

Journal Supplement No. 9.

“ Extracts from State Papers relating to Friends,” second series, 1658 to 1664 (transcribed from the original MSS. by Charlotte Fell Smith, and edited by Norman Penney, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.), pp. 105 to 200 and Index.

It was a happy thought of the Editor's to give these authentic notices of the doings and sufferings of the first Friends, as written down by themselves and others in contemporary documents now at the Record Office. This series will form a valuable addition to the printed material before readers who are not specialists in the period. It ought also to be of great use to students of local history and biography in many districts, if only for the lists of well-affected persons recommended for the magistracy, and for the notices of men, otherwise unknown, who opposed the movement. But to most of us the wealth of incident will appeal more strongly: the graphic accounts of Reading gaol and the struggles in Bristol “ Tolzy ”; the hard cases of army and navy men convinced of the sinfulness of war; and the ludicrous bewilderment of Cumberland justices at “ such suspicious expressions ” as the monthly meeting and a collection “ for our owen county seruis.” Here and there we light upon curious tributes to the life and character of the maligned Quaker, such as Lord Langdale's honest letter. Indeed, in the first years of Charles II., the cloud almost seems as if it might lift; but the storm begins again in the summer of 1663, and we are hurried onward to the central interest of the story, in the imprisonment of George Fox and Margaret Fell. It is, of course, not intended in this series to elucidate the extracts with comment on the history of the time; and yet, without more than is here given, this painful episode can never be fairly understood. From page 171 to the end of this part one must read between the lines, and supply the story of the Kaber Rigg plot, which, unsuccessful as it proved, was the real reason for the persecution of Swarthmoor. The avowed object of the plot was to do away with taxes

and to restore a Gospel magistracy and ministry. Atkinson, the spy, and the prisoners taken after the rising (autumn 1663), informed Sir Philip Musgrave that the Quakers were concerned. Some, disowned by the Society, seem really to have taken part.¹ But Friends had refused tithes and the oath of allegiance ; they had made recommendations for the magistracy. The "evidence" was against them. What is the value of legal evidence is another matter, but no protests satisfied local authorities so long as the meetings were held. The extract given on page 200 can be amplified from papers in private possession showing the widespread and acute fear of further risings. In the thick of the trouble (January, 1663-4) came Mrs. Fell's letter (p. 187)—an important chapter in the story. Of Col. Kirkby we know that he showed personal friendliness to Mrs. Fell, both before and after her imprisonment. Daniel Fleming was the most intelligent man in the district ; that he acted as he did is only a proof of the far-reaching mischief of the Kaber Rigg plot. We owe much to such publications as these **Extracts** for their help in clearing up the facts of that tragic misunderstanding.

W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

Coniston, Lancs.

A counterfeit is rather an evidence of a reality than a solid argument against it.—JOB SCOTT, *Selections*, 1911, p. 107.

¹ On this subject we may quote from Nightingale's *Ejected of 1662 in Cumberland & Westmorland*, 1911, vol. i., p. 125, "Whether there is any truth in the charge that the Quakers were involved in the rumoured plots and risings, of which the times produced such a plentiful crop, is not certain. Probably some of the reports were fictions, and others grossly exaggerated ; but it is difficult to account for them all except on the ground of complicity on the part of some. 'Apparently, at the time of the plot,' says Chancellor Ferguson (*History of Westmorland*, p. 223), 'the local justices included under the name of "Quaker" every dissentient from their own religion except Papists. Westmorland was also full of Quakers who had been disowned by, or who had seceded from the Society of Friends, for in those days of religious excitement men roamed rapidly from one form of religion to another.' It is not, however, necessary to resort even to such an explanation. There must have been some bearing this name, men made wild and reckless by ceaseless persecution, whose thoughts turned for a remedy in those directions ; and a few such would be quite sufficient in the popular judgment, especially in the excited state of the times, to involve the whole in suspicion." [ED.]