

Northern Yearly Meeting, 1777

N'castle 29th 4th Mo : 1777.

Dear Friend

I now set Pen to Paper to acquaint thee I am just returnd from y^e Northern yearly Meeting¹ & as thou desires it shall hand thee a Short account Thereof.

I set out from home on First Day y^e 13th Inst & reached Staindrop that night & Kirby Steven about 7 °clock on Second day Evening, where I found a great Number of Friends arrived, both Ministering Friends & others. The Public Friends that attended this large Meeting were John Storer², Thomas Rutter³, Thomas Carrington⁴, Thomas Colley⁵, Esther Tuke⁶, Mable Wigham⁷, Elizabeth Robinson⁸, Jane Crosfield⁹, David Duckett¹⁰, W^m Rathbone¹¹, Sarah Taylor¹², Isaac Wilson¹³, Samuel Parrott¹⁴, Alice Rigg¹⁵, Anth^y Mason¹⁶ & some others, amongst whom were two young men, Henry Marriott of Marsden¹⁷ & Jonathan Williamson from Cumberland¹⁸, the first mentioned I tho^t seemed a very Pretty, young Minister & y^e latter was dressed in a very Singular Manner, I apprehend somewhat like Jno: Woolman. He was at Keswick last year cloth^d in y^e Same way. Some Fr^{ds} I beleive spoke to him about it, but I suppose he apprehends it his Duty to appear in that Singular way, & as a Fr^d remarked it required a good deal of Ballast to carry so much sail Properly.

But to return to y^e Subject of this Letter—on Third day Morning at Ten °Clock began y^e Select Meeting, in w^{ch} Thomas Carrington, Eliza: Robinson, Esther Tuke, Mable Wigham, Henry Marriott & one or two More appeared in Testimony. y^e Select queries were then read & answered verbally. Jno: Storer and Thomas Rutter Proposed to Friends to have them answered in writing in future, w^{ch} Method its likely may be adopted, it being very few that can do it verbally in these large Meetings. At Three in the Afternoon began y^e Quarterly Meeting for Westmorland, in y^e Forepart of w^{ch} John Storer appear'd in Testimony. Business was then gone Through & y^e yearly Meeting's Queries read & answered in writing. Some very pertinent

Remarks being made by John Storer during the reading y^e answers from each Meeting. After w^{ch} our friend W^m Rathbone bro^t the General Monthly Meeting Visit before y^e Meeting, informing Friends that Meetings were laid out in Cumberland, & that as only Thomas Rutter & himself who were under appointment of the Yearly Meeting¹⁹ cou^d go at this time, Isaac Wilson & Iona: Binns²⁰ had intended it seemed but could not attend now on acco^t of Some of their Relations being ill—he named Anth^y Mason, Tho^s Crewdson²¹, George Benson²², and James Backhouse²³ for to join them in the Visit—alsoe strongly Solicited Jno. Storer, but he cou^d not accompany Them. The three first ment^d its likely May. After Cumberland they Purposed going thro' Westmorland. About half Past Seven °Clock y^e Meeting broke up.

On Fourthday Morning at Nine °Clock began the 1st Publick Meeting for Worship w^{ch} was held in a large Booth built on Purpose, supposed to contain above 1200 People, & was quite filled. In this Meeting Jane Crosfield appeared first in Prayer, afterwards Elizabeth Robinson, Tho^s Rutter, Henry Marriott & Esther Tuke appeared in Testimony, & Tho^s Rutter concluded the Meeting in Prayer.

At 3 in the afternoon another public Meeting was held but the Concourse of People was so great that Friends were under y^e necessity of Dividing to accomodate them & accordingly their was two Meetings held at y^e Same time—one in a yard behind the Town & the other, in the Booth. I attend^d y^e latter, chusing rather to be under Cover, y^e day was remarkably fine & y^e Booth so crowded that y^e Windows were obliged to be open'd & some of y^e Boards taken down to admit the fresh Air in, it being exceeding Close & Hott. John Storer & Thomas Rutter had, I think, the principal Service in this Meeting, y^e first ment^d being largely open'd to explain y^e Principles of Truth to y^e People & stood upwards of an Hour & Half, being much favoured. Tho^s Rutter had also a very extraordinary time & is, I think, a most beautifull Minister. He closed this large Meeting with an excellent Prayer.

On Fifth day Morning at 8 °Clock began the Meeting of Conference, in w^{ch} Esther Tuke open'd the Meeting in Supplication, Thomas Rutter, Esther Tuke, Eliz: Robinson, Sarah Taylor, Anth^y Mason & Sam^l Parrott, alsoe Alice

Rigg, all appeared in Testimony. Y^e Northern yearly Meeting Queries were read & answered verbally by Representatives from each county constituting this Meeting, during w^{ch} time very pertinentt & weighty Remarks were made by Jno: Storer and other Friends, Y^e Meeting Closed about one Clock.

