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### Richard Smith and his Journal, 1817-1824

[The MS. which is the subject of the following paper is in the handwriting of Toft Chorley (1761-1835) and is one of the many which were bequeathed by him to his cousin by marriage, George Crosfield (1785-1847). It remained with the others in the latter's house in Liverpool during the life of his son, when they came into my possession. Most of the MSS. in this bequest were deposited at Devonshire House in 1902—see Isaac Sharp's article on them in the *F.Q.E.* for April in that year. This MS., in seven volumes, was lent to the late John Wilhelm Rowntree, for his studies in the social aspect of Quakerism in the past, and reached Devonshire House somewhat later. JOHN DYMOND CROSFIELD.]

**T**HAT we know anything beyond a few bare facts respecting the life of Richard Smith is due to the circumstance that he belonged to the industrious class of people who keep a Diary, and to his having won the friendship and warm interest of another member of his Monthly Meeting, who transcribed it—not indeed in full, but in such detail that the seven years, 1817 to 1824, covered by the transcript occupy 112 large folio and 477 quarto pages of writing. The same Friend also preserved a few of his letters.

Other material for an account of R.S. is extremely limited: a Testimony of Staffordshire M.M., various

references to him in the *Memoirs of Hannah Kilham*, and in the Reports of the Committee for African Instruction would be all that remain as the record of the life of a Friend by conviction who “adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour” and “served his own generation.” Some account of him was contemplated after his death though never carried out; there is an unfinished sketch by G. Crosfield (parts of which are used in this narrative), and the transcript is annotated in places by Luke Howard (1772-1864).

The following extracts from letters are here inserted to show the value which contemporaries attached to the Journal.

Luke Howard writes, on the 7th of Sixth Month, 1825 :

Being deeply interested in whatever concerns him, I have taken the liberty of perusing the Journal [*i.e.* that part written in Africa] . . . and have been amply repaid, in personal satisfaction, for the time bestowed upon it. I think no well disposed mind could entertain a doubt, after reading this document, that our dear fr<sup>d</sup> moved in this undertaking in the Divine fear & counsel, and that he has laid down his life . . . in the cause of the Redeemer of mankind. There is a great deal of detail, it is true, and some few sentiments or observations which one would not wish to make public, but on the whole it presents a mass of matter likely to be productive of real edification to the members of our Society, from whom I therefore hope it may not be long withheld; especially as I am informed by Rob<sup>t</sup> Forster that there are other memoirs (of his visit to America) in thy possession of a similar tendency.

The draft of Toft Chorley’s reply on the 10th of Sixth Month, 1825 :

. . . He had long been in the practice of recording the employment of each day with a minuteness that some might think trivial, yet to me it is not unimportant as it more fully displays the Character of a Man who in every instance sought to assist the wants & mitigate the sufferings of others; & who, by closely pursuing the path that Duty open’d to him, had his full share of the conflicts attendant upon a life he humbly devoted to the Divine Will. There are some things in his Journal improper to be exposed, & many others that could only interest those who knew & lov’d him: yet I can truly acknowledge that I have derived much real pleasure as well as profitable instruction from the perusal of them.

As none of R.S.’s relatives had any connection with the Society of Friends, T. Chorley borrowed the Journal and copied,—mostly, if not entirely, in his own

hand,—such parts of it as he thought valuable. The transcript begins abruptly on the 1st of First Month, 1817, with the entry:—“Departed from Manchester by Coach: what a pity the poor Coach-horses should be abused & worked beyond their natural strength so very much,” and ends on the 22nd of Seventh Month, 1824, the last entry being eight days before R.S. died at Bathurst in the Gambia.

