



WILLIAM RICKMAN (1745-1839)

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Devonshire House Reference Library

WITH NOTES ON EARLY PRINTERS AND PRINTING IN THE SOCIETY
OF FRIENDS

FROM very early days, Friends felt strongly the importance of the printed statement of their views. The foundation of the present Reference Library was laid as early as 15 vii. 1673, when the Morning Meeting, held at the hospitable home of the wine-cooper, Gerard Roberts, in the first minutes preserved to us, agreed as follows:—

That 2 of a sort of all bookes written by freinds be procured & kept together, & for the time to Come that the book seller bring in 2 of a sort likewise of all bookes that are printed, that if any booke be pverted by our Adversaryes wee may know where to find it.

And that there be gotten one of a sort of every booke that has been written ag^t the Truth from the begining.

This to be minded by W^m Welch, Ellis Hooks & James Claypoole to send to Nicholas Jordan of Bristoll for such bookes as cannot be gott heere or for a List of what freinds bookes he hath and also to Nicholas Cole of Plymouth.

George Whitehead & William Pen to help to procure the bookes written ag^t Truth.

That if any bookes are putt out ag^t Truth they be without delay brought to this Meeting & considered of, & that the Answers thereon to be dispatched wth all convenient speed.

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About ten years later (5 xii. 1682) a further order was made that “ printers are to bring in to R^d R^dsons chamber in Lumbard St. at y^e 3 Kings Court there, 2 of a sort of each book of friends y^t they print.” To all which the printers present agreed.

The “ printers present ” would probably be Andrew Sowle and Benjamin Clark, both of whom are mentioned in a minute of the following year ; and it will be convenient to say a little of the history of Friends’ printing before passing on to an account of the Reference Library.

The care of the Morning Meeting was exercised over the publication of Friends’ books, and great part of the weekly meetings was taken up in reading through the works which Friends desired to publish, that such works might bear the *Imprimatur* of the Society. The censorship was strict. At a meeting at Rebecca Travers’s (22 vii. 1674) a minute runs :—

Agreed that hereafter A.S., B.C., nor no other print any bookes but what is first read and approved of in this meeting, & that the *Tytte of each booke* y^t is approved of & ordered to be printed be entred in this booke & that A.S. & B.C. & all other who print for freinds receive their bookes of E.H.

“ E.H.” is, of course, Ellis Hookes, the first Recording Clerk. The common form of minute is :—“ A book entituled . . . read & ordered to be printed ” ; or it may be :—“ read to p. 33,” “ read to p. 120,” and so on. But all authors did not get through so easily.

At a meeting at Anne Travers’s at Horslydowne, 2 ix. 1674 :—

Concerning S. Eccles his booke entituled *The Soule Saveing Principle, &c.*, freinds have taken three daies to read it & their sense and judgment is that it is not safe to be published there being many things in it that are to be left out & others to be corrected, both w^{ch} will require much labour & care and therefore it is referred to G.W., A.P., & W.G., & T.G., or any two or more of y^m to speak with Sollomon the book in y^e mean time to be left with E.H.

Sometimes it was wisest not to put objections in writing :—

7 x. 1674.—Ste. Smiths booke entituled *The Baptist Leaders thresht.* The meeting doth not judge it convenient to print it, for divers reasons, of w^{ch} he may have a private information, when he speakes with some of the Bretheren.

Even George Fox could not count on the Meeting's approval :—

9 iv. 1677.—A Paper of G. ff's read and ordered to be laid by till G. ff be spoken with about it.

In one case the Meeting seems to have been beaten by the author's hand-writing. There is an amusing minute about a MS. submitted by a Welshman, Thomas Wynne :—

24 i. 1678.—Thomas Wynne his booke entituled an Antechristion Conspiracy detected read only to the 12th page, being very difficult to read and to distinguish the matter, by reason it is not right English and y^t y^e opposers words and y^e reply are not distinctly sett down wth breaches between, it is the desire of this meeting that if Ellis Hookes and James Parkes cannot correct it that Thomas Wynne have notice thereof by Letter and his booke returned him from Ellis Hookes ; And y^t wth the assistance of some freinds in wales & y^t way he would see it amended and better composed, and made shorter y^t y^e opposers words and his replyes be set down distinct with breaches between them.

