

## Friends and Pietists in Germany.

London 3<sup>d</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> mo Juny : 1693.<sup>1</sup>

All Dear and well Beloved freinds & Brethren who are now assembled out of severall provences, in and thorough Gods arm, and pouer! My Love and Life doth very tenderly salute you all, in the fellouship of Gods revealed truth, and in a fresh sense of our joynt Communion therin, the which we have with one another in our Lord Jesus Christ, praised & magnified be his name for ever.

Dear freinds, since it hath pleased the Lord to bring

<sup>1</sup> This letter was endorsed by Benjamin Bealing "N: Rust 3 4mo 1693"; also in another hand "This is to be Read," to which words are added by John Field "but no need to be Answ<sup>r</sup>d." The text is written in a clear, cultivated hand, the signature being different and probably autograph. The letter was filed away with other Y.M. documents of the same year.

The minutes of London Y.M. dated 7 4 mo. 1693 are as follows:—

"An Epistle from Nicholas Rust, dated London the 4 mo 1693 giving an Acco<sup>t</sup> of Dantzick ffriends that they have been Quiet a Year &  $\frac{1}{2}$  and still continues, thô but small, being but 2 or 3 and severall Dyed Under Persecution, and the Majestrates pretty kind. And that there are a People raised up in Germany from among the Lutherans called Pietests and by some called Quakers, and pretty much persecuted by the Duke of Saxony and by Priests &c. of sober Conversations. Severall ffriends books have been spread among them, but by the Duke of Brandinburgh ffavoured and Tollerated Many of the said People Studients and of the Gentry.

"An Epistle from Jacob Huggens dated Hamburough the 21<sup>th</sup> 2 mo 1693. To Nicholas Rust, That the Priests greatly exclaime and vilifye the Quakers from their Pulpitts and also Print books ags<sup>t</sup> them, That the Pietests Increase and a Doctor lately become one of them. see the Letter.

"And a Letter to Nicholas Rust from the same ffriend giving an Acco<sup>t</sup> That a great Stirr hath been made abo<sup>t</sup> a Taylor, that gave a book to a Maide, and also a great Stirr occasioned against one of the Pietis Harbeus for writting a book Intituled the Wisdom of the Iust, & the Priests are earnest to have the said Harbeous Banished out of the Towne, But the Majestrates will not Gratifie them. And one of the studients writting a ffalse paper ags<sup>t</sup> ffriends to Gratifie the Priests and the People But the Majestrates Jmprisoned the said student. See the Letter.

"And a Letter from Dantzick the 22<sup>th</sup> day of the 10 mo 92 from a Young Maiden one of the Pietis to Nicholas Rust signifyeing to N. R that she is moved to write to him and Jncites him and desires, that they may work together in the Living ffaith, and Jncourages to ffaithfullness in his Testimony and to deny selfe &c. see the Letter.

"And it's desired that the Letter of the Young Woman be Read in the Womens Meeting, and it's given unto W<sup>m</sup> Meade to give to his wife for that end and then Returne, As also the two Letters from Jacob Heggens w<sup>ch</sup> are likewise to be Returned to Theodor Eccleston to give Benj<sup>a</sup> Bealing to keep."

Unfortunately the letters referred to above, except that of Rüst, are not forthcoming. Perhaps they were never returned to the Chamber.

me again into this Countrey amongst you, so hath the Lord afforded me many sweett opportunitys, in which J have been many times with you refreshed in my inward man, and that in a Living sense of the presence of the Lord amongst you, by which your meettings are made very glorious, praised and magnified be his name for ever.

And My very Dear freinds, J find my selfe inclined to give you some small acc<sup>t</sup> of our Dantzick freinds,<sup>2</sup> who (as you do know) have for severall years suffered under many tryalls, Jt hath nou pleased the Lord to afford us rest and quiett for the Last year and halfe, and J have also receaved severall letters from thence, by which do understand that the magistrates carry themselves yet quietly to freinds, and they have their meettings peacable, and although our number is very small, being no more then two men & 2 women there, yet we are Contented, & given up in the will of our father, who hath raised us up there, he is mighty enough to increase us, in his own time, and in his own good pleasure, praises to be him for ever.

Our dear freinds there have dyed time after time, by the great persecution, and not Long ago J had advice that our dear freind Christian Puttall hath Laid down the body, he hath suffered very much for his testimony for the truth, and is in Gods Love removed from us in a true sound sense thereof, feelling that it was the Lords pleasure to take him to himselfe, and so he hath Laid down his head in rest, as also another woman freind much about the same time, J was willing to give this meetting this small hint in relation to us at Dantzick.

Dear freinds—J find my selfe also inclined, to Lay before this your meetting, hou that there is a people raised up in Germany, and severall other places, who call themselves Pietists,<sup>3</sup> but are by the world called Qwakers, and

<sup>2</sup> The sufferings of Friends in Dantzic lay heavy upon the heart of George Fox. Letters to them and about them may be read in his *Journal*. There are also references to the suffering condition of these Friends in epistles from Amsterdam, preserved in D.

<sup>3</sup> The following references to Pietists will be read with interest ; the first is taken from the Minute Book of the Six Weeks Meeting under date 26. x. 1693, and the second from an ancient MS. book in D., entitled *Sundry Ancient Epistles* (p. 141) :—

“The Low Condiçon of the Pietests.

