

Standing Before Kings

THOMAS SHILLITOE AND GEORGE IV.

JN our last volume (xii. 195) we printed an account of the visit of Thomas Shillitoe to George IV. in 1824, taken mainly from *The Journal of Thomas Shillitoe*. We can now supplement this by further information from contemporary sources.

I.¹

Thomas Shillitoe having for a considerable time felt it required of him to present a memorial to the King on the very disorderly manner in which the First-day is spent at Hanover, & when there having been informed that an order of the King and Council issued in 1822, instead of checking the disgraceful profanation of the day set apart for public worship, had been considered as a licence for it, procured the said order which was translated into English.

In the 12th mo. 1823, in order to accomplish this apprehension of duty, he went to Brighton and obtained an interview with H. Pearson², the Dean of Salisbury, who appeared kindly disposed to assist him; but no suitable opportunity presented for obtaining an interview with the King.

T. S. therefore returned home & after some time had elapsed wrote to the Dean & on the 15th of the 4th mo. rec^d from him an obliging letter recommending his going to Windsor & informing him of the time at which the King usually rides out & that he might have an opportunity of handing the Memorial to him in the Long Walk in the Park.

¹ From a MS. written on a quarto sheet of paper, with watermark of 1822. This and the following MSS. are the property of Gilbert Gilkes, of Kendal, grand-nephew of Peter Bedford.

² Hugh Nicholas Pearson (1776-1856) was Dean of Salisbury, 1823-1846. (*D.N.B.*)

The Concern still resting upon T. S.'s mind on 3^d day, the 20th of 4 mo. 1824, accompanied by [Peter Bedford]³ he left London for Staines and arrived at Dr. Pope's⁴ a little before 11, who, with his family evinced some solicitude as to the object of his visit, which was not decreased when T. S. explained to the Dr. the nature of his concern. After some consideration R. P. kindly wrote a letter to Sir W. Knighton⁵ who he supposed was in attendance on the King.

We then proceeded to Windsor & went immediately to the Castle but were informed that Sr W. Knighton was not at Windsor. Whilst inquiring for Sr. W. K. we saw the King's poney-chaise drive up and thought it best to proceed immediately to the Long Walk in the Great Park. Much was the anxiety & solicitude of T. S. that he might be enabled to discharge this act of apprehended duty suitably & in a way that would on a retrospect afford relief to his mind.

We had proceeded pretty far down the Walk & reached a spot where there were no persons nigh when the King accompanied by Sir W. Cunningham⁶ came up to us attended by 3 Servants on horseback. (This was about half-past 2 o'clock.) On our presenting ourselves the King immediately stopp'd his Horses & we approached the Carriage, when T. S. (holding in his hand the Packet he had prepared) ask'd respectfully whether he might be permitted to present it to the King: to which he kindly replied, "Yes Friend." T. S. then ask'd, "Is it the King?" Sir W. C. smiled & the King replied, "Yes, Friend, I am the King. Give it to Sr W. Cunningham," which he did, & then added, "Now you have handed it to me." T. S. then informed him that he had on a former occasion allowed him to speak to him at Brighton; to which the King replied, "I remember you." The King

³ A name is not given in the MS. Peter Bedford (1780-1864) was the Friend.

⁴ For Robert Pope, M.D. (1748-1827) see THE JOURNAL, v. 200, n.

⁵ Sir William Knighton (1776-1836) was private secretary and Keeper of the Privy Purse to George IV. (D.N.B.)—His *Memoirs* were published in 1838.

⁶ Sir William Cunningham, fourth Baronet, of Caprington, co. Ayr, was born 19th December, 1752, and died before 1834. (*Notes and Queries*, July 29th, 1916.)

then inquired after Dr. Pope & spoke of him in terms of respect ; after which T. S. assured the King of the sincere desire which he felt that the blessing of the Almighty might attend him to the end of his days, to which the King replied, " I thank you." We then acknowledged our sense of the King's condescension & withdrew, upon which he drove off ; having given T. S. a full opportunity of effecting what he believed required of him, and that in a way, that has afforded satisfaction to his mind.

II.⁷

ROBERT POPE TO PETER BEDFORD.

Staines, 20th Evg.

Dear Friend,

Anxious to hear how you succeeded I sent to the office to enquire if there was a letter for me from Windsor, & I can truly say the Trio of Popes rejoiced at the contents of thy letter which thou mayst communicate to our much esteemed friend whose zeal for the public good has been long known. You made me on your appearance this Morning feel myself a Quaker, & altho' I once heard, & by only one person that our dear friend Mary Dudley was censured for saying ' poor Peter ' when he denied (no doubt for an instructive purpose to the self-confident) his Lord & Master, The Pope of Staines sayeth, ' Well done ' Peter, by supporting thy friend in what hath appeared to him, moving in the line of Duty, remember us when opportunity offers to thy tried, yet courageous T. S. who with thyself hath the feeble good desires of

Thy affect^e friend in haste as lateTo
Peter Bedford.