“ Better composed and made shorter ” ! Were the Morning Meeting still in existence, it might still find need at times to give the same counsel. One further minute of a similar kind may perhaps be allowed :—

13 i. 1681/2.—Abraham Bonnyfield's book entituled a word of advice to all sleepy virgins, most part was read. And judged not meet to be printed. But to be return'd to him, only if something of the advice remain upon him, of warning to the sleepy virgins, &c. He is left, as y^e L^d shall clear his understanding, to abstract out of it what's most clear & pertinent, as briefly as may be, in a sheet or two.

The quaint titles make the minutes curious reading sometimes, as *e.g.* (Meeting for Sufferings, 4 i. 1698) :—“ The taking of the Antidotes y^t are in sheets, in Number abo^t 400, to be considered next meet : ”

The distribution of books, when printed, was in the care of the Meeting for Sufferings. A proportion of the issue was sent to each county ; but this became burdensome, and on 10 iv. 1680 it was agreed that in future Friends' books should not be sent down to the counties unless the particular county writes and asks for the book, and then in such number as the county directs.

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It is evident that this led to a smaller distribution of books, for in 1692 the matter was taken up by the Yearly Meeting, with a resulting order from the Meeting for Sufferings :—

That those that Print Friends Books shall the first opportunity after Printed, within one month at most, send to one of the Correspondents in the several Counties . . . two Books of a sort if under Six Pence for each Monthly Meeting in your County, and but one of a sort if above Six Pence per Book.

Among the reasons given for this decision were :—“ For Friends to have General Notice of what Books are Printed,” “ That they may send for what other Quantities they may see a Service for,” “ That the Printer may be encouraged in Printing for Friends,” and “ That one Book at least of a sort that shall be Printed . . . may be kept in each Monthly or Quarterly Meeting, for the service of Friends and Truth.” The document, a printed broadside, continues :—

Its tenderly and in Brotherly Love Advised and Recommended unto you, That y^{ee} be careful and diligent in the spreading of all such Books that are Printed for the Service of Truth.

There was equal earnestness in endeavouring to circulate books outside the Society. On 10 iv. (June) 1680, the Yearly Meeting having agreed

that the Matter of Books & printing and the methods of Sending them abroad as well within this nation as forreigne parts shold be wholly Left and referred to the meeting for Sufferings in London to do & order as they shall from tyme to tyme see meete and convenient for the Service of the Truth, the Meeting for Sufferings considered methods, and its minute states that

its further Agreed that the way of exposing of bookes to sale bee for the future by sending them to Market Towns to such ffreinds and shopkeepers as will expose the same to Sale in their shoppes and houses.

In xii. 1697 George Whitehead informed the Meeting that “ some books of ffri^{ds} in High Dutch are bound up in order to be dđ [delivered] to the Zar of Musscovy.” The following week, William Penn was added to the Friends appointed by the Morning Meeting to make the presentation ; but an unexpected hitch occurred, for the minute adds :—

which books being Bound much finer than friends expected, It's ordered that they be not done as they are, but anew bound in Turkey Leather Plain.

At the next week's meeting it was minuted :

The Books for the Zar being now brought in plain bound in Turkey Leather, the friends named are continued to deliver them as formerly directed.

One wonders whether George Whitehead or the Meeting better estimated Peter the Great's taste, and whether he read the twice-bound volumes presented to him.

But if Truth was to be spread, it was equally important that Error should be suppressed, or at least counteracted. On 22 ix. 1692 £15 was granted for the purchase of a parcel of books brought "into this Port by a Pensilvania Ship." The parcel contained books by George Keith, the circulation of which in England might, it was feared, embitter the controversy.

