

Thomas Areskine, Brewer, of Edinburgh.

The first we hear of Thomas Areskine is in Thomas Story's *Journal*, under date of ix. 1717, when T. Story was at a Meeting at Alston-Moor, at which there were several newly-convinced Friends, and amongst them "Thomas Areskine, lately a Baptist teacher; a very hopeful young man, and of good repute among the people." When Thomas Story reached Keswick, some weeks later, he found that Thomas Areskine had had a meeting the day before in the market place of the town.¹

In vii. 1721, we find him paying what the Meeting records term "a comfortable visit" to Friends of Aberdeen. Besides his ministrations to Friends he would seem to have had other and more personal attractions to the "granite city," as appears from the following minute of Aberdeen M.M., xi. 1721:—

Andrew Jaffray read a paragraf of a leter from Thomas Ereskin, shewing that the s^d Thomas was about to propose his purpose of mariage wth Widue Jaffray, and requiring a Certificat of her clearnes here . . . [Friends] know of no ingadgements that she lyes under, nor any present stop; & that when he brings necessary certificate with him, and that they propose their s^d purpose to the Meeting, they shall have their ansuer.

Accordingly, T. A. produced, at a subsequent meeting, 26. xi. 1721, a certificate from "Allendeile" M.M., Co. Northumberland, to the following effect:—

DEAR FRIENDS.

In that dear and tender love which from our Lord Jesus Christ We have Received, We tenderly salut you, and withall signifie to you that our dear friend, Thomas Aresken, has by Orderly proceidings presented to us his Jntention of mariage with Mary Jaffrey, of Aberdeen, Widow, which wee have hade Under our Care And Consideration; and after serious Jnspection he apears Clere. Theirfore We hearby Certifie that, Since his Coming amongst us, By his orderly conversation he has gained a good report and Esteem Amongst us, and is in true love and Unity with friends; And that he also has the consent of parents and the consent and Aprobatation of this Meeting, provided you approve theirof, so what further

¹ *Thos. Story*, p. 590, 595, see also pp. 664, 665, 668, 700.

is needfull to the accomplishing of this their s^d intended marriage we commit to your cair to see accomplished as in the Wisdome of truth you see expedient.

Signed on behalf of this Meeting by JOSHUA WATSON, ARCH. GILLESPIE, THOS. HARISON, JOSEPH WHITFIELD, RICHARD WILSON, JOHN SCOLICK, HANNA WATSON, MARY WATSON, MARGRET ROBINSON, ELIZABETH SPARK.

Thomas Aresken's parents consent to his mariag acording to the Gospell order of friends by a certificat in Writ, Tho no frends . . . Phillip Aresken, of parson shield, in the county of Northumberland clerck [?] [he adds to his signature " Rect^r de Kravj. dell] and Jane his wif, parents of the afors^d Thomas Aresken, doe give our free and voluntary consent That they be lawfully joynd together, Earnestly begging of Almighty God that his favor, blising, and Asistence may atend and prevent them in this and all ther other undertakings.

Accordingly, 3, i. 1722, they were married at Aberdeen, and apparently Thos. Areskine at once settled there, as in the following month he was appointed by Friends of Aberdeen one of their " Correspondents " with Friends in London.

A few months later (viii. 1722), the minutes record " a difference betuext Alexander Jaffray and Thomas Ereskin and his wife. Friends desire the overseers may deal with Alexander Jaffray and enquire into the grounds of it towards taking it away." In the following second month he had obtained a certificate to visit some parts of England, and his name is of frequent occurrence in the Aberdeen records until ii. 1728, when he and his wife were furnished with certificates on their removal to Edinburgh, Friends of that city paying £12 to defray the expense of his journey. From that time his name is of very frequent occurrence in the records of Edinburgh Meeting, in the capacity of guide to " publick Friends," representative to various Meetings, etc.

The following letter may be introduced at this point² :—

London, 12^{mo} 18 day, 1728/9.

Dear friend,

Tho : Story.

Haveing been here for some time, and many friends asking for thee, thought propper to trouble thee with these lines for J can truly say though our personal acquaintance hath been but short, yet J have found all along a true love and fellowship with thee in spirit, and was satisfied with

² D. Gibson Bequest MSS, Thomas Story, 664.

the oppertunity J had in thy company when last in Scotland, w^{ch} J believe was of good service to many. J have had a satisfactory time here, J think J may sincerly say as much as ever J had in my life, for thou knows, although there be diversity of spirits & states here, yet there are some who understand and receive true Religion and Righteousness in its own pure nature as much as in any place.

