

years before. The difficulty over the application of the meeting collection in Bristol in 1679 (see note 36 to p. 161) was not due to financial stringency but to the opposition of the Wilkinson-Story party to proposals to send a subscription to the London National Stock from the Bristol meeting funds which they had helped to collect. Dennis Hollister was once Member of Parliament for Somerset, never for Bristol.

The volume is well produced, and illustrated with facsimiles of documents—although these lack reference to source, and it is disconcerting to have Francis Bugg's caricature *The Quakers' Synod* described as "George Whitehead opening the Yearly Meeting, 1696." The price is 21s.

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## Notes and Queries

### THE QUAKER CALENDAR

WHEN did the Quaker year begin? Before England changed from the Julian Calendar (Old Style) to the Gregorian Calendar (New Style) in 1752, the year was accounted to begin on Lady Day (25th March) not 1st January. Did Friends likewise begin the year on 25th March? Much evidence points to the conclusion that they did, but Henry J. Cadbury has drawn attention to an inscription in a Sussex Friends' register (Ifield and Shipley, 1659-1775), which was printed by Perceval Lucas in his article "Some Notes on the Early Sussex Quaker Registers" (in *Sussex Archæological Collections*, Vol. 55, 1912, pp. 74-96, quoted at p. 81). As this may not have come to the notice of many Friends it is reproduced here:

"Memorandum: That ye Names of ye Months mention'd in this Book does Hold like correspondency with the Other Months Named after ye Manner of ye world as they are distinguished hereafter followeing vizt

The First Month is called by ye world March.

The Second Month is called by ye world April.

The Third Month is called by ye world May, etc., etc.

And Note that by the Acct in this Book the year is (to be understood) to Begin the First day of the First Month comonly called March Whereas in the worlds Accompt it begins not till ye 25th day of the said Month."

This statement bears out the contention of Samuel G. Barton in his article on *The Quaker Calendar* (publication of the University of Pennsylvania: Flower Astronomical Observatory, Reprint No. 74. Reprinted from *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 93, No. 1, April, 1949, pp. 32-39). Samuel Barton, who is Associate Professor of Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania, argues that before the change to New Style the Quaker year began on 1st March not 25th March.

The English evidence we have studied points overwhelmingly to the fact that English Friends as a whole did not consciously adopt a system of dating (as distinct from the names applied to days

and months) different from that of their fellow countrymen. The dating practice in the Minutes of the London Meeting for Sufferings, and in a typical provincial meeting book (the fortnightly Bristol Men's Meeting—from which the examples quoted next are taken), indicate 25th March as the beginning of the year. Typical date sequences are: 6.xii.1670, 20.xii.1670, 6.i.1670, 20.i.1670, 3.ii.1671; 4.i.1671, 18.i.1671, 1.ii.1672; 3.i.1672, 17.i.1672-3 [here the double year is given, as often in March up to the 24th, never after the new year had begun on the 25th], 31.i.1673; 5.i.1682 [alternatively given as 5.i.1682-83], 19.i.1682 [with similar alternative]; 11.i.1688-89, 25.i.1689.

As this evidence seems to bring to light a possibly unsuspected difference between English and American Quaker practice, and one in which perhaps English records are not consistent, we should very much like to have further record evidence on the matter.

#### NELL GWYNN AND FRIENDS

IT is possible to make some answer at this late date to a query under the above title by my late friend and fellow countryman Francis R. Taylor, published in 1932 in this *Journal* (xxix, 71). He wrote: "Hast thou ever run across Nell Gwyn in a Quaker connection? I find the following in Bancroft's *United States History*, ii, 347: "Profligate gallants of the Court of Charles II assembled to hear the drollery of Nell Gwyn heap ridicule on the Quakers.'"

Perhaps the source is Gerard Croese who wrote in Holland

in Latin in 1695 the first history of the Quakers. I quote from his English translation, published in 1696, Part II, p. 96 [= 2nd Latin edition, 1696, p. 356].

"Yea, in the Courts of Kings and Princes, their Fools and Pleasants, which they kept to relax them from grief and pensiveness, could not show themselves more dexterously ridiculous, than by representing the Quakers, or aping the motions of their mouth, voice, gesture, and countenance: I heard a pleasant story from them, Helen which the English for shortness calls Nell at London, a most noted Dancer at the Playhouse (afterward a miss of King Cha. II) tho she could imitate all the Actors by any gesture of her body, yet she could not by her outmost effort and endeavour, even before the King and Courtiers (whom she often pleased with such ludicrous Actions) Act the Quaker so to the life as to draw out, compress and remit the Spirit, and so to ape their praying and holding forth, without betraying force and affectation, and how unhappy she was in Imitating those Actions, which she could never have knowledge of by any Conjecture."

I do not vouch for Croese's historical accuracy here or elsewhere, still less for the recent play of Bernard Shaw, *In Good King Charles's Golden Days*, which brings together in its scenes Charles II, Nell Gwyn, George Fox, Sir Isaac Newton and others as part of a motley *dramatis personae*.

HENRY J. CADBURY, 7 Buckingham Place, Cambridge, 38, Mass.