In the original, the Journal may have been comparable for minute personal detail and vivid self-revelation to that classic, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*. In its transcribed form, the entries are mostly memoranda of the occupations of the day, more elaborate when travelling than when stationary: great prominence is given to the subject of his meditation in religious retirement, to which he made a practice of devoting an hour or two twice a day. As a most regular attender of meetings for worship, the names of the speakers, with their texts, as well as the amount of Life experienced, are generally noted. As the transcript was plainly undertaken to illustrate the religious side of the life and character, these subjects may have been less conspicuous in the original. Odd touches crop up from time to time:

1818. 2 mo. 15 [At Smithfield, Ohio]. At meeting a longer space than common, & I thought somewhat more weighty, tho' much interrupted by persons getting up & going to the fires.
1819. 8 mo. 18 [At Richmond, Ohio]. Kept the scholars half an hour longer than usual at night in spelling the word Omniscient [a pity he spelt it wrong].
1821. 4 mo. 16. S. B. observed this morning that he did not peruse News-Papers, which conveyed to my mind a reproof of instruction. [Samuel Botham of Uttoxeter, father of Mary Howitt, on the day of William and Mary Howitt's marriage.]
1822. 1 mo. 9. Called on John Wright (Cheadle) to whom I returned his topcoat, & gave him some more tracts on drunkenness. [J. Wright had at this time applied for membership!]
1822. 6 mo. 2 [In London]. Refused J. N.'s (and a young woman of his acquaintance)<sup>1</sup> pressing request to dine with them at her master's house.
1823. 5 mo. 31 [In London]. Felt reproof at having used soap & being thirsty of rather too freely taking porter mixt with beer at J. N.'s. [? because palm oil might be a slave product, in the same way as many Friends eschewed sugar for that reason.]

<sup>1</sup> This parenthesis is doubtless that of the original Transcriber.

In reading the Journal we must remember that it was never intended to be made public; the entries are the private memoranda of an orderly mind, and from the modesty and simplicity of the writer must be treated with respect, even when they raise a smile. Belonging to a family which had long been connected with the management of land and being very observant, R.S. records the weather and is careful to note the soil, trees and crops wherever he goes; and his general interest in what went on around him, and, when abroad, the conditions of life, is constantly evident. There are many illustrations of the manner of life (especially in Ohio) a hundred years ago; people historically interesting to Friends are mentioned, and Quaker scruples—so different from those obtaining at the present day—appear from time to time. As it is not possible to know whether T. Chorley copied *literatim*—he certainly did not *verbatim*—little notice has been taken, in the extracts, of abbreviations or occasional variations from the now accepted forms of spelling.

Richard Smith was born at Farley in the parish of Alton in Staffordshire on the 6th of Eleventh Month, 1784. His parents were members of the Church of England. His mother died about 1797 (“1818. 2 mo. 26. This I believe is the 21<sup>st</sup> year from the death of my mother.”) His father, Matthew Smith, who died 9th of Eleventh Month, 1821, aged 80, and is described in his will as “Gentleman,” occupied an important position as agent for the estates of many landowners of the district, a connection which he inherited from his forbears, and which is still maintained by his descendants. That Matthew Smith was esteemed by the gentlemen whom he served may be assumed from the statement that the Earl of Shrewsbury visited him twice when on his deathbed:

1821. 11 mo. 6. Earl Shrewsbury with a priest (Roman) called to see father: the latter queried if he had any spiritual instructor.

1821. 11 mo. 7. Earl Shrewsbury again called: his coming seemed to hurry father.

The outline of R. S.’s life is as follows:

He first became known to Friends as an Attender of Meetings in 1816: in 1817 he went to the U.S.A.,

where he spent three years in Ohio, and was there admitted into membership with the Society of Friends in 1819: he returned to Staffordshire at the close of 1820: went to the Gambia under the auspices of the Committee for African Instruction in the autumn of 1823: and died at Bathurst on the 30th of Seventh Month, 1824, before completing his 40th year.

