

# Norfolk Friends' Care of Their Poor, 1700-1850

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## II

*Concluded from last issue*

### EDUCATION

Much of the foregoing is concern for the aged. But Friends were also careful to help the younger members of the Society and to assist them in earning a living, either through providing education or paying apprenticeship fees.

In the seventeenth century, George Fox and other leading Friends had established schools in different places, and in 1697 Meeting for Sufferings recommended to the provinces John Bellers' "Proposals for a Colledge of Industry for the better maintenance of the poor and education of children," urging that schools should be founded so "as to take away the Reflection of the Dutch proverb on our English, viz 'that they keep their children to work to make things for ours to playe withall.'"<sup>1</sup> Yearly Meeting in 1709 sent out in its epistle the advice:—"And when Friends want ability in the World, their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are desired to assist them that the children of the poor may have due help of Education."<sup>2</sup>

Early in the eighteenth century, Norfolk Friends set about supplying the deficiencies in the field of education. From 1708, the monthly meetings made a collection for the establishment of a county school and in 1710, the Quarterly Meeting reported to Yearly Meeting that one school existed in the county. No further reference to it occurs, however, and individual meetings provided education. Thus, Norwich 9.v.1715 minuted:—"This meeting agree that Hubert van Kamp may teach school in this meeting house he taking care

<sup>1</sup> *Sundry ancient epistles*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>2</sup> Yearly Meeting Minutes MSS., vol. 4.

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to keep it clean." And in 1716 "ordered that Edward Ellington on one side of the water and Christopher Catt of the other side do give notes for poor Friends children to be put to school in the time of harvest." The meeting also stated in 1725: "We have several schools for the education of our youth." Yarmouth also provided facilities for school. Norwich Monthly Meeting minuted 3.vii.1728: "John Manning reported from the Friends appointed to treat with Samuel Urin about his taken Yarmouth Meeting House for a writing schoole, that they had mett and agreed with the said Samuel Urin for the said meeting house upon paying 30s. for the first year and 40s. for each year afterwards so long as he shall hold the said house."

In 1735, Yearly Meeting again made specific enquiry about the education of Friends' children and in 1737, asked that they might be instructed "in some modern tongue as french, high and low Dutch, Danish etc so that if they go as traders to foreign countries when they grow up, to be of service to the church." In 1738, Quarterly Meeting replied to Yearly Meeting: "Our poor are well taken care of but we have no public schools for their education," and in 1744: "We have no Publick School in this County but there is one settling on the edge of the county at Bury, which we hope will prove a service in the education of our children."

Meanwhile, Norwich Monthly Meeting was busy putting its children to school and from 1738, frequent references are made to payments to teachers—Nathaniel Whiffen, Thomas Davey, Isaac Jermyn, and in 1744 reported: "We have a Friends school to which . . . children are put at the expense of this meeting." The meeting refused, however, to educate children under ten years of age. Sometimes, girls were put to sewing-school, but usually children were ordered to learn to read and write for "one year whole days or two years half days." But they were not to be slack and when Elizabeth and Edmund Golden, who had been put to school first in 1768, were still "without learning" six years later, it was ordered 29.iv.1774 that they were to go to Thomas Tallowin's evening school for a year and "produce their copy books or specimens of their improvements at the expiration of that time." In 1752, Quarterly Meeting commented on the importance of education and from that year, monthly meetings brought in bills for schooling.

When Friends' children could not be maintained at home, they were sometimes placed in Friends' Workhouse, Clerkenwell (whose establishment in 1701 was due partly to Bellers) where, according to an account published in 1786, "decayed Friends" and children were "lodged in great order and cleanliness."<sup>1</sup> Here boys were taught to read, write and keep accounts and girls learnt to spin and to make and mend linen and woollen apparel. The charge for entrance for country children in the middle of the eighteenth century was 40s. and boys were boarded at 2s. 9d. a week, girls at 3s. 6d., and 10s. a quarter was charged for clothing boys and 12s. 6d. for girls. In 1754, Norwich boarded two children of John Hitchin in the London workhouse and again, in 1756, Frederick Tilney's children.