R. POPE.

III.⁸

THOMAS SHILLITOE AND WILLIAM IV.

On fifth day the 27 of the 9 Mo. 1832 I left Town accompanied by three Friends⁹ for Windsor, arrangements

⁷ Original letter. Postmark : " 21 AP 1824."

⁸ This is the draft report to the Meeting for Sufferings. There are numerous alterations. The print follows mostly the longest and presumably the first composition.

⁹ Who were the Friends in addition to P. Bedford ?

having been made for me to have an interview with the King at the Castle, in order to present him with an address on some subjects which had previously deeply occupied my thoughts, the presentation of which appeared to be a duty I could in no other way get relieved from.

We reached Windsor by 10 o'Clock, were conducted to the Castle, and Peter Bedford & myself were taken to the Apartments of the Kings private Secretary Sir Herbert Taylor¹⁰, but we found he was then with the King. We were shown into his office and spent some time in conversation with Tho^s Sheffner¹¹ & — Hudson¹². Whilst there, the Wife of H. Taylor and their daughter, a lovely little girl came to see us, and she conversed with us in a very friendly manner.

Tho^s Sheffner left us for some time, and on returning conducted us to the appartements of the King. He appeared to be in excellent health, was standing in the middle of the room and moved towards us on our entrance. We were with him about 20 minutes, quite unattended by any person whatever, and it may be said he rec^d us very graciously. He soon entered into familiar conversation; addressing himself to me he said, "Your name is Shillitoe, your family must be of French origine: where do you live? where were you born? how old are you? what is your trade? I suppose you are out of business, how many children have you?" & when these questions were replied to, He turned to my companion and as if to remove all undue restraint made similar enquiries and remarkd, "Your family must be English, altogether."

He then held out his hand to receive the Books we took with us which my companion gave him.

I then handed the address I had prepared, which the King took of me, opened it, and intimated that he would further look at it. This was a manuscript Copy, having

¹⁰ Sir Herbert Taylor (1775-1839) was secretary to the Duke of York, 1794, to George III., to Queen Charlotte, and to William IV. (*D.N.B.*)

¹¹ Thomas Shiffner, of Westergate, Essex, born 1796, died before 1856, Paymaster of the Household to William IV. (*Notes and Queries*, July 29th, 1916.)

¹² Sir James Hudson (1810-1885), private secretary to William IV. (*D.N.B.*); *Notes and Queries*, July 29th, 1916.)

previously had it printed. A little pause then ensued, and he was informd that I had crossed the Atlantic, and travelled thro Germany, Sweeden & Denmark. The King then enquired if there were any of our Society in Berlin, and whether the Herrnhuters¹³ belongd to our Community, and added, " They are found in almost all parts of the World." He further observed that the Friends, or Quakers have no appointed Ministers ; when my companion informed him that I was an acknowledged minister of the Gospel, had travelled in that capacity, and had been admitted into the presence of the King & Queen of Denmark & other branches of that family, & that our late Kings George the third & forth had also allowd me that preveledge. I thought it right to say that I believed the King would not be offended at our appearing before Him with our hats on, & that it was not out of desrespect—to which he promptly replyed, " You know I am aware of that."

Under a degree of solmn feeling I then expressed that, I felt thankful to Almighty God that He had been pleased to renew in my mind, that earnest solicitude, which at times I have experienced for the Welfare of the King, accompanied with desires that the Almighty, would be pleased to incline his heart, so to walk in the ways of his requirings, that he might become a blessing to the Nation, over whom he is permitted to reigne, beseeching the Lord on the bended knee of the mind, (tho' not of the body) to incline the heart of the King to seek daily for help to be enabled to maintain the Noble resolution (of one formerly), " Let others do as they may, I will serve the Lord " ; and that when called upon to surrender up his earthly Crown, he might be favoured to receive the Crown designed for him, to wear in the Kingdom of Heaven ; to which the King listened with serious attention.

I then acknowledged his Kindness in allowing me this interview and said there was still another favour I was anxious to obtain, but I feard it would be requesting too much. The King promptly enquired what it was ; and when I told him that I wished to present two Books

¹³ That is, the United Brethren, or Moravians, who, under Count Zinzendorf (d. 1760), in 1722, established a colony in Saxony which was called Herrnhut.

to the Queen¹⁴, and to have the privilege of addressing her in a few words if it would not be unpleasant to her ; he replyd, “ I have no doubt but she will readily comply with your wishes ” ; and He immediately rang the Bell, and sent a message to the Queen by one of the servants.