George Crosfield writes:

From what was learned after his death of the early period of Richard Smith's life, it appears that he was of a mild and gentle disposition, dutiful to his parents, & kind and affectionate to those with whom he associated. At this early period he evinced much sympathy for the sufferings of the animal creation, & was greatly pained at the cruelties which are too often practised towards them—a feeling which remained with him to the end, & in after life manifested itself in various acts of dedication to serve & to benefit his fellow creatures.

There is nothing recorded of his education, but it is plain that he was of a studious turn of mind: reading the Bible in Hebrew and the study of Chaldee are often mentioned in the Journal: and he was willing to undertake a schoolmaster's duties on two occasions in Ohio, though, when the engagement was under consideration, "1819. 4 mo. 3. I stated my diffidence of accepting the appointment for want of sufficient arithmetical knowledge." Nevertheless, he understood accounts, for he often helped his neighbours in that way: and his neat handwriting was in request in America to write letters and to copy Epistles and the Minutes of Meetings.

R.S. was never married: but by piecing together a few passages in the Journal one is glad to think that his life, in many ways so lonely, was not without its love-story: whether his affection was reciprocated, we know not. The following shows that the question of marriage had been discussed with his father in 1816:

1818. 12 mo. 28. This afternoon I received a letter from my dear Father and brother Charles, both written on the same sheet. I cannot easily express the sensations of pleasure which it excited even before I had opened it, it being nine calendar months (save 9 days) since the receipt of the last, and I had been looking for it with some anxiety for some time, particularly just of late (yet I trust with a good degree of resignedness). I verily believe it has come at the right time, and perhaps better than if it had come sooner, from the prospects that I have

lately had of leaving this place [Smithfield] being a sort of confirmation thereof. It contains the consent of my father for me to please myself about marrying, dated at Endon 6th mo. 15<sup>th</sup> this year, thereby doing away the injunction which he laid upon me in his illness in 7<sup>th</sup> mo., 1816, which was, *not for me to marry*, & which injunction had been heavy upon me at times since I came to this country; but I felt resigned and had not any desire to apply to him to reverse it. But I feel thankful that he has done it of his own accord.

There are, subsequently, mentions of letters to "E. B." and the following entry would seem to point to the subject of the long extract just copied:

1821. 2 mo. 2. Showed to Father a letter which I received in America from E. B. & shew'd him also a copy of the answer, which subject he left entirely to myself. I feel easy now.

The wording of this entry indicates that "E. B." was not resident in America: taken in conjunction with the following extract, may we not conclude that she was a daughter of John Bill, the squire of Farley?

1821. 2 mo. 23. Departed from Endon after breakfast arrived at the residence of J. B. in abt 2½ hours, where I had an interview with him after previously waiting a while in the room, with my mind retired; an opportunity I am of opinion we ought to avail ourselves of on every occasion when presented, particularly amongst those in higher stations & where the Truth is concerned. Partook of some refreshment—met with J. B. in the garden after having been through the hot-house, with whom I walked about in the grounds amongst his stock. His discourse on war was disagreeable to me. Returned to Alton between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> hour.

G. C. assumes in his sketch that this was a religious visit: but I venture to suggest that my deduction is valid—that this was a formal application for leave to pay his addresses to the squire's daughter. We are not told the result, and no more is said about the matter, though he frequently met with the lady in the course of his ordinary duties and remained on very friendly terms with the family. In this, as in many instances, we are disadvantaged in that T. Chorley, transcribing so shortly after the events, would be cautious in matters concerning persons then alive, especially in so delicate a matter respecting a family of not distant neighbours, whom he must have known personally.

George Crosfield writes :

It is not known what first brought him among Friends, but he began to attend the meeting at Leek about 1816, when his solid behaviour & serious and orderly deportment soon won for him the friendly notice of the members of that meeting.

Some time before this period he had been engaged in cotton manufacturing in Manchester. The account written by G. C. says he was "brought into difficulty through having entrusted a considerable portion of his effects to a man who hastily departed with them to America"; but this statement hardly agrees with two entries in the Journal :

1817. 5 mo 5. Received John Moor's long-expected papers—which were very acceptable—placing me in a situation of paying off all my debts.