Yearly Meeting in 1777, revived its former Advices about education and stressing the need for Friends' children having "a guarded education,"<sup>2</sup> expressed its concern that they were often led to mix "with those not of our religious persuasions which so often leads into hurtful habits from which they are not easily reclaimed." It proceeded to consider the possibility of a boarding school and in 1778, sent out a report on a school at Ackworth and invited subscriptions. Norfolk (without Norwich) sent £93 in 1780 and Norwich collected £569 (of which four members of the Gurney family contributed £100 each). From that time the county meetings sent sums for Ackworth varying from £35 to £62 a year and rising in 1802 to £179 when more was asked for because of rising prices. Quarterly Meeting, however, did not begin to pay fees to send children to Ackworth until 1809.

Meanwhile, monthly meetings continued to provide education locally. Yarmouth 14.iv.1811 required "Joseph Ainge to become a subscriber 2 guineas to the Boys School on Jos Lancasters plan in this town in order to place therein

<sup>1</sup> See *Account of the workhouses in Great Britain in 1732 showing their original number and the particular management of them at the above period with many other curious and useful remarks upon the state of the poor.* 3rd ed., 1786, and also Beck, W., and Ball, T. F., *London Friends' meetings*, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> Friends expected their teachers to provide education of a sober character, e.g. Norwich 14.iii.1811 minuted that Mary Ball was to be visited "she being in the habit of keeping a school in which music and dancing have been admitted to be taught and other inconsistencies being apparent."

Rich and Jos Woodrow." In 1818, Quarterly Meeting subscribed £500 to help found a girls' school in Norwich. This was to provide for boarders and day scholars who were to pay to be taught writing, arithmetic, reading, needlework, English grammar and geography (and washing and French were extras). In 1822, a satisfactory report on the school was made and the furniture was turned over to the schoolmistress for £200. In 1826, however, when John Jackson of Bungay left £1,000 for the establishment of a school in Norfolk, Suffolk or Essex, on condition that another £1,000 was raised in two years, quarterly meetings in none of the counties could see their way to complying and the legacy was given up.

#### APPRENTICESHIP

Though Friends in Norfolk do not appear to have been discriminated against when companies like the Merchant Adventurers refused to accept Quakers as apprentices,<sup>1</sup> Friends liked to find masters for their apprentices within the Society. Yearly Meeting sent out Advices to this effect from time to time but it was not always easy to act on them. Thus, Norwich, 23.ii.1770: "Henry Gurney having proposed to place Samuel Tallowin . . . in a way to be instructed to weave; and no proper Friend in that business being found to take him apprentice, this meeting refers it to the conduct of Henry Gurney to provide for the occasion."

Quarterly Meeting undertook the whole or part payment of apprenticeship fees when monthly meetings were not able to pay them. Thus, 23.iv.1713: "Upwell Friends are advised upon their request to this meeting for money towards putting out a lad to apprenticeship first to apply to their monthly meeting." In the early years of the eighteenth century, £5 to £6 was paid. Norwich, 12.iii.1701 minuted: "Agreed that Elizabeth Reeve have £6 for taking Diana Rose to be her apprentice till the age of 21 years £3 to be paid down and the other £3 a year after next ensuing if the said Diana be then in being." When the Thursford estate came into service for providing money for fees, Quarterly Meeting

<sup>1</sup> Dunlop, J. and Denman, R. D. *English apprenticeship and child labour*, 1912, p. 137. Only one case occurs in Norfolk when a report was made from Yarmouth in 1828 that Ralph Clark was prevented from attending meeting by his master.

paid £2 for clothing in addition. Fees gradually rose and by the end of the century, £20 was paid and by 1849, £40 was paid.

