

Notes on Early Friends' Schools in Scotland.

The earliest allusion to a Friends' School, which we have found in the Scottish Meeting records, is contained in the following minute of Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting for Twelfth Month, 1678:—

It being offered by freinds of Aberdeen that they are about to set up a publick schooll for teaching freinds children by a freind q^o is to teach reading and wryting & Langwages and is Likewayes to have jnspection over their Manñers, the assistance of freinds generally is called for in y^t Matter and therefore it is Laid upon the freinds here to acqwaint their respective monthly meetings.¹

At the next Quarterly Meeting, the matter was again brought forward, with the somewhat vague intimation that “if any that hes children be willing to send them to Aberdeen, Caire will be taken of them at as easie a raite as may be.”

It would seem that Aberdeen Friends met with unexpected hindrances—possibly a competent master was not at once forthcoming—for it was not until 1681 that they were able to carry out their intention. In that year two Schools were established, one at Kinmuck, under the care of John Robertson,² the other at Aberdeen, probably for younger children, with Margaret Ker as mistress.

¹ The original Minute Books are in D., but their condition is so tender that it is thought best not to check the quotations by them. [Ed.]

² John Robertson died at Kinmuck, 21 x. 1714, aged 77. He contributed at least two volumes to the multitudinous controversial writings of the seventeenth century. The first, published in 1694, bears the graphic title *Rusticus ad Clericum, or the Plow-Man rebuking the Priest. In Answer to Verus Patroclus, wherein the Falsehoods, Forgeries, Lies, Perversions, and self-contradictions of William Jamison are detected, by John Robertson.* William Jameson seems to have responded in a work entitled *Nazianzeni Querela*, whereupon J. R. issued, as a counterblast, *Some Manacles for a Mad Priest.* In March, 1703, application was made by the presbytery of Ellon to the Sheriff “anent Robertson the quaker schoolmaster and the remnant of that sect in Kinkell and Tarves. He desired an Act of Parliament to be produced for his warrant to suppress them, otherwayes he would not move.” Two months later the presbytery complain “that the Sheriff doth nothing else but trifle in the matter of contumacious persons refer’d to him.” After nearly two years “upon weighty considerations it is thought fitt to sist [*i.e.* to stop] the process against the quakers in Kinkell and Tarves for a time.” *Ellon Presbytery Records*, part iv., p. 284, kindly communicated by Dr. Macnaughton, Stonehaven.

KINMUCK SCHOOL.

We learn from a somewhat involved minute of Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting, Fourth Month, 1685, that John Robertson's salary had been fixed at a hundred per annum, but that in the past year he had had only sixty pounds :

John Robertson having come to this meeting and represented how it stands as to the 100 pound rent Jngaged to him with the School. That he wants 40 pounds theirop yearly which he is not able to do the thing upon without. And so desires frinds (seeing he hath cast himselfe Jdle for serving of Truth in that School) to be positive with him, Whether they desire him to continue Longer their in ; And in that case, That they may take some course . . . to make up the said 100 pound for bygons & in tyme coming. ffrinds answer in this meeting is unanimously, That by all meins he continue theirin.

The money was evidently provided, and the School flourished. In 1691, Aberdeen Friends, addressing London Yearly Meeting, write :—

Our Living weighty concern continues as to the education of our young and hopefull Offspring Jn Jncouraging and continuing that Schooll sett up a considerable tyme ago among us (to the great trouble of the priests) for the Latin tounge and other Comendable Learning And severall Considerable people of the World have sent their children theirto : highly comending their profiting theirin beyond their own Schools. And some fruits also as to conviction and Conversion among the young ones hath been of great Jncouragment to us.

In an Epistle from Friends of Aberdeen to the " correspondents " in London, 1692, the writers, speaking of Friends in the West of Scotland, lament " a very great want of that due care of their children's Education and preservation in the Truth severalls of them going back to the priests and worldly marriages " ; and, in connection with this, they complain that Friends of Edinburgh " had writt to some of you for some of frinds primers for children but had gote no answer therunto Wee Jntreat you dear frinds let this be speedily answered."

Four years later Edinburgh Yearly Meeting, addressing Aberdeen Yearly Meeting, writes :—

Your care in the education of Youth according to Truth and in keeping up and Jncouraging Schools for that purpose we are well satisfied with ; And our earnest desire is the same with yours, That frinds in other places of the nation may be as carefull That there Children be not exposed to snares which may prove hurtfull or ruinous to them by being put to Schools of such as are not frinds, or to be servants to the people of the world ;

which we are sensible has been hurtfull in some places. But the Lord in his infinit Mercy by a renewed visitation hath of late reclaimed some Frinds children in the West who had formerly gone astray.

