

Quakerism in Staffordshire

REV. A. G. MATTHEWS, M.A., of Oxted, formerly of Tettenhall Wood, near Wolverhampton, has written a useful book, *The Congregational Churches of Staffordshire*, with some account of the Puritans, Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers in the county during the seventeenth century (London : Congregational Union, 7½ by 4¾, pp. 275). Under the heading of "Henry Haggard, of Stafford," is recorded a dispute in 1654 at Harlaston, between Thomas Pollard, Baptist minister, of Lichfield, and Richard Farnsworth, the Quaker, with a reference to the resultant discussion in print by Farnsworth, Pollard and Haggard (p. 35. see Smith, *Adv. Cata.*). "The activity of the Quakers was chiefly directed, though by no means confined, to the Moorlands about Leek." Richard Hickock, of Chester, was at Leek in 1654 and Thomas Hamersley, of Berry Hill, a Baptist, became a convert (pp. 36, 38). He went to Newcastle (Staffs.), and was the means of detaching Humphrey Woolrich from the Baptist to the Quaker persuasion (p. 39). Sir Bryan Broughton (), of Beaudesert, was a leader in the county and arch-opponent of dissent; he set himself to unravel plots and destroy plotters believed to be at work in the district and elsewhere. At first he included Quakers with Baptists and Independents, but he later cleared the Quakers as refusing to fight and being only well wishers to the rebels (p. 60). Under the heading of "A Quaker Funeral," we have the account of the attendance of John Gratton, when "prisoner" at Derby, at the funeral of Robert Mellor, of Whitehough, in the parish of Ipstones, in 1684 (p. 81). According to the Return of Conventicles in 1669 there were Friends' meetings at Cheddleton at Thomas Hamersley's, Ipstones (Robert Mellor), Dilhorne (George Amery), Bramshall (Francis French), Horton Helid (William Yardley), Leek (William Davenport), Houghton (Peter Littlelin) (pp. 89ff.).

The following is a list of Friends houses licensed under the Toleration Act :

- 1700 Richard Bowman, Stokely Park, Tutbury.
John Wilcockson, Cauden.
- 1703 Thomas Woolrich, Shawford.
- 1705-6 Samuel Radford, the Bottam, Leek.
New building erected on the land of Walter Pixley, near to
the house of one Thomas Bennett.
- 1706-7 Thomas Silvester, Fradley, Alrewas.
- 1723 Samuel Jesse, Burton-on-Trent.
Elihu Hall, Longnor.
- 1730 John Timis, Stonylow.
- 1731 John Simpson, Long Low, Madeley.
- 1754 New erected building, Tamworth.

The above are given as "Quakers"; there may have been other Friends' houses not described as such. Instances of judgments on persecutors (p. 62) remind us of similar statements in "The Journal of George Fox." The author has fallen into the not uncommon error of stating that the Conventicle Act prohibited "more than five persons" being at a meeting, whereas the Act reads "five or more." See xvii. 100, xix. 137.

In the course of his investigations, Mr. Matthews noted various references to Friends in Staffordshire and kindly sent the following :

"One indenture dated the 3rd of the month called December, 1671, wherein William Heath of Kingsley in the county of Stafford, grants unto Humphrey Wall, Thomas Duce, of Dovebridge, John Scott, of Stramshall & Walter Pixley of Uttoxeter, one parcel of land lying in Stramshall aforesaid containing in length 20 yards & in breadth 12 yards lying at one end of a croft, for a burying place in trust for the use of the people called Quakers."

[This at the s.w. angle of the field in which Stramshall church stands and locally known as the "Quakers' Bit." Redfern says men digging for marl struck lead coffins there.]

