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Reminiscences of Some Old Edinburgh Friends

EDINBURGH Meeting seventy years ago was probably at the most flourishing period of its very chequered existence. In 1827, when David Doull brought his bride to Edinburgh, Friends there numbered one hundred and ten, and fifteen or twenty years later the numbers were in all probability much the same. The old Friendly families of Scottish origin were represented by ALEXANDER CRUICKSHANK, of Meadowside (1757-1842), and by his household; by the children of JOHN and ANN (JOLLY) MOSGRAVE, who had migrated from the north nearly half a century before; and by my father, WILLIAM MILLER (1796-1882), the only one of seven brothers and sisters who remained a Friend, he being the fourth of the name who had occupied a seat in the Ministers' gallery since the end of the seventeenth century. He occasionally appeared in the ministry, though he was not "recorded" until 1854.

JOHN WIGHAM, JUNIOR, of Salisbury Road (1781-1862), and his cousin, JOHN WIGHAM, TERTIUS, of Grey Street (1784-1864), had both come from England—the former as a child, the latter as a young man—had prospered in business as shawl manufacturers, married, and, with their families, were now among the leading Edinburgh Friends. They also occupied seats in the gallery beside Alexander Cruickshank, who sat at the head of the meeting. JANE WIGHAM (1801-1888), the

second wife of John Wigham, Tertius, was also a gallery Friend. She was a sister of William and Robert Smeal of *British Friend* celebrity. SARAH WIGHAM (1803-1872), the second wife of John Wigham, Junior, was a Nicholson of Whitehaven; she occupied the far corner of the Overseers' form, immediately below the gallery. Ann —, the first wife of John Wigham, Junior, had been a convinced Friend, and a considerable heiress. I think her father made his fortune in India. Her elder brother much resented her joining Friends and her marriage, and left his money to a younger brother; but on the death of the latter the sister inherited both fortunes, and John Wigham was able to retire from business in very easy circumstances. She died in 1823, leaving an only daughter, Jane, afterwards wife of Edward Richardson, of Newcastle. The first wife of John Wigham, Tertius, who died in 1830, was also a convinced Friend, Jane Richardson by name; her brother was a Canon of York Cathedral. She was the mother of Henry, Eliza and John Richardson Wigham, and of Mary (Wigham) Edmundson.

Another gallery Friend was MARY HOWISON (d. 1853, aged 78), a widow with several children, who had been left comfortably off by her husband, William Howison, a convinced Friend, also in the shawl business. She herself was a Dilworth of Wyresdale, Lancashire, sister of MARGARET GRAY (d. 1848, aged 66), another "plain Friend," and kind benefactress of our childhood. She must, I think, have been re-instated in membership after "marrying out." Her husband, John Gray, was certainly not a member, though he was a diligent attender of meetings until late in life, when he took to himself a second wife, a lady of the name of Miller, not connected with Friends. He had one child of his old age, John Miller Gray, who was for several years the very capable Curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, until his death in 1894, at a comparatively early age.

Dear MARY DOULL (1797-1868), who sat at the head of the meeting on the women's side, was for many years the only recorded Minister. She was of an old Quaker stock, a Rimington of Penrith, and, together with her husband, DAVID DOULL (1784-1858), and their family,

filled a very important place in Edinburgh Meeting, as well as in our social pleasures. David Doull was born in the far-off wilds of Caithness, which in his youth was still a Gaelic-speaking portion of Scotland. When he was in his sixteenth year, he, together with the sons of other small landowners in the North, joined a local regiment of "Fencibles," and he was duly enrolled for garrison duty during the French invasion scare in 1803. Whilst under conviction, he and his friend, William White (afterwards of Glasgow), used to attend Meeting in full regimentals, no doubt to the great entertainment of the younger portion of the congregation. David Doull strongly held the view that true membership in the Church of Christ could only be given by its Head, and he did not feel easy himself to apply for recognition in the Society; however, the Overseers of Edinburgh Two Months Meeting brought his name before Friends, and he was at once cordially welcomed as a fellow-member. The residence of David and Mary Doull was, for many years, in Drummond Street, a locality of considerable interest on account of its name, which commemorated the well-known provost, George Drummond, brother of May Drummond, and also because for some distance along one side of the street, in place of houses, the old city ramparts, dating from the disastrous year of Flodden, were still in existence. One of his places of business was a venerable old building in the Potterrow, which had been General Monk's town house when he was Governor of Scotland during Cromwell's usurpation. David Doull was a strikingly fine figure in his broad-brimmed hat, ample collarless coat, knee breeches, silk stockings and drab gaiters, as he sat on the Overseers' form below the gallery, leaning on his staff, with his little boys, Alexander and Clement, seated on square hassocks on either side of him.