The King then inquired if Penn was not the first Quaker, and if there were not many of our Society in America, and ask'd if there were many in Scotland, and said he knew there were in Ireland. He was informed that George Fox was prior to W^m Penn and I then inquired if the King would like to receive Sewells History of Friends and the Book of Extracts, containing on acct of our Religious principles & the rules of the Society ; to which he replyd in the affirmative. He desired they might be sent for him to Sir Herbert Taylor. The servant not having returnd from the Queen a fear was expressed that we were unsuitably trespassing on the time of the King which did not appear to be the case—an acknowledgement was then made of his condescension to us and desires expressd that the Divine blessing might rest upon him during the remainder of his reign.

The messenger being returnd, informed us that the Queen would receive us in her drawing-room, where we were then conducted by Tho^s Sheffner.

After waiting there a few minutes the Queen, quite unattended, walked into the room, a striking example of simplicity in her attire for her exalted station, dressed in white, without any jewells, or costly apparel :—After a few introductory remarks the Queen sat down and desired us to be seated which we accordingly did. We presented her with two Books and a printed copy of my address which she received in an obliging manner. After a short pause I told her that I was one of the deputation who presented the address of the Society of Friends to the Queen, on her accession to the Throne, That at that time and frequently since ; when the Queen had been brought to my remembrance, my mind had been impressed with the belief that a Kind Providence, had favoured the Queen with a mind, capable of entering into feeling, for those who were in distress which feelings of Sympathy I

¹⁴ Queen Adelaide (1792-1849). The address to the King and Queen on their accession was presented on the 28th of Seventh Month, 1830.

believed the Queen was disposed to cherish. Under these impressions I had often regretted that the Queen had not the opportunity, for becoming more fully acquainted with the distress, of thousands, and tens of thousands, of her subjects who were wanting sufficient food, cloathing, & fuel, principally arising from a want of employment, which I considered was chiefly occasioned, by articles for cloathing & those for domestic purposes, being manufactured by Machenery, relating to the Queen two circumstances that had come under my notice clearly to the point. And in another way also I considered it had been injurious to the Nation, it being allowed by all, that goods made by hand were much more serviceable than those made by Machenery ; as I believed the Queen was desirous to relieve the distressed, as far as in her power ; when these subjects had been presented to my mind it had appeared to me that the Queen's example & influence might relieve some of the distress, and draw upon her the blessing of the poor ; and whilst I did not wish to be considered as dictating to the Queen, I could but recommend what appeared to me likely to afford relief by suggesting, that in the Palace such Articles as are made by hand should be used, which the Queen did not object to. My Companion being a silk manufacturer then acknowledged the kindness of the Queen, in having adopted the use of silks manufactured in Spitalfields, which he said he beleived had already been of service. The satisfaction that gleemd in the countenance of the Queen at this information was striking.

The Queen then enquired if the poor weavers were better employd than they had been, and informd us that the Furniture of the Palace, was of that Manufacture. After a pause I then felt it my duty to address the Queen pretty much to the following effect, viz.

I feel thankfull to the Almighty that he has been pleased afresh at this time to awaken in my mind those earnest desires which at times I have felt, that the Queen may be made a blessing to the Nation, by seeking to the Almighty for help, to be found so filling her station, that when called upon by Him to surrender her temporal Crown, she might be prepared to receive an eternal one.

My companion then acknowledged the kindness of

the Queen in having favoured us with the interview, and express'd his sincere desire that God Almighty might be pleas'd, to bless her.

When we rose from our seats again at our parting, the Queen took off her glove & kindly gave us her hand.

On leaving the Queen's Appartm^t Sir Herb^t Taylor, who appear'd in waiting to receive us, paid us the greatest attention, entering into familiar conversation with us, saying, " You *must* see over the Palace, I will go with you over part of it, & Mr. Sheffner will then meet us & conduct you thro' the remainder" ; which they did, and most politely pointed out to our attention, the beauties of the place and the rich collections of curiosities, specimens of the fine Arts, and things only fitted for a Palace.

After having passed thro' the private rooms and State Apartments, we were conducted to an apartment where we partook of Refreshment, *thankfull indeed*, that the visits to the King & the Queen had been accomplish'd without we trust, cause for offence to be taken by any one, and I hope it may not be unattended with benefit; this however is certain that my own mind being relieved from the great load of exercise I had been and was labouring under to the time of our entering the apartments of the King and Queen ; for which feeling gratitude filled my heart to the gladening my countenance which was visible to my friends.