At 3 in y^e afternoon began the Parting Meeting, in w^{ch} Thomas Carrington, Thomas Rutter, John Storer, Esther Tuke, & Tho^s Colley all appeared in Testimony, tho' T. Rutter & J. Storer had, as I thought, y^e weight of the Service & indeed are both eminently qualified & dignified for the great Master's use. They were both favoured wth Matter Suitable to y^e occasion, & life & Power seem^d to accompany 'em in their Service. T. Rutter closed this large Meeting with an excellent Prayer.

Y^e Northern yearly Meeting falls next year in Lancashire & Swarthmore²⁴ was Proposed as alikely Place, where such a great Convincement was in George Foxs time. The Time seems not yet to come for Dropping these large Meetings.

I am sorry to put thee to y^e expence dble Postage, but coud not help it, shall endeavour to avoid it in future by Procuring a few Franks for thy address . . .

Thy affectionate Fr^d

JOSEPH KING.

P.S. I was glad to hear Fanny Dodgson²⁵ was going abroad again—being told by a Friend that she, Tabitha Marriott²⁶ & M. Routh²⁷ were to be at the welsh yearly Meeting²⁸ this Spring. . . .

[Addressed]

Joseph Wood, at New House, To be left at y^e Talbot, Huddersfield, Yorkshire.

Copied from the original (written in a good bold hand) in the possession of Albert Wood, of Colwyn Bay, 1923.

NOTES

¹ The Circular Yearly Meeting for the Northern Counties—Chester, Lancaster, Westmorland and Cumberland—was first held in 1699 at Lancaster and last held at Liverpool in 1798. Many Friends attended, and large companies of inhabitants of the district, special accommodation having to be provided. Other districts had their annual gatherings. By degrees the public element got out of hand and the end of the century

saw the close of this interesting effort. See a valuable article on these Y.M.'s by A. Neave Brayshaw in the "Handbook" of Y.M. at Birmingham in 1908. Very full list of years and places are in **D**.

² John Storer (1725/6-1795) lived at Nottingham. He was in "the wool stapling trade." He travelled extensively in the ministry and was in America in 1759 and 1786.

ii. vii. x. xi. xiii. xv. xx.

³ Thomas Rutter (c. 1741-1800) has left on record *Some Account of my Religious Experience*, 1803. He was a nominal Friend and attended meetings in Bristol, but took no interest in the Society. "I said to myself 'Surely they are of all people the greatest fools, and the preachers amongst them especially so.'" But the words of a preacher on one occasion went home, his views on religion and Quakerism gradually altered, and he became a prominent Minister. In 1766 he travelled with John Fry in Ireland (ms. in **D**), and was later in that country again. Hester Rutter, his second wife and widow, added a few words to the *Account* of her husband.

xv.

⁴ Thomas Carrington (c. 1721-1781) of Pennsylvania, was in Europe in 1775ff.

xx.

⁵ Thomas Colley (1742-1812) joined Friends in 1768. In 1779 he visited the West Indies with Philip Madin (ms. in **D**). His home was in Sheffield. He was a frequent attender of this Y.M.

iii. x. xiii. xv. xvi.

⁶ Esther Tuke (c. 1727-1794), formerly Esther Maud, was the second wife of William Tuke, of York. She headed the deputation of women Friends to the Y.M. of 1784 to request permission for the establishment of a Women's Y.M. (*London Yearly Meeting, 1668-1918*).

ix. x. xiii. xiv. xv.

⁷ Mabel Wigham (1729-1781) was of Coanwood, Co. Northumberland; her husband was Thomas Wigham. Her journals are extant in **D**.

xiii. xiv. xv.

⁸ Elizabeth Robinson (1729-1804), *née* Hoyle, was the wife of Joshua Robinson, of Wensleydale, Co. York. Her second husband was George Gibson, of Co. Essex. She was in America in 1773-1775. (List of Friends crossing the Atlantic on Religious Service, ms. in **D**).

x. xv.

⁹ Jane Crosfield (1712-1784), *née* Rowlandson, was the wife of George Crosfield, of Preston Patrick, Co. Westmorland. She visited America in 1760.

ii. iii. vii. x. xiii. xv.; Rancocas *John Woolman; Isaac and Rachel Wilson*, 1924.