Children were apprenticed to a wide variety of trades. Woolcombers, worsted weavers and dyers were naturally popular, but instances are not lacking of cordwainers, blacksmiths, knackers, last makers, staymakers, clockmakers, basket makers, brushmakers, pipe makers, periwig makers, collar makers, blockmakers, knifemakers, trunk makers, patten and heel makers, mantua makers, tailors, turners, curriers, tanners, grocers, bakers, ironmongers, carpenters and cheesemongers. There is only one reference to a gardener and none to a farmer (though the writer has seen an indenture for the latter for a child of another denomination).<sup>1</sup> To the end of the eighteenth century, Friends' children were apprenticed to craftsmen but in the nineteenth century, shopkeeping became more attractive. Elsewhere, apparently, the same tendency was noted and in 1821 Yearly Meeting advised its members thus: "We would affectionately advise the parents of our young men not to seek high things for their children, and young men themselves to rest contented with that station of life in which Divine Providence may have placed them." It went on to recommend "manual employment as suited to afford to many young persons a salutary and desirable occupation."

Apprentices seeking masters did not confine their attention to Norfolk. Some went to Woodbridge, Bury and Ipswich and to Gainsborough, Sheffield and Nottingham. Sometimes, they were advised of a place through London Meeting for Sufferings.

Disputes between masters and servants were often settled through the Quarterly or Monthly Meeting. Thus, John Horncastle got rid of his apprentice, John Lavender, with the consent of Lynn meeting.<sup>2</sup> In 1775, Woodward Tilney got leave from Tivetshall meeting to bind his apprentice to another master. Friends expected their apprentices to abide conscientiously by their indentures. George Fox had advised them: "See that all apprentices that are bound

<sup>1</sup> Dunlop and Denman, *op. cit.*, p. 97: "We hear nothing of the binding of ordinary children to agriculture."

<sup>2</sup> 7.ii.1755. John Lavender was ordered to pay his master "6 pence per week out of his earnings until the time of his indentures expire," and the master was "excused from providing him and even with clothes."

amongst you may serve out their times faithfully, according to Covenant, that all may know their places ; for Youth if they be let loose are like wild Asses and wild Heifers ; and such many times bring a great dishonour to God by running into looseness." In 1775, Joseph Blagbourn was turned out of the Society by Norwich meeting for joining with his master to secure a discharge for himself without the knowledge of Friends.

### PARISH RELIEF

Though it may have been the case elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> the help thus given to the poor was intended to make it unnecessary for Friends to apply for parish relief. Only one case appears. Quarterly Meeting 30.x.1713 noted " a complaint being made to this meeting that a poor widow Friend of Lynn living in their meeting house receive some collection of the town and thereupon wear the town's poor badge," and advised Lynn's representatives to take care for her " according to our Christian principle and Antient practice ever since we were a people." At the next meeting, it was reported that Lynn meeting was maintaining her, and it was affirmed at the same meeting that all acknowledged as Friends were to be maintained by the Society wherever " they shall . . . be exercised with the tryall of poverty." Quarterly Meeting periodically replied to Yearly Meeting that none in unity with Friends was sent to the parish.

Friends in other counties may have extended charity to non-Friends as part of their meetings' policy of poor relief,<sup>2</sup> but there is no clear indication that such was the case in Norfolk. On the contrary, Norwich minuted 14.ii.1715 : " Robert Mallett of Hemlington have laid before this meeting an account of the distress befallen him by a late violent wind

<sup>1</sup> See Barclay, R., *Inner life of the religious societies of the Commonwealth*, 1876, p. 324, and Tanner, W., *Three lectures on the early history of the Society of Friends in Bristol and Somersetshire*, 1858, p. 85. Both refer to cases in Bristol in the early eighteenth century but the matter is obscure. Norwich Monthly Meeting minuted 14.vii.1701 : " Ordered that Henry Canwell and Robert Seaman go to the officers of the parish called St. Swithin to acquaint them that Edward Tillet is a person we disown." (He was disowned at the previous meeting for " whoredom.") 11.xii.1770. " John Skinner having declined coming to Meeting and applying to the Parish for relief has denied his membership with us."

<sup>2</sup> Jorns, A., *op. cit.* ch. I, and Marsh, T. W., *Early Friends in Surrey and Sussex*, 1886, p. 50, for examples at Horsham.

which has reduced him to such circumstances as he cannot provide for his family without the assistance of others, he being a Miller by Trade has his Mill blown down and of himself cannot raise it again. John Manning and Wm Shepherd are desired to enquire into his conversation and make report of it to the next Monthly Meeting," and 14.iii.1715 they reported "that he is one of an Honest character for his dealings among men but that he is not esteemed as one called a Quaker by his neighbours." Individuals like the Gurneys, however, gave liberally to the poor.

