

Friends at Newbury, Berkshire.

In Mr. W. Money's able and voluminous *History of Newbury* (1887) there are numerous passages relating to the Friends who formerly flourished in the old Berkshire town. On pages 523-526 there are a series of extracts from the Churchwardens' presentments of those who were charged with absenting themselves from the parish church, refusing to pay dues and church-rates, not receiving the sacrament, leaving children unbaptised, etc. These bear date in the years 1665, 1666, 1667, 1670, and 1675.¹ In 1693 four persons are returned as refusing to pay church-rates. Except in one presentment, none of the persons mentioned are expressly referred to as Quakers, but a comparison with other documents shows this to have been the case with several of them.

The municipal authorities in Newbury, as in some other boroughs, seem to have been very reluctant to put in force the enactments of the Government against peaceable neighbours, and in 1681 we find that an order was issued from the Court of King's Bench, requiring that the names of those who had been "indicted for absenting themselves from Church" should be forthwith "extracted into the Exchequer." "This mandate," says Mr. Money, "appears to have had the desired effect on the Newbury Court, as at the next Sessions the names of the Quakers formerly imprisoned were called over, and so many of them as appeared were remanded to the Town prison into the custody of John Dandridge, Serjeant." Sixteen persons put in an appearance (all of them men). The names in this and the following cases will be found in the list below.

Two years later (1683), the same sixteen Friends, with two more added to their number, were called at a Court of Quarter Sessions, and the Oath of Allegiance was read

¹ In the Churchwardens' accounts, 1681, 1682, we find :—

Re ^d . of the Quakers	3 2 0
P ^d . to Hugh Kettle for prosecuting the Quaker	..	10 0

and tendered to them, when they all refused to take it. After this tender they were re-committed to the borough prison, under the charge of John Dandridge, who was bound over in the sum of £10 each for their appearance at the following Sessions. At the same time the attendance of ten females was required. Of these, five were wives of the men Friends, and four were "spinsters." The tenth was Anna Hyne, whose husband, Thomas, does not seem to have been a Quaker. But at the same Sessions, Thomas Hyne, Jun., who was probably their son, and who carried on the business of a tanner at the adjoining village of Shaw, was bound over with his surety, Thomas Pearce, weaver, in the sum of £10 to appear at the same time; and Edward Crosby, clothworker, was bound over in the same amount for the appearance of Mary, wife of Robert Gosling (not one of the men Friends charged).

At the next Sessions true bills were found against the ten women Friends and young Thomas Hyne, and Messrs. Pearce and William Paradise became sureties, in the sum of £10 each, that the accused would appear and answer to their indictment at the next sitting of the Court. One wonders whether these proceedings had anything to do with a decision arrived at in November of the same year (1683) that a common prison should be erected at the expense of the Corporation, the said prison consisting of two rooms with garrets, and butchers' stalls underneath.

In October, 1684, the retiring Constable, Francis Cox, presented twenty-four persons, some of them Friends and some belonging to the other Nonconformist bodies, "ffor not repairing to the Parish Church at Newbury to heare Divine Service and Sermon upon the two last Lord's Dayes commonly called Sunday, *vizt.* the 5th and 12th dayes of this instant October." No conviction, however, is recorded against these persons.

At the Court held in January, 1685, Thomas Hyne, Jun., and ten women (probably the ten women Friends before mentioned) were indicted for unlawfully assembling for religious worship, and being found guilty, it was ordered that Mr. Mayor and the Associate Justices send for them by warrant. Were the other men Friends at this

time in prison, and was young Thomas Hyne at liberty because he alone had been willing to give surety ?²

Mr. Money's book does not contain any later instances of persecution against the Friends. In February, 1688, when James II. was vainly endeavouring to conciliate the Nonconformists, a number of Dissenters were elected as Aldermen and Common Councillors at Newbury. Of these it is noted that " Robert Wilson refused to be sworn Alderman, and Robert Gosling refused to be sworn Councilman, whereupon their places were declared void." They were not to be tempted to abandon their Quaker principles by the prospect of municipal honours.