"One copy of a deed of gift wherein Robert Heath of Nether Tean conveys unto the people called Quakers one messuage house lying & being in Uttoxeter in a street called Carter Street for certain uses therein expressed ; that is to say the house aforesaid to be for a public meeting house for the worship of God & that part of the land thereto belonging to be set apart for a burying place for ye aforesaid people, & also that there shall be paid out of the profits arising from the said premises yearly & every year by the said people the sum of one pound eleven shillings for the use of publique friends in the ministry for provision both for man & horse when they come to the meeting. Nominating & appointing Walter Pixley, John Alsop, Richard Bowman and Thomas Shipley trustees to take care that all things contained in that grant be fulfilled to the times, intent, & meaning thereof. Dated the 27th of the month called March, 1700." (Redfern, *Uttoxeter*, 2nd ed., pp. 245ff.)

Staffordshire. Hundred of Totmonslowe. Grindon.

"The presentment of the constable of Grindon according to the book of articles delivered to him by the High Constable, this 19th day of July 1662.

(2) These present Richard Buxton, Symon Buxton, James Smyth, George Epworth and Richard Addams of Grindon, husbandmen and such as are called Quakers, who do frequently meet at Richard Buxton his house in Grindon aforesaid." (Sleigh, *History of Leek*, p. 196.)

Writ to the Sheriff of Staffordshire.

"Forasmuch as at the general gaol delivery held for the County of Stafford in the said county upon Monday the one & twentieth day of July in the fourteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Charles

the Second of England & before Sir Robert Hide, Knight, one of the King's most honourable Justices of the Common Pleas & Sir Thomas Tyrrell, Knight, & other of the King's most honourable Justices of the Common Pleas . . . Henry Fidoe of Wed[ne]sbury, . . . ironmonger, Robert Nayle of Wolverhampton, yeoman, & Thomas Wall, of Dudley . . . were legally indicted & convicted upon their respective trials as Quakers that maintained the taking of an oath in any case whatsoever (although before a lawful magistrate) is altogether unlawful & contrary to the word of God and for that they did assemble themselves together at one time from their several habitations into the dwelling house of one Samuel Whitehouse in the parish of Tipton . . . above five in number under pretence of joining in a religious worship not authorised by the laws of this realm contrary to an act of Parliament in that case lately made & provided, upon which conviction the said Henry Fidoe is fined 20s and the said Robert Nayle & Thomas Wall at £5 apiece.

“In case of non-payment dstraint on goods or if no goods the house of correction for 3 months with hard labour.” (Gaol Book 1656-1679. Assizes 2¹ Record Office.)

Contributors to the erection of a meetinghouse at Stafford in 1674: Walter Pixley of Uttoxeter £2. George Godridge of Doveridge £1.10.0. Humphrey Ball of Doveridge £1.10.0. William Hixon of Tean, £1.10.0.

Banbury, Co. Oxon

BANBURY, CO. OXON.—Extracts from transcripts at Bodleian Library, Oxford.

1704, April.

“Edward Wills, Quaker, was buried y^e 30th day.”

1704, May.

“Andrew Long was married at y^e Quakers Meeting House, y^e 8th day.”

1705/6, February 8.

“Rob^t, son of Jno. Baker, Quaker, baptized, Neathorpe.”

Information from Col. H. Southam, Woking.

FICTION.—The novel: *A Fair Jacobite, A Tale of the Exiled Stuarts*, by H. May Poynter, published in 1904, has references to “Hannah Penn.”—“‘Why is a Quaker neat, Aunt?’ ‘Whether ’t is by nature or religion, I could not say. The only one I am acquainted with is Hannah Penn and she always was as properly neat as a pink’” (p. 62). Our author represents *Hannah Penn* to be acquainted with the life of the exiles at St. Germain (chap. vi), whereas it was Penn's first wife, *Gulielma Maria*, who is said to have paid yearly visits to France. Queen Maria Beatrice is made to speak of her “faithful friend *Hannah Penn*, now, alas, no more” (p. 142). An aunt of the heroine of the story living in Kent “joined the Society of Friends and was about to betake herself to their colony in Hertfordshire” (p. 239).