WILLIAM GIBB (d. 1846, aged 70), also a plain Friend, I think shared the form with David Doull. JOHN SINCLAIR was another of the old school, but he had been unfortunate in business and so lost his membership, though he appeared in plain coat and knee breeches to the last. He was killed in an accident on the North British Railway. A less conspicuous member of the congregation was little WILLIAM GRAY (d. 1865, aged 76), who, with his good wife,

ELIZABETH GRAY (1783-1872), one of a large family of Ivisons of Cumberland, had come north, from London, I think, seeking his fortune. He was for many years David Doull's right-hand man, but having gained a moderate competence he retired into private life, and added to his income by an agency for coal. The good Friends lived alone, occupying a small flat in Roxburgh Street, near the Meeting House. Elizabeth Gray was a notable housewife, keeping her little suite of apartments beautifully clean and neat, and proud of the musk and other flowers which she successfully cultivated, and which sweetly scented the place. Her finger was of course guiltless of a wedding ring, but she wore a zinc circlet in which she had great faith as a preventive of rheumatism. She and her devoted husband were model old Friends. His voice used to be heard not unfrequently in Meeting, though he seldom got beyond the repetition of a text, but he had a weakness for getting on his feet several times in the course of one First-day morning.

All of ALEXANDER CRUICKSHANK'S family were, in those early days, members of the Meeting, except Edward, the eldest son, who, to the great grief of his father, had joined the Anabaptists. The next son, George, had married Louisa Thomas, of Bristol, and was a dispenser of hospitality at Blackford House, a dull old building at the end of an avenue near Blackford Hill, on the then remote outskirts of Morningside. Louisa Cruickshank's mother, Hannah Thomas, was a frequent visitor, and her slow, deliberate voice, with its constantly recurring refrain of "ah!" after each word, was often heard in Meeting. George and Louisa Cruickshank left Friends for one of the divisions of "the Brethren," whilst Alexander, the youngest brother, and his bright wife, Martha Ogden Gingell, joined the so-called "Free Kirk," and Rebecca Wilson of Hawick, their only married sister, united herself to the Morisonians.¹ One lovingly remembers their elder sister, LUCY CRUICKSHANK (1810-1875), the warm-hearted friend of our family from our earliest childhood. Some of my very first recollections are of pots of lovely Lilies-of-the-valley and scarlet Mimulus, which had come from the green-

¹ So named from James Morison, a Presbyterian minister, who was suspended from his office in 1841, on account of his anti-Calvinistic views.

house at Meadowside to adorn the parlour at Hope Park. For many years we had a key to the garden entrance to the Cruickshanks' house adjoining the Meadows, so that callers from Hope Park might be spared a long walk round to the front entrance in Lauriston. The garden itself was a delightful old-fashioned place, with its high walls, picturesque summer-house, prolific fruit trees and luxuriant growth of evergreens. Mention of it recalls a sonnet on a pair of blackbirds which had built their nest in the Meadowside garden. The lines are by Elizabeth Rimington, of Penrith, a translation from the Spanish of D. M. Vila, one of the numerous "distressed foreigners" to whom the Cruickshank family extended a helping hand.

A beauteous blackbird hither came,
 Pecking the juicy leaves and flowers,
 And, hopping 'mid the shady bowers,
 Sang to his mate his glowing flame.
 The clustering ivy in the nook
 Hung o'er the nest, she laboured there ;
 He, studious in her toils to share,
 Cheered with soft song and trusting look.
 She from the thicket calls, " Imprudent one !
 Hear'st thou not steps approaching near this walk ;
 Where'er man comes our tender hopes must fall ;
 Why in his garden hast thou made our home ? "
 " Fearful one," he replied ; " why, this alarm ?
 In a *Friend's* garden no one doeth harm."

