

# Devonshire House Reference Library

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

*Concluded from page 16*

**W**E have already quoted the minute of the Morning Meeting of 1673 directing that “ 2 of a sort of all bookes written by freinds ” and “ one of a sort ” of all written by their adversaries, should be kept together for the use of Friends. From 1682 these were to be brought “ to Richard Richardson’s Chamber,” and workers in the Library have still cause to be grateful to the second of the Recording Clerks for his care in arranging and indexing the books in his charge. At his death in 1689 he left certain books to the Society.

The Meeting for Sufferings minute of 11 viii. 1689 runs :—

The Widow Rich<sup>d</sup>son being willing to fullfill her Husbands mind sent ffriends her Husbands two Concordance, viz. of y<sup>e</sup> new and old Testam<sup>t</sup> but understanding ffriends has one already desires to have one back again. It’s left to John ffeild and the ffriends concerned to view R.R.’s Books to do therein as they think fitt.

Four months later Benjamin Bealing, the new Recording Clerk, reported “ that the Widow Richardson has sent some Books of her Husbands for the use of Friends ; ” and two Friends were desired “ to visit y<sup>e</sup> Widow Richardson and to acknowledge her kindness in y<sup>e</sup> behalf of ffriends.”

Already the importance of keeping records at some central place and not leaving them to the care (or neglect) of individual Friends was making itself felt. In i. 1688/9 the Meeting for Sufferings ordered “ that Enquiry be made after a Chest of Writings that belongs to Friends, w<sup>ch</sup> was formerly in the keeping of Tho: Rudyard.” A fortnight later, this is reiterated, and the information added: “ and ’tis supposed he left it with W<sup>m</sup> Gibson w<sup>h</sup> he went beyond sea.” In Third Month report is made that the writings had been delivered to the Meeting of Twelve but in Ninth Month

John Dew Acquaints the meeting of a deal Chest with Writtings and Books of ffriends (Supposed to be the

Chest soe much enquired after by ffriends) is now found at Lawrence ffuloves. This Meeting Orders that the said Chest and Writtings be sent to ffriends Chamber in Lombard Street [this was the Recording Clerk's Office, at Three Kings Court].

Another "cautionary example" may be given, belonging to a somewhat later date:—

3 xii. 1720. This Meeting desires John ffield forthwith to Return to the Chamber The six Volums of Miscellanys which he hath had about Thirteen Years, with such other of our Books which he may have had since that Time.

(Then follows list of books lent by B. Bealing in 1707.)

On 10 xii. 1720, B.B. reported that he had written as above. At the next meeting a week later the Recording Clerk was ordered "to continue writing to John ffield for ffriends Books till he has Returned them."

On 3 i. 1720/1, it was reported that the Six Volumes of Miscellanies had been returned, but B.B. was continued to get the other books from the delinquent.

B.B. still being unsuccessful, a few weeks later "Anthony Neate is desired to write to John ffield for the Remaining Part of y<sup>e</sup> Books of ffriends in his hands not Returned." In Third Month, things had advanced, for Anthony Neate had spoken with J.F. and reported that "he is Ready to Return them."

On 26 iii. 1721, John Field reported he had returned "all y<sup>e</sup> Books belonging to this Meeting that he knows of." A minute of 9 iv. 1721 refers to books still remaining in John Field's hands.

Then the subject drops.

Naturally, the need of a Catalogue was soon felt. On 22 x. 1693, a Catalogue of books was brought in by Theodor Eccleston from the Second Day's Morning Meeting with request that they may be purchased

and to Remain for the Service of ffriends to have Recourse to in Answer to Adversaries books, with Benj<sup>a</sup> Bealing who is Ordered to Add these books in this Catalogue to the Catalogue of ffriends books kept by the Meeting. And also to Add such other books to it as he hath Rec<sup>d</sup> from the Printers since R.R.'s decease.