25 ix. 1692.—Friends having under their Consideration the Buying up the Books from Pensilvania among which are severall Books Relating to a difference among friends there, and Endeavours having been Used for an Accomodation and Some Answer Recd: from them Signifying their good liking of our friends Letter to them.—Therefore friends are willing to Stop them in hope of Such Accomodation, and apprehending the Spreading of them may be a grief to both parties of our friends there, If such an Accomodation be, & also will have a Tendency to the reproach of Truth and the friends in it, by the ill construction our Adversaries may make thereof. And therefore Leave it to Cornelius Mason and John Frame to Purchase them and friends to Reimburse them the charge altho it be more than what was Allowed the 22th 9 mo. 1692.

On 28 ix. 1692 the books were reported already "in the Custome House." Friends were authorised to try to get an Assignment upon the Bill of Loading, "and if they cannot get them out of the Custome House without a Review to have them Sealed up and let y^m Lye till further Order."

About a fortnight later £17 was paid to John Frame "for George Keiths Books sent hither from Philadelphia."

In v. 1696 a bill of £10 19s. 9d. was paid

for Papers delivered for the Service of friends At Turners Hall, Coffee Houses and Booksellers Shops, viz^t 2092 John Penington's Reflections upon G.K.'s Advertizem^{ts}; 3225 Reasons & 178 Remarkes on y^e afores^d Advertizem^t.

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Friends were exceedingly anxious to clear themselves from George Keith's accusations, and three months later an appointment was made

to deliver the books now bound up together being one of a sort of ffri^{ds} answers to Geo. Keith's &c. To y^e Late Mayor and the B^p of London, and one of a sort of the Churchmans [*i.e.*, "The Churchman's Letters"].

In 1697 three Friends were appointed

to bring an acco^t w^t Book sellers Shops doe sell Adversaries Books, &c. in order y^t 2 of a sort of ffri^{ds} Answ^{rs} may be left at y^e said shops.

Two months later :—

Henry Gouldney Reports y^t in some places in Cornehill he found on Book sellers Stales y^e following Books of Adversaries viz^t Sathan Disrobed, A Book of G.K.s Retractions and another abo^t Baptizme. Hen: Gouldney is desired to lodge at these places 2 books of a sort of w^t ffriends have writt in answer to y^m.

One such answer was "a late Book of Jos. Wyeths Intituled Primitive Christianity."

On 14 xi. 1697/8 "Report is made y^t Tace Sowle has dd the hundred of Jos. Wyeth's late books to y^e Mercury Women to distribute to y^e shops, &c."¹

Before leaving the seventeenth century, some notice should be taken of the printers and correctors of the press in these early days. Friends were not free to submit their books to the Government Licenser, and consequently it was a business attended with personal risk.² From 1662-1680 there is seldom any imprint on this account. Thomas Brewster (not a Friend) "at the three Bibles by Paul's" was in 1659 pilloried, fined, and imprisoned during the King's pleasure. Henry Boreman died in prison in 1662, whither he had been committed on a charge of selling Friends' books. Giles Calvert published and sold Friends' books from 1653-1659, "at the Black Spread Eagle at the west end of

¹ Women seem generally to have been employed in the sale of books in the streets. As early as c. 1660 we are told that Friends' books were placed for sale at such bookstalls as would take them, and "Some of the women cry them about the streets." *Antiquarian Researches among the Early Printers and Publishers of Friends' Books.* John Harrison, Manchester, 1844.

² *Ibid.*

Paul's," and in 1655 we find that there was a bookstore in the Bull and Mouth building. But the most interesting of all these early printers is Andrew Sowle (1628-1695). The testimony issued after his death states that he was

a printer by trade, and engaged himself freely in the printing Friends' books, when he had large offers of advancing himself in the world . . . if he would have desisted therefrom. For several years together he was in continual danger . . . his house being often searched, and his printing materials, as presses, letters, &c., as often broken to pieces, and taken away, as any Friends' books were found printing by him; and this they did for many years together.

