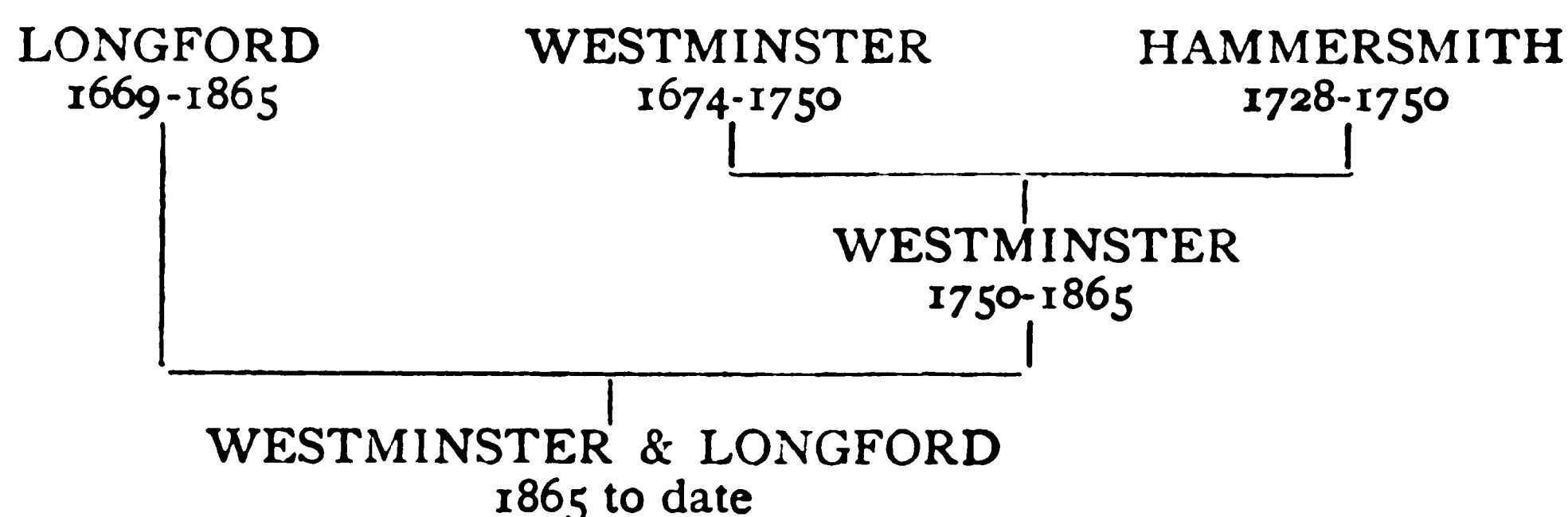
I. WESTMINSTER MEETING HOUSE, LONDON.

Longford Monthly Meeting, 1669-1865. 13 vols.

Westminster Monthly Meeting, 1674-1865. 17 vols.

Hammersmith Monthly Meeting, 1728-1750. 1 vol.

Westminster and Longford Monthly Meeting, 1865 to date. 9 vols.



¹ Minute of the Meeting for Sufferings, London, Second Month, 1906 :
The Committee of the Friends' Historical Society asks permission to print, from time to time, in the Journal of the Society, lists of minute books, etc., sent up by Quarterly and Monthly Meetings to this Meeting, showing what historical records, relative to Friends, exist in various parts of the country. The request is granted. (Signed) ROBERT A. PENNEY, *Clerk*.