¹⁰ David Duckett (c. 1720-1789) was one of the large number of Quaker preachers travelling around Great Britain and Ireland about this time. He lived at Carlisle, Co. Cumberland. James Jenkins writes: "We were favored with a religious visit [at Clonmel] from David Duckett. Having been deemed unorthodox by our Elders on the doctrine of original sin, an explanation took place . . . which, in the absence of caution, the Friends suffered me to hear" (*Records and Recollections*, ms. in **D**). "He was convinced of the truth in the forty-ninth year of his age." He travelled in Scotland with John Pemberton.

xiii. xv.

¹¹ There were four successive Friends named William Rathbone—first, 1726-1789, second 1757-1809, third 1787-1868, fourth, 1819-1902. (*William Rathbone: A Memoir*, c. 1905.) The Friend attending this circular Y.M. would be the first-named (1726-1789). He paid numerous visits. His son (1757-1809) was the author of a book dealing with a division in Ireland, *A Narrative of Events*, 1804, for writing which he was disowned by Hardshaw M.M., Co. Lancaster.

ii. iii. vii. x. xiii.-xv.

¹² Sarah ("Sally") Taylor (1717-1791) was the daughter of John and Margaret Routh, of Wensleydale, Co. York. She was married for a few months to William Taylor, of Manchester. She was the instrument in the striking conversion of Edmund Gurney (1723-1796).

xiv. xv. xvii.

¹³ Probably, Isaac Wilson (1714/15-1785), dyer, of Kendal, husband of Rachel Wilson, the preacher-traveller. Letters of Isaac and Rachel Wilson have recently been edited by John Somervell, and published by the Swarthmore Press, London. Isaac Wilson took part in the visitation of Meetings in connection with the "revival of the Discipline," 1760, etc. He was clerk of London Y.M. in 1778—"made an excellent clerk with a fine, clear voice."

vii. xi. xiii.-xv.

¹⁴ Samuel Parrott's name has not yet been found among Quaker records.

¹⁵ Alice Rigge (1728-1809) was Alice Ecroyd. She married, 1751, Isaac Rigge, of Kendal (Ecroyd, *Smith of Cantley*, 1878, p. 98).

x. xv. xvi. xx.; *Isaac and Rachel Wilson*, 1924.

¹⁶ Anthony Mason (c. 1706-1794) lived near Settle, Co. York. He is referred to in *Isaac and Rachel Wilson*, 1924, present at a wedding, at which he "said a few words very prettily."

¹⁷ Henry Marriott () appears to have lived at Crawshaw-booth and was doubtless a member of the Marsden family of Marriott.

¹⁸ We should be glad to know more of Jonathan Williamson, who "required a good deal of ballast to carry so much sail properly," but particulars are lacking.

¹⁹ This appointment, with many others, was in connection with what is known as the "revival of the Discipline," 1760 and 1776.

x. xiii. xiv. xvi.; *Later Periods of Quakerism*, p. 137, etc.; *London Y.M. 1668-1918*.

²⁰ Jonathan Binns (c. 1745-1812), M.D., was the fourth and last Treasurer of Ackworth School. He took over the post in 1795 and left in 1804—"He was a man of independent spirit, and maintained discipline efficiently, but the Committee interfered so much . . . that he resigned his post" (*Superintendents . . . Ackworth School*, 1895). He had been a physician in large and lucrative practice in Liverpool.

²¹ ²² The names of Thomas Crewdson and George Benson follow one another in the list of Friends of Kendal M.M. signing a Testimony to Grace Chamber in 1763. Samuel Neale, when visiting Scotland, was accompanied by Thomas Crewdson, Kendal, "though not himself publick," that is, no preacher.

vii. xiii.

²³ James Backhouse (1720/21-1798), of Darlington, was extensively engaged in business as flax-dresser and in 1774 he founded the Darlington Bank. In later life he engaged in the ministry and visited Friends in Great Britain, Ireland and Holland.

xiii. xv.

²⁴ The Y.M. of 1778 was held at Ulverston, near Swarthmoor. Thomas Colley was among the Ministers present.

²⁵ Frances Dodshon (1714-1793). The principal authorities for her life-history, mostly autobiographical, are two pamphlets; one was printed by James Phillips in 1794, about which, in the copy in **D**, there is the following letter:

“ Dr Br. Were I a book-collector I should consider this pamphlet a *vast acquisition*. It was thus far printed by direction of the Morning Meeting, but suppressed by the Meeting for Sufferings from some discoveries of a certain kind of spiritual pride made, as I remember to have heard my Father say, by him and Wilson Birkbeck as Correctors of the press. It is I believe the only Copy in existence, at least in this form, but am not quite certain whether the Zeal of some friend has not given rise in some part of Eng^ld to the printing of a mutilated Edition.

“ Thine, WM. PHILLIPS.

“ Lond., 3/11m. 1808.”