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But a Catalogue is out of date even while you presume to consider it complete ; and in 1700, three Friends were appointed “ to Inspect . . . the Catalogue of w<sup>t</sup> books are bo<sup>t</sup> for ffriends to see y<sup>t</sup> they are entred in the Cattalogue.”

The Library was not to be exclusively for the writings of Friends. On 25 xii. 1703, at Richard Claridge's suggestion, “ Matthew's Bible in English and Jerom's Bible in Lattin w<sup>th</sup> a Book or two of History, being in the Custody of Nathan<sup>l</sup> Markes ” were ordered to be bought for Friends' use and kept at “ the Chamber.” The Latin Bible is later described as “ a Lattin Manuscript of great antiquity.” In 1704, when the question of Marriage Contracts was being considered, John Whiting was directed “ to buy a new book Relating to y<sup>e</sup> American Laws and to inspect w<sup>t</sup> Relates to Marriages. As also a book Treating of Marriage Ceremonies.” In ii. 1707, “ John Whiteing bro<sup>t</sup> in y<sup>e</sup> Book w<sup>ch</sup> he was desired to buy for this meet: Intituled an Essay on Inspiration in two parts,” and a fortnight later “ Dan<sup>l</sup>. Phillips is continued to buy for ffriends Seldon's History of Tythes.”

The mention of John Whiting brings us to another Friend to whom users of the Library have cause to be grateful.

In a Yearly Meeting minute of 1707, John Whiting's name heads a list of nine Friends appointed

to get an Account and Catalogue of Antient friends books y<sup>t</sup> lyes by and now in y<sup>e</sup> Pcssession of Thomas Raylton and to Inspect them & Treat for them, & make Report to y<sup>e</sup> Meet<sup>s</sup> for Sufferings who may give orders therein as they shall see meet.

But John Whiting was drawing up a much more complete catalogue of Friends' books, and in iii. 1708, the Meeting for Sufferings ordered that 500 of John Whiting's Catalogue be printed ; they were to be sent to the Counties, to the American Colonies, and to Europe, with a view to getting Friends' books dispersed. (It is in this connection that the Meeting for Sufferings defines “ Antient friends books ” to be those printed in the lifetime of Andrew Sowle.)

It will be observed that this was not merely a Catalogue of books in the Friends' Library, but a list of all those published up to 1695.

The title page may be of interest :—

A  
CATALOGUE  
OF  
*Friends Books;*  
Written by many of the People, called  
QUAKERS,  
From the Beginning  
OR  
First Appearance of the said People.

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Collected for a General Service, By *J. W.*

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*Go, write it before them in a Table and note it in a Book, that  
it may be for the time to Come, Isa. 30. 8.*

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LONDON:  
Printed and Sold by *J. Sowle*, in *White-Hart-Court*  
in *Gracious-street*, 1708.

In the Preface it is noted that books are marked 8°, 12°, fo. if not in 4° “(as most are)”; and the following description is added:—

As to the Use or Service hereof, besides the General Notice of what Friends have Written (or Printed) on Truth's Account and their Country, & time of the Death of the Chiefest of them. Hereby may be seen, not only what Books have been Printed of the Sufferings which many of the said People underwent, but also the many Warnings to the Governments and Rulers, &c., Concerned. Which may be a Warning to them that Come after. All which is Dedicated to the Service of the Truth, by a Lover of it.

**John Whiting.**

John Whiting's Catalogue has been the basis of all subsequent catalogues, as the annotations to it in the hand-writing of Morris Birkbeck and Joseph Smith abundantly testify.

Joseph Besse was another Friend to endeavour to bring the Library into good order. In x. 1730, he was desired by the Meeting for Sufferings “to make an Alphabetical and Numerical Table of ffriends Books y<sup>t</sup> are in the Lower Chamber.” Three months later he was able to report that

13 volums of Collections of ffriends Books are bound, making up 32 such volums in each of which he has written y<sup>e</sup> Titles of y<sup>e</sup> many Books and Papers therein contained.

For this work he received £5 5s.