Lucy Cruickshank devoted the best years of her life to caring for and nursing her deceased sister Susan's *fiancé*, ALFRED BLAKEY by name, a talented young Friend who had come to Edinburgh as a student ; he was said to have been Sir William Hamilton's favourite pupil. Alfred Blakey fell into a decline after Susanna Cruickshank's death in 1843, but lingered on for many years a prisoner to his room, and the object of Lucy Cruickshank's unremitting care. She was the only one of her family who rejoined Friends. Alfred Blakey was interred in a vault in Warriston Cemetery, where Susan Cruickshank had been laid. Her niche was closed with a white marble slab on which were inscribed Wordsworth's lines, beginning :—

Thou takest not away, Oh, Death !
 Thou strikest—absence perisheth.

A friend who was present at Alfred Blakey's funeral describes the long, dreary ride across Edinburgh, the lengthy procession of *non*-mourning coaches through the busy streets, much stared at by the passers-by, so that in one at least of the carriages, those inside were glad to pull down the *red* blinds so as to shut out the too curious gaze of the populace. "The vaults were fearfully dark, and we felt thankful to come out into the daylight. [My brother, who was with me, exclaimed] 'Oh, for a grave the sun shines on!'"

JOHN and SARAH WIGHAM had four children. The elder son "married out," and settled in Jamaica, where I believe he died, leaving an only daughter. The second son was an invalid, and had an attendant, called his tutor, always with him. One daughter, a girl of much promise, died in early life², and the younger, Anna Mary, married her cousin, Theodore Nicholson, of Carlisle; she too is now dead, but has left children. Of the family of JOHN WIGHAM, TERTIUS, two, Henry and Eliza, were for many years valued members of Edinburgh Meeting, though eventually they both joined their relations in Ireland. The elder sister, Mary, had married Joshua Edmundson, and settled in Dublin in 1840; and the younger brother, John Richardson (whose carpenter's shop in the garden at Gray Street, with its lathe and multitudinous tools, used to be viewed with much awe by my childish eyes) followed his sister to the Emerald Isle, and became a distinguished engineer, a great authority specially on the illumination of lighthouses, but "a most modest man: he twice refused a knighthood."

MARY HOWISON had several children: two unmarried daughters—one I think afterwards married a Polson of Dublin—besides her widowed daughter Johnston. Like other young Friends of the period they wore Friends' bonnets, though of a somewhat less staid type than the prolonged straight tunnels of their elders. Sons there were also. The eldest was for some time Clerk to the Preparative Meeting, but both he and another brother left Friends. The third son, David, who married a very capable English wife, a Harrison of Kendal, died at a

² Sarah Elizabeth Wigham (1834-1854). Her parents issued a privately printed *Memorial* of S. E. W. in 1855. A copy of this is in D.

comparatively early age after a long period of helpless infirmity. His widow afterwards married Michael Graham of Preston, and became the mother of John William Graham, Principal of Dalton Hall. Other plain Friends on the women's side were Sarah Wigham's sister, ELIZA NICHOLSON, afterwards wife of John Barlow, and SARAH JOHNSTON, also resident at Salisbury Road, a bright energetic woman, who would now be called a "mother's help." There were two unmarried sisters MOSGRAVE. They retained for many years the market garden which had been their father's, at Powburn, beyond Causewayside; but, to their great indignation, they were eventually turned out by a Radical M.P., who bought the property for building purposes, and it is now covered with streets and crescents of middle-class houses. Other Friends who occupied seats in the body of the meeting were the widowed MARGARET BRYSON (d. 1862, aged 62), and her daughter, Agnes. The latter afterwards settled in Glasgow, and with her friend, Mary White, became a devoted worker among the poor and suffering in that city, specially in connection with the "Prison Gate Mission."