In "Octr," 1695. we have a somewhat pathetic picture of the schoolmaster:—

It being proposed to this meeting That because John Robertson our Schoolmaster finds himself weak and decaying and thinks fitt the provyding of the Schooll of a sufficient master after his decess be in tym looked to. ffor which end John Glenney's son William is proposed That his father put him to J. R. to qualifie and fitt him theirfor yet more. And it is the sense of the meeting That he being sufficiently qualified and fitt theirfor He shall not be depryved of it when the tyme happens nor any other prefered to it befor him [with the important proviso] He behaving himself sutable to the Truth.

In the year 1700, Elizabeth Dickson, a Friend of London, of Scottish descent, amongst other gifts to Friends in Scotland, made a "Donation" of £100 for the purpose of providing a schoolmaster at Kinmuck or elsewhere in Aberdeenshire "to teach and instruct 6 boys in the art of reading their mother tongue, writing, arithmetic, and the knowledge of the Latin tongue"; whilst about the same time William Gellie, a Friend of Aberdeenshire, left a legacy of 1,000 merks³ (£55 11s. 1½d.) for a similar purpose.

Aberdeen Friends decided, Fifth Month, 1702, that the half of the interest of Elizabeth Dickson's donation should be used to pay for the board of Isaac Winchester, one of the boys, and that John Robertson, the master, should have the other moiety. In 1708, it was agreed that the Schoolmaster at Kinmuck should have an Usher under him. He was also to board "whatsomever Children" of poor parents were recommended by Aberdeen Monthly Meeting, he receiving an allowance for each, of 4 bolls⁴ of meal and half a boll of malt yearly. He was "to take particular cair of washing their Cloaths and other necessary attendance upon them, as to their dyet and keeping them clean and neat." Next year the usher was appointed in the person of Isaac Winchester.

³ The Scotch Merk was equal to 13½d. sterling, and the "pound Scots" to twenty pence sterling.

⁴ The Boll was an old dry measure in Scotland varying in quantity according to locality and the article measured. A boll of *oats* was equal to six bushels. (*Chambers's Encyclopædia.*)

His salary was to be three pounds sterling, contributed in equal proportions by John Robertson the master, by Kinmuck Meeting, and by Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting. He was bound to give a year's notice to the Monthly Meeting before leaving; whilst six months' notice only was required from the other masters and mistresses of Friends' Schools in the North. Accordingly, in the spring of 1712, we find him giving notice that he intended to leave at Whitsunday of the following year.

On the death of John Robertson in 1714, one James Bean wrote to Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting, offering his services, and was accepted; but he seems not to have been able to assume the duties, and the "Meeting for Sufferings" appointed the usher, Isaac Winchester, to fill the late master's place for a quarter of a year, till they "consider of his abilities and good behaviour in that Charge." In 1716, report was made that the School "is pretty well attended [to] by Isaac Winchester and that the Schollars are profiting accordingly." He continued master until his death in 1722, when William Glenny was appointed to succeed him. He was also expected to "entertain such Friends as come on the publick service of truth."

In 1731 Isaac Valentyne was appointed usher "under Will. Glenny because of his infirmness at this time." He was to have for salary, either £20 (Scots, I presume, £1 13s. 4d.) and the whole of "the Coledg fees," or 50 merks (£2 15s. 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ d.) without the fees, which, in that case, would "fall to the master, Will^m Glenny—in the s^d William's option."

William Glenny died in Eleventh Month, 1731/2, and Friends arranged in the following spring that his widow was to have the use of the "Croft and yard," with an allowance of £24 Scots (£2 sterling) for waiting on "publick Friends," for the ensuing year; whilst Isaac Valentyne was to occupy "the low room" in the Meeting House, in which to teach the School, with a salary of £19 6. 8 Scots (£1 12s. 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ d.)—we may hope that this was in addition to the regular school fees! In any case, he did not long retain the situation. In the following summer he "desired leave of Friends to give him Liberty to leave the School for the time of harvest," and in

1733 it was decided to discharge him, and, if no better teacher could be found, to appoint Widow Glenny's son, John, to the vacant post, at a salary of 50 merks.

About this time there seems to have been considerable unsettlement as regards the schoolmaster. John Glenny would appear to have been definitely appointed to the office at Whitsunday, 1734; but two months later James Bean "from England" was installed, and in Eighth Month, Alexander Gordon, of London, applied for it. Robert Barclay was directed to write to the latter "and tell him the real state of the Sallary of the s^d School and get his positive answer." It would seem that, after all, "James Bean from England" was the successful candidate, for at the Quarterly Meeting in Fifth Month, 1735, Aberdeen Friends appointed two of their number "to Intimate to Jam^s Bean, Schoolmaster, that fr^{ds} desires he may for the time to come take care to keep to Yearly and Quarterly Meetings or send his reasons with a member of their Monthly Meeting, otherwise Incur the Cencure of the Quarterly Meeting." Three years later, Fifth Month, 1738, we find a minute of Kinmuck Monthly Meeting directing "James Bean to gett Divoits^s cast and win [and brought] to the common stable belonging to Friends and bring in the accompt therof when sufficiently done, and he is to be paid."