There was yet remaining one more individual, viz. Lady Sophia Sydney¹⁵, I wished to have seen, but indisposition prevented it. We sent her two Books of which we requested her acceptance ; and here it should be added that to her kind advice we were in some measure indebted for pointing out the way to get admitted to the King. She sent a most obliging message expressing her regret, at not being able to see us. We however, saw her two lovely Children, a little Boy & Girl who came and shook hands with us.

¹⁵ Lady Sophia Sydney was the eldest daughter of William IV. and Mrs. Jordan ; they had nine children, who took the name of Fitzclarence. She became Lady Sophia Fitzclarence by royal warrant, 1831. She married, in 1825, Philip Charles Sydney, of Penshurst, Kent, afterwards first Lord De L'Isle and Dudley. She died in 1837. (*Notes and Queries*, July 29th, 1916.)

It is due to acknowledge that thro'out the whole, from our entering the Palace to the time we left it, every one to whom we were introduced treated us with the utmost civility and kindness, and I desire to render unto Him, the author of all good, thanksgiving & praise, for having enabled me, to perform that which I believed he required at my hand.

The foregoing is a brief statement (as nearly as could be rememberd) of the substance of what passed at a visit paid to the King & Queen by Tho^s Shillitoe.

IV.¹⁶

SIR HERBERT TAYLOR TO PETER BEDFORD.

Windsor Castle, October 2, 1832.

Sir Herbert Taylor presents his compliments to Mr. Peter Bedford and begs to acquaint him that he has presented to the King the Volumes of Sewell's History of the Society of Friends sent to him by Mr. Shillitoe & that his Majesty received them very graciously.

Sir Herbert Taylor requests that Mr. Bedford & Mr. Shillitoe will be assured that he was very happy to have it in his power to show any attention to them.

V.¹⁷

SIR HERBERT TAYLOR TO PETER BEDFORD.

Windsor Castle, October 3 1834

Dear Sir,

I hope you & Mr. Shillitoe will forgive my not having earlier acknowledged the receipt of your kind note of the 19th ulto and of a Copy of the revised Edition of the Rules of the Society of Friends and a Copy of the Diary of Alexander Jaffray for the King which I have had the honor of presenting to his Majesty who received them very graciously and ordered me to thank you both for them.

I request that you will accept my best acknowledgments for the Copy of the first named work which you

¹⁶ Original letter, written *sui manu* on octavo note paper with a gilt edge, and addressed "Mr. Peter Bedford, Stewart St., Spitalfields, London."

¹⁷ Original letter, written on two sides of a quarto sheet, gilt-edged, sealed with the royal coat of arms.

have been so obliging as to send me, & that you will be assured that I am very sensible of your friendly attention. I request also that you will do me the favor of offering my best regards to Mr. Shillitoe and my sincere wishes for his Welfare which are expressed to yourself also.

I have written to Mr. Hodgkin to thank him for the works he kindly sent me.

I remain with great truth,

Dear Sir

Your very faithful Servant,

H. TAYLOR.

Mr. Peter Bedford.

VI.¹⁸

PETER BEDFORD TO SIR HERBERT TAYLOR.

Steward Street, 19/9 34.

Peter Bedford on behalf of his Friend Thomas Shillitoe takes the liberty of forwarding to Sir Herbert Taylor the other Work which The King consented to accept, when he so kindly allowed Thomas Shillitoe & Peter Bedford the favour of an interview with him. It has but lately come from the Press & is a revised Edition of the Rules of the Society of Friends. It is also accompanied with a Copy of the Diary of Alexander Jaffray which furnishes an account of the Rise & Progress of the Society of Friends in Scotland, & Peter Bedford begs leave to present Sir H. Taylor with a copy of the first named Work.

Thomas Shillitoe has been requested by his friend John Hodgkin¹⁹ to forward for Lady Sophia Sydney & Sir H. Taylor a Geographical Work for the use of Children of which he is the author.

P. Bedford hopes that Sir H. Taylor will have the kindness to excuse him thus troubling him & begs to unite with his venerable friend Thomas Shillitoe in the expression of their respectful regards and that they continue to retain a very grateful remembrance of Sir H. Taylor's kind attention when they were at Windsor.

¹⁸ Rough draft. Note the respectful and yet simple diction.

¹⁹ John Hodgkin (1766-1845) was a writing-master of Pentonville and lived later at Tottenham. The book mentioned would be *A Sketch of the Geography of England*, of which a fourth edition appeared in 1825.