MARGARET CONSTABLE (d. 1855, aged 74), who had been my father's nurse, and was the widow of John Constable, one of the old hand-loom weavers, was still living, but I do not seem to remember her at Meeting; probably she was too feeble to come out. There were, however, other members of the family, notably her daughter Reddie, who were regular attenders. Another daughter was the wife of ROBERT BELL, a line engraver of portraits and figure subjects, of some note. He was not a member, but together with one or more of his boys, he occupied a form in the body of the meeting, First-day after First-day, with great regularity. Some of his large family afterwards joined Friends.

Another conspicuous figure at Meeting was ANDREW RICHARDSON, a painter of pictures, who lived with his old mother, CHRISTIAN RICHARDSON (d. 1853, aged 88). I think he must have lost his membership through marrying out, or possibly he never was a Friend. At any rate, Andrew and his old mother lived together. I can still recall the peculiar odour of oil paint which pervaded the flat where they dwelt. The father, John Richardson,

had been in the shawl trade, and, like his wife, was a convinced Friend. She was partly paralysed, and was quite confined to the house. She spoke the very broadest Scots, and took large quantities of snuff.

Few of our Edinburgh Friends at this period indulged in tobacco. I can remember only two who continued to smoke the long "churchwardens" which an earlier generation had so generally patronised; my grandmother Miller, who died in 1842, aged 82, was one, John Wigham, Tertius, the other. John Wigham, however, some years before his death, gave up the practice under the feeling of strong religious duty.

We must not forget HELENUS GIBBS (d. 1876, aged 75), the worthy shoemaker, a convinced Friend, from near Dundee. He was a widower with one daughter, Sarah, not a member, though I think an attender of meetings. In subsequent years, as the old standards failed, he became one of the pillars of the Meeting.

There were always one or more Friends students from the south or from Ireland, many of them valuable additions to the Friendly circle. In those early days I specially remember DR. MARTIN BARRY and DR. BEVIL PEACOCK, afterwards of Finsbury Square, London. The latter, whilst accompanying my father on some of his First-day evening walks, first interested me in our common wayside wild-flowers. To a later date belongs the name of JOSEPH LISTER, in after years the celebrated Lord Lister, who has just passed away full of years and honours. He however came less and less amongst Friends as his student days went by, and he eventually "married out," his bride being a daughter of James Syme, the great Professor of Clinical Surgery in Edinburgh University, with whom Lister had been much associated.

Dr. Barry, when I first remember him, had advanced beyond the student stage. He was a brilliant scientist, was the first Briton to ascend Mont Blanc (he published an account of the ascent in 1834³), and was a member of many learned societies. I remember accompanying him in his search after microscopic specimens in the ditch at the foot of "Neighbour" Lothian's field—a half stagnant abomination, very appropriately known as "the stank";

³ A copy is in D.

it was the last remnant of a ditch which in old times extended all round the Meadows.

A small collection of rare plants from the Scottish Highlands, which Dr. Barry had himself gathered, pressed, neatly mounted and presented to our mother, was long treasured at Hope Park, until the plant beetles made an end of it. There was also a curious model in flexible wire, made to illustrate a discovery of the Doctor's as to the way in which our muscles act. Dr. Barry had been much in Germany, and was an enthusiast as regards the language, which he had mastered so thoroughly that he declared he *thought* in German. He was, I believe, of Irish birth, a strong loyalist and "anti-repealer"—those were the days of Dan O'Connell. I remember Dr. Barry quoting with gusto the charade, "Pat is my first, he makes my second, then calls himself my whole" (patriot). There was also a riddle by Macaulay, I fancy, with which he puzzled us, on the word *cod* :—

Cut off my head, and singular I act,
 Cut off my tail, and plural I appear,
 Cut off both head and tail, and—wondrous fact!—
 Although my middle's left, there's nothing there.

What is my head cut off? A sounding sea;
 What is my tail cut off? A flowing river,
 Amid whose sparkling waves I sportive play,
 Parent of sweetest sounds, yet mute for ever.

