

Martha Jackson's Minority

Yorkshire Trustees' Accounts—1722-1728

By BEATRICE SAXON SNELL

MARTHA JACKSON¹ was the only daughter of Samuel Jackson of Armley Heights, near Leeds, by his wife, Mary Smith, of Balby. Samuel was a Quaker clothier and yeoman farmer, who died early in May, 1722. His wife died in the following January, and Martha, then a girl of 13, was left to the guardianship of her uncles, John Jackson and Thomas Smith.

The papers here described, consist of the accounts of their guardianship which they handed over to Martha when she attained the age of 21. Two years later she married William Whitelock of Sheepscar, Leeds. She was the great-great-grandmother of Marian Fry Pease,² who found the papers in a seventeenth-century oak desk belonging to her family, and presented them to the Library at Friends House. They are of great social, economic and philological interest, but I propose to limit this article to matters that have some relation to Quaker ways and testimonies.

Most of the receipts and accounts are on small scraps of paper, done up neatly in little brown paper packets for each year, and endorsed in the beautifully clear writing of John Jackson. The paper is very tough and strong and it was probably paper of this kind which George Fox's step-daughters bought to pack the parcels they sent to him.³

Samuel Jackson was a typical Quaker of the early eighteenth century; an independent artisan and yeoman who could afford to employ a little labour. He bought yarn, sent it away to be spun, and dyed and wove it himself with the assistance of his mother's brother, "Uncle Samuel Crowther", to whom he paid £5 a year board wages. The inventory of his goods which his brother John made in order that they might be valued by four Friends, has the following entries:

¹ Born 10.xii.1708-9 (Feb. 10, 1709); married (1732) William Whitelock.

² Thomas Pease (father of Marian Fry Pease) was son of Thomas Benson Pease and Martha Whitelock (married 1814); Martha's father, Isaac Whitelock (b. 1742), was the son of William Whitelock and Martha Jackson.

³ See Sarah Fell's *Account Book*.

In the house Garrat				
Wooll there of all sorts to the value of ..	..	£14	0	0
In the Work Chambr.				
a pr of looms 30/- another pair looms etc 20/- ..		2	10	0
bartrees & dammy pins 6/8 8 pr of Gears				
6 li : 0 : 0		6	6	8
horn wheell & Skeps etc 2/-		0	2	0
One Cloth in the Looms		9	10	0
One Cloth in Yarn		9	10	0
One Cloth at the Spinners		7	10	0

The "bartrees", "dammy pins", "horn wheel" and "gears" are tools of the trade which I have not been able to identify. Perhaps some Friend weaver could oblige? In east Lancashire a small loom to weave handkerchiefs used to be called a "dandy"; "dammy" might be a variant of this.

"Skeps" are large wicker baskets to hold clothes, or, in this case, the finished cloth, or the yarn coming from and wool going to the spinners. The theatrical profession still uses the term. The cloth was dressed to remove any knots, and the process was known as "burling"; there was a "burling-board" in the scullery garret. In the yard there were "2 pair of cloth tenters" (wooden frameworks for stretching the cloth) at 30s. each.

There is a very long bill for dyeing materials supplied between 1719 and 1722; the three following extracts cover all the substances mentioned.

1721				
July 6th 41 fustle, 3 Logwood, 3 Allm, 1 Sanders,				
2 galls. Rape		0	10	3
Aug 21st 2 galls. Rape, 1 Elgauls, 4 Redwood ..		0	6	10
1722				
June 4th 2 galls. Rape, 4 Sanders, 3 Madd. 1				
Elgauls		0	9	8

I have not discovered what "Elgauls" or "Olgauls" are, possibly a corruption of "alcohol". "Madd" is madder, "Allm" alum, "Sanders" sandalwood and "fustle" a local form of "fustic" a yellow-wood for dyeing. An interesting fact about "logwood" and "redwood" is that they came at this time from Barbadoes and Jamaica, which have such strong Quaker connections. The dyes appear to be all of the red, yellow and brown tones; and this is corroborated by a long list of cloth sold; it is only made in cinnamon and various shades of drab; it must have taken a fine eye to distinguish between

“red”, “redish” and “redly” drab, which all appear on the bill. The price per yard varied from 4s. 9d. to 7s. 6d. “super-fine”. The only colour mentioned in the many bills for Martha’s clothes is black, and it is clear that the family were strict Quakers in dress, following the “silly, poor gospel” which roused such strong disapproval in Margaret Fell.

