

## William Edmundson, 1627-1712,

Some notes on his family and second marriage

By ISABEL GRUBB

**W**ILLIAM EDMUNDSON, the foremost Friend in Ireland for nearly sixty years, was born in Cumberland in 1627 and died at Tineel, near Mountmellick in 1712. Before coming to Ireland in 1652 he had married Margaret Stanford from Derbyshire. In the Mountmellick M.M. *Book of family records* (the early pages of which are in Edmundson's handwriting) he describes himself as "William Edmundson, ye son of John and Grace Edmondson." The spelling is curious, for throughout his life he always spelled his own surname as Edmondson, but after his death the family seem to have changed to Edmundson. In the two editions of his *Journal* the name is so spelled, and in this form the name has been handed down to his descendants.

His eldest daughter Mary married William Fayle, and from her and from his youngest son, Triall, a number of present-day Irish Friends are descended. His eldest and second sons, William and Samuel, seem not to have associated with Friends even in their father's lifetime.<sup>1</sup> His daughter Hindrance was disowned for being too friendly with an unsuitable young man. It is said William Edmundson named his daughter Hindrance and his son Triall because their births prevented him attending meetings at which he wished to be present.

During the war in Ireland in 1690, when Edmundson was carried off by rapparees,<sup>2</sup> another band attacked his son's tanyard, took Edmundson's wife and stripped her naked. It was a cold December night and she never recovered from the experience. In the *Book of family records* William wrote a beautiful testimony to her.<sup>3</sup>

In 1696 when he was sixty-nine he felt it right to marry

<sup>1</sup> Some fifty years ago there was a non-Friend family in Ireland who claimed descent from one of these sons.

<sup>2</sup> Irregular soldiers or freebooters.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Edmundson, d. 1691. See Besse *Sufferings*, ii, 492. For testimony see *Journal F.H.S.*, vol. 33, pp. 32-34.

again, and he says in his *Journal*, after very considerable thought, "I acquainted the Person towards whom my Mind was drawn in that Respect, viz. *Mary*, the Widow of *Joshua Strangman*, about the Age of Fourty nine Years, whom I had ground to believe would be a Comfort to me, and helpful in my Family, being a Woman of a good Understanding, and one who fear'd the Lord."<sup>1</sup> She agreed to marry him, on condition his family approved, which they did, but nonetheless the marriage did not take place for about a year and a half, as meanwhile William Edmundson paid a lengthy visit to England.

Mary Strangman's maiden name is unknown. She had married, first, William Ball of Philipstown, and second, in 1675, Joshua Strangman of Tinnemuck, King's County.<sup>2</sup> In the following copy of the marriage certificate taken from the Mountmellick book her name is given inaccurately as Strongman.<sup>3</sup>

"These are to certifie to whome it may concerne that WILLIAM EDMONDSON of Rosenallis<sup>4</sup> in the Queen's County, and MARY STRONGMAN late of ye city of Dublin (Widdow and Relict of Joshua Strongman deceased) haveing Intentions of marriage according to God's Ordinance, did lay ye same before the Men and Womens Meeting of ye people of God, (in scorn called Quakers) at Castledermott the 9th day of ye 5th month 1697. The w'ch being taken into Consideration severall persons were Appointed to make Inquiery where their Residences are & of late have been, Whether ye said William be clear from all other women, And ye said Mary be clear from all other Men, in Relacion to Marriage, & whether their relacions be consenting to their sd intentions, And ye said William and Mary signifieing ye continuance of their sd intentions a second Time (he in person and she by certificate) before a men & Womens Meeting of the people affores'd at Mountmellick ye 20th day of the

<sup>1</sup> *A Journal of the life . . . of . . . William Edmundson*, London, 1715, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Strangman (d. 1691) had also been married previously, and from his first marriage a number of Friends are descended. Joshua and Mary Strangman had four children but none of these seem to have left descendants.

<sup>3</sup> The name is derived from Strange man (Peregrinus), an ancestor of the family being mentioned in Domesday Book under that name.

<sup>4</sup> Tineel is very close to the village of Rosenallis, and Edmundson is sometimes described as of one, sometimes of the other.

