

Joseph Rickman and his Poems

A VERY rare, thin octavo volume has recently been presented to D. by Kirk Brown, of Baltimore, Md., entitled *Religious & Moral Poems*, by the late Joseph Rickman, of Lewes, Sussex, England. Philadelphia : printed for the Proprietor, 1828.

Joseph Rickman (1749-1810) was a son of John and Elizabeth (Peters) Rickman, and was born at Lewes, Sussex. In 1772 he married Sarah Neave, of Staines (when he was "of Maidenhead, Surgeon and Apothecary") and had a large family, among his children being Thomas, the noted architect (1776-1841), John, the accountant (1780-1835), Edwin Swan, the author (1790-1873), and William, the Schoolmaster (1781-1871). In 1777 he received Thomas Pole (1753-1829) into his family as apprentice, and they remained through life on very friendly terms. (*Thomas Pole, M.D.*, by Edmund T. Wedmore, 1908, where there is a reproduction of a profile of J. R., by Dr. Pole.)

The Gentleman's Magazine of 1810 has this reference to his decease :

"At Dublin, aged 64, Mr. Joseph Rickman, a native of Lewes, and formerly one of the people of Quakers. He had for the last two or three years held forth as a street preacher in most of the principal towns of the Kingdom, and particularly in the Metropolis, with a degree of eccentricity bordering on insanity. He was by profession a surgeon and apothecary, and practised many years at Maidenhead." (vol. 80, p. 662.)

There are nineteen pieces in this little book. One is addressed "To the little Lambs in Ackworth Fold, J. and W. R. their cousins, &c." J. and W. R. were probably his own sons, John and William, who entered Ackworth together in 1790, and the cousins would be some of the seventeen children of his brother, Richard Peters, and Mary (Verrall) Rickman, all who grew up, save George the youngest, being educated at Ackworth. Another poem was written on the death of his brother, R. P. Rickman, in 1801, the first of the line of Richard Peters and John, in alternate generations, down to the present John ; and another to the memory of his sister Ann (1757-1793), who married William Jeffrey, of Salisbury.

William Rickman (1781-1871) was the third son of Joseph Rickman. He was at Ackworth School from 1790 to 1795. It does not appear in what year he went to America, but in 1821 he transferred his membership from Frankford, Pa., to Baltimore, Md. It is probable that before residing at Frankford he taught school in Cincinnati. Later in 1821 he was at Nottingham, Md. In the Introduction to his father's Poems he writes : "The following collection of Poems is affectionately inscribed to his Scholars at Cincinnati, Frankford, Woodbury, Baltimore, East Nottingham, Bush, Fawn Grove, West Grove and Sadsbury, by their late teacher W. R." In his *Thoughts on Education including the draft of a Constitution for a contemplated Society, to be called The United States Education-Improvement Society*, William Rickman describes himself as

“An Instructor of Youth, in the States of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland, from 1818 to 1826” (Smith, *Cata. Supp.*; pamphlet not in **D**). He had relinquished his educational work so far as we know, when he wrote a Preface to his father’s Poems in 1828, and issued his educational pamphlet in 1830, in which later year he was residing on Pratt Street (above Howard), in the City of Baltimore.

The late Perceval Lucas wrote under date, July 21st, 1902, “W. R. was an enthusiast on the subject of education and died in York Retreat, 1871, aged 89” (letter in **D**). The *Annual Monitor* gives his residence as London.

An Adventure on the Delaware River

JT was a winter’s day and the sleighing was perfect. The swine had been slaughtered, and a stock of lard, sausages and tenderloins, filled the larder. My mother determined that a sister in Philadelphia should have some of these good things, and this was a fine opportunity to take them. So Bob was rigged to the sleigh, and loading the spoils we started, my mother and cousin Rebecca, M. Cooper and myself the passengers, and father the driver. I remember well how I enjoyed the jingle of the echoing bells, as that frosty morning we passed by the old woods then bordering the road to Camden. Reaching the river we found it was solidly frozen over and covered with snow. It seemed a perfectly even plain of pure white. A stream of foot passengers, and sleighs and sleds were going and returning over it, and our only recourse was to do as did the rest. Down the slip we rode, and soon were in line with the others travelling on the ice. We reached the city gaily, and having done all our errands, started to recross the river, my father standing up in front the better to manage his steed and insure the safety of his precious charge. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, and an ample camlet cloak. We had just struck the ice when Bob took fright at something and began running. It was a moment of peril, for open air-holes lay not far distant. We in the sleigh were not a little terrified. As to father, while we were thus speeding, first his big hat flew off and took to the rear. Then a wig he wore came loose, and after flapping in the gale, shortly followed the hat. Now, bald-headed, with his cloak streaming in the wind, my father tried the expedient of guiding Bob towards a projecting wharf. Rather than strike this, Bob slackened his pace, and a man seizing him by the bridle, brought him to a halt. It was then my father enjoyed first the reception of his wig from a polite witness of his disaster, and then his broad-brimmed hat from another. After composing ourselves and calming Bob, we headed homeward, rejoicing that we had escaped a more serious disaster.

From *My Ancestors*, by William Hopkins Nicholson, 1897. The father and mother of the writer were Samuel Nicholson (1793-1885) of Haddonfield, N. J., and Rebecca Hopkins, his wife.