He also seems to have reported that the rule of bringing “2 of a sort of all bookes” to the Chamber had fallen into neglect, and a Committee was appointed “to consider w<sup>t</sup> has or ought to be done Relating thereto, and make Report.”

In the following year, John Hayward reported speaking to Tace Raylton about delivering “Two Books of a sort to friends Chamber for friends use—w<sup>ch</sup> she formerly did, but of late not being called on for them, there Remains several Books due to ffriends.” Benjamin Bealing was instructed to see what were wanting, and then to call on Tace Raylton for them.

In 1733, Joseph Besse was still at work; and in 1738 the “Foundation Minute” is reiterated by the Meeting for Sufferings.

It is the opinion of this Meeting that the Printer ought to send in Two Books of a Sort of all ffriends books that are Printed by the Approbation of the Society. Gratis.



No Friend seems to have taken any very definite interest in the Library during the next generation but, in ii. 1776,

Thomas Letchworth is desired to deposit in a proper manner the Books and Papers now lying in the Rooms adjoining to the Meeting-house, compleat the Catalogue of the whole, and bring the same to this Meeting.

These were mainly intended for distribution and a long list was sent to Quarterly Meetings with an invitation to apply for them for distribution "amongst Persons not of our Profession." T: Letchworth resigned the work to James Phillips, and, in 1778, James Phillips and two or three other Friends found that "many [books] are wanting to compleat the Library."

The Meeting for Sufferings directed them to make out a list of the books that had appeared since 1708, when John Whiting's Catalogue was published. James Phillips, who was a book-seller, was desired "to supply such deficiencies" and charge the cost to the Meeting. On 23 iv. 1779, James Phillips was desired to print one thousand copies of the list of books needed to complete the Library.

In vii. 1780, the Meeting had the offer of books and papers belonging to Thomas Broadbank of Tottenham, and the committee appointed to deal with the matter reported:—

On looking over the said printed Tracts and written Papers, we have made a selection of such as we think are best worth preserving. The Remainder we are of opinion will be better destroy'd than longer reserved to engage any person's future attention unprofitably.

To this drastic and sensible proposal the Meeting agreed, and the selected part having been brought to Gracechurch Street Meeting-house, the business of destruction was recommended "to the care of our friend Thomas Broadbank."

One of the Friends who drew up this report was Morris Birkbeck to whom we must return immediately. In vi. 1780, he was appointed, along with Joseph Gurney Bevan, "to procure such books as appear to be wanting for completing the Library—particularly modern ones."

The report sent in by these Friends seems to have led to increased interest in the Library. In viii. 1799, John Eliot brought to the Meeting for Sufferings "a List of Books the Property of the Society," and was appointed, along with Joseph

Gurney Bevan, "to take the general superintendance of the Books in the Library." This was the beginning of the Library Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings, which, as we have seen, lasted until 1847. In 1814, Joseph Gurney Bevan was released from the Committee but showed his continued interest in the Library by presenting to it the London Polyglot Bible in six folio volumes. These volumes are still in the Library, but, I am informed, never see the light except at Spring cleaning. John Eliot was still a member of the Committee in 1824.

Morris Birkbeck<sup>1</sup> was a great collector of Friends' books. He died in 1817. In the will by which he left to the Reference Library any books, pamphlets and MSS. not already in its possession (the remainder being bequeathed to the Library of York Meeting), he stated that he had been for "several years employed in endeavouring to procure a complete collection of the several books and pamphlets written by Friends . . . from their first rise to the present time and the several editions thereof, as also the works of their adversaries." Many of his books he annotated, and in 1802 produced a MS. Catalogue of Friends' books, not contained in John Whiting's, and four years later, a Catalogue of Adverse Books, with some Answers given to them.

With the name of Morris Birkbeck must be linked that of a contemporary student and benefactor, Thomas Thompson of Liverpool. On 2 ix. 1814, "John Eliot informed [the Meeting for Sufferings] that a Box had been received from Thomas Thompson of Liverpool containing about 70 Books of Adversaries, [not to be found in the Library]." Five years later, 3 xii. 1819, the Meeting for Sufferings granted £30 for preparation of

a General Catalogue of Friends' Writings from the rise of the Society to the commencement of the year 1820. Containing the whole of the Catalogue by John Whiting, and the additions made by Morris Birkbeck, which additions have been arranged and revised by Thomas Thompson of Liverpool, who has also supplied many of his own. In two Volumes.

