

## MS. Documents at Cork

---

THE racy anecdotes culled from Waterford archives, and presented by Ernest Grubb in his Presidential Address at the last Annual Meeting, turned the attention of members of the Council to the little known or exploited store of manuscript evidence in Ireland. It does not seem that much use has ever been made of this, or a great deal written about Irish Friends, beyond what is to be found in John Rutt's *History of the Rise and Progress of Friends in Ireland* (1800).

At the request of our friend Francis C. Clayton, I spent a couple of weeks in Cork in the autumn, and examined the very fine collection preserved in the capacious premises of the Meeting House there. The books are well bound, are stored in a roomy fire-proof safe, and have been catalogued recently by members of the Meeting. They are under the care of Henry H. Beale, the Monthly Meeting Clerk, from whom, during my work at the Meeting House, I received the most kind help, as also from many other Friends of the Meeting.

The premises comprise a large Meeting House, two smaller ones, lobbies, a library, and, fronting on the street, a roomy dwelling-house, with rooms above, let to a Friend. This part was originally used as a day-school, many interesting references to which may be pieced together from the MSS., for later use in THE JOURNAL if desired. The date of the first Meeting House cannot be exactly stated, but in 1677 Friends decided it was "insufficient," and "committed the care of purchasing a plot of ground to build upon" to five Friends, of whom Francis Rogers was one, and they were ordered "to proceed immediately." The sum to be spent on "finishing the worke according to the Moddle p̄scribed" was "adjudged by computaçon to require £500."

The earlier minutes of Cork Six Weeks Meeting, beginning 28 x.1675, and of the Three Weeks Meeting, dating from 24 iii.1676, are full of interest. They present a very active picture of a colony of merchants, ship

owners and others, many of them prosperous, and all busily engaged in watching over their neighbours, both as to conduct and for opportunities to give advice and help. No one was to suffer poverty or want without assistance from those better off. No one could take a false step, financial or otherwise, without a warning. They seemed ever ready to lend small sums of money to the deserving and thrifty, and to look diligently after the aged or ill, or even those who were in no need of assistance. The earliest minutes are very largely taken up with hearing applications and giving consent to "joyning in marriage in the Order of Truth." The Society must have been large and steadily growing at this time, and although there was a frequent testimony against drunkenness, against marriage by a priest, and against parents giving consent to the marriage of their daughters with "one of the world's people," the constant reiteration against fashions, periwigs, keeping of dogs, drinking tea, and other harmless trifles which later occupied the business meetings, had not then begun.

A wholesome and admirable oversight was kept that integrity in trade and no sweating should prevail. Friends were appointed in 1678 in each Meeting

to speake with y<sup>e</sup> friends of the Cloathing or Spinning trade that they take care in all theire dealings with spinners & other work folkes, to pay either mony for their worke or Such goods as they shall fully agree for before hand, & to desire if they pay goods it may not be vallew'd above y<sup>e</sup> Currant price.

As time went on this inquiry into the business affairs of fellow-members became almost inquisitorial, and preoccupation with the internal machinery of their own sect to the exclusion of other matters necessarily resulted in a period of formality fully revealed in the minutes. Many instructive points may, however, be dwelt on, by quoting and putting together short extracts relating to special subjects, as relief of the poor, distribution of Quaker books, conduct in Meeting. The School I have indicated above; the way in which the wars and rebellion affected Friends, and the use of the Meeting House for soldiers, are other topics.

The principal items of the catalogue are given below. The omitted numbers are those of lists of members,

proceedings of various committees, marriage registers, certificates, testimonies and epistles, certificates of removals, account-books, maps, and similar documents preserved in Meeting Archives.

1, 1A, 3A-5	Cork Three Weeks and Six Weeks Meeting	1675-1756
6	"    "    "    "    "    (Women)	1763-1784
7-12	Munster Province Meetings	1694-1798
13	Charleville Men's Meeting	1698-1720
14	Bandon " "	1677-1700
15, 16	Quarterly Meetings	1798-1865
17	Yearly Meetings	1798-1839
19-21	Provincial School Committee Proceedings	1796-1855
22	Historical Narrative of Ministers' Visits	1708-1871
23, 24	Account of Sufferings, Munster Province	1750-1863
29	Provincial Register of Families	1655-1868
37	Record of Friends Travelling in Ireland	1664-1765
46	Provincial Female Bounty Fund	1775-1833
53-56	Cork Monthly Meeting	1807-1885
57, 57½, 58	"    "    "    (Rough)	1826-1874
59	Cork Preparative Meeting	1839-1872
60	"    "    "    (Rough)	1855-1872
65	Sundry Proceedings, Bandon Meeting	1680-1714
68	Letter from Prince William, afterwards King William IV., to Friends in Cork	1787

---

## Isabel Yeamans

---

**A**LL fresh information coming to light about the Fells of Swarthmoor Hall is sure of a welcome, for that remarkable family of noble Quaker women, Margaret Fell and her seven daughters, always remained the ideal example of a seventeenth century Puritan household of means and education, birth and good breeding. Their industrial and economic activity at home was quite as remarkable as their evangelical campaigning at large.

While recently examining the records of Munster Province, at Cork, I came upon facts which throw a sidelight on a point in the life of one of the seven, which so far as I know has never figured in their history.