At one time about 1,000 reams of printed books were seized, yet he was never heard to complain, but he would say he was glad to have anything to lose for truth, and that the Lord had made him worthy to be a sufferer for it.

A. Sowle probably printed from about 1670, and his imprint is found from 1680:—"In Devonshire New Buildings without Bishop's-gate." In 1683 he removed to "The Crooked Billet in Holloway Lane, Shoreditch," and he also carried on business at his residence at "The Three Keys in Nag's Head Court, Gracechurch St."

About the year 1679 the names of Benjamin Clark and John Bringhurst occur as printing for Friends. B. Clark was the London publisher of the original Latin edition of Barclay's *Apology*, and John Bringhurst, who had learnt his trade in A. Sowle's employ, suffered the pillory and imprisonment for reprinting a book of George Fox's.

Although greatly respected, Andrew Sowle was sometimes involved in misunderstandings with the many masters he served. On 15 ii. 1680 William Shewen was appointed to act as umpire to compose the differences between Ellis Hookes and A. Sowle. His award satisfied Ellis Hookes, but Andrew Sowle declined to comply and was ordered to attend the next Meeting for Sufferings. In iv. 1680 the Meeting proposed to

Andrew Soule, Benjamin Clark & Ellis Hooks all joyntly together or any two of them together to undertake the printing & disposeing all fr^{ds} Books for the future, w^{ch} undertaking they all of y^m absolutely refused,

and the meeting thereupon offered its business to Thomas Rudyard. The next week, when the matter came forward, Andrew Sowle

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left the meeting without giving any answer to Friends, but Benjamin Clark declared that

he was willing to serve ffreinds & serve Truth in undertaking the printinge as ffreinds shall Agree—upon w^{ch} it was Agreed that he shall have y^e printing & publishing of ffreinds bookes And that this meeting shall & will stand by him in this Affaire y^t he shall not be a Looser therein. Its also Agreed that If Andrew & Ellis will & can Agree wth Ben: Clark to be concerned joyntly in the Manageing the p^{sse} & publishing ffreinds bookes This meeting doe Agree thereto. And if Andrew Soul will Agree to be partner therein wth Ben. Clarke this meeting will approve thereof.

After this, Friends' books were often printed by Benjamin Clark, but Andrew Sowle did not lose the custom of Friends. One thinks the Meeting was perhaps not always easy to satisfy. John Bringhurst had to apologise to Devonshire House Monthly Meeting in xii. 1680 for having printed "an ungodly & pernicious booke," and about the same time persons concerned in printing Friends' books were ordered

to bring in perticular specimens of bookes to be printed with Number of Lines, Letters & largnes of pages—And kind of paper.—As also what they desire or expect from each other in writeing.

Competition from without the Society had also to be faced. On 4 xii. 1680, the following minute was brought in from the Six Weeks Meeting:—

It being proposed to this Meeting, by Geo: Watts That there is a Compl^t That ffreinds doe imploy some of the world in printing & binding ffreinds Books, It is upon Consideraçon of this Meeting desired that henceforth such as print ffreinds bookes doe for the future employ only ffreinds in printing & binding, provided it be by the said ffreinds done as well & as reasonable, as the worlds people will doe it.

A committee was appointed to hear complaints and report to the Meeting for Sufferings "next Sixt-day att Ellis Hookes Chamber."

"Next Sixt-day" the committee advised in regard to the "Friend" printers

that they all severally claiming aright to print bind and sell Bookes, It concernes ffreinds of y^e Meeting for Sufferings, To see that they be as well, & reasonably done,

as other people do, both as to good paper, Letters & Inke, & y^t printing & binding ffriends bookes, be only done by ffriends, they doing them as well & as Cheape as others.