“Friends having under their Consideration the poor Condition of the People called Pietests now in England about 40. The ffriends under named are desired to draw up a few Lines to be Read in y<sup>e</sup> Publick

that because they pretend to have another principle and foundation, then they have, they come from amongst, viz: The Lutherans,—J have had pretty much conversation with some of them, and so far as J can discern, they are a people very tender in all their actions, and they have a great Love for our freinds, and would willingly have freinds books, a great number whereof, J have dispersed amongst them, Their conversation is very tender, in many things one with the truth but the outward

Meetings at the Conclusion thereof next ffirst day for a Collection towards their Relief, viz<sup>t</sup> Geo. Whitehead and John Vaughton.

“And the ffriends that are ffree to Visit them & Set with them are W<sup>m</sup> Meade, Theod<sup>r</sup> Eccleston John Vaughton G<sup>t</sup> Laity. or any others.”

“A Collection for The Pietests by order of y<sup>e</sup> six weeks meet<sup>s</sup> the 26<sup>th</sup> 10 mo 1693.

“Dear ffriends and ffriendly People.

“The Lord in his tender mercy having made many ptakers of his goodness and of y<sup>t</sup> Pretious faith that works by Love hath Jnclined our hearts in Christian Charity to Commiserate the Poor Condition of some tender people called Pieties (lately come from Germany to London abo<sup>t</sup> fforty in number) who have in Measure seen the Emptiness of outward Ceremonies in Religion and a necessity of an Jnward waiting upon the Lord to feel the Assistance and Guidance of his Spirit some of whom have been Exposed to Great sufferings and being Strangers in this Land and Reduced to Straights and necessities.

“We thought meet thus to recommend their low Condition and Jntreat y<sup>e</sup> Christian Charity of all such whose hearts the Lord shall open in Compassion towards them to Communicate at the Doors of our Meeting Houses this day for their Relief not doubting but all y<sup>t</sup> are kind to Strangers and doe chearfully Communicate to the Relief and Refreshment of those in Necessity will meet with a Reward from the Lord to whom the Sacrafice of doing good and Communicating is well pleaseing and ought not by us to be forgotten.

“Coppyes hereof sent in the 10<sup>th</sup> month 1693 To the meetings of ffriends in and abo<sup>t</sup> London.

“Collected at the severall Meets<sup>s</sup> as foll<sup>s</sup>

	li.		li.	s	d
Bull and Mouth ..	20 : 00 : 00	Parke ..	03 : 11 : —		
Gracech <sup>r</sup> street ..	16 : 00 : 7½	Peel ..	05 : 16 : 07½		
Devon <sup>r</sup> House ..	15 : 6 : 6	Westm <sup>r</sup> }	07 : 11 : 05		
Ratcliff ..	11 : 0 : 00	Savoy & }			
Horselydown ..	06 : 17 : 00	Longacre }			
	<hr/>				
	69 : 04 : 1½			16 : 19 : 00½	
				69 : 4 : 01½	
				<hr/>	
				Total	86 : 03 : 2”
					<hr/> <hr/>

These minutes illustrate the benevolent spirit which seems inherent to Quakerism. They make it evident that collections at doors of Meeting Houses are no modern innovation, and also that Friends came to Meeting supplied with money (note the words “this day”).

testimonys of the truth they are not as yet known amongst them—and because that they do separate themselves from the Lutherans, they are pretty much persecuted, especially under the Duke of Saxon Lunenberg in Pomerania, and now Lately in Hamb<sup>r</sup> by the preists, ane acc<sup>t</sup> wherof goeth along with this, the which was sent me from one of our freinds in Hamburgh.

Many of the s<sup>d</sup> Pietists are Gentlemen, Preists, Students and other principall persons, The Duke of Brandenburg hath great numbers in his countrey, giving them freedome, and entertaining those who happen to be driven and baniskt out of other countreys, J did feell my selfe much inclined (for the truths sake) to Lay this before the Consideration of this meetting and the weighty freinds therof, if it should not be well, if that this people were once visited in Love by some of those freinds, who have a publick service for the truth, for my part gladly would J see it, if so that it pleased the Lord to move any therunto, the which J do recommend to the serious of this meetting—Here also you have a Letter writt to me by a young Gentlewoman, one of the above pietists, whom J have never seen, but her Love thereby is tenderly felt.

So My Dear freinds, being that J do yet want the English Language, have thought fitt to shou these feu Lines to your respective general meetting, and being inclined (if the Lord pleases) to return to my own home, so by these at this time do in tender Love take my Leave of you, and do desire that the same Love may be remembered to all our dear freinds, in all places, as you shall see meett.

And J do Praise & return thanks to my heavenly father, that he hath afforded me so good ane opportunity to meett with you in this manner, and to see your faces, in the Love of our God, in the which J take my Leaue of you all, in a fresh sense therof, heartily Longing, that the blessed work of truth may be more and more spread over the whole earth, and many may turn their faces towards Zion, with us to worship God the father, in his blessed spirit, and truth, and in his Love J do remain your Loving freind and Brother in my measure

in the blessed fellowship of the truth

NICOLAES RÜST.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Rüst's name appears here and there on Quaker records. See Besse's *Sufferings*, ii. 432.