

Comments on "Military History"

J. AM asked by the Editor of THE JOURNAL to make some comments on certain passages in J. W. Fortescue's "Military History."¹ On page 11 we read :

You know that late in the seventeenth century a company of worthy and excellent men formed the settlement of Pennsylvania in North America. They were members of the Society of Friends, who would have nothing to do with war, and consequently bought their lands from the Indians instead of taking them by force or fraud. Frugal, thrifty and industrious, they soon grew wealthy, and extended their borders further and further, until they came into collision with other tribes of Indians, who one day fell upon the outlying settlers with fire and sword. In utter dismay the sufferers appealed to the Government of the province for protection ; but the Colonial Assembly would not do violence to their tenets and ignored the appeal, leaving their unhappy and inoffensive frontiersmen to be massacred. At length, goaded to desperation, the settlers came down to Philadelphia with their arms in their hands, and threatened violence unless the Assembly voted money for supply of ammunition, and other measures of defence, forthwith. Thereupon the Assembly yielded, but still they would not openly pass a vote for the purchase of gunpowder. To save their conscience they voted money only for the purchase of corn or *other grain*, which, as gunpowder is made up of grains, was sufficient warrant for the acquisition of the necessary but unspeakable article. To such contemptible subterfuge are men driven who refuse to face facts.

This statement is very misleading. It was not other tribes of Indians which made the trouble, but other tribes of white men, who had come to the Quaker Province and abandoned the Quaker methods. The Friends lived in the south-eastern corner. The other settlers were the Germans, who got along very well with the Indians, and the Presbyterians from Ulster, commonly called Scotch-Irish. These exasperated the Indians by their pugnacious intolerance. " Why should the Indians have land which Christians want ? " they demanded.

" The settlers that came down to Philadelphia " were a company of these militants, who had just lynched some

¹ *Military History*. Lectures delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, by the Hon. J. W. Fortescue. Cambridge University Press, pp. 207, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 5, 1s. net.

twenty peaceable Indians at Lancaster, and proposed to treat a group of Moravian Indians, then in Philadelphia, in the same way. The Philadelphians, including some 200 Friends, rose in arms, and the expedition went back without a fight and without accomplishing any other object than extorting from John Penn, grandson of the Founder, and not a Friend, a promise to offer a reward for male and female Indian scalps.

The incident, related by Franklin, of the purchase of gunpowder referred to a different transaction about twenty years before. The Province was asked by England to aid in a military attack upon the French fort at Louisburg on Cape Breton. The Quaker Assembly refused, on the ground that "The peaceable principle professed by divers members of the Assembly do not permit them to join in raising of men or providing arms and ammunition." They, however, appropriated £4,000 for "bread, beef, pork, flour, wheat or other grain." The Governor, not a Friend, on his own responsibility said that "other grain" meant gunpowder, and so expended the money.

Again, on page 105 :—

The pious Quakers of Pennsylvania and Rhode Island used to finance pirates, who at one time nearly swept our East Indian trade off the seas.

There were pirate ships that went out from Philadelphia and from Rhode Island about the year 1700, and returned with spoils. So far as I have been able to ascertain, Friends had nothing to do with financing them. I am sure that if any individual Friends had done so, they would have received the censure of their Monthly Meetings, and the fact would have appeared on the minutes. I never saw or heard anything of the kind.

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Margaret Pike was expressing her high approval of women speaking in meeting and in public where it appeared desirable. Jonathan Pike remarked: "Well, Aunt, thou knows Paul was not of that opinion." She replied with alacrity: "But thou knows Paul was not a Friend."

From THOS. HY. WEBB'S MS. *Collection of Quaker Stories.*