Samuel Jackson left an odd little note dated 1718 and headed “Uncle Crowther”, which I transcribe in full.

Uncle Crowther

The 21st of August paid to him all his wages 1711 & from that time to this 21st of August 1713 is due to him 10 li.os.od & two years will be the 21st of August 1715 will be due to him 10 li.os.od. more which is 20 li.os.od. & 5 li 10s. that I borrowed of him makes 25 li 10s.

So far, so good. But now comes some mysterious arithmetic.

The 9th of 4th mo: 1712

2 Yrs & a quarter of Cloth at 5 × 8d pr Yrd Due	£26 : 3 : 3
& 2 Yrds at 7/- pr Yrd is in all ×	£1 : 6 : 9 ..
	28 : 16 : 3

Allowance for Ode Days X The 17th of 1st mo: 1718 Accounted with Uncle Crowther there remains due to him £14 : 6 : 3d.

It is not to be wondered that Samuel Jackson’s careful brother and brother-in-law found this puzzling. “Uncle Crowther” insisted that the final sum of £14 6s. 3d. was due to him, and John Jackson, in a letter to Thomas Smith written in 1725, says that he “makes a great ado with me every time wee talk together and I have put him off from time to time ever Since I was over at thy house & told him thou wold Consult some friends at the next Quarterly Meeting & Send me a line or two about it, for I cold doe nothing of my Self but none comeing he Still weares me to write to thee again to Order him all or Some part of it; or else he will either goe to Law or Acquaint friends with it, So I desier yee to Consider further of it & acquaint Matty that we may doe Some thing to make him more easie.” In order to help Thomas with the consultation John made a copy of “Samuel Crowther’s Note & his Case”, as follows:

THE CASE

1st There is a Note or a sort of an Account stated after an irregular manner ye ballance whereof as it is placed down in ye Acct. is

- £14 : 6 : 3 but without being signed by the person judged to be the Debtor.
- 2dly Samuella Jackson deceased is adjudged was the person indebted in the Sum above.
- 3dly Samuella Jackson lived upwards of 3 yrs after the settling ye above account so as it appears.
- 4thly The Creditor its said was boarded there about 2 Years at the said Samuella Jacksons after the settling yt acct & in the life time of the said Sam : Jackson & no board wages paid for the time.
- 5thly The Widow of Samll Jackson who also is now deceased was spoke to in her life time about the said affair or Debt, & her Answer was that she believed if the Accompt was ballanced betwixt them there would be but little due to Samll Crowther the Creditor.
- 6thly Now the question is how must yee Guardians (of ye Daughter of ye said Samuella Jackson who is a Minor) Act in this Case to be safe, as the Law will justify ym & if the Creditors demands be recoverable by Law.

There is no indication of the answer given by the Friends to whom Thomas Smith put the problem; but in John Jackson's summarized accounts for 1725 there appears the following item: "4th Mo. 25th my Expenses in going from York to Armley to Settle an Accompt yt was left unballanced betwixt her late Father and Saml. Crowther. 0 : 2 : 6."

An interesting point in John Jackson's letter is the request that "Matty", who was only sixteen at this time, should be informed and consulted. It suggests that she was a level-headed and practical young woman, and shows a Quakerly respect for her. She was being trained to be a good housewife in a surprisingly modern manner; here is a receipt or "acquittance" given to her uncle Thomas Smith, and dated "December the 1st, 1724."

Recd of Thomas Smith for his Niece Martha Jackson }
 dineing at my House for 7 weeks when she came to } 17s. 6d.
 the pastry School the Sum of Seventeen Shillings 6d. }
 per Geoffrey Mawhood

Thomas adds a scrupulous little note: "I have only charged 6/9 of this bill" (i.e. in his yearly statement to the other guardian) "it being the overplus of what she pays me by the Year." His charge per annum for her board and lodging was £8 and in 1725 when she stayed 10 weeks with John Jackson, he deducted 30s. John, equally scrupulous, when charging to Martha's account the interest on a debt of her father's which he repaid in 1725, adds: "John Jackson had

this money one quarter of a Year in his hands, so that only 30/- is charg'd to Matty's acct. for Interest." He had none of the modern doubts about "usury"; writing to Thomas Smith in 1728, he says:

Now as to Cous. Matty Affair what I Recd & what I have Disburst, Since I was over at thy house, I have sent thee an Acct. Sett down below, & what Money I have in my hand thou may let me know which way I shall dispose of itt; for I wold have itt be Improveing what's more than She may have Occation for: For what will be left in my hand I shall be very willing to Allow Interest for from a Settled time, This being what's Needfull at present.