9th mo 1697, where a full acc't was given, as was before desired, and nothing appearing to obstruct the s'd Marriage, and their Intentions being published in ye respective Meeting to which they doe belong, and still Nothing appearing to obstruct ye s'd Marriage a Meeting was appointed at Mountm'ck ye first day of ye 10th mo. 1697 Where ye s'd William and Mary (being contracted) did publickly & solemnly in ye presence of God and before many Witnesses, take each other as Man & Wife, he expressing himselfe in these words Viz't Friends I am sensible of ye Lord's presence, and in his presence, and in y'r presence I take Mary Strongman to be my wife promiseing to be unto her a faithfull & loveing husband till death seperate, and ye s'd Mary saying these words In ye presence of ye Lord and this assembly I take William Edmondson to be my husband promiseing w'th ye Lord's Assistance to be to him, a faithfull loveing subject wife till it shall please the Lord by death to seperate us.

And as a further testimony of such their promise & takeing each other the s'd William & Mary have hereunto sett their hands, & wee whose names are underwritten are wittnesses of ye same.<sup>1</sup>

William Edmondson  
Mary Edmondson

John Edmondson <sup>2</sup>	Mary Fayle <sup>13</sup>	Robt Jackson <sup>21</sup>
Triall Edmondson <sup>3</sup>	Susanna Sheldon <sup>14</sup>	Tho. Cantrill <sup>22</sup>
Joshua Strangman <sup>4</sup>	Martha Fayle <sup>15</sup>	Henry Ridgeway <sup>23</sup>
Eliezer Sheldon <sup>5</sup>	Mary Pim <sup>16</sup>	Richd. Eves <sup>24</sup>
William Fayle junr <sup>6</sup>	Susanna Softlaw <sup>17</sup>	Moses Pim <sup>25</sup>
John Softlaw	Mary Beale	Owen Roberts
Joshua Beale <sup>7</sup>	Hannah Guy	Joshua Northall <sup>26</sup>
Tobias Pleadwell <sup>8</sup>	Sarah Gee	Ralph Stevenson <sup>27</sup>
John Pim <sup>9</sup>	Jane Barcroft <sup>18</sup>	Tobias Pim <sup>28</sup>
Nicholas Gribbell <sup>10</sup>	Ann Boardman <sup>19</sup>	Francis Salkeld."
Richard Guy	Sarah Eves <sup>20</sup>	
James Hutchinson <sup>11</sup>	Hanna	
James Knowlls	Ann [page torn]	
Gershon Boate <sup>12</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> The signatories were almost all from Quaker families in or near Mountmellick.

<sup>2</sup> John Edmondson (1625-c. 1707) was William Edmondson's elder brother who had come to Ireland before him. During his life he resided at various places near Mountmellick and Edenderry, and was a sufficiently "weighty" Friend to have a meeting "settled" in his house for many

It will be noted that though bride and bridegroom were so well known they had to go through the same lengthy formalities as any other Friend. The words used by William Edmundson show, however, that he did not think it necessary to adhere to any set formula. He says of the marriage, "we took each other in marriage, in which weighty

years. In old age after the death of his wife he fell victim to immorality and Friends regretfully disowned him. He wrote a pathetic letter regretting his conduct and the slur it cast on Friends. In it he described himself as 83 years of age and in bad health, living at Timahoe, Queen's County.

A number of American Quaker families claim descent from him, but as the John Edmundson from whom they trace descent went to America soon after the middle of the seventeenth century it cannot have been William Edmundson's brother.

<sup>3</sup> Triall Edmundson (1671-1722), William Edmundson's youngest son.

<sup>4</sup> Joshua Strangman (1673-1743), Mary Strangman's stepson. He was often afterwards in Edmundson's company and helpful to him.

<sup>5</sup> Eliezer Sheldon, William Edmundson's son-in-law, m. Susanna Edmundson.

<sup>6</sup> William Fayle, junr., William Edmundson's grandson.

<sup>7</sup> Joshua Beale (1656-1708), m. Mary Hammon, 1686.

<sup>8</sup> Tobias Pleadwell, b. 1679, son of Thomas and Elizabeth Pleadwell.