There follow strict directions as to the various types to be used and the number of letters in a line. The paper employed was to be "not under 3^s—4^s per Reame."

It is fair to state, however, that the Meeting paid Andrew Sowle in 1685 over £30 "in consideration of his Loss of books printed for National Service." In 1690 John Bringhurst "desires ffriends out of Charity" to take over a parcel of books value £61 16s. 11d., so that he may have something towards discharge of his debts, but after some bargaining, he seems to have had to be satisfied with a payment of £15.

In v. 1689 the following minute occurs:—

Friends do condesend to pay Andrew Sowle forty shillings for 1100 Yearly Meeting Papers, And it is the sence of the Meeting That he prints no more Books or papers that this Meeting is to pay for without an Agreem^t with the Friend or Friends, that deliver y^e Coppye. . . . The Reason of w^{ch} Minute is because that wⁿ ffriends have come to pay him for some things he printed, he hath demanded more then they could have it done for. And therefore Direct y^t Agreem^t be 1st made with him.

This minute was pretty much repeated next year, but it can hardly have suggested to Friends at the time quite what it would convey to us, for the last reference we find to Andrew Sowle, in a postscript to the broadside already referred to, sent down after the Yearly Meeting of 1692, is altogether friendly in tone. This postscript says that in matters concerning books and printing Friends might apply to

Our Ancient Friend, The Printer's Name is as followeth, to whom direct thus, For Andrew Sowle, at the Crooked Billet in Holywell Lane in Shoreditch, London, Who hath long Served Truth and Friends, and suffered very great Losses, and gone through many Hazards and Difficulties, with sore Prosecutions for the same; is now Ancient and Dark-Sighted, but his Daughter, Tace Sowle, who understands the Business very well, Carries on his Imploy.

Or, To Tho. Northcott at his Shop in George-Yard in Lumbard Street, London; One that served his Apprentice-ship with one that Bound, and sometimes procured Books for Friends, and hath now for some Years past, in like manner been Employed.

Tace Sowle had charge of the business from about 1691, and in 1694 opened a store in White Hart Court, Gracechurch Street. Dunton³ (a fellow bookseller) said of her in 1704, that she "understands her trade very well, being a good compositor herself." Andrew Sowle's death marked the close of an epoch, and a sub-committee of the Meeting for Sufferings appointed iv. 1709 to consider the purchase of books of "Antient Friends" reported: "By Antient friends books we unanimously agree to include all books printed in the life time of Andrew Sowle, who dyed in the 10th mo. 1695."

After this Tace Sowle's name frequently occurs on the minutes. On 22 vi. 1699, "Tace Sowle's Bill for 600 Switches in Answer to the Snake in the Grass" comes to £123. In 1700 she was desired "to take effectual care to spread ffri^{ds} books in Answ^r to adversaries," as advised by a committee of Friends. In 1701 she agreed to print 1,500 copies of Barclay's *Apology* in French, for which she received £225.

In the year 1706 Tace Sowle was married to Thomas Raylton, a hosier, but the old name was kept for many years, the imprint being at first "J. Sowle" (Jane, Tace's mother), and after 1712 "Assigns of J. Sowle." (It is interesting to note that Tace's sister, Elizabeth, married William Bradford in 1685, who settled in Philadelphia and printed Friends' publications there.) Thomas Raylton died in 1723, but T. Sowle Raylton continued to print for Friends and was succeeded near the middle of the eighteenth century by Luke Hinde, and after his death by his widow, Mary. In 1775 we come to James Phillips, successor to Mary Hinde; and the work of his son, William, brings us up to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The interesting little pamphlet on Early Friend Printers, which I have freely used for the above information, states that between 1650 and 1708, 2,678 different publications were printed by Friends, from a quarto of 4 pp. to a folio of 900, many of these passing through several editions.

