

# Two Swarthmore Documents in America

By HENRY J. CADBURY, Ph.D.

AMONG three early Quaker letters acquired by Haverford College from A. W. S. Rosenbach in May 1947 are two that deserved if they had been known, to be included in my *Swarthmore Documents in America*, 1940.<sup>1</sup> I have numbered them in succession to the thirty-five items there. Though their subsequent history is unknown they are originals sent to Fox or to the Fells and they were endorsed by George Fox in his own hand. These were among criteria of my earlier collection and are shared by the larger collections of Swarthmore Manuscripts in England.

William Smith's letter shows how Fox and other leaders were consulted on problems of marriage.<sup>2</sup> The case here dealt with is not without its human interest and parallels to-day.

Margaret Fox's letter is from a romantic moment since it is her report of the parting between her and George Fox when the latter set forth on the ship *Industry* for a long and adventurous journey to America. It neatly fills the need suggested in Helen Crosfield's *Margaret Fox*, p. 150. It should be compared with Fox's own account of the protracted farewells given in his *Journal*, Cambridge edition, ii, 176-8. The letter is also to be welcomed as throwing some light on three of her interests in London, viz. her married children, her financial affairs, and her concern for Friends' meetings.

<sup>1</sup> Supplement No. 20 to this Journal.

<sup>2</sup> A breach of promise case was submitted by a man Friend to George Fox in 1683. It is recorded in *Book of Cases*, Vol. I, p. 141, a MS. at Friends House, London, and is entered in *Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers*, No. 19, 33G. The opinion is there expressed, and signed by George Fox and George Whitehead, that Friends could not liberate the woman to marry another man unless the first would release her from her engagement.

## XXXVI

WILLIAM SMITH to GEORGE FOX. *Nottingham*,  
21.iv.1664.

[One folio page half filled in the handwriting of William Smith.<sup>1</sup>]

Right Deare. In the sweetness & pretious Savour of the heavenly Virtue, thy fatherly word is felt over the whole flocke and family of the Righteous, by which the Innocent are abundantly Refreshed, comforted & strengthened, for thy streams doth nourish, & thy tydings makes the poore Reioice & singe. Havinge this opportunitie of sendinge, I am willing to signifie unto thee Somethinge of a particuler matter that thou may be acquainted with it soe far as I have knowledge of it, because it may be the thinge may be brought before thee. Some years agoe, Martha Plats<sup>2</sup> did manifest something of a motion which did lye towards Edward Langford<sup>3</sup> as to marriage, & after she had spoken of it to him, she did alsoe speake of it unto me, & I had nothings further to say unto it, then to exhort her to waite in the power & cleave unto that & soe it Remained, onely at tymes somethinge would be stirringe on her parte, but I never could finde that the man had any cleareness in himselfe to answer it, but Rather was much Exercised that such a thinge should be moved unto him by her, & thus it hath been for certain yeares, & now of late the matter beinge brought up againe on her parte & he yet findinge nothings to answer it, she hath soarely judged him, & not onely soe, but hath Judged me alsoe for not dealinge plainly with her, as to tell her possitively whether her motion was Right or wronge, which thinge I never found freedome in, but was rather willinge that she might feele the thinge in her selfe, for which cause I did at the first Exhort her to minde the power, from which she now drawes this conclusion (& alsoe a Judgment with it) that she had not gone on in the thinge, but that I

<sup>1</sup> William Smith of Besthorpe, Notts ( -1672). See *Camb. Jnl.*, ii, 406 and Joseph Smith, *Catalogue of Friends Books*.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently Martha Platts had her problem differently solved. According to the Nottinghamshire Friends Registers she married on 10.x.1665 John Marshall of Nottingham and they had at least three children.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Langford, like William Smith of Besthorpe, appears among the sufferers in Besse, *Sufferings*, i, 552, where he is described as "of North-Sellingham."

through these words did strengthen her in it and that from thence it had its beginnige, though she had spoken to him before & also spoke to me ab[out] it, which was the occation of my speakinge soe unto her, & she sayed, that she had layd the thinge [be]fore thee & that thou did owne the motion, & it is likely she may come over to thee, if she sinke not into the power to goe over her discontent for she is in trouble about it, yet I tould her I should beare all that she had layed upon me, & was as tender towards her as I could to keep the truth cleare from her Judgment, but I tould her that I would have noe more to doe in that matter betwixt them, these things was much uppon me to lay before thee, that if she should come thou might the more clearely feele into her minde, & also be somewhat acquainted with the matter from the beginnige, which as to the principles things I have named soe far as I know, the man hath been a prisoner in this place a long tyme, & is an honest man, & a faithfull friend in his testimonie, the dearest love of my life Salutes thee,

W.S.

