

Vagrancy.

“ This was the readiest means of punishing travelling Friends, and is abundantly illustrated in *F.P.T.* [see Index, *s.v.* Vagrancy¹]. By St. 39 Eliz., cap. 4, ‘ an act for punishment of rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars,’ any person taken begging, vagrant, wandering, or misordering themselves might be ordered by any Justice to be ‘ stripped naked from the middle upward ’ and ‘ openly whipped until his or her body be bloody.’ The Justice was then to make out a Testimonial or Pass. . . .”
—W. C. Braithwaite, in *First Publishers of Truth*.

Several Passes under the Vagrancy Act are given in W. J. Hardy’s *Extracts from Hertfordshire Sessions Rolls, 1581 to 1698*, Hertford, 1905. One reads as follows² :—

1676.

Warrant “ to all constables, headboroughs, tithing men, and all other officers whome these presents may concerne :—

“ George Snodon,³ a sturdy vagrant beggar of a low personage, black haired, goeth stooping, making use of a crutch, aged about nineteen years, was this 28th day of August, Anno Domini 1676 . . . openly whipped at Redbourne according to law for a wandering rogue, and is assigned to pass forthwith from parish to parish by the constables thereof the next way to Stowsley [Stokesley ?] in Yorkshire, where he confeseth he was borne or dwelt last by one whole year, and he is limited to be at Stouesley aforesaid within fortie dayes now next ensuing at his perill, and the constables of every town where he shall come are required to allow him necessary relief for his passage, and to help him with lodging, soe that he travelleth the next way to Stously aforesaid not doing anything contrary to the lawes and statutes of this realme.”

Signed by THO. DRAPER,

WILL. MARSHALL.

¹ Operations under the Vagrancy Act as applied to Friends are also referred to in *The Journal of George Fox*, i. 503; Whitehead’s *Christian Progress*, pp. 103, 133; *Declaration of Sufferings*, 1659, p. 17; *Journal F.H.S.*, v. 36, 37; Supplement No. 8.

² Vol. 1., p. 266.

³ There was a Friend’s family named Snowden living at Kirbymoorside, not far from Stokesley, one member of which was named George (d. 1712), but the above-named “ sturdy beggar ” may not have had any connection with Friends.