J was at friend Joseph Greens in Duke Street, and both he and wife asked after thee with much respect, and desired both to be kindly remembered to thee. J desire my kind love to be remembered to any friends as thou thinks propper and art free.

So with true regard J rest thy real friend in that wherein our true fellowship stands,

THO: ARESKINE.

And so does Thy Sincere Friend, and Companion
of T. Ariskine,

ROBT. JORDAN.

Endorsed :—

To Thomas Story,
To the care of John Huntington,
Jn Carlisle, Cumberland.

T. Areskine paid family visits in Edinburgh Meeting in 1733, and obtained a certificate to visit Ireland in 1737. There is no record of the death of his first wife, but in 1734 he married Margratt Miller, daughter of George Miller, of Edinburgh, when he is described as “ Brewer in the Pleasants, Edinburgh.” They seem to have had one daughter, Jane, who, marrying her cousin, William Christy, left an only daughter, Mary, married in 1788 to Alexander Cruickshank, and she dying without issue in 1803, T. A.’s descendants would seem to have become extinct.

There is no mention in the records of Thomas Areskine after 9th month, 1750, when it is stated in the M.M. minutes that “ T. Areskine has got four and sixpence to help to sustain A.M. in his weakly state.” In one of the title deeds connected with Edinburgh Meeting he is designated “ ane discreet man, Thomas Erskine, Baillie.” It is said that “ his labours in the ministry in Scotland and England were for many years extensive.” Amongst other services he walked, on more than one occasion, through the streets of Edinburgh, exhorting the people to repentance ; and we learn from Joseph Smith’s *Catalogue* that he was the author of a printed address, *To all the people of the Kingdom of Scotland in general*, and of a broadside addressed to Friends in London, both issued in 1736.³

³ An address to Friends in Cornwall, etc., written in 1736/7, is in MS. in D.

Joseph Smith quotes from Ray's *History of the Rebellion*,⁴ the following amusing anecdote of an interview between this "eminent Brewer, and preacher among the people called Quakers," and Prince Charlie:—

The Rebels one night broke into the house of Mr. Thomas Areskine, an eminent Brewer, and a Preacher among the People called Quakers, and one of my Acquaintance. He has since shew'd me the Drawers which they broke, and robb'd him of all the Money he then had in the House, with some Linen and other Things of value. Upon which great Injustice, the fair dealing Quaker makes his Application to their Prince, assuring him that Method he pursu'd would never prosper, or answer his Expectation; "for," said he, "our George takes only a Part of our Money, but Thou even verily takes all; and Thou may'st as well take my Life, as take away the Prop that supports it." Upon which Complaint the Highland Prince answered that he (Mr. Areskine) was many years in Debt to the Revenue of his Father's Excise, and it was but the proper Dues to his Government.

Thomas Areskine's second wife probably died about midsummer, 1750,⁵ but there is no record at all of his own death. From a memorandum, apparently in his handwriting, he would seem to have been living in 1764. I fancy that in his latter years he became disunited from Friends.

Part of a sermon of his has been handed down by tradition. After accusing Friends of having lost the kernel of religion whilst carefully preserving the husks of external "plainness," he exclaimed, by way of peroration, "Silly Quakers! Foolish Quakers!! I could *die* in a lace coat!!!"

WILLIAM F. MILLER.

NOTE.

A letter from Thomas Areskine to John and Joshua Toft, dated from Edinburgh, 19th 11mo., 1736/7, recording his feelings of thankfulness for a safe return home from some journey, is among the Crosfield MSS. in D., and in the same collection there is a long, closely-written MS., endorsed, "Tho: Areskins Advices, Leeds, 17th 3mo., 1720."

⁴ 1754. p. 54. Also given with considerable variation in "The Wood-houselie MS," edited by Mr. A. Francis Steuart.

⁵ On the 28 June, in that year, her daughter, "Jean," was "served heir of line and prov. genl to her mother, Margaret Miller or Erskine."

"The contraction in the note seems intended for 'heir of line and of provision in general.' An 'heir of line' is simply an 'heir at law.' An 'heir of provision' is one who succeeds in virtue of a destination contained in the titles, and not simply by operation of law. 'Heirs of provision' may be heirs of provision in general or in special or in trust, and it is quite possible, as in the case of Jean Arskine, for the same person to be both heir of line and heir of provision in general. The process by which the title is made up is called a 'service.'"—WILLIAM J. BEGG.