Nottingham Countie Goale

21st of the 4th mo<sup>th</sup>: 64.

Unto dear M. F. my true love is Remembred, with all the faithfull in that place Things in the generall are very well here awayes

[Addressed in the same hand] For Deare G F

[Seal]

[Endorsed in the hand of George Fox, but apparently at three different times]

w: s: to gff

1664 a feathull minester whoe died [in preson—*erased*]  
in the trouth

thes be all in gosed

[Endorsed in another hand] These are writt over

## XXXVII

MARGARET FOX to HER CHILDREN. *London,*  
19.vi.1671

[Two folio pages in an unknown hand<sup>1</sup>]

London, ye 19: 6: mo: 1671

My dear and blessed and Beloved Children

In the dear Everlasting love of God which is Everlasting and changes not, in this is my dear love remembred unto you, and by this you may know according as I writt in my last unto you, wee with many more went downe the last 7<sup>th</sup> day with your father to the Ship a litle below Gravesend, and there Susan<sup>2</sup> and I laid all night, and the next morning severall freinds came to the Ship to us to goe along with us to the downes, and soe that day being the first day we had a fair gale of wind, and a prosperous Journey unto the Downes, and about the 9<sup>th</sup> hour at night wee cast anker and that night your father with severall other freinds that were passengers came ashore with us unto Deal and there wee stayed all night and the next day they tooke in provisions and water for the ship, and then there was a fair wind to goe out of the Downes and so about the 2<sup>d</sup> hower wee parted with your father and the rest of the Company and stayed on the shore till we saw them under saile and soe ever since they have had as fair an East wind for them as ever could blow, and it is wonderfull remarkable, and freinds takes great notice of it that the wind should turne every way according as they had occasion for one wind caryed into the downes one day another wind caryed out of the downes the next day they were speaking of putting in at Plymouth and soe to send for your Brother and sister Lower, but it may be that this fair wind may hinder them least they should misse of their opportunity, but if they want any conveniences or find any fault in the ship, I believe they will put in before they passe the landsend of Cornwall. We came on the Second day after wee had parted with them a mater of 16 freinds that night to

<sup>1</sup> So few letters from Margaret Fox are extant and they differ so in handwriting that her own hand has always been hard to determine. As she suggests in this letter it was probably written for her by someone called to her aid in the absence of such usual London amanuenses as John Stubbs and Ellis Hookes.

<sup>2</sup> Probably her sixth daughter, Susanna Fell.

Canterbury by land, and the next day to Gravesend by land, and ye fourth day to London by Water, where we met with your letter with the Inclosed, and soe according to thy desire I shall indeavour to make sure with Tho: Yoakely<sup>1</sup> for the £100 against the time thou speakes of. And I have a bond from him and Wm. Willson<sup>2</sup> for the £250 and the other £50 Walter Miers<sup>3</sup> hath paid to Robert Eletson.<sup>4</sup> I think it will be the best way to leave this Bond with Walter Miers to keepe till the time the money be paid, but I shall speake with them all and Consider further of it. it is now fair weather and I would gladly be away, but I am not yet quite clear of the meetings, but I trust in the Lord that I shall get ready to set forward out of this City this day weeke. And soe I doe not know that I can write any more to you. Soe if the Lord will wee may be at some meeting not far of London the next day being the first day, and soe set forward on our Journey the second day towards warwicke and Stafford, and soe home as the Lord makes way for us. wee doe not know of any Company but Leonard<sup>5</sup> and I for Miles Hubertsey<sup>6</sup> and his wife is not like to be ready. wee intend if the Lord please tomorrow to goe see Margrett Prestone<sup>7</sup> who sets forward towards the North next 2<sup>d</sup> day. I had a lett<sup>r</sup> yesterday from your sister Lower And it seems shee is very poor and weake but there is some hopes of Recovery your sister Yeamond<sup>8</sup> hath been very Ill ever since before the fair, and continues very poor and feeble still. I had a lett<sup>r</sup> from her this weeke, in which shee does inform me in every

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Yoakley (c. 1627-1677) a substantial Friend of London. See *Camb. Jnl.*, ii, 429.

<sup>2</sup> William Wilson of Westmorland (*Camb. Jnl.*, ii, 392) may be intended, but *The Household Account Book of Sarah Fell*, mentions several of the name, including one who was a transmitter of funds (see note, p. 517).

<sup>3</sup> On Walter Miers (Myers) (c. 1633-1723/4) of London see *ibid.*, p. 534, where he is said to have served as financial agent for Friends of his native county (Westmorland).