### MEMBERSHIP

The problem naturally arose of deciding who were members. At first, the certificate system was applied to Friends moving out of the country but apparently the movement of Friends within Britain was also supervised. Thus, Lynn Monthly Meeting noted 7.v.1684 : "There being a stranger from Spalding in Lincolnshire frequently finding friends meetings at Stoake (his name not now remembered) and endeavouring to settle himself at Wimbotsham concerning whom Friends desire to be further satisfied ; he is therefore to be spoke to . . . and in the meantime inquiry to be made for further information of him from Spalding aforesaid," and the next month : "At this meeting William Cobley . . . was presented . . . and gave Friends an account of the reasons for his present being at Wimbotsham and coming from Spalding ; his future settlement at Wimbotsham being yet uncertain . . . Friends advised him to be very cautious how he settled himself in any new place from Spalding, and to do it with the consent and unity of Friends for several reasons." In 1694, Yearly Meeting extended the certificate system to Friends moving about Britain, who were to have certificates "of their sober and orderly conversation : and if single persons, to signify also their clearness respecting marriage engagements ; and if public ministers to mention their unity with their meeting." Norwich, taking action on this in 1697, minutes : "Wm Kiddell, Wm Kay, John Gurney, John Fenn are ordered to call upon strangers for to produce certificates from the place from wherever they were last resident to satisfie Friends here that things may be kept clear."

In 1710, Yearly Meeting introduced more complete oversight of removals and settlement and the document recommending procedure was prefaced with the statement: "We think it safe to recommend upon occasion of settling the poor the under-written particulars and offer them as our Judgement that they may be proper to be practised amongst Friends as a settlement." Poor Friends were to get the consent of their meeting and a certificate to the meeting to which they proposed to go before removing. If their contribution for the poor was accepted or they were put into any service of the church, persons removing with a certificate established a legitimate settlement in their new meeting. If they were not able to contribute to the poor fund or be of service to the church, they might obtain a settlement after three years if they had behaved "according to Truth" and had not received poor relief. Servants hired for one year and serving the same faithfully were deemed members of the meeting within the limits of which they served. If persons moved without certificates and came to need relief, those to whom they applied might write to the meeting from which they had removed and if they had not been "denyed," might demand reimbursement of the cost of relief. In 1711, this was altered and the home meetings of necessitous persons removed without consent were to reimburse half the charges and could demand their return. If they did not return "so soon as health and ability of body" permitted, the meetings need not continue their care for them.<sup>1</sup> But in 1724, Yearly Meeting ruled again that the whole charge was to be reimbursed.

In 1737, more detailed "Rules for Removal and Settlement" were established. All Friends, except pensioners to or persons relieved within one year past by any other meeting, were deemed members of the meeting within the limits of which they dwelt on 1.iv.1737 (and the wife and children were deemed members of the monthly meeting of which the husband or father was or had been a member—which introduced "birthright membership"). Pensioners and persons relieved within the period stated were deemed members of the meeting which relieved them.

On removal, Friends became members of the meeting to which they removed when their certificates were accepted,

<sup>1</sup> Yearly Meeting Minutes MSS., vol. 4, pp. 142-44.



provided they were not insolvent nor had been relieved by the Meeting recommending within the term of three years preceding the delivery of the certificate. If they came to need relief within three years and had not contributed to or been employed in the service of the church, the meeting which accepted them was to relieve them but was to be reimbursed by the meeting from which they came. Friends removed without certificate were deemed members on contributing to the poor fund or serving the church. The clause relating to servants stood and apprentices were allowed a settlement in the meeting where they were bound after living forty days with their masters.<sup>1</sup>

