

The Nicholson Manuscripts.

In the library of Friends' books belonging to Liverpool Preparative Meeting there is a collection of twenty-five manuscript volumes, averaging from 250 to 300 foolscap pages each, known as the Nicholson MSS. The volumes contain no original MSS., but consist of copies of documents ranging in date from 1660 to 1840. The contents are extremely miscellaneous in character and vary greatly in interest and value.

There are hundreds of letters by writers who were in their day prominent members of the Society.

Biographical notices are frequent, generally brief, but a few of considerable length.

Testimonies to deceased ministers are very numerous from the earliest times of the Society, one issued by Hardshaw Monthly Meeting in 1661.

Epistles issued by Yearly, Quarterly, and Monthly Meetings are transcribed in full in large numbers both of early and later dates; also others from individuals addressed to Friends generally, or to some particular place or meeting, in some cases after religious visits had been made to them. Reports of Yearly and Quarterly Meetings visitation committees are also found.

Memorials, petitions, and congratulatory addresses to persons in authority and to legislatures are frequent.

The earlier volumes contain relations of remarkable incidents, sermons, visions and dreams.

There is information about the chief dissensions that have from time to time troubled the Society, from the Story-Wilkinson down to the Beaconite controversy.

A large proportion of the contents under the above headings relate to Friends in America.

Special interest for our Monthly Meeting attaches to records of former members of it, such as the Haydocks, Fothergills, Rathbones, Rouths, Robsons, Flounders, etc.

It is probably correct to say generally of the letters, biographical notices, and testimonies that they have not been printed or are now out of print.

Each of the twenty-five volumes has a list of contents at the end, and there is an index to the whole bound separately.

From a recent report on the Nicholson MSS. presented to Hardshaw West Monthly Meeting. Joseph Nicholson, the writer of the volumes, was a Friend of Liverpool; it is said that he spent most of his time at the Meeting House copying ancient Quaker documents. He died in 1842.