It was at Robert Wilson's house that the Friends held their meeting, as appears from the "Return of Conventicles" made in 1669, and preserved in the Lambeth Palace Library (Tenison MS. 639). At a later date, a small Meeting House was erected near Bartholomew Street. It has been used of late years as a candle factory and for other purposes. The Friends' Burying Ground is still preserved in Mayor's Lane, at no great distance from the railway station.

The following list gives the Quaker families whose names occur in the entries given in Mr. Money's book, and may be of service to those interested in Friends' genealogy :—

AVELYN.—Edward Avelyn imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683.

BOND.—Thomas Bond presented for not attending church, 1670.

BROWNE.—Richard Browne imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683; Elizabeth his wife also refused oath, 1683.

COX.—Abraham Cox presented for not receiving sacrament, 1665; reported as excommunicate, 1670. Robert Cox, weaver, presented for not receiving sacrament, 1675; refused oath and imprisoned, 1681, 1683.

GOSLING.—Mary, wife of Robert Gosling, apparently refused oath, 1683. Robert, and Mary his wife, presented for not attending church, 1684. Robert refused to take oath as Councilman, 1688.

² The objection of the early Friends to " giving surety " is illustrated by Thomas Ellwood's words relating to Sir William Bowyer, " We told him that knowing our innocency, and that we had not misbehaved ourselves, nor did meet in contempt of the King's authority, but purely in obedience to the Lord's requirements to worship Him . . . we could not consent to be bound, for that would imply guilt, which we were free from."

GRAY.—Joseph Gray, weaver, presented for refusing church dues, 1665, and, in 1675, for not receiving sacrament. John, Joseph, and Benjamin Gray imprisoned, 1681, 1683. Sara, Joseph's wife, refused the oath, 1683; presented for not attending church, 1684.

HUTCHINS.—Anna Hutchins, spinster, refused oath, 1683; presented for not attending church, 1684, as was also Richard Hutchins, Jun.

HYNE.—Anna, wife of Thomas Hyne, Sen., refused oath, 1683, as did Thomas Hyne, Jun., of Shaw, who was indicted for unlawful assembly, 1685.

JOHNS.—John, Robert, and Thomas Johns imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681 and 1683. Margery Johns presented for not attending church, 1684.

KNIGHT.—Elizabeth Knight, spinster, refused oath, in 1683; presented for not attending church, 1684.

MARSHE.—Thomas Marshe presented for not attending church, 1670; imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683; refused to pay church-rate, 1693.

MILLS.—Edward Mills refused to pay church dues, 1665; imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683, as was also William Mills, Jun. Maria or Marion, Edward's wife, also refused oath, 1683.

OSGOOD.—Mary Osgood, widow, presented for not attending church, 1670, and for not receiving sacrament, 1675.

PLANT.—John Woodes, *al.* Plant, presented for not attending church, 1665. John Plant, Jun., imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683.

STEPHENS.—Bridget Stephens, spinster, refused oath, 1683; presented for not attending church, 1684.

STRONGE.—John Stronge imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683. Prudence his wife refused oath, 1683; presented for not attending church, 1684.

STYLES.—Joseph Styles imprisoned for refusing oath, 1683.

TOVEY.—William Tovey imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683.

WATERMAN.—John Waterman imprisoned for refusing oath, 1681, 1683.

WEBB.—Elizabeth Webb refused oath, 1683.

WILSON.—Robert Wilson, flaxdresser, and Maria his wife, both returned as excommunicate in 1667. The Meeting was held at their house in 1669 (Lambeth Return). In 1670, R. W. was still excommunicate. He was imprisoned for refusing the oath, in 1681 and 1683. His wife refused it in 1683; and was presented for not attending church, in 1684. He refused to take the oath as Alderman in 1688. Priscilla Wilson was presented for not attending church in 1670.

W. H. SUMMERS.