Before 1710, meetings decided for themselves cases of doubtful settlement and membership. Afterwards, they relied on the rules of Yearly Meeting. Barclay declares that "these poor laws produced an amount of dissension and ill-feeling which cannot readily be conceived."<sup>2</sup> In Norfolk, such does not appear to have been the case. Quarterly Meeting, in all, dealt with eleven cases of disputed settlement from 1709 to 1849, and each separate meeting with a smaller number. Moreover, even when a person's settlement was deemed to be in one Monthly Meeting, it was quite usual for the Quarterly Meeting to take on the relief, as in the case of the Woolnos family and Samuel Derry, when the charge was too great for the meeting concerned, and the Quarterly Meeting also bore the charge in full or in part when a person's settlement in the county was in doubt, as in the case of Mary Rumsby, a member of Wymondham Meeting living at Tivetshall when it was minuted 29.vi.1765: "As there appears some difficulty to fix the settlement of the said Friend to the satisfaction of both meetings, In order to prevent any breach of that love and unity which we desire above all things to maintain, this meeting do consent the disbursements . . . on her account . . . be brought to next Quarterly Meeting and become a debt from the same."

Quarterly Meeting was not, however, so obliging when disputes arose with other counties, as the case of Benjamin Bustard's widow which dragged on from 1753 to 1756, shows. Benjamin Bustard had lived one year as hired servant within the limits of Lynn but removed within the limits of Wainfleet.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 314-19.

<sup>2</sup> Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

He married there and having failed in business there, was assisted by Friends of Wainfleet meeting but because he never again secured rights of membership elsewhere, Yearly Meeting in 1756 passed the following minute :—" It appears evident . . . that Benjamin Bustard did gain a settlement in Lynn . . . and we are of opinion that he gained no settlement elsewhere . . . which being several times read, was agreed to." His widow was therefore removed to Lynn and the cost of her relief was shared between that meeting and the Quarterly Meeting.

Yearly Meeting laid down in 1761 that if Friends moved and did not secure a certificate for six months, the meeting from which they moved could send it after them or the meeting to which they moved, might apply for it. In 1771, it was stated that the wife and children of a husband disowned or the children of parents disowned for insolvency or other offence, born before such disowning, were to be deemed members of the Monthly Meeting from which they removed until they obtained a settlement in their own right. But children of marriages contrary to the rules of the Society were not acknowledged members until they were received by the monthly meeting to which the parent or parents belonged.<sup>1</sup>

The certificate served to identify a Friend and it was usual to give therein some description of character, behaviour and financial circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Woodbridge writing to Lammas in 1789 about Joseph Ainge approved his conduct and conversation but did not find "his Dress and Address . . . altogether so agreeable . . ." as they wished.<sup>3</sup>

The certificate system throws light on the movements of individuals and of families. Thus, among 1,715 certificates granted in the Norfolk meetings, about 300 surnames occur. One can, for example, watch the Candles moving in and out

<sup>1</sup> *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1783.*

<sup>2</sup> Such proceeding was particularly referred to as lawful in rulings of Yearly Meeting in 1790, 1796 and 1801.

<sup>3</sup> Friends' views on plain dress are well known but perhaps not so well known is Ambrose Rigge's "Testimony against Extravagant and Unnecessary Wiggles," where quoting St. James, he urges the avoidance of "all superfluity of naughtiness." Joseph Phipps of Norwich in "Observations on a late anonymous Publication," 1767, explains that the plain dress was "pretty much the Common Dress of Sober People in Middling Stations of Life, when and amongst whom, the Society was first raised."

of Norfolk between 1796 and 1847—James, Thomas, Joseph, Benjamin, Thomas Wagstaffe, John Wagstaffe, Samuel, John, Isaac, Edward, Edmund, William, Horatio, Lawrence, Catherine, Elizabeth, Amelia Caroline, Sarah, Mary, Mary Peckover Candler migrating into the county from Colchester, Woodbridge, Brighouse, London and going out again to Colchester, Folkestone, Woodbridge, Leicester, Southampton, Chelmsford and London.