There were several sub-tenants beside the chief tenant at Armley Heights, but John Jackson kept an eye on their doings, and reports another kind of "Improvement" in 1725.

Thos. Garmans has lett all his pt of the house & 4 Closes of land below the house to one John Langton of Wortley, a young man but is now got Married Since he came and this J. Langton has lett the Shop and kitchen & the Chambers over them to one Antho: Lister but no Land, & he has (wth my leave) put up a firestead for thm in the Shopp of his own charge wch I think will be very beneficiall to it being a Dampy Room.

The charge of one shilling and eightpence with which John debited his niece "when I went to sell up her late mother's Personal Estate," can surely have covered no more than his travelling expenses. He saw that she did her duty by the Society's funds, recording that he "laid down eighteen pence" for her at both Monthly and Quarterly Meeting (apparently on two occasions when she was unable to go herself). If this was her general contribution it would amount to 24s. per annum—18s. for Monthly, and 6s. for Quarterly Meeting. This would represent about £5 in modern terms, and is interesting as showing what it was thought suitable for a fairly prosperous young Friend to contribute.

John Jackson wrote to Thomas Smith in 1724: "I cannot be at the Quarterly Meeting for wee have a Fair falls out to be on that day at Beadle [Bedale]¹ wch I shold be at if possible." As early as 1680 Upperside M.M. recorded "Friends taking notice that the next Meeting here wil in course fal on the same day that Beconsfeild fair wil be on, at wch fair many of the friends of this Meeting are usually engaged in business, have

¹ Fairs were held five times a year at Bedale, Yorks, N.R. They were important centres for millinery as well as metal goods and agricultural products.

thought fit, that neither Friends may be straitned in their occasions, nor the service of Truth neglected, to alter the day for that time." Neglect of this precaution caused Windsor Friends to minute in 1749 "It being our Fair and most of our Members being Absent We adjourn this Meeting to next 5th day."

Neither Martha's father nor her guardians always remember to use the Quaker system of dating; the two forms occur side by side in the "Uncle Crowther" document. John Jackson, however, strictly observes the "plain language" of "thee" and "thou" in writing to Thomas Smith. Martha's tailor, Thos. Couper, sends most of his bills in to "you", but in July, 1726, the bill, written by another hand, and only bearing his signature, is in the plain language. In 1728 he uses "thy" in receipting a bill for altering "your" petticoat; perhaps he wrote this part of it under the watchful eye of Thomas Smith, who paid him. Here is the bill for 26th July, 1726 written in the plain style.

for martha jackson					
for makein thy night gown	..	..	..	..	I 5
for tornin thy crep gown & linein	..	..	..	..	2 4
for linein thy hat	..	..	..	..	0 6
for makein thy hudd hade	..	..	..	..	I 0
for makein thy blacke silke patecot	..	..	..	..	I 0
for silke & thred	..	..	..	..	0 5
for makein thy Creap Suet	..	..	..	..	3 0
for makein thy Creap patecot & linein thy black gown	..	..	..	..	I 2
for alterin thy suet	..	..	..	..	0 4

II 4

A "gown" at this time was the ordinary term for what we now call a "dress": i.e. a frock which was not worn open down the front to show the petticoat underneath. The original meaning, "a loose outer robe", survives only in "dressing-gown." It was, I believe, the open overdress which was known as a "robe" at this period. Therefore an old "gown" worn in the front breadth could be cut into a "robe"; and in this case the front edges would have to be lined (or "faced" as we say now) with strips of stuff to make them hang properly. Richardson's Pamela, twenty years later than the Martha Jackson papers, made "facings and robings" of chintz to one of her dresses; I think the distinction is between strips applied on the "face" or outside of the material for decoration, and on

the inside for the purpose of stiffening. In 1723 Thomas Couper charged Matty for "Robing your Riding Coatt and oltearing yr pety coate." Women's riding coats were at this time worn, like men's, open over a waistcoat, and the fronts would have to be "robed."

