

Notes and Queries

WILLIAM PENN STOPS THE PRESS
A NOTE in the Winter, 1951, issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 94-9, tells the story of the discovery of a copy in the original state of a leaf (signature B2) in Penn's *Some Account of the Province of Pennsylvania* (London, Benjamin Clark, 1681). The Harvard copy of this pamphlet lacks pp. 3-4 (signature B1) but has two states of pp. 5-6 (signature B2). The usual, corrected, state has catchword "And" on p. 5; the original cancelled leaf has the catchword "that" on p. 5. In the conditions laid down for the prospective settlers there are variations in the text, showing that William Penn, besides making some alterations for the sake of clarity, toned down a strong passage condemning harsh treatment of indentured servants after their period of service in the colonies had expired. The wording was altered (as James E. Walsh, the author, points out) to avoid antagonising the wealthy merchants and landowners whom Penn wished to interest in his colony.

JONATHAN SWIFT AND FRIENDS' AFFIRMATION

THE appearance of Dean Swift's *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen* in the edition of his works in course of publication by Basil Blackwell of Oxford has brought to our notice the comments he made on the occasion of Friends' unsuccessful application to Parliament in 1712 for a renewal of the Affirmation.

The *History* is basically an

apology for the High Church party. Swift was one of the most active literary supporters of the party during the period of its political power at the close of Queen Anne's reign.

The Affirmation Act of 1696 (7 & 8 Will. III. cap 34) had been renewed in 1702 (13 & 14 Will. III. cap 4) for a further period, and it was due to expire at the end of the Parliamentary session in 1715. As the time drew near, Friends considered whether to apply for a renewal of the Act, and this was eventually agreed to, although a large body of Friends was dissatisfied with the current form of words.

In the passage which follows Dean Swift tells the rest of the story. True to its Tory High Church traditions, the Commons rejected Friends' petition (9th February, 1712). Friends then applied to the Lords where the Whigs still held a slender majority. Their Lordships were more obliging—doubtless fearing the loss of votes if the scruples of any of their nonconformist supporters should prevent them voting at elections. The Lords ordered a bill to be prepared (6th May, 1712), passed it through all its stages in five days (30th May-3rd June) and sent it down to the Commons. The Lower House refused the bill even a first reading (6th June) by a vote of 168 against 57.

The passage is reproduced in full from the first printed edition of 1758 (pp. 248-51).

"The sect of Quakers amongst us, whose system of religion, first

founded upon enthusiasm, hath been many years grown into a craft, held it an unlawful action to take an oath to a magistrate. This doctrine was taught them by the author of their sect, from a literal application of the text, *Swear not at all* ; but being a body of people, wholly turned to trade and commerce of all kinds, they found themselves on many occasions deprived of the benefit of the law, as well as of voting at elections, by a foolish scruple, which their obstinacy would not suffer them to get over. To prevent this inconvenience, these people had credit enough in the late reign, to have an act passed, that their solemn affirmation and declaration should be accepted, instead of an oath in the usual form. The great concern in those times, was to lay all religion upon a level ; in order to which, this maxim was advanced, that no man ought to be denied the liberty of serving his country upon account of a different belief in speculative opinions, under which term some people were apt to include every doctrine of Christianity : however, this act, in favour of the Quakers, was only temporary, in order to keep them in constant dependance, and expired of course after a certain term, if it were not continued. These people had, therefore, very early in the session, offered a petition to the house of Commons for a continuance of the act, which was not suffered to be brought up ; upon this they applied themselves to the Lords, who passed a bill accordingly, and sent it down to the Commons, where it was not so much as allowed a first reading.

“ And indeed, it is not easy to conceive upon what motives the

legislature of so great a kingdom could descend so low, as to be ministerial and subservient to the caprices of the most absurd heresy that ever appeared in the world ; and this in a point, where those deluding or deluded people stand singular from all the rest of mankind who live under civil government : but the designs of an aspiring party, at that time were not otherwise to be compassed, than by undertaking any thing that would humble and mortify the Church ; and I am fully convinced, that if a sect of sceptick philosophers (who profess to doubt of every thing) had been then among us, and mingled their tenets with some corruptions of Christianity, they might have obtained the same privilege ; and that a law would have been enacted, whereby the solemn doubt of the people called Scepticks, should have been accepted instead of an oath in the usual form ; so absurd are all maxims formed upon the inconsistent principles of faction, when once they are brought to be examined by the standard of truth and reason.”