A study of certificates can help to explain the collapse of meetings. In 1763, Quarterly Meeting reported to Yearly Meeting: "The state of things in this county is low and by the removal of divers Members, meetings in some places are reduced to a very small number." The following table giving the totals for the county illustrates the extent of the migration, but it should be noted that not all the certificates granted are entered in the meetings' minute books, particularly up to 1780.

	<i>Migrated from Norfolk.</i>	<i>Moved to or within the county.</i>
1700-1735	16	21
1736-1745	9	11
1746-1755	10	15
1756-1765	37	58
1766-1775	35	20
1776-1785	54	57
1786-1795	106	54
1796-1805	78	61
1806-1815	73	56
1816-1825	70	78
1826-1835	72	54
1836-1845	57	64
1846-1850	36	9
	<hr/> 653 <hr/>	<hr/> 558 <hr/>

Of the emigrants, fifteen went to America and the rest moved widely over Britain to nearly thirty counties. London attracted the greatest number. In this way, the Society in Norfolk lost members and coupled with deaths and disownments, it is little wonder that meetings declined.

## DISOWNMENT

It is of interest to note the circumstances in which members could be disowned and refused certificates and unity with the Society. Friends' discipline was naturally exercised against persons who married in the Church of England or who held non-pacifist views. Thus, Norwich 12.v.1701 refused to acknowledge Peter Huit as a preacher or to have unity with him till he acknowledged to the world his offences "and that particularly of taking a wife or wives by a Priest and listing for a Trooper." A century later, Hudson Gurney was disowned for subscribing to a fund for military purposes. Drunkenness was discountenanced, and Yearly Meeting in 1751 commented: "As an excess of drinking has been too prevalent among many of the inhabitants of these nations, we recommend to all Friends a watchful care over themselves, attended with a religious and prudent zeal, against a practice so dishonourable and pernicious." In practice, Friends were long suffering in the matter as in the case of William Cooper of North Walsham, first accused of being drunk and disorderly in 1774 and for whom care was continued until 1779 when the minute regarding him was dropped. Members might find themselves cautioned if suspected of "disorderly frailties" in other directions. Thus, Norwich 4.ix.1745 minutes: "Joseph Gurney reports that pursuant to the direction of the meeting, he acquainted John Lucas with the uneasiness thereof respecting his conduct in several respects particularly in attending Plays and Music Meetings as being contrary to the good order and discipline established amongst us, which he acknowledged to be just and seemed to take in good part, assuring Him He would endeavour to behave for the future in such a manner as not to give the like occasion again." But for other forms of "unstable conduct" such as bigamy,<sup>1</sup> deserting a wife, producing illegitimate children, or joining with people of a different religious persuasion, members were disowned.

The most frequent cause of disownment was culpable insolvency. George Fox had commanded Friends: "And all, of whatever Trade or Calling, forever, keep out of Debts; owe to no man anything but love. Go not beyond your

<sup>1</sup> *e.g.* William Bowen of Norwich, 1752.

Estates, lest ye bring yourselves to Trouble and Cumber and a snare; keep low and down in all things ye act. For a man that would be great and goes beyond his estate, lifts himself up, runs into debt and lives highly of other Men's Means."<sup>2</sup> Ambrose Rigge wrote similarly and advised Friends to disown those who were running into debt heedless of good advice. His *Brief and Serious Warning* (1678) was republished by Yearly Meeting in 1771, along with Advices of 1675, 1688, 1692, 1724, 1727, 1731, 1732, 1735, 1737, 1754, 1759, 1767 and 1771 on the same subject.

In the Norfolk meetings, there are instances from North Walsham, Hingham and Norwich of Friends disowned for insolvency. In each case, the assertion is made that the Friend was guilty of negligence, dishonesty, deceit, extravagance or speculative activity which led to the failure. Thus, John Ransome of North Walsham failed in 1789 owing to "want of inspection of his affairs, by which he suffered his benevolence to exceed his abilities." For this failure, he was discontinued as an elder, but when he went bankrupt again in 1800 and it was found that he had used property entrusted to him as an executor for payments of his debts, he was disowned. F. F. Golder of Norwich went bankrupt in 1801 because he held large stocks of flour, the price of which fell. He was not then disowned but Norwich meeting hoped that he was impressed "with the sense of the injustice of his conduct in purchasing too great a stock." But in 1806, when he was again insolvent, he was disowned because he had taken fresh credit to improve his position. Hammond Blake of Norwich, a throwster turned shopkeeper, likewise was disowned for contracting fresh debts "under the known circumstances of a property very insufficient to discharge the same."