<sup>9</sup> John Pim (1641-1718), m. Mary Pleadwell, 1663.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Gribbell, b. 1641, m. (i) Sarah Jackson (1651-1696) at Limerick, 1674; (ii) Jane Barcroft.

<sup>11</sup> James Hutchinson of Knockballymeagher, Co. Tipperary (1652-1718), m. Mary Bent (d. 1690), 1681.

<sup>12</sup> Gershon Boate (c. 1649-1704), son of Gerard Boate, Charles I's Dutch doctor who wrote an account of Ireland. Gershon Boate had considerable estates in north Tipperary. He was a prominent Friend, and especially useful in negotiations with the government. He was married three times and is author of a poem "The Maiden's Best Adorning."

<sup>13</sup> Mary Fayle, b. 1654, William Edmundson's eldest daughter; m. William Fayle, 1675.

<sup>14</sup> Susanna Sheldon, b. 1666, William Edmundson's third daughter; m. Eliezer Sheldon, c. 1688.

<sup>15</sup> Martha Fayle, b. 1679, William Edmundson's granddaughter.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Pim (1644-1721), *née* Pleadwell, m. John Pim, 1663.

<sup>17</sup> Susanna Softlaw, b. 1656, *née* Beale, m. John Softlaw, 1670.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Barcroft (1653-1730), *née* Slade, m. (i) Ambrose Barcroft (1654-1687), 1675; (ii) Nicholas Gribbell.

<sup>19</sup> Ann Boardman, b. 1657, *née* Thompson, m. Joseph Boardman, 1686.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Eves (1665-1719), *née* Thompson, m. Richard Eves, 1684.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Jackson, b. 1659, m. Hannah Scott, 1681.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Cantrill, b. 1650, m. Hannah Cooper, 1673.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Ridgeway (1666-1723), m. Anna Watson, 1694.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Eves (1657-1722), m. Sarah Thompson, 1684.

<sup>25</sup> Moses Pim (1664-1715), son of John and Mary Pim, m. Ann Raper, c. 1686.

<sup>26</sup> Joshua Northall, b. c. 1649, m. Rose Fletcher.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Stevenson, m. Elizabeth Cantrill, 1683.

<sup>28</sup> Tobias Pim (1666-1747), m. Susanna Cope, 1694.

affair the Lord's heavenly presence accompanied us, to our great Comfort and Confirmation ; and many in that Meeting being sensible thereof were refresh'd in their Spirits, also several Testimonies born to the Lord's Goodness, which attended us in that Ordinance."

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**A**MONG other tracts reprinted in *British pamphleteers* (vol. 1 : From the sixteenth century to the French Revolution. London, Allan Wingate, 1948), George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds reproduce the account of the noted trial of William Penn and William Mead in 1670 which appeared in *The Peoples Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted*. Each item in the collection is prefaced with an illuminating introduction giving a short account of the author and a study of the work which follows. Among other points, the editors raise the question of authorship of the Penn-Mead tract, which is usually attributed to Penn. On weighing the evidence, they incline to accept the view that Thomas Rudyard (admittedly the author of the second half of *The Peoples . . . Liberties Asserted*, which is not reprinted) was author of the whole work, although Penn probably had a hand in it. *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies, in a Short Representation of the Calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions*, by Anthony Benezet (original edition, Philadelphia, 1766), and *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, by Gerrard Winstanley the Digger, also appear in this most interesting volume.

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*The life and work of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, LL.D., D.Sc., Sc.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S., 1828-1913, with an account of his family biography and of some aspects of 19th century life and thought, particularly in science and medicine.* By Albert Eric Wales. (University of Leeds, Ph.D. thesis, 1948, 3 vols., typescript.)

This exhaustive dissertation was presented as thesis in the Department of Chemistry at Leeds. It is divided into sections as follows : The Quaker Family background ; The Victorian state ; The Man and his work ; Conclusion. The author has collected much genealogical material for the Hutchinson, Massey, Procter and West families, and useful family trees are given. The wide and varied activities of Sir Jonathan Hutchinson are traced carefully throughout his long career, and full weight is given to his scientific and medical interests, especially his discoveries about leprosy.