³ John Dunton (1659-1733) was apprenticed as a printer at the age of fourteen. His first wife was Elizabeth Annesley, sister of the mother of John Wesley. Dunton was editor of the *Athenian Gazette*, and *Mercury* (1690-1696). His principal work was *The Life and Errors of John Dunton*, published in 1705 and re-issued in 1818, in which are frequent references to London booksellers and printers, including, doubtless, a notice of Tace Sowle.

See *D.N.B.*

One other name deserves to be mentioned in connection with the technical side of Friends' publishing. In iii. 1679 an agreement was drawn up regulating the functions of the Morning Meeting and the Meeting for Sufferings, which tended to overlap. It was agreed :—

(1) That all bookes read at Second days morning meeting be presented to y^e meeting of sufferings who are to order and direct y^e manner and number of bookes & y^e printer thereof.

(2) That Marke Swaner the German friend bee the Correcter of friends books printed by friends order & have y^e usuall and Customary allowance for y^e same.

Mark Swanner had already done work for the Morning Meeting. In vi. mo. some books of George Fox's were to be printed, " And Mark Swaner is to see to correct y^e same as friends Agreed." He was to have " the Usuall Pay and allowance for the Same."

Richard Richardson succeeded Ellis Hookes as Recording Clerk at the beginning of 1682, and a few years later a committee of about twelve Friends, of whom George Fox was one, reported concerning arrangements between him and Mark Swanner. R.R. was to have £20 as formerly, and to be chief, and £10 to pay a helper for six months, and M.S. to have £30 a year " if y^e Meeting of 12 judge M.S. deserves it."

In 1694 M. Swanner was being employed in bringing out an edition of G. Fox's works. On 22 xii. 1694, he asked ten shillings a week for 27 weeks

for having attended the friends appointed from time to time to Read G. ff's printed books and Manuscripts. It's Referred to [six Friends] or any 3 of them to Agree with the said Marke for the Time past as Cheap as they can, as also for the Time to come, & make Report.

The Meeting succeeded in beating Mark Swanner down. On 27 xii. 1694,

Friends agreed with Mark Swanner for 8/- a week but could come to no agreem^t with him for Time to come, he insisting to have more then ten shillings a Week because of the great care and Labour he suggests it will now shortly be.

A few days later, Friends agreed with M.S. for ten shillings a week, and he signed the minute to say he was satisfied.

The meeting probably had very little comprehension of the difficulties of the work he was doing. It seemed to them to proceed slowly, and in 1696 Friends were appointed to inspect his work, and at last he was justified. The Friends appointed to inspect his work reported :—

There hath been great care and paines taken, and a very great progress is made therein, and the work reduced to an Extraordinary method, to a Regular proceeding—most of the Epistles and Doctrinal Writings and Books are gone through, and not much remaining, save controversies, &c.

The printing of George Fox's Epistles proved a great anxiety to Friends :—

8 i. 1696/7.—Tace Sowle desires the meeting will Incourage her in the printing G. ff's Epistles, w^{ch} is by Advanceing money for buying paper.

She asked for £100, "upon the Consideration (as she saith) that the Books will come the Cheaper to ffriends." The payment was recommended to Yearly Meeting.

In i. 1698 the work was definitely placed in the hands of Tace Sowle, who promised to print at a price not exceeding one penny per sheet. "And if she can afford y^m Lower, she promiseth she will." Friends were appointed to supervise the work, "to see it be well and Truly done," and "to take their Turns by 2 at a Time, and Marke Swan^r to attend y^e Press."

At a succeeding meeting Tace Sowle was called up and inquiry made how many sheets she could print a week. The answer was ten.

And this Meet^s advises That w^a any manuscript of G. ffs comes to Taces hand y^t she cannot Read it or any part or Passage therein—That then she Repaire to one or two of the ffri^{ds} appointed by this meet^s to puse the Sheets as they are printed off—y^t they may take care to have soe much of y^e s^d Manuscript as they see needfull—to be Transcribed soe y^t y^e Work may not be delayed.

