

The Diary of Joshua Wight, 1752-1756

Sometime ago Mary Pike, of Dublin, sent us a few extracts from the Diary of her ancestor, Joshua Wight, of Cork. He kept a diary for about four years in order to enter a record of the weather. He was an elderly man at the time but was out in all weathers, following his calling as a surveyor in the South of Ireland. He had one child, a daughter, who married Ebenezer Pike, from whom Mary Pike descends.

“ 27th 8^{mo}. 1753 :

Fine warm westerly wind. I walked to Marybrook and dined with my cousin, Richard Newenham, who was in y^e gout, where was our friend May Dromond . . . who was much disordered with a cold.

“ *Fifth day*, 6th 9^{mo}. 1753.

“ This Afternoon our friend, May Dromond went to Passage to take ship for Bristol, who have been on and about Cork for five weeks visiting several meetings as Kinsale, Brandon, Youghal, but most of her time was in y^e City of Cork. She was a Scotch gentlewoman of note and had Education, who was convinced of y^e Principles of y^e People called Quakers & for many years have been a Preacher & many psons of Different Persuasions had a Curiosity to hear her, & gave her considerable applause. She was in Ireland about fifteen years ago & travel'd throug several parts of y^e Nation & was Publick y^t time & before.”

J. W. laid down his diary; someone took it and filled the next six pages with remarks on the worldliness of Cork Friends and the goodness of M. Drummond. The remarks of this Unknown Person on Cork Friends are clear :

“ Instead of plainness of apparel, we see a wig of extra-ordinary magnitude, nicely curled and adorned, and which in times past would have been judged to the flames. A cloak likewise of finest wool, to which is superadded (I suppose for ornament) an unnecessary excresence the like of w^{ch}, in a similar garment where really it would be useful, has repeatedly been condemned. Linnen exposed in places where all appearance of it has been disapproved [? ruffles]. The cut of the coat quite wide from the Antients. . . . An excessive eagerness in obtaining riches. No mortification in eating or drinking, but a hearty liking to both. No rusticity in the finishing or decoration of houses, but an embellishment with marble & other worldly gaietys. . . .”

Joshua Wight writes :

“ N.B.—The foregoing Six Pages was wrote not by me, nor know I anything of it, neither was I aiding or assisting therein. . . . what I remarked about May Drummond was n't in y^e least to lessen her.

“ The author of the foregoing libel breaking in & imposing on my diary has don very unfriendly by mee.”