In 1831 the Library was greatly increased by the purchase of the books which Thomas Thompson had been collecting

<sup>1</sup> See article by Isaac Sharp in *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. viii. pp. 9ff.

for upwards of twenty years<sup>2</sup> which were first placed in the premises at Gracechurch Street. This collection is described in a MS. apparently prepared to interest Friends who might subscribe towards its cost, as "a very valuable library of Friends' writings, which is the most complete private one of the sort." It was catalogued, and the catalogue brought down to the year 1828. Six Friends advanced the £400 asked by Thomas Thompson, and a list of thirty-two subscribers was appended.

In i. 1876, a minute of the Printing Committee states that, "after considerable discussion," the re-arrangement of books in the Library was decided upon, and the production of a single Catalogue for the use of Friends. Up to this time the Meeting for Sufferings Library and the Thompson Collection had been treated as separate units. The work was entrusted to Edward Marsh and Joseph Smith, and it is to the latter Friend that the chief praise for the re-arrangement and cataloguing of the Library is due. After this date the old rule of "2 of a sort" was no longer considered necessary.

From the pen of Isaac Sharp<sup>3</sup> we have a very interesting account of Joseph Smith, largely from personal knowledge. From watch-making and dealing in umbrellas he had turned to the study of the literature of the Society. For over forty years he kept a bookshop in Oxford Street, Whitechapel, and "after twenty years of patient preparation" published in 1867 his great *Catalogue of Friends' Books*, in 2 vols. Dr. Richard Garnett wrote from the British Museum in 1897 of J.S.'s Catalogues that they "are models of painstaking and accurate research, and invaluable for the light they throw upon highly interesting but out-lying departments of literature, which, but for him, would have been very obscure." The Catalogue gives the names of 2,174 authors and of 16,604 publications, and the various publications and editions are carefully described. In 1873, Joseph Smith, issued his *Bibliotheca Anti-Quakeriana*. Twenty years later, when 74 years of age, he issued a *Supplement* of 360 pages.

Joseph Smith was first employed by the Meeting for Sufferings in 1856, and his last account was settled in September, 1892. He was paid at the rate of 1s. an hour but, as Isaac Sharp points out, "he worked when he pleased, and in his own irregular, fitful

<sup>2</sup> See Meeting for Sufferings minute of 12 ii. 1831, vol. xi. pp. 1ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, vol. xi. p. 1.



manner." From 1877 to 1882 he was engaged on a book catalogue for the Library, and in 1888 and 1889 on the MSS. there. The condition of the MSS. at this time Isaac Sharp describes as appalling. Under the care of Joseph Smith and Edward Marsh deficiencies in the Library were noted. By ii. 1877 "a list of books required to complete the Society's collection" was read to the Committee and £15 was spent in the next two or three years in the purchase of such as could be obtained.

Need was increasingly felt that the contents of the Library should be made generally known amongst Friends, and in 1893 a proposal was made that a catalogue of the contents of the Reference Library should be printed and circulated. In i. 1895, the Library and Printing Committee prepared a specimen of the proposed arrangement and asked leave of the Meeting for Sufferings to proceed with the work. Probably the impulse was largely due to the enthusiasm of Isaac Sharp who became Recording Clerk in 1890, and who immediately threw himself into the work of the Library Committee, the meetings of which, to the end of his life, he very rarely missed. To his energy the use of the Library, apart from its existence, is very largely due. The clerical work on the Catalogue was begun in the Recording Clerk's office, but in 1900 more help was required, and this led to the first agreement with the present Librarian, who undertook to give three or four days a week to preparation of the Catalogue. All this time there was no Librarian other than the Recording Clerk, and as lately as iii. 1884, the Meeting for Sufferings decided that there was "not at present sufficient demand for the services of a regular Librarian." It admitted, however, that "provision was needed for the safety, proper arrangement, and practical accessibility of the books and other documents of the Society forming the Library." Seventeen years later, however, the Library and Printing Committee sent forward a minute asking for the appointment of a Librarian owing to the increased use of the Library, and the impossibility of the Recording Clerk giving to cataloguing, etc., the necessary attention. There had been real advance in the interest taken by Friends in the life and history of their Society, and Norman Penney was appointed Librarian from i xi. 1901. It is impossible to estimate the value to Friends of the faithful and enthusiastic service given