8 ii. 1698.—This meeting orders y^t Marke Swanner don't delay the Cobby by Ittallick Characters, or otherwise, and not to put any Ittallick in the Cobby y^t appears to this meeting or the supervisors to be unnecessarie.

A week later Friends calculated that Swanner's work "comes to ffive shill^s p sheet for the s^d Correcting and Revising." The Meeting debated how this great charge could be lessened, "considering that he has had abo^t Ninety pounds already, least the

Yearly Meet^s should blame this meet^s." (Each week report was made to the Meeting how many sheets were printed off.) Later Mark Swanner was asked to correct at four shillings a sheet, but dissatisfaction still existed, and at last:—

10 iv. 1698.—This Meeting being dissatisfied with the long delay and great charge of continuing Marke Swanner in Collecting George ffoxe's Epistles, did appoint some ffriends to Inspect his method, to consider if any way could be found to dispatch the business and lessen the charge, did make report As followeth:—

"The Meeting for Sufferings having referred to us the Inspection of Marke Swanners Method of proceedings abo^t Dear G:ffs Epistles and ord^ring them to the Press Do unanimously agree y^t all the Books and papers be Immeadiately taken into ffriends hands and from this week he be discharged of his former sallary.

"And if ffri^{ds} have any Occasion for Marke Swanner for the future to Employe and satisfye him as they have occasion."

The Minute and the above Report being Read to Marke Swanner he declared he was satisfied.

But it is not till more than a year later that a final payment of £7 was made to him "to end the matter," for which he gave "a full Disch^s to ffriends." And so we leave him.

Meanwhile, on 17 viii. 1698 the Morning Meeting asked the Meeting for Sufferings to appoint some Friends to draw up an Index to G. ff's Epistles "but hope there will be no need of an Errata." And, at last, on the 25 ix. 1698 the Epistles were reported printed.

There was much activity in printing and distributing Friends' books throughout the eighteenth century. Grants were constantly made to the various Circular Yearly Meetings, to Scotland, "to the Foreign Ministers now at this Court" (1766), to "some libraries in N. America," to Libraries on the Continent, to French prisoners, etc. In 1760 Barclay's *Apology* in English and Latin, Sewel's *History*, George Fox's *Journal*, William Penn's *Works*, and the *Rise and Progress of Friends in Ireland*, were suggested by a committee as suitable for presentation to the newly-opened Library at the British Museum, and the Meeting added John Crook's, Stephen Crisp's and Isaac Penington's Works. Perhaps the most interesting point to observe is the large number of

books printed in foreign languages. I have elsewhere noted⁴ that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Friends were able to distribute books in French, German, Danish, Italian and Latin ; and there were books or tracts available a little later in Spanish and modern Greek.

Arrangements were also made with provincial booksellers to expose Friends' books in their shops.

All this time details of price of paper and estimates were brought to the Meeting for Sufferings itself. On 5 ix. 1794, a committee was appointed "to consider the present method of printing the Societies Books, and whether some plan of having them printed nearly on one sized paper in future might not be advantageously adopted." No Act of Uniformity, however, was passed, the committee next month recommending that in future books be printed on demy paper in 12mo. for smaller tracts, and 8vo for larger, " & that the size of the latter be at the time of printing, determined by the Circumstances of the Case."

It was not until the early part of the nineteenth century that the Meeting for Sufferings appointed a committee to prevent time being occupied with detail as to prices of paper and printing arrangements. On 1 viii. 1828, "The subject of the consideration of the most proper and advantageous mode of conducting the Printing business of the Society" was referred to a strong committee, and at the beginning of 1830 (1 i.), it was recommended and agreed :—

That a small standing Committee be appointed, termed the Printing Committee to attend to the Printing of Papers, &c., for the use of the Society, and to obtain Proposals for Printing any new Works.