SOCINIANISM

Socinianism in Seventeenth century England ; by H. John McLachlan, tutor and librarian of Manchester College, Oxford (Oxford University Press), is a contribution to the study of developments in seventeenth century religious life which will interest many besides Unitarians. There is an account of the controversy which followed the publication of William Penn's youthful *Sandy Foundation Shaken* (1668), and other Friends make an appearance in the course of this scholarly work.

MARRIAGES "OUT"

IN response to a letter in *The Friend*, 31. xii. 1943, p. 886, the Editor has collected at the Library at Friends House, a small file of confidential letters giving information about the operation of the discipline concerning marriages outside the Society—either with non-members, or with members, at a church or registry office—particularly in the period just preceding the alteration of the Yearly Meeting rules in 1860 to permit of the marriage of Friend and non-Friend at meeting.

Friends will remember that William Edward Forster was disowned after his marriage to Jane Arnold in 1850. In the same year John Bright records in his *Diary* (5. xii. 1850): "for the first time our Monthly Meeting has retained in membership a Friend who has married a person not a member." Practice evidently was far from uniform. There is an interesting record from the West of England of a Friend who was disowned for marriage according to the use of the Church of England in 1854, readmitted to the Society after the death of his wife in 1858, and retained in membership after marriage at a registry office a little over a year later.

In points such as this, family letters and recollections are likely to give a better picture of the variations of practice than the reticence of official minutes, and the Editor would be grateful for any further instances which may help to fill in the pattern showing the gradual change in discipline over the whole country. Within the last half-century much material which would throw light on the question has probably

disappeared, and this may well be one of the last opportunities of saving a representative sample of records of a discipline which agitated the Society for many years.

MUSICAL GEOGRAPHY LESSONS IN the January, 1951, issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (Vol. 75, No. 1, pp. 76-90) is a series of "Biographical Notes on Jonathan Knight (1787-1858)" by Harold L. Dorwart. In the course of this study of a Pennsylvanian Friend who was in his life a practically self-taught mathematical thinker of no mean order, a civil engineer, a railway pioneer, a member of the state legislature, and a Congressman with a broad national outlook, Professor Dorwart prints an extract from a grand-daughter's letter or reminiscence, written in 1908 which illustrates Quaker family discipline in the Knight family, and the slow decline of the testimony against music.

In consequence of this testimony, Jonathan Knight's son, who was very fond of music, could not play in the house and kept his flute in a barrel in the barn, where his mother liked to listen to his playing. He also attended a "geography class" in the evenings at the schoolhouse where about fifty or more young people sang all their lessons while the teacher beat time; and "it was quite exciting."

Is more known of this interesting way out of a difficulty?

 QUAKERS AND PATENTS

HAS there ever been a Quaker testimony against taking out patents for inventions?

A letter concerning the Pennsylvanian Friend Jonathan

Knight, chief engineer of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from 1830 to 1842, printed in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, Vol. 75, No. 1, p. 88, states that "he never would take patents, for his principles in some way interfered."

It is noteworthy that the full reports issued during Knight's tenure of office in the early days of the Baltimore & Ohio did much to spread technical knowledge on the engineering and mechanical problems encountered in railway construction and operation, so that engineers everywhere were able to learn by their errors and profit with them in their discoveries.

Railway engineering is a special case, where the release of technical information of value to rivals would only in the rare cases of proximity of line influence the competition for traffic. It may be for this special reason that no claim for patents was made; or it may be from a sense that discoveries once made should be placed freely at the disposal of all.

Dr. Arthur Raistrick writes: "There is no specific testimony of which I know against patents, but the whole tenor of the Advices and of many early writings are against the retention of inventions for personal profit. In the case of the Darby group of ironmasters, to whom we owe our inventions—coke smelting of iron, raw coal conversion, the iron railway, the canal incline, etc.—

the only patent taken was Abraham Darby's first, for hollow pots, in 1707. For a hundred years and more after that, no others were taken. Richard Reynolds took no patents, although he and his partners, the Darbys, the Harfords, and many others introduced new methods in the tin-plate industry. Allen, Bevan and others in the chemical and pharmaceutical world refrained from patents, and both journals and letters state that they preferred humanity at large to have the benefit. Huntsman refused to patent his method of steel casting. In Bristol the Champion family were an exception, though they did not patent all their discoveries. I think a very strong list of fundamental discoveries by Friends, never patented by them, but sometimes by rivals and others, could be prepared. Fry refrained from patenting many of his methods in type-founding and soap-boiling. In metallurgy the same is true, Wright and the London Lead Company did not patent their inventions at any time.

A later generation after 1800 was more prone to patent.

I think I could make out a strong case for the view that Friends had a 'stop' against patents, and they followed this feeling on the whole, so faithfully that it never came to the necessity of an Advice on the matter."

Can any Friend produce more evidence?