

The Misfortunes of a Descendant of Fells

Maria Webb wrote in her *Fells of Swarthmoor Hall*, 1865, p. 412, respecting John Abraham (1687-1771), grandson of Margaret (Fell) Fox: "All of John and Sarah [Foster] Abraham's children were born at Swarthmoor Hall—two sons and five daughters. . . . Mary was married in 1756 to Charles Cannon, of Manchester,¹ who emigrated with his wife and three children to Philadelphia in 1762. Of their descendants nothing is known."

We can now add information respecting the descendants of John Abraham, from a letter in the collection of MSS. now belonging to Albert J. Crosfield, of Cambridge (kindly lent for the benefit of the readers of THE JOURNAL):

"Philadelphia, 8th mo. 23rd, 1771.

"Dear Friend, Isaac Wilson.

"When I was in England I was at Swarthmore Hall where John Abraham then lived, who, on this short Acquaintance, recommended His Daughter when she came to this country, with her husband & family, to my notice & gave me some acco^t of their Tryals in life. Their case was Comisserated & several kindly assisted them to begin in Business, He having bro^t men over, acquainted with his trade, so that their family was large, & their passages unpaid, which amounted to upwards of £100 stg, the Greatest part of which I advanced, & he seemed likely to do well, but dying in ab^t 10 weeks after he came here, a Considerable loss ensued to those who Assisted them, & she was left in a Distressed situation. The Creditors here considered her Case & as their foreman seemed capable to Conduct their business, with some Assistance, it was Concluded to suply her with part of those Goods intrusted her Husband & I became security on her behalf for ab^t £100 & she Continued the business under my Inspection, & while I had almost the whole Care of the family.

¹ See also *Jnl.* iii. 91.

“ She gained something handsome the first 18 months, & seemed likely to repay me, & maintain her Children, but when she became more acq^{ted} in the City, I thought it time to leave her to Conduct her own affairs, without my being so Closely engaged therein, tho’ my Care not wholly withdrawn.

“ But on settling her books in 12 months after, I found she fell behind, yet as she did not owe much besides what was due to me, I thought it not amiss for her to keep on until some way Opened, & as she made (or her men) my Cloathes, my Debt was gradually reducing, for she paid me no mony after the first year, & I had not intended to have distressed her if I never obtained it.

“ About 20 Months past, very Suddenly she married to a man much a stranger to her & unknown to me, & she stands Disowned therefor. She expected I suppose to better herself & I believe both she & the man are each Disappointed. Soon after their marriage he settled her acco^t with me, & there was then due me £232, for which he gave me his Bond, & their necessities have been such since, that on their making me the Conveyance sent thee, I advanced a further sum, so that I have paid them the full value of what will be recovered.”

There is a reference to the death of John Abraham and of money due in consequence—“ £100 payable on his decease,” and also to “ £700 to be divided at the Decease of her mother. She tells me that her brother Daniel never married, & going to sea was never heard of, supposed lost.” The letter is signed, “ John Pemberton,” and addressed “ For Isaac Wilson, in Kendall, Great Britain.”

The Derbyshire Times, of August 18th, 1928, contains some few reminiscences of the life of Edward Watkins (b. 1848), of Fritchley, in connection with the celebration of his eightieth birthday. There is a portrait of our Friend in his Quaker coat.

“ Her Grace the Dutchess Dowager of Marlborough was present in the Quakers Meeting-House in Devonshire Square on Tuesday morning, at the Wedding of Mr. Joseph Freame to Mrs. Ann Osgood ” (*London Journal*, Saturday, July 13th, 1728, quoted *Notes and Queries*, July 14th, 1928)