This tract has, as title, *A Brief Narrative of the Convincement of Frances Dodgshon, formerly Frances Henshaw, etc.* The other pamphlet, referred to in above letter, was entitled: *Some Account of the Convincement . . . of Frances Dodshon, Late of Macclesfield*, printed by W. Leicester, Warrington, 1803 and 1804.

Frances Henshaw was born at Caldon (Cawdon) Hall, near Leek, in Staffordshire. Her parents dying when she and another daughter were quite young, the girls were cared for by relations and brought up in the rites of the Church of England. Their outward position was good and they received an education suited to their position. When the mind of Frances turned towards the Quakers, the opposition of her friends developed, but a letter addressed to her uncle and guardian, Thomas Sutton, by “T.S.,” dated Balby, near Doncaster, 8th month, 27th, 1736, relieved the situation (1794 ed.). On one occasion the illness of her sister prevented her hearing “a person (her name was Drummond) who professed the opinion of the Quakers, whom, as a stranger, many people went to hear speak.” (1794 ed.) “After I had waded for about the space of two years, through unspeakable afflictions of body and mind, it pleased divine Providence to open my way and cause my relations to assent to my joining in society with the people called Quakers.” And soon after this she became a popular preacher. “I was sought after by several of the chiefest persons in the society, as a companion for life. One William Paxton, indued with every qualification I could desire, found me in the covenant of light and life . . . and I was made his, and he mine” (1804 ed.). William Paxton lived in the city of Durham. The marriage lasted about eight years. William Paxton, of Newcastle M.M. died 1753. Four sons were born to them. As Henshaw she wrote *A Serious Call*, from Kendal, 10 ii. 1744.

In 1755 Frances Paxton married William Dodshon, of Co. Durham; “being of the people called Quakers, the Lady made a learned discourse upon the occasion”! (*Gent’s Magazine*, 1755, p. 186, quoted xiii. 34). In 1774 she accompanied Abiah Darby into Scotland, being then of Leek. In the *Gent’s Magazine* for 1775 (pp. 275, 276, see xiii. 74) is given a “Letter of F. D. to the King.”

“ During the latter part of her time her residence was at Macclesfield in Cheshire, with her son, William Paxton,” where she died 1 viii. 1793, “ aged 78 ; a minister about 56 years ” (Testimony).

It is curious that in neither pamphlet nor in the Testimony is there any reference to the marriage with William Dodshon, although she is given the name Dodshon (Dodgshon, Dodson) in each.

If the following, taken from the *Gent's Magazine*, 1782, p. 406, be correct, there must have been another Frances Dodshon, also a prominent Minister : Died 29 May “ At Bishops Auckland, Durham, Mrs. Frances Dodson, a principal speaker among the people called Quakers.”

²⁶ Tabitha Marriott (1724-1786) was the daughter of Richard and Susanna Ecroyd, of Edgend, Marsden, Co. Lancaster. She married Richard Marriott, of Mansfield, and they later resided near Edgend. She “ had a fine gift in the ministry, was accounted an acceptable and able Minister ” (*Smith of Cantley*, 1878.)

ix.

²⁷ Martha Routh (1743-1817), *née* Winter, married Richard Routh, of Manchester. She twice visited America.

ii. iv. vi. xiii.-xv. xvi. xx.

²⁸ The Yearly Meeting for Wales appears to have opened at Haverford West in 1682. A complete list of places where it was held appeared in *The Friend* (Lond.), 1870, p. 15. See journals of Richard Davies, Thomas Story, Samuel Fothergill, Catharine Phillips and others, and also vol. x. The meeting of 1777 convened at Builth, Breconshire.

“ Out of Lawful Matrimony ”

Sessions held at Hicks Hall, London, September, 1677 :

“ Information that Richard Stanton, late of Ladbroke, Co. Warwick, yeoman, ‘ pretending himself to be a Quaker and that he could not in conscience dispence [*sic*] with the ceremonies of matrimony used in the church of England, did, about three years since, with much persuasion, prevail with one Hanna Walford, widow, to espouse him, the said Richard, according to the manner used by the Quakers.’ Two daughters were born to him by s^d Hanna : Elizabeth, born in the parish of Priors Hardwick, & Mary, born in the parish of Tottenham, both being born ‘ out of lawful matrimony.’ Since the birth of the last child he has deserted Hanna Walford & married another woman & refuses to support the said Hanna & her children who are likely to become chargeable to the parish of Tottenham. Order for two of the Trustees to deal with the case & report thereon at the next Sessions.”

Middlesex County Sessions. *MS. Calendar of Sessions Books*, 1638-1738. Sessions Book 346. (Extracted by William A. Caffall.)