1817. 5 mo. 29. This day at Leek, through Divine favour, have it in my power to pay all demands against me, which is what I could not say for many years past.

which would indicate that it was not only the embezzlement which caused financial difficulties—the more so as it appears from a letter written by him from Philadelphia to T. Chorley that the thief did not leave England till Third or Fourth Month, 1817. But it is a small matter and cannot now be explained.

Whatever the circumstances may have been, the loss of his property was a deciding factor in a wish he had to go to America, feeling already a concern to promote the welfare of the Indian tribes. He told T. Chorley of his intention on the 25th of Fifth Month, who, we may be sure, did all in his power to help him forward. Typical entires at this time are :

1817. 6 mo. 10. Working all night preparing for my departure.

1817. 6 mo. 12. After being at work all night & completed my arrangements departed from Endon about half-past 9 to Leek F.Q.M.<sup>2</sup> George Withy the Minister greatly favoured. Arrived at Manchester about half-past 9 at night.

Preparations at Liverpool occupied just four weeks ; letters of introduction to New York and Philadelphia, presumably from Friends, were given to him, and on the 15th of Seventh Month he set sail as a steerage passenger

<sup>2</sup> That is, Friends' Quarterly Meeting.

in the American-owned ship *Magnet* belonging to Bristol, Rhode Island. They experienced much bad weather and the voyage was uncomfortable, with uncongenial surroundings; there were no less than 73 passengers in the steerage.

7 mo. 19. Sensibly felt the Divine visitation during the night: tho' sleep kept from the body, the mind enjoyed sweet slumber or repose during the raging of the sea and rocking of the ship.

8 mo. 7. Worshipp'd forenoon & engaged a little at the Chaldee.

8 mo. 10 [A Sunday]. Great lightness in the ship, lent tracts to different persons. A religious meeting held in the Cabin late at night; enquiry was made for me & I was gone to bed.

8 mo. 11. Amidst the Babel confusion on board ship from profligate persons & the rocking of the vessel, how sweetly have I at times felt the flame of Divine love & peace visit my soul.

8 mo. 26. Card playing close to me till after midnight.

Other incidents of the voyage are found in a letter written to his father on arrival in New York, which also contains the following dismal account of his passage: "I was for many days oppressed with sickness, & being deprived of many necessaries suitable for persons in that situation, an opportunity was afforded of exercising a degree of patience, & I have great cause of thankfulness for the Divine assistance & preservation that has been rendered me." A letter a month later to T. Chorley says that his seasickness lasted three weeks.

They passed Icebergs on the 11th of Eighth Month, anchored off "The Vineyard<sup>3</sup>" on the 28th, when he notes that "Women Servants, Shoemakers & Cotton Dyers were wanted by the inhabitants of Bristol," and reached New York on the 31st. The Quarantine Doctor "said he never saw so healthy a set of passengers before."

9 mo. 2. Packages landed: officers detained my Hebrew Bible.

9 mo. 3. Drank Tea in company with John, the Brother of Lindley Murray.<sup>4</sup>

9 mo. 4. My Merchandize landed & pass'd after scrupling to sign a paper that was offer'd me. On its being underwritten by ( . . . )<sup>5</sup> I did sign the same.

<sup>3</sup> That is, Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of New England. See THE JOURNAL, xii. 161.

<sup>4</sup> John Murray, Jun. (1758-1819). He was much interested in the welfare of the Indians. See *Memoir*.

<sup>5</sup> Parenthesis inserted by original Transcriber.



On the 6th he left New York in the steampacket for Elizabeth Town, and proceeding "in the usual rout to Philadelphia thro' Jerseys" reached that City on the 7th.

