

The Paintings of Sir Peter Lely

JN a recently published volume, *Historical Portraits, 1600-1700*, there are reproductions of eighteen paintings by Sir Peter Lely, including the one said to represent George Fox. These include George Monck, Duke of Albemarle; Prince Rupert; Henry Martin, whose "profligacy culminated in bankruptcy"; David Leslie, Lord Newark, "completely devoted to war"; James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh; Anne Hyde, Duchess of York; James Butler, Duke of Ormonde; George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; Algernon Sidney; Samuel Pepys; James II., when Duke of York; the Duke of Monmouth; and Sir Peter himself. Verily, George, thou art in strange company!

Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680) was the son of a Dutch soldier called Van der Faes. He came to England in 1641. His assumed name seems to have been taken from the sign of a "lily" over his father's home in Holland. "After 1660 Lely was continually busy in painting the beauties of the Court—so busy indeed that many found it exceedingly difficult to get a sitting. He was knighted in 1679, and was fully at work when he died suddenly in the next year" (*op. cit.*).

The painting from which the familiar portrait of George Fox was reproduced hangs in the rooms of the Friends' Historical Library, at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. According to a note to the portrait in *Quaker Biographies*, vol. i., published in Philadelphia, 1909, "An American, John Wethered, when on a visit to London in 1858, found in a curiosity shop near Trafalgar Square an ancient painting, on the reverse side of which was written 'Geo. Fox.' The picture was shown to many experts in England, and, as a result of careful examination by them, it was *thought* that the painting was the work of Sir Peter Lely."

So far as we know Fox never sat for his portrait, and it is not in the least likely that he ever did so, but some admirer, such as Judge Fell, might have commissioned Lely to paint him, and the painter might

have secured a reasonably accurate representation of his features.

The result of a comparison by some expert of the various reproductions given in the above-mentioned volume, of the work of Sir Peter, might result in establishing or disproving of the statement that the Fox portrait was actually the work of this painter. It would be interesting to have an authoritative pronouncement as to the possibility of the Fox of Honthorst, painted in 1654, being the same man as the Fox of Lely, not more than twenty-five years later.

The questions to which answers are sought are :—

- i. Was the portrait painted by Sir Peter Lely ?
- ii. Does it represent George Fox ?

Queen Catherine at Devonshire House, 1662

In an article on the headquarters of London Y.M. which appeared in *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, 1911, it is stated that "the Countess Dowager of Devonshire (d. 1675) entertained here King Charles II. and his Queen." By the kindness of Albert Cook Myers we are able to give a contemporary reference to the Queen's visit, taken from the Ruge MSS. in the British Museum :—

Sept. 1662. "The last day of September the yong Queen and Duke of York and two dutches went into the Citty of london with a Guard of horse, hir majesty went only through the Citty to see it for that it was the first time shee went into the Citty, she went in a very high Coatch. Shee made noe stay at all at that time, only at the old Countess of devonshire hir house without Bishops Gate entitled ffishers folly."

When the poet Southey was telling an old Quaker lady how he learned Portuguese grammar while he washed, and something else while he dressed, and how he did something else while he breakfasted, and so on, filling in the day utterly, she said quietly, "But, friend, when does thee think ?"

Report of *Conference of Educational Workers in Syria and Palestine*, 1912.