

London Yearly Meeting in 1833

A MANUSCRIPT, written by an unknown hand, has been lent us by J. Ernest Grubb. The following breviate may be of interest to our readers.

The Meeting opened on Wednesday, 22nd May and closed on Thursday, 6th June. Business meetings were held on fourteen days, sittings being held on both the Saturday afternoons. Samuel Tuke was clerk and Josiah Forster and George Stacey assistants.

There was considerable ministry before each sitting, amongst the Friends taking part being Thomas Franklin, J. J. Gurney, Abraham Fisher, Barnard Dickinson, Stephen Grellet, Richard Ash, Richard Cockin, Lewis Seebohm, Charles Osborn, John Pease.

Passing a revision of the Book of Extracts occupied numerous sittings. Testimonies were read and Queries answered; Epistles were read and answers prepared. The committee for examining the accounts of the National Stock reported a charge for travelling Ministers of £900, printing and stationery £200, with numerous smaller matters.

There was, as usual, coming and going of a religious nature between the Yearly Meeting and the Women's Meeting—Sylvanus Fox, accompanied by Richard Cockin and Alexander Crookshank; Thomas Franklin, accompanied by John Hipsley and John Glaisyer; Robert Jowitt and John Pease, accompanied by Joseph Marriage and John Glaisyer, went into the Women's Meeting. Respecting the last named visit we read:

Robert Jowitt mentioned his concern to visit the Women's Meeting. John Pease then rose & laid a similar concern before the Meeting; they were both encouraged & united with, Joseph Marriage & Jno. Glaisyer were appointed to accompany them. Previous to their moving, a message was received from the Women's Meeting to know if this would be a suitable time to receive a visit from 2 women Friends, which proved to be so, & soon after Elizabeth Fry, Mary Fox & two friends in the

station of Elder appeared. Silence prevailed a short time ere Mary Fox was on her feet . . . E. Fry supplicated & afterwards spoke in testimony . . . M. Fox said a few more words & then left us. Rob^t Jowett, John Pease & their companions then went into the Women's Meeting.

At one sitting James Nicholson Richardson, of Ulster, expressed with much diffidence a concern that rested upon his mind about friends not being careful enough to uphold one of our ancient testimonies, by signing petitions that have objectionable titles in them, an act of this kind being an infringement of our Query respecting Plainness of Speech. The Meeting was brought under much concern on this subject.

At the close of another sitting

Isaac Crewdson gave friends of Devonshire House a hint of the great want of cleanliness that appeared in these premises, more particular in the large house.

Josiah Forster opened a matter before the Meeting in a weighty manner which was the exposed state the Society is likely to be involved in, if our disabilities to fill civil offices & places of trust under Government be removed. The remainder of this sitting which lasted till $\frac{1}{4}$ before 8 o'clock was nearly all occupied with the solid consideration of this important subject. Several, like good watchmen, warned their fellow-members of the dangers the Society is likely to be exposed to & the need of constant watchfulness & Divine aid to keep faithful. Thomas Shillitoe was not the least conspicuous in this concern; he said it was a matter that frequently occupied his mind & had revived afresh at this time with a fear that temptations & Snares may be laid for us. He said he thought the world thus taking us by the hand was no sign of our advancement in the Truth.

At the Meeting for Worship on the first Friday, which was much crowded, Lucy Maw first spoke and then Anna Braithwaite broke silence. "She stood rather more than an hour fluently elucidating many Gospel Truths." On the following Wednesday Devonshire House was again much crowded, "many not of our Society were there." John Wilkinson prayed and William Forster spoke for over an hour. John Yeardley closed the meeting in prayer.

Of the Sunday meetings attended by our reporter we have full notice—at Tottenham the preachers were William Rickman, Thomas Shillitoe and Sylvanus Fox; at Stoke Newington, Robert Jowitt and Stephen Grellet; at Peckham, Mary Fell, Sylvanus and Mary Fox. Sarah Grubb had "expressed a concern to sit with friends in

Devonshire house on the evening of the last First-day," but this, for various reasons, was discouraged. She was, however, there at the time but was silent, the vocal service being upon Anne Moore [of Clonmel, and later, wife of Charles F. Wakefield], Elizabeth Robson and others, after a long silence.

At various sittings—James Cropper spoke of the blacks in the United States; a report of the Continental visit of S. Grellet and William Allen was read and references were made to the visits of James Backhouse and G. W. Walker to Van Diemens Land, of Daniel Wheeler to the Pacific Islands, and John and Martha Yeardley to the Grecian Islands.

Thankfulness was expressed that these devoted servants are thus influenced in Gospel love to labour in foreign lands & leave all that is near and dear to them in this world for that purpose.

But, curiously, when a minute of the previous year was read,

manifesting the concern friends then felt, if way clearly opened to take some step towards endeavouring to spread the knowledge of the Gospel amongst the Heathen . . . after serious deliberation it was deemed most suitable to close the matter on the books, by making a minute expressing the concern the Y. Meeting felt on the subject, but not being able to see its way clearly, relinquished it for the present.

The Temperance question came up.

Samuel Capper mentioned in strong terms his opinion for some time back of the propriety of framing a minute to prevent the selling or using spirits by any of our members. Many friends offered their ideas on the subject. One friend mentioned how much he regretted some members of our Society having Ginshops and related a disgraceful scene lately witnessed in one of them—a person went in to drink & got so much that on coming away he fell down near the door quite intoxicated. Rich^d Ball said he looked back with surprise, & thought the Society would yet do so, that no minute had been added totally forbidding the use or sale of spirits. A plain and curious looking friend from Guernsey, whose voice we did not hear before, mentioned that at one time he was used to hard labour & drank spirits 100 times, which he found good for his body but bad for his spirit. . . . A friend who had a brother a spirit dealer stood up & rather exposed himself, when he found Sam^l Capper's opinions gaining ground, by saying if this suggestion was approved of, Sam^l Capper should go without clothes. No notice was taken of this rash act, further than the pain some friends must have felt that any in our Meeting should be so incautious. The Meeting seemed not capable just at the time of forming a rule to this effect.