<sup>4</sup> Robert Allatson ( -1676) of Sunbrick is mentioned also later as a creditor of the Fell's. See *Household Account Book*, p. 538.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Leonard Fell (1624-1701), an intimate associate of the family, and a Friend of some standing (*ibid.*, p. 534).

<sup>6</sup> Miles Hubbersty ( -1675) lived at Underbarrow. See *Camb. Jnl.*, ii, 405.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Preston, not identified, but probably a neighbour of Swarthmore Hall, sojourning in London.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Fell's daughter Isabel was married to William Yeamans of Bristol (d. 1674) in 1664. See *Camb. Jnl.*, ii, 410, 492; *Short Jnl.*, p. 346. The fair is the well known annual St. James' tide fair at Bristol. The "things" to be sent her were medicine.

way how its with her and I have taken advice about it and intends to send downe the things by Susan. Susan cannot goe till next second day come a week for Thomas Yoakely and his wife and some other friends intends to goe to Bristoll along with her and soe shee was willing to stay for their Company. And I hope Thomas Salthouse<sup>1</sup> will stay on here to take her along to Cornwall. I have seen Thomas Greene<sup>2</sup> once since he came to towne, and it was in the street and I could say but little to him. and John Lawson<sup>3</sup> I have not seen at all, but I intend to send some things by them in the ship, which thou writt for. Soe this is the most that I have at present I have much to doe to get any one to write for me now John Stubbs<sup>4</sup> being gone away, and Elise Hookes<sup>5</sup> got a great fall from a horse as he was ridding to the Downes that he is not able to set up. I am now at Walter Miers and intends in the Strength of the Lord and his power to be at Horsly downe tomorrow, and at Peele on the third day, and at Gracious Street<sup>6</sup> on the 4th day and to goe to Kingstone on the 5 day and to come backe on the sixth day and to set forward if the Lord pleases on the 7th day and to visit Thomas Dry his wife<sup>7</sup> as I goe along. And soe in the streingth and power of the Almighty God I bid you farewell.

From Your Dear Mother

In the Lord

M: F:

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Salthouse (1630-1690/1) came from near Ulverston, but after his marriage in 1670 to Anne Upcott of St. Austell probably made his home in Cornwall.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Green (c. 1628-1703) of Lancaster was a local grocer or mercer and a forwarding agent for the Swarthmore family. He had married a London woman, and was for this or business reasons a visitor in the city. See *Household Account Book*, p. 546.

<sup>3</sup> John Lawson was also a shopkeeper of Lancaster. See *Camb. Jnl.*, i, 418.

<sup>4</sup> John Stubbs (c. 1618-1674) was a scholar. He would be in demand for his good handwriting. See *Camb. Jnl.*, i, 418.

<sup>5</sup> Ellis Hookes (c. 1630-1681) was a trained scrivener and for many years paid secretary of the Society of Friends in London. He was even apart from this accident, a man of feeble health. See Norman Penney's account of him in *Journal F.H.S.*, i, 1903, pp. 12-22.

<sup>6</sup> Horslydown, the Peel, and Gracechurch Street were the names of settled Friends meetings in London. At Kingston-on-Thames was not only a Friends meeting, but the home of the writer's daughter, Margaret, who was married to John Rous.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Elizabeth Dry, later a widow of Enfield and frequent entertainer of George Fox. *Short Jnl.*, p. 317.

[Addressed in the same hand, the first line or two trimmed off]

Swartmore

D D

Leave this with John Higgin<sup>1</sup>  
in Lancaster to be delivered  
with care and speed

Lancashire

[Endorsed in the hand of George Fox]

m.f. to her childeren

[Endorsed in the hand of George Fox]

m.f. to her childeren

1671 consarn g f passing  
beyond the seay read over  
19:d 6 mo:

[Endorsed in the hand of George Fox but at once struck out]

to mf & gff

[Endorsed in a later hand] Margaret Fox to her children 1671.

---

The Spring number, 1948 (vol. 37, no. 1) of *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* includes the first portion of an article on *Quaker botanists* by Francis W. Pennell, curator of Plants at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and *John Greenleaf Whittier to William J. Allinson*, a reprint of nineteen unpublished letters copied into a notebook owned by the Allinson family and recently presented to Haverford College Library. The letters date between 1842 and 1873 and deal with family, literary and Quaker topics. Professor Edward D. Snyder of Haverford has edited them for publication.

---

<sup>1</sup> On John Higgins, a carrier between Lancaster and Swarthmore Hall, see *Household Account Book*, p. 513.