The committee consisted of Josiah Forster, William Hargrave, John Eliot, Paul Bevan, Abram Rawlinson Barclay, Joseph Talwin Foster, and George Stacey. Almost their first business was "to take measures for the inspection, arrangement & better preservation of papers in the Record room & the Clerk's office," but their work mainly consisted in arranging for the printing and publication of Friends' books. The distribution of Friends' books was not in their hands, but in those of the Library Committee, which had been appointed by the Meeting for

⁴ See *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, 1919 (no. 43).

Sufferings in 1799. There was, naturally, a good deal of overlapping, and in 1847 the Library Committee was merged in the Printing Committee.

The minutes of the Committee are mostly of little general interest, being of necessity occupied with matters of routine. But occasionally there is a reference to the wider world. Thus, in iii. 1851, George Stacey and Robert Forster were asked to consider the

most suitable mode of bringing under notice of foreigners who may be in London at the forthcoming Exhibition in this Metropolis in the 5th mo. next works illustrative of our religious principles.

It was decided to advertise in the French, German and English Catalogues of the Exhibition four dépôts where Friends' books could be obtained. Similar measures were taken in connection with the 1862 Exhibition.

In iii. 1856 James Bowden and Robert Alsop reported the collection of evidence to refute Macaulay's charges against William Penn in the third and fourth volumes of his *History*. The documents were given to William Hepworth Dixon to include in a third edition of his *William Penn*.

In 1858 information about the lives of Friends was sent to the editor of the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, and in 1859 the publishers of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* were asked to substitute another article on QUAKERS in the eighth edition in place of one "in which the principles and testimonies of our religious society are much misrepresented." The editor, however, refused to accept the article which had been prepared by "a person."

For some years a good deal of time was given to the superintendence of the Depository of Friends' books at 84, Houndsditch. This had been set up by leave of the Yearly Meeting in 1841, "the subject of providing a public dépôt for the sale of Friends' Books near these premises" having been brought before it by minute of the Meeting for Sufferings. Edward Marsh was appointed Superintendent, and the Printing Committee drew up a careful paper of regulations as to the conduct of the business, and a catalogue of books to be sold. The Depository was to be open in Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Months till eight o'clock, and during Yearly Meeting till nine o'clock; but in the remaining

months it might be closed at six o'clock. It was also closed during the week-day meeting at Devonshire House, and during Monthly Meeting. The duties of the Superintendent included seeing Friends' works through the press, and his remuneration was fixed at £130 and house rent, and twenty per cent. on the sales. For the year 1842, the sales amounted to £327 3s. 7d. In 1845 the sales amounted to £545 6s. 4d., and the Committee noted that sales "to casual purchasers" were apparently increasing. The Depository existed for some thirty-five years, after which (in 1876) the stock of bound books was transferred to Samuel Harris and Co. In 1890 a new arrangement was made, in conjunction with the Friends' Tract Association, which had formed a depôt at 14, Bishopsgate Street Without, under the care of Edward Hicks, Jun. In 1896 Headley Brothers became booksellers to the Society of Friends, until, in 1916, the Society decided once more to have a bookshop of its own. Plenty of work was found for Edward Marsh in connection with the cataloguing of the books in the Library. He had an office in the yard, and after his death, at the beginning of 1884, the Committee's Report to Yearly Meeting spoke "with feelings of affection and regret" of the service he had so long given to the Society.

It was in this year, 1884, that the Printing Committee was definitely entrusted with the care of the Library, and was ordered to "meet regularly in the middle of each month in the Upper Strong Room." This room was also to be opened and prepared for use on days when the Meeting for Sufferings sat, and was to be ventilated and warmed about once a fortnight,

in addition to occasional duly authorised resort thereto by Friends or others for the purpose of consulting the Books, &c., in either of the two rooms which contain the Library of the Society.

After two meetings the heading "Printing and Library Committee" changed into the now familiar "Library and Printing Committee" (17 vi. 1884). It is time, therefore, to return to the beginnings of things and to trace the way in which the Reference Library has grown up to its present value and importance.

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To be concluded