by the Librarian, as well as by the Assistant Librarian, M. Ethel Crawshaw, appointed about two years later. An immense amount of work has been done in arranging, cataloguing, indexing, and making generally available the books, MSS., etc., contained in the Library. Various books have been edited, and the notes prepared by the Librarian for the Cambridge edition of George Fox's Journal are a mine of information, invaluable to the student of the history of Friends. It is hardly necessary to remind this gathering of the value of the work done by the Friends Historical Society, the initiation of which, in the autumn of 1903, was chiefly due to Isaac Sharp and Norman Penney. The first number of *The Journal* was issued about the end of that year, and this publication, together with its Supplements, the most valuable of which has been the record of the work of the *First Publishers of Truth*, has been an important part of the Librarian's work.

Although considerable progress had been made towards the proposed new catalogue, it began to be understood that a printed catalogue could never be properly kept up to date; and in 1903 the Card Catalogue had a humble beginning in a set of four drawers. In 1905 the Committee decided that "the present does not appear to be a suitable time for completing the work of the Printed Catalogue," and the matter was left for the Librarian "to bring up for consideration at some future date"—a date which has not yet arrived.

It remains to say a few words with regard to the housing of the Library and its contents. The books, as we have already seen, were first collected in "the Chamber," or Recording Clerk's office, at Three Kings Court, Lombard Street, and it appears to have been this collection, the nucleus of our Reference Library, that John Whiting catalogued.

In v. 1712, some arrangements had to be made for keeping the books, which were fast increasing:—

It being proposed to the Meeting as necessary to have a Press or two placed up to preserve friends books y<sup>t</sup> lyes open to the Dust, It's consented that one be put up inclosed with shelves.

Nine years later precautions against fire were taken.

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31 i. 1721. It being Proposed by John Hodgkins To have Baggs in Readyness, in Case of ffire, at or near ffriends Chamber to carry off y<sup>e</sup> Books and Records kept there. The Meeting desires Rich<sup>d</sup> Partridge to get a dozen of them for said meetings use. [Next month, 8s. 4d. was reported due for these.]

Further space was required by the beginning of 1726 :—

John Davis reported to the Meeting that There is a want of Room for y<sup>e</sup> Books and papers in y<sup>e</sup> upper Chamber belonging to y<sup>e</sup> Yearly Meeting,

and it was agreed to take “the Back Room Adjoyning for 30<sup>l</sup> p year . . . and to fitt it up for said Use.” Three or four years later, £2 15s. 6d. was paid to a carpenter “for putting up y<sup>e</sup> Shelves for Books in y<sup>e</sup> little Room adjoining to y<sup>e</sup> Upper Chamber.”

Books seem to have been kept at all the central meeting-houses, for in 1724, Tace Raylton replied to inquiries about Friends' books in her hands

that ffriends have 300 in ffrench of R.B.'s Apologies in a Chest at y<sup>e</sup> Bull and Mouth. As to y<sup>e</sup> Number in ffrench & Spanish in y<sup>e</sup> Chests at Gracechurch Street & Devon<sup>r</sup> house, she will as soon as she can find the keys of y<sup>m</sup>, let friends know.

The keys had evidently been found by the following week, as the numbers are given ; but these stores were stock for sale or distribution rather than books kept for the use of readers.