The next minute relating to the School which we have met with is dated 1764, when it is recorded that David Glenny "entred to the School of Kinmuck at the team of Martinmass, although he came not to it till some time afterwards, that liberty being granted him by the meeting; his continuance there," the minute cautiously adds, "being to be according as he behaves regularly." Two years later he was still in office.

When the School was discontinued we have not been able to discover; probably before 1781, in which year Friends of Kinmuck Meeting subscribed £10 19. for the

^s Divet or Divot is a thin flat oblong sod used for covering cottages, etc. It is cut from the surface of the "Moss," whilst peats are dug from below. Both need "winning" or drying. When "they are dug or cast from the moss at end of April, they are laid on the nearest dry piece of ground where they are exposed to the sun and wind until the end of August, when the 'leading' takes place." [Dr. Macnaughton in litt.]

recently established School at Ackworth, where were already six children from Scotland.

ABERDEEN SCHOOL.

As to the School established at Aberdeen under the care of Margaret Ker,⁶ one fancies from the following minute of the Quarterly Meeting, Fourth Month, 1682, that it must have been of a somewhat humble character :

As to the provision for the School of Aberdene frinds concluds That the former provision be continued [*i.e.* " six bolls of meill and two bolls bear and house room in the Meeting House "] And have also found their hearts open to give her some further particular Jncouragment for the year till the school Jncrease Also men frinds thinks meet That Lillias Skene & Jsobell Gerard speak to Margaret Ker That she may take some care to accomplish herself in arithmetick and writting for the education of the children.

The Schoolmistress would seem to have had her difficulties, but was energetically supported by the weighty Friends of the Quarterly Meeting. In Twelfth Month, 1682/3 it is recorded :—

Frinds having a true sence that ther is cause for Jncouraging Margaret Ker Jn going on Jn teaching and Jnstructing frinds children in the fear of God and in outward knowledg : and being sensible of her pains and willingness theirin : Doe find fitt To appoint her former allowance to be continued for the year to come : And that frinds who have withdrawn their children from her be weightily dealt with to return them again ; that so they may not weaken the hands of frinds. And lykwise that she be spoke to get a good stocking weaver against the nigh term ; And also otherways seek to accomplish herselfe Jn writting [and] arithmetick for the benefite of frinds children.

In 1697, Elizabeth Robertson is mentioned as Schoolmistress at Aberdeen. In 1700, the School funds benefited by a donation of £50 from Elizabeth Dickson " for a schoolmistress to teach 3 girls in the art of reading their mother tongue and sewing and making plain work," whilst Mary Bannerman, a Friend of Aberdeen, gave 100 merks (£5 11s. 1½d.) for the same purpose. In the spring of that year :—

Margt Jaffray having in the Love of Truth offered her service to frinds as to teaching ther children and undertaking the Womens Schooll

⁶ Margaret Ker was married at Aberdeen, in 1687, to Daniel Monro, of London. The births of three sons are noted in the London records. She would seem to have died at Norton, nr. Stockton-on-Tees, in 1718, three years after her husband.

Which Frinds in this meeting unanimously hath true and full unity with And refers it to the Womens Meeting to concert the matter terms & fond theirop more fully.

However, Margaret Jaffray cannot long have remained Schoolmistress, as she was travelling in the ministry in England and Ireland in the autumn, and in 1701 she was married to a Friend in England.

In 1701, Alice Kinier was appointed mistress at a salary of £56 13. 4 Scots (£4 14s. 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ d.), but it is doubtful whether she accepted the office. At all events we shortly find the name of Rachel Gellie as Mistress, and by the end of 1702, Jean Skene was installed. We gather from the minute recording her appointment that the School had not flourished under all these changes. The minute concludes:—"Friends are desyred not to withdraw their Children from [the School] much Less to put them to any other School."

The trouble as to teachers was by no means ended, for, in less than six months, the minutes record that "Jean Skene having dimitted" the Women's School, Ann Chalmers of Inverury is to be asked to take her place. This, however, after three months' consideration, Ann Chalmers declined to do, so harassed men Friends appeal to women Friends to make diligent search for a teacher "that it [the School] be not Letten fall." Probably Lillias Glenny was the Friend discovered after diligent search, for a Quarterly Meeting minute of "Oct^r," 1706, narrates that:—

Lillias Glenny having come to this meeting and humbly signified her sence of her miscariag in hastily Leaving the schooll contrary to frinds sence and that now she purposes thorow mercy to accept thankfully of it from frinds and cleave to it and not to Leave it without frinds consent (wpon 6 months advertisment) And so the meeting gives the scooll to her to begin at this hallowday so called Nov^r 1706.