Disowned Friends might, of course, be reinstated if they showed that they were repentant. Thus, in 1796, Edmund Gurney and John Ellington of Norwich were reported insolvent. Gurney died, but John Ellington was disowned. He was, however, readmitted in 1802. When Friends were insolvent through no fault of their own, they were excused. Thus, in 1780, Robert Pitcher of Mattishall was considered an object of pity because he had "ingaged a bad farm," and unkind seasons combined to ruin him.

<sup>2</sup> Fox, G., *A Collection of many Select and Christian Epistles*, 1698, no. 200.

There is no suggestion that Friends in Norfolk were turned out of the Society in order to save the Meetings money. On the other hand, a family made necessitous by the insolvency of its head would be supported until it could maintain itself. Members were, however, expected to help themselves and occasionally meetings minuted reproof to parents whose children were of an age to maintain themselves, or they themselves were taken to task for indolence. Thomas Fenn of Norwich was warned in 1797 that unless he laboured reasonably towards his own subsistence, he would be disowned. But in 1807, he became the care of the Society and expenditure averaging £22 a year was spent on him until he died in 1819. Yarmouth Meeting recorded in 1799 regarding Joseph Woodrow: "This Meeting . . . apprehending from the testimony of Medical Men that more exertion should be productive of good to him, is of the Judgement that the weekly allowance should be discontinued." From 1700 to 1714, William Claydon of Norwich was supported. Though he was urged to get work for himself, when he failed to do so the meeting laid out money either to provide him with a stock or "to procure a friend a comber" to employ him.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, meetings sometimes record the sale of the goods of a deceased pensioner, and Norwich 7.iii.1733 ordered the overseers to "take an inventory of the household goods of such poor friends which now are or hereafter may be relieved by this meeting and that they do inform such friends this meeting expect the amount of such inventories shall be applied towards defraying the expense which may have been on their accounts and also to inform them that this meeting expects no embezzlements should be made on any account unless with the knowledge and consent of the overseers."<sup>1</sup> The practice seems to have died out later.

## CONCLUSION

In coming to a final judgment on Friends' treatment of their poor in Norfolk, it should be remembered that members

<sup>1</sup> It is of interest to note that John Scott, Quaker poet of Amwell in *Observations on the Present State of the Parochial and Vagrant Poor*, 1773, condemned the parish practice of taking inventories and seizing paupers' goods when they died.

of the Society in those days were not rich. The apprenticeship indentures give some clue to their occupations and the marriage announcements indicate that Friends were engaged as woolcombers, worsted weavers, dyers, hotpressers, linen weavers, haberdashers, cordwainers, distillers, glassmakers, carpenters, millers, merchants, tanners, combmakers, collar makers, grocers, butchers, bakers, tailors, knackers, glaziers, salesmen and farmers. Norwich Meeting in a letter to Yearly Meeting, 8.v.1721 records: "Our Monthly Meetings are . . . duly kept up: when (notwithstanding the meanness of our circumstances and the great many poor we have among us) due care is taken to provide for the maintenance of our poor Friends."

It should also be noted that in addition to collections for the poor, funds were raised for incidental expenses, national stock, and for special purposes such as losses of Friends in the rebellion of 1745, briefs, civilising the American Indians, the abolition of the slave trade, the relief of Friends who lost their goods by fire. Moreover, Friends were constantly being levied on because they would not pay tithes, church rates or for militia-substitutes. Quarterly Meeting sent each year to Yearly Meeting an account of sufferings under this head, varying from £260 in 1782 to £1,041 in 1820. Monthly meetings kept Books of Sufferings and that for Lammas and North Walsham has many references from 1664 to 1792 of appropriations by clergy or "stepelhouse wardens" of Friends' crops. In 1722, for example: "In the time of haisil and harves came Toby Jobson and his men and hos and cart and cared away of wheat, barley, peas, ots, buck to the valoo of a leven pounds which tithes he mit have had for five pounds from Nicholas Taylor in Mondsley." Possibly, agriculture as an occupation became unpopular because of the facilities it afforded for the taking of tithes.

