

## Hannah Lightfoot.

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It seems curious that whilst so much has been written respecting Hannah Lightfoot and George III., no attempt has been made (or if there has been it is many years since) to ascertain whether the Society of Friends could throw any light on the question. After the notorious trial which took place in 1866 (see the *Annual Register* of 1866),<sup>1</sup> in which forged documents purporting to be certificates of their marriage were produced, the subject went to sleep for some years. As it has again come to the front not only in these pages,<sup>2</sup> but also in other publications,<sup>3</sup> the Friends' Historical Society has had reproduced, at the expense of one of its members, such contemporaneous information as it possesses, consisting of four pages of the Minute Book of the old Westminster Monthly Meeting containing references to the disownment of Hannah Lightfoot. These interesting reproductions are published by special permission of Westminster and Longford Monthly Meeting.

The subject was first brought before the Monthly Meeting<sup>4</sup> early in 1755 (see first reproduction). At the following meeting the Friends under appointment were "Con<sup>t</sup> to Visit Hannah Lightfoot & make report." In Third Month, the subject was minuted as continued, also in Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth Months. In Ninth Month a short report appears (see second reproduction). Tenth Month's meeting continued the appointment, as also Eleventh Month. The next meeting desired the Friends appointed "to acquaint her that this Meet<sup>ng</sup> Intends to give forth a Testimony of Denial against her." In First Month, 1756, it was stated that she could not be found (see third reproduction); next

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 223-259. Rynes and Rynes *v.* Attorney General.

<sup>2</sup> See THE JOURNAL, iv. 159; v. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1907; Melville's *Farmer George; Notes and Queries*, Feb. 15, and April 4, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> The first reproduction refers to a *Quarterly* Meeting. William Beck states, "At one Monthly Meeting in each quarter, all business, except that connected with marriage and other urgent affairs, was postponed, and a special character given to the proceedings." (*London Friends' Meetings*, pp. 186, 205, 227, 252, 292.) Evidently the Lightfoot defection was a matter of urgency.

month the subject was continued ; and in Third Month the minute of denial appeared (see fourth reproduction). In Fourth Month the final minute on the subject ran :—  
 “ Nath<sup>l</sup> Might reports he delivr<sup>d</sup> a Testimony of Denial against Hannah Lightfoot to the Six Weeks Meeting.”

At a sitting of the Six Weeks Meeting (a committee of London and Middlesex Quarterly Meeting), held on the 23rd of Third Month, 1756, the minute of denial was handed in by James Marshman. In Seventh Month, we read, “ The Dispersing the Testimony from Westminster Monthly Meeting against Hannah Lightfoot being under our consideration, Benj<sup>a</sup> Bourne is orderd to send a Copy thereof to each of the other five Monthly Meetings.”

In addition to this, the Friends' Registers of Births show that Hannah Lightfoot was born on the 12th of Eighth Month (October), 1730, daughter of Matthew and Mary Lightfoot, of St. John's, Wapping.<sup>5</sup>

The information contained in the Minutes shows :—

1. That she was married by a Priest (this probably means Church of England), in 1754.
2. That she, however, had gone away and could not be spoken with.
3. That her mother was not fully satisfied she was separated from her husband.

But there is no allusion in any way as to who her husband was.

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### Editors' Note.

Owing to the increased number of illustrations to be included in the forthcoming Supplement, “ Dr. Pole and his Drawings,” it has been decided to raise the price of the Supplement to four shillings and sixpence (one dollar fifteen cents) on publication. The subscription price of three shillings (seventy-five cents) remains as before ; those who wish to avail themselves of this price should forward their orders at once to Norman Penney, Devonshire House, Bishopsgate, London, E.C., or to the American Agents of the Society.

<sup>5</sup> It will be observed that she was eight years older than George III.