It was at Gracechurch Street that Joseph Besse worked, when, in 1730, he was desired “to make an Alphabetical and Numerical Table of ffriends Books y<sup>t</sup> are in the Lower Chamber,” and when he also catalogued “the books in the case & press in the Morning Meeting Room and in the Back Chamber up two Pairs of Stairs.”

It was to Gracechurch Street that on 12 ix. 1740 a number of Books and Papers were “Brought from Bull & Mouth Meeting House and putt into a box in a Cubbord under the Chimney.”

In 1786 “the Property of the Society in Books at the Back Chambers” was insured for £1,000 for 7 years by a payment of £12.

In 1790, the Friends appointed on the affair of the Library made a series of interesting proposals for the good of the Library :—

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To have the upper shelves of the Library covered with doors, glazed, & the lower with close doors.

To burn the folio Books of Extracts.

To sell the superfluous printed Copies of the Yearly Meeting Epistles, &c.

To buy Six Chairs suitable for the room.

When the new meeting-houses were built on property acquired at Devonshire House, the Committee in charge proposed to the Meeting for Sufferings (30 v. 1794) "That an Erection may be made on the Premises at Devonshire House for the following purposes." Among these purposes were:—"A Clerk's House and a Library" and "A Repository for all the Records intended to be made secure from Fire." These rooms are definitely stated to be "in lieu of those now used at Gracechurch Street." I have not been able to find any record of a Library at Devonshire House previous to this date, nor of the removal of books from Gracechurch Street at this time.

There is an interesting ground plan of the premises at Devonshire House, belonging to the Six Weeks Meeting, in vol. 40 of the Meeting for Sufferings Minutes (1797). This shows the Library situated on the ground floor along with the Recording Clerk's office in front of the Old Meeting House, which at that time had its principal access from Cavendish Court.

In xii. 1815, a Committee was appointed "to consider whether any improvement can be made as to the place for depositing the Library or Collection of Books under the care of this Meeting" and two months later it was agreed "that the Books should be removed to the Room where the Meeting for Sufferings is held." New book cases would be required, and the largest of the present book cases was to be removed to the Clerk's Office.

In 1862, when the Gracechurch Street Premises were sold, the remainder of the books were brought to Devonshire House. The books were temporarily placed in the Library Room of the Friends' Institute, and report was made in iv. 1862 to the Printing Committee that the Library had been removed to the Friends' Institute "where it is locked up." The idea of the *use* of books, apart from their preservation, had not yet taken possession of Friends.

In 1877 when the Yard was enlarged by the removal of the ground floor the Meeting for Sufferings encouraged the Committee



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to "give further attention to providing a room for the Libraries," and a joint meeting with the Premises Committee proposed in 1878 to convert Room No. 1 (the present G) into a Library by raising the ceiling and making other alterations. But this was never carried out.

The Library is still overcrowded, the Thompson Collection not being "readily accessible," as it is housed two rows deep on shelves in the Upper Strong Room. It is greatly to be desired that some of the curiosities and treasures of the Library should be placed in show cases, so that visitors might be easily able to view them. It may be noted that the Library tends to become a Museum as well as a valuable collection of books and MSS., and we may conclude by giving a brief account of some of the more important treasures belonging to the Reference Library.

First of all, there is a fairly complete collection of all that has been written by Friends to explain or justify their special views. It is comparatively rarely that any old book is offered to the Committee for purchase of which there is no copy in the Library, and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to those who 250 years ago planned for the deposit of "2 of a sort" of such books. New books are, however, constantly being added, though now that Friends make essays in science, literature, fiction, etc., their works are not always added to a Library which specially aims to exhibit the history of Friends and what they stand and have stood for in matters of faith and practice. Note is, however, always taken of such books.

The Anti-Quaker literature is large in bulk and very curious and interesting. It is not all serious argument or even invective. Sometimes it takes the form of poetry (or, at least lines arranged in metrical pattern) and there are quite a number of satirical plays, which would make an interesting study, such as *The Country Innocence* (1677), *The Fair Quaker of Deal* (1710), *The Quaker's Opera* (1728), and others, most of which are scrupulously catalogued as "Adverse."