It should be noted too that Friends always paid the parish poor rates (for which practice, George Fox said that the Society earned praise from the justices) and though they would not pay for the cost of substitutes for the militia and objected to its being included in the poor rates, they did not object to supporting the wives and children of militia men.

It seems a pity, therefore, that Sir Frederick Morton Eden did not add to his careful and lengthy statement of other forms of poor relief, a more correct report on the methods of

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the Society of Friends. Sir Thomas Bernard reviewing Clarkson's "Portraiture of Quakerism" in 1806 was much more right, even if he was extravagantly praising, when he said that Quakers "afforded a practical example of the wisest and most benevolent system, which can be adopted with regard to the poor."<sup>1</sup> Clarkson said: "A Quaker-beggar would be a phaenomenon in the world,"<sup>2</sup> and in Norfolk, at any rate, between 1700 and 1850 a *bona fide* Quaker seeking charity outside the Society would have been a remarkable sight.

### MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

#### A. In Norwich Meeting House

##### *Minute Books*

1. Norfolk and Norwich Q.M., 1708-1850, 12 volumes
2. Norwich M.M., 1690-1849, 8 volumes
3. Yarmouth M.M., 1763-1840, 6 volumes  
do. Women Friends M.M., 1829-1840, 1 volume
4. North Walsham and Lammas M.M., 1679-1763, 1782-1791, 4 volumes
5. Wymondham M.M., 1757-1812, 5 volumes.
6. Tivetshall M.M., 1710-1812, 1822-1850, 7 volumes
7. Wymondham and Tivetshall M.M., 1813-1835, 2 volumes.
8. Lynn M.M., 1677-1775, 4 volumes.
9. Norwich Poor Accounts, 1799
10. Accounts for the Poor at Tasburgh, 1729-1786
11. Lammas Book of Sufferings, 1664-1792
12. Lynn Book of Sufferings, 1699-1761
13. Trust Book, 1832-1869 (mainly Alburgh Estate)
14. Wymondham Trust Book, 1799

<sup>1</sup> *Reports of the Society for bettering the condition of the Poor*, vol. 5. "Extract from the Rev. Mr. Clarkson's account of the system of the Quakers with respect to their poor" by Thomas Bernard, 1806, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Clarkson, T. A., *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, 1806, vol. 2, p. 89.



B. In Friends House Library, London

1. Sundry Ancient Epistles
2. Yearly Meeting Minutes, vols. 4 and 8
3. Gurney MSS, Mr. Quintin Gurney's loan, (specially Section III for letters to and from J. J. Gurney and a memoir of him by his wife, 1847)
4. Martineau, E. Quakerism and Public Service, 1832-1867. (unpublished thesis, typescript)

C. In Mr. Quintin Gurney's possession

1. Memoirs of Priscilla Gurney

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## Co-operation Between English and American Friends Libraries

**T**HE exchange of books and pamphlets has long been a helpful practice between Friends House Library and those at Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges, and other libraries in America. An exchange of staff is a new and valuable step.

In August, 1947, Friends House Library was glad to welcome Dorothy Harris, assistant librarian at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College. Her two months as a member of Friends House Library was very helpful to us in London. In September Muriel Hicks, assistant librarian at Friends House, joined the staff at Swarthmore College Friends library for two months and then spent a similar period at the Quaker Collection at Haverford College, returning to London in February, 1948. To complete this valuable exchange we hope to welcome Anna Hewitt from Haverford College for a similar visit in the spring of 1949.

These visits between the principal libraries of Friends' literature and records will be of benefit to Quaker studies and facilitate the co-operation of our two historical societies by increasing our knowledge of each other's resources, methods, projects and needs. We in London have certainly been helped by and have enjoyed the privilege of closer personal acquaintance with our colleagues across the sea.