Dr. Barry's health failed completely through overwork. He also had a great disappointment in love, though I hardly think we can blame the lady. His talents had fascinated one of the G—— family, but when he remarked to her one day, "Yes, Sarah, I could give even thee up for Science," she told him with much spirit he had better do so. She lived to make a very happy marriage some years later. A stay for some time at a German hydro-pathic establishment made Dr. Barry a confirmed invalid. I remember his appearance, that of a feeble, bent old man, as he came up the path to Meeting, leaning on the arm of John Wigham, Junior, when he returned from his fatal course of icy water douches, wet sheets, and endless glasses of cold water. "Does thou wonder what old Friend this can be? William Allen perhaps?" was his greeting to me, seeing, I suppose, my pained and astonished face.

He finally retired to Beccles in Suffolk, where he died, 1855, aged 53.

I am not quite sure when JOHN BARLOW (d. 1856, aged 40) appeared on the scene. He came from Cheshire as a student, and became professor in the Veterinary College in Clyde Street: "a talented man and rather a pioneer in microscopic work," a friend remarks. When he was a student, the bitter controversy between the followers of Hahnemann and the "orthodox" school of medicine was in full swing. As the result of many experiments on the animal world which John Barlow made, he ranged himself on the "orthodox" side; whether he ever changed his views, I know not.

Knee breeches were by this time the exception amongst Friends, but the collarless coat was still a *sine qua non* for old and young alike. I remember John Barlow appearing in an ordinary fancy coloured overcoat, "Coderingtons," I think they were called, and when he was taken to task by one of the Overseers, he defended the garment by pointing out how convenient it was in cold or wet weather to be able to turn the collar up. Whilst on the subject of dress, I may recall the fact that mourning garments were considered to be most un-Friendly. I remember the half-astonished, half-grieved comments made on the dress of a woman Friend, as she appeared at her husband's funeral in 1856, though I fancy it was only ordinary black silk, and a Friends' black bonnet and veil which she wore.

Even in those days there were Friend women students at the Ladies' College in Moray Place, one of the earliest institutions established for the higher education of women.

As has always been the case, a certain number of queer waifs and strays used to attend Meeting for longer or shorter periods, but I don't remember that Friends were at this time much troubled by those not in membership taking upon them to hold forth, as was the unpleasant experience of Friends at Edinburgh a generation later. One very regular attender was an old gentleman, a tobacconist of Leith, who occupied the corner seat of the front form facing the gallery. He had been a "Separatist," and apparently appreciated the quietude

of a Friends' Meeting, as the walk from Leith to the Pleasants and back must have been a fatiguing one for a stout old man such as he was. As he sat meditating, he was wont to wave his arms about, and utter inarticulate sounds which much interfered with the gravity of some of us younger ones. Good HARRY ARMOUR (d. 1867, aged 77) was well known to Friends as a fellow worker in anti-slavery, temperance and other good causes, but I think he had not then become an attender of Meetings. He was certainly not then a member.

Most of the Friends belonging to Edinburgh Meeting were strong Liberals in politics, besides interesting themselves warmly in escaped slaves and wronged native Indians from "the land of the free" across the Atlantic, and Spanish and Italian refugees, German democrats, and oppressed Polish nationalists nearer home. JOHN WIGHAM, JUNIOR, had been a strong supporter of Macaulay, one of the members for Edinburgh, but after that voluminous Whig writer's attack on Friends in general, and William Penn in particular, John Wigham became his strong opponent, and worked steadily and successfully on behalf of the Radical candidate. J. Wigham Richardson, in his Memoir of his sister, Anna Deborah,⁴ tells of the disgust of the latter, when she found her grandfather "burning some letters, and exclaiming with great satisfaction, 'Now! I've got rid of the letters of that *rascal*, Macaulay!'"

WILLIAM F. MILLER

To be concluded

James Nayler, speaking of the Light within as shewing what no outward declaration of man can shew, describes its effects thus:—

"It will let you see all your sins done in secret, and whom you have wronged, and how you have spent your time, and will bring you to repentance and to tenderness of heart towards all people, and will bring you to exercise a pure conscience in the fear of God, towards God and man in uprightness, and so will lead up to Justification and 'Peace.'"

The Power and Glory of the Lord Shining out of the North, 1653, p. 2.

⁴ *Memoir of Anna Deborah Richardson with Extracts from her Letters*, privately printed in 1877, page 29. A copy of this in D.