R. S. remained about seven weeks in Philadelphia, where he quickly got into touch with Friends, who at that time were much occupied with the reception and settlement of "Redemptioners from Germany: 50 families lately arrived, being as I understand, persecuted by the government for maintaining a testimony against War: some of them underwent many years imprisonment." Friends took many of the children into their houses, and the rest and the heads of families were installed in a building at Bush Hill: "they are to settle in the southern part of Ohio State, where the great current of emigration at present runs."

While R. S. was in the City, the man who had stolen his property arrived with it: a letter of Tenth Month 10th says:

It is somewhat remarkable that the man I wanted to see from England, who left there more than 3 months before me, destined for this place (by way of Ireland), did not arrive here till last week: the ship he sailed in was dismasted after she had proceeded a considerable distance to sea, and had to return to Ireland for repairs. By his unlooked for arrival it is likely my business at this city will terminate to my satisfaction much sooner than I once expected.

R. S. was favoured to recover most of his property, though he experienced a time of anxiety and difficulty till the business was completed.

9 mo. 20. Applied to J. G. for employment.

9 mo. 21. Solicited employment of A. W. either in agriculture or to tend sheep: he not wanting.

9 mo. 28. My stay in this country revealed to me, after much exercise of mind, for more than two years.

Felt thankfully sensible for the Lord's goodness in enlightening me.

R. S. then made a trip to Burlington and to Bristol, Pa., disposing of goods: from there he visited Mount Holly, where he notes, "Interposition of Divine Providence in preventing me from sinning." On Tenth Month 5th he "felt drawings to the Westward," but on the 6th and 7th was inquiring about a situation in the

Academy at Germantown. The determination to go westward became more fixed, and during the following days he settled up with J. S. (the man who had taken his goods), took advice as to articles suitable for the Western Country, and provided himself with tracts. There is a note in this place that Lodgings were \$4½ to \$6 per week.

It is not clear what, precisely, he had in view as his occupation in the west: the idea of a store was probably regarded as a temporary expedient while he was looking about him: on one occasion, later, he was offered land in exchange for his stock: and he twice made expeditions to view the country, and inspect some plots, but the scheme of settling, if ever seriously entertained, was never carried out.

JOHN DYMOND CROSFIELD

*To be continued*

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### *An Absconding Quaker Shoemaker*

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13 9<sup>m</sup> [16] 84 ff from ffalmouth, a letter from Tho Gwin to W<sup>m</sup> Taylby.

J write now to satisfy y<sup>e</sup> request of friends of y<sup>e</sup> monthly meeting who finde that a yong man, walking in pfessio<sup>n</sup> of Truth, for some time & so getting credit for severall considerable summes, & proving false is run away with their moneyes, 1.9<sup>m</sup> 84, taking his way Eastward as we hear, from a place calld Gweegge, about 8 miles from hence, we suppose to Bristol or London, by name John Pedegrew, a Shoemaker, ab<sup>t</sup> 30 y<sup>rs</sup> old, of black curled hair, full eyes, long nose, midle stature, or somewhat short.

We desire that if such an one come amongst you, friends may be wary of him. And if you can understand him to be y<sup>e</sup> same, we should take it kindly to have him arrested in y<sup>e</sup> suit of Tho. Philipps, John Scantlebury, or Joh. Tregelles, or Steven Richards, these being some of his creditors who will maintein y<sup>e</sup> charge of y<sup>e</sup> Law. He hath by his carriage opened y<sup>e</sup> mouth of Truths enemies, & strengthened Backsliders & evill doers.

Jf thou pleasest to communicate this to friends, that if possibly he may be stopped in his course. We suppose it may be of service. Put y<sup>e</sup> charge of postage on my account. And if friends at London see convenient to send after him to Waterford or other places of Ireland, we Judge 'twould not be amiss.

ffor Southw<sup>r</sup>k Mo. Meeting R.R.

[Endorsement] A Letter from falmouth about J<sup>n</sup> Pedegrew a shoemaker Run away from thence. R.R. [? Richard Richardson.]