

Our Recording Clerks

Continued from vol. xxviii. p. 37

No. II. WILLIAM MANLEY, 1811-1844

A HAPPIER time in our story now dawns and the second longest period of service begins.

In our note-books *re* Recording Clerks we preserved for future use some notes referring to William Manley, written by his grand-daughter, Lydia Manley, of the Stockwell Training College, and sent us by Francis C. Clayton in 1903.

William Manley was born 6 Dec. 1771, the youngest son of James Manley and Elizabeth Lockwood, who were married in St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 18 Feb. 1762. "He was a freeman of the City of London and belonged to the Pewterers' Company. He was an apprentice and, according to the custom of those days, waited at table. His master was a Friend, and when Friends came to visit him, they used sometimes to speak before [or after] meals in the sitting-still time. In this way my grandfather was convinced of Friends' Principles and joined them, to the dismay of his relatives, who were alienated from him for some time, but later were reconciled.

"I have a shadowy, childish memory of my grandparents. My grandfather was a very fine-looking man. My grandmother was crippled with rheumatic gout most of her married life."

Thomas Compton was the "master" referred to and his business premises were in Booth Street, Spitalfields. A fellow-apprentice and lifelong friend was John Gray. The names of some of the Quaker visitors are given in Theodore Compton's *Recollections of Spitalfields*, 1894, pp. 35ff. and for Manley see pp. 47 and 75—"he used to get up at four o'clock in the morning to read Sewel's *History of Friends*." An obituary record in *Annual Monitor*, 1852, states that he was principally convinced by the perusal of William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*.

Manley joined Friends in 1794, married Priscilla James, of Moorfields in 1812 and was later appointed an Overseer and Elder. Priscilla Manley became a Minister. They had one son, William (1814-1854), who married Lydia Tuke and whose daughter was the Lydia Manley (1847-1911) before-mentioned, who left Friends.

In the Ninth Month of 1811 William Manley was appointed "Office Clerk" with a salary of £50 a year and "accommodation on the premises, coals and candles," and in 1813 it was decided to advance his salary to £110 per annum "on consideration of the present price of provisions and the other necessaries of life." The increase of salary was probably intended to cover the work usually undertaken by an assistant, as John Allcard's services had been dispensed with. In 1836 his salary was increased to £150 p.a.

In the controversy which arose on the publication of the *Beacon* in 1835, in which John Wilkinson, with other Friends, was involved, William Manley remained in sympathy with the main body of Friends and wrote a letter, dated from Devonshire House, 31 i. 1835, to John Wilkinson, stating his belief that "some part of the doctrine preached by thee in the Society, of which we are members, is in my opinion *unsound*" (printed in *Quakerism Examined*, by John Wilkinson, 1836, 418). In **D** there is a pamphlet entitled: *Great is Divine Mercy . . . Narrative of a Fact*, London 1841, upon which is written in pencil, "by W. Manley I am told."

There is little to be told of the years of William Manley's reign—the subject of the preparation of the Registers will be better introduced under the record of his successor, James Bowden.

In 1843 the Meeting for Sufferings records: "The following letter from our Friend William Manley has been now received and read, proposing to resign his office as Recording Clerk to the Society in 6th month next:

“ To the Meeting for Sufferings.

“ Dear Friends.

“ Having of later time found that my strength has been on the decline and that I am gradually becoming more unequal to the duties of the office I have been allowed to fill so long (now near 33 years), I believe it right to inform my

Friends that I am looking forward to a time to be released. and I have thought ; if there be no objection and health be permitted to attend me, I might be liberated about the end of 6th month next.

“ ‘ In thus resigning an employment which has so long and agreeably occupied my attention I feel bound in gratitude to acknowledge the kindness and liberality of Friends.

“ ‘ I am, under the feeling of much love, Your very sincere friend,

“ ‘ WILLIAM MANLEY.’ ”

On his retirement Manley and his wife joined their son at Leighton Buzzard where the quiet evening of life was spent.

The Society W. Manley served recorded its appreciation of the services rendered “ by a courteous and obliging demeanour very acceptable to Friends,” and added : “ It is our affectionate desire for him that now in retiring from active life he may be favoured with heavenly peace and permitted to recur with satisfaction to the services he has rendered to our religious Society.” He was granted a life annuity of £50.

Manley died in 1851, his wife having preceded him by a few months.

In 1811 William Manley received appointment as “ Office Clerk,” and in 1832 he is described as “ clerk,” but in 3 mo. 1836 the term “ Recording Clerk ” is introduced and has, since that date, been the official title of the Secretary to the Society of Friends.

To be continued

William Hudson, of Philadelphia

Francis R. Taylor, of Cheltenham, Pa., to the editor, 7 iv. 1932 :

“ William Hudson, my ancestor nine generations back, brought his certificate from York Friends hither in 1685. He is a most interesting early Philadelphia character, a patrician, who brought wealth with him (inherited from his mother), increased his wealth, his learning, and his influence, until his death in 1742. There is much of interest about him available. One item is a *grandmother* clock, which he brought over. It stands to-day, about five feet high, in the hall of the Philadelphia Library Company, on Locust Street. His father, William Hudson, bought it in the dispersal sale of Oliver Cromwell’s effects and gave it to his young son, adventuring overseas. It bears the name of a German maker.”