Next year Aberdeen Friends again declare "ther universall sence that no frinds children ought to be put to Schools of the world to be ther in such danger of hurt," "especially," adds the minute, "when frinds have taken care to set up sutable schools to Truth both in City and Country."⁷ This minute would seem to have been

⁷ Friends were, however, permitted by Edinburgh Yearly Meeting (1712) to contribute to the salary of the parish schoolmaster, "providing there is nothing of precentor's fees mixed with it."

specially aimed at one Robert Keith, who had "put his children to the vain schoolls of the world," "contrary to the absolut method and practise of all true frinds," and, when visited, was found to be "wilfull and obstinat therin without any solid reason." Another committee was appointed to labour with him, "and if he prove obstinat still, To desire him to come to the nixt Yearly Meeting to speak to frinds." Accordingly, the labours of the second committee being also unavailing, "the said Robert appeared before Friends, who weightily spok to and dealt with him as to our testimony in the christian Education of our Children in the Truth. He expressed his sorrow befor the Meeting for greeving frinds and that he Jntended to redress it with the first Conveniency."

In 1719, the by no means exorbitant salary of the Schoolmistress had to be reduced in consequence of the loss of a portion of the Meeting funds through the default of someone to whom the money had been lent!

The state of the women's School at Aberdeen being laid before this meeting and Patience Jaffray seeming inclined to enter again to it, Friends are willing she doe, but have ordered to acquaint her that since the fond appointed to that end is somewhat diminished by loss with Ludwharn, she or any other person that officiats in the School can expect no more sallary than the fond affords, with that loss.

Whether Patience Jaffray accepted the position with the reduced salary we do not know, but at best her tenure of office must have been brief, as she married Joseph Miller, of Edinburgh, in 1721.

The School seems to have been discontinued before long, and we hear no more of it until Eighth Month, 1731, when there was a suggestion that "the Womens School" at Aberdeen should be revived, Elizabeth Robertson being proposed as mistress; and next year she was definitely appointed at a salary of 40 merks Scots per annum. She was to occupy the two upper rooms in the Meeting House, "formerly used" for the School. Whether she really assumed the duties of Schoolmistress on the modest salary of £2 4s. 5½d. sterling per annum, and if so, how long she continued to teach the youth of Aberdeen, we do not know. Meetings and minutes become increasingly irregular, and there would seem to be no further mention of the School.

OTHER SCHOOLS.

There are in the Meeting books one or two allusions to other Schools in Scotland, but they are so slight that we may suppose the Schools were not maintained for any length of time. Thus, at Edinburgh Quarterly Meeting, Ninth Month, 1709, Charles Ormston, of Kelso, reported :—

Som sufferings that they have had through the magistrets of Jedbruch Endeavoring to extrud Jean and Sarah Stagg out of ther toun upon hir keeping scoole ther and that after they had represented the maiter befor the Justices of peace of that shire they had been pleased to grant to the said Jean & Sarrah Stagg protection to stay in the toun.

In 1711, mention is made of a Friends' School at Ury of which John Glenny was master. The following extract from the Arbuthnott Kirk Sessions Records, kindly supplied by Dr. W. A. Macnaughton, of Stonehaven, gives the only intimation we have of another Friends' School in the North.

1691, December 16. The q^{lk} day the minister informed the session that it was reported to him that William Wallace in Barnyards of Allardes, who is a quaker, had set up a school, which he thought good should be stopt, and that it should be enacted that neither popish or quaker school should be tolerate in the parioch.

W. F. MILLER.

Winscombe, Somerset.

Letter from MR. THO. RICHARDS to MR. JOHN CHAUNCEY :—

St. Albans, 11 Jan., 1683.

“ My business falls out soe that I cannot possibly waite on you on Munday, so must desire your pardon for my non-attendance. There is a Quakers' meeting constantly held every Sunday at Wood Greene, in Hemelhempstead parish, M^r Marston one of the high constables of Dacorum hundred lives hard by and I don't hear hee euer disturbed them. I thought fitt to acquaint you with it that you may admonish Marston.”

From *Herts. Sessions Rolls, 1581-1698.*

It makes one weep to think how our middle-class people neglect their genealogies, so that they know nothing of their own people, and have no pride, and learn no lessons from the past.—BESANT AND RICE.

Quoted in *Family Records*, by Charlotte Sturge, 1882.