Many old pictures and illustrations have been collected, with newspaper cuttings of all descriptions. There is a large collection of prints and photographs of meeting-houses, as well as portraits of Friends of a by-gone age.

In the various fireproof rooms are housed volumes of minutes—

Yearly Meeting Minutes from 1672 to the present day, Meeting for Sufferings Minutes from 1675 to the present day, Morning Meeting Minutes from 1673 until the Meeting was laid down in 1901. Forty-four huge volumes of "Sufferings" (1650-1856) "attest," in the words of Norman Penney, "both the amount of sufferings endured and the patient labour of recording them."

In addition to these, many Quarterly and Monthly Meetings have sent up their minute books and books of sufferings for safer custody and greater accessibility.

Among other MSS. of great value and interest is the original Journal of George Fox, lent for a number of years by Robert Spence. This is in two large volumes and is mostly in the handwriting of Thomas Lower, while a third volume contains letters written to and from the family at Swarthmoor Hall.<sup>4</sup> There is also an account book belonging to Swarthmoor Hall, carefully written by Sarah Fell, which is being prepared by the Librarian for publication by the Cambridge University Press.<sup>5</sup>

Besides this there are collections, known as the Swarthmore MSS., containing about 1,400 original seventeenth century letters, papers, etc.; the Penn MSS., "a miscellaneous assortment of originals, transcripts, facsimiles, engravings and newspaper cuttings relating to William Penn"; and the Gibson MSS., "ten volumes and portfolios containing original letters, drawings, news-cuttings, etc.," bequeathed to the Library by George Stacey Gibson.

Some MS. Diaries are of special interest, like the recently purchased Diary of Rebekah Butterfield, which gives so much of the history of Jordans Meeting and Burial Ground. Amongst many others may be mentioned those of John Kelsall of Dolobran (c. 1683) with frequent references to circulating Yearly Meetings which he attended; Abiah Darby of Coalbrookdale, recording her ministerial journeys; James Jenkins (c. 1753-1831), containing racy descriptions of contemporary Friends.

Since the publication of the 250th Anniversary Yearly Meeting Volume a number of private reports of sessions of London Yearly Meeting have been offered and gladly accepted.

<sup>4</sup> These volumes have since been purchased for the Library through the generosity of a number of English and American Friends.

<sup>5</sup> Published in 1920.

Other treasures will be familiar to those who have attended the Exhibitions held during Yearly Meeting and at other times; the "Charter of Release" granted by Charles II in 1672 whereby nearly 500 Friends were released from prison along with some Nonconformist leaders, chief of whom was John Bunyan; the chair used by John Woolman during his last illness at York; a desk which belonged to Thomas Story; an umbrella used by John Yeardley in the Ionian Islands in 1858; and interesting specimens of the distinctive dress of both men and women Friends, now so nearly obsolete.

Mention should also be made of sundry original treaties made by Friends with the Indians of Pennsylvania, showing the various totem or tribal marks. There are also many holograph or autograph letters of George Fox, Penn, Penington, Ellwood, and other Quaker worthies.

It is, however, the great desire, both of the Committee and the Librarians that the Library should not be regarded merely as a collection of antiquarian interest, however valuable that may be. Great efforts are being made to obtain complete records of the work of Friends during the recent war. School magazines are regularly purchased, for a Library should look forward as well as backward. Students are always welcomed, and every assistance offered to them; and a large number of books may be borrowed. It is earnestly desired that Friends may know more of and take a greater pride in their Library, and make it even more complete by sending up modern tracts and publications and records of present day activities. It is always a great pleasure to receive books, sketches or other specimens of original work from Friends. Some day, when at last new premises are provided, we hope that what is really a wonderful and immensely valuable collection of books and papers may be worthily housed.

ANNA L. LITTLEBOY.

*The above, being the presidential address for the year 1920, will shortly appear in separate form for general use in making known the history and purpose of the Reference Library.*