Any sort of headdress was known in the 1720's as "a head", so a "hud hade" would be a headdress in the form of a hood. "Creap suet" is "crape suit"; i.e. a matching dress and petticoat. It is evident by these bills that Matty was prosperous; she buys a good deal of silk, and even a spoilt and superior maidservant such as Pamela only wore silk when her mistress passed it on to her. But she was well trained in the thrifty art of "mend and make do." Her crape gown is "turned"; her hats and stays (boned bodices worn either under or over the dress) are several times re-lined; her "patecot" is "olteared", her shoes are "top-pieced." The bills cover a fairly complete wardrobe; it looks as though her talents lay rather in cooking than sewing. She bought stuffs for Thomas Couper to make up from a draper called Thomas Johnson; and the bill is receipted on his behalf in Quakerly form by his assistant Matthew Wilson. In 1728 a second bill for stuff is presented with a Quaker dating by Benjamin Rhodes of York. I transcribe both in full.

1726 Bott of Thos. Johnson
 Aprill the 15th 24 yds of Silkatee at 14d .. £1 : 8 : 0
 4 yds of Taminy at 14d 0 : 4 : 8
 ferrit 18d Silk 4d thread 2d 0 : 2 : 0
 9½ yds Silk Crape at 15d 0 : 11 : 6
 4 yds more of Taminy at 15d 0 : 5 : 0
 ferrit 3d silk quality 12d all 0 : 1 : 3
 Recd Aprill the 15th 1726 Of Tho: Smith on Acct. of his Niece
 Martha Jackson the Contents of thy Bill for the use of my
 Master Tho Johnson

pr me Math Wilson.

Silkatee and taminy are silk and wool mixtures. Ferrit is tape.

York, 1 m 27th 1728

Bott of Benj. Rhodes 8 yds of Basnet at 2 : 4 yd 00 : 18 : 8 Recd. att the same time the Contents in full on account of his neece Martha Jackson pr Benj. Rhodes.

In spite of Quaker austerity in the colour of his cloth, Samuel Jackson saw nothing inconsistent in tapestry chairs and good silver, as the inventory and the list of goods for sale when Martha left Armley Heights bear witness.

6 Settwork Chairs a little Chair 2 stools & 2 tables	o : 18 : o
A sett-work buffett	o : 1 : o
Plate	
A Silver tancker	} 12.0.0.
2 Silver Cups	
2 Silver Casters	
a little Silver Cup	
a tea spoon	
6 other spoons	

Things such as tea-spoons and sugar-casters were modern for the times; the Oxford English Dictionary first records them towards the end of the seventeenth century. A "buffet" is a foot-stool and "set-work" is tapestry. Thomas Ellwood also had a set of six, worked by his wife. Samuel Jackson's family ate and drank out of pewter and earthenware mugs and plates; but they had some china and "Delf ware"—stone ware from Holland—for best. They had not only a "beel-back" chair (the Southern word is "stick-back"), but a dozen leather, 6 wood and 8 cane ones as well; it looks as if meetings were sometimes held at their house.

The inventory and sale lists show that like many meetings in other parts of the country, Leeds Friends used a strong local dialect, particularly rich in trade terms and local names of tools and implements. Some of these have been already mentioned; and here are extracts from the inventory relating to fire-places and their appurtenances.

One Range, End Irons, Grate tongs fire shovell & fire point	1 : 5 : o
Smook Jack Spitt & Racks, all	1 : 10 : o
A pr of iron briggs & an Iron Yate & 3 reckons ..	o : 7 : o
A fender, Warming-pan, Candlebark & Skellet	o : 5 : o

"Range" seems to stand for any kind of fire-place, whether it had an oven or not, as there were "ranges" in the West parlour and West (bed) chamber as well. "Fire-point" is a North-country version of "poker"; in the form "fire-poite" it is found in the York Castle Depositions of 1651. A "smoke-jack" was an apparatus for turning a roasting-spit, worked by the current of air passing up the chimney. The grate evidently had a hinged front which could be opened to clear out the cinders—the gate or "yate"; when pots or pans were put on the fire "briggs" or iron bars were set across it to support them; the "briggs" also may have been fixed across the chimney, so that the "reckons" or pot-chains could hang

from them. The word "briggs" in this sense is not noted by the Oxford Dictionary till 1875, and another word not recorded till this date is "candle-bark", a box for holding candles. The price put on the 10 lb. of candles left in the house—three shillings and eightpence, shows they were tallow, not wax.

If Martha Jackson's mother had time to embroider the six set-work chairs and the buffet, she must have been a very efficient house-wife. Entries relating to activities which would come within her province are as follows:

5 Rundletts, a Gantry, Churn & staff and glass bottles	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 5 : 6
skreen & wintrhedg	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 10 : 0
2 Clay backstones	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 2 : 0
Kitts etc.	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 3 : 0
A Kimlin	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 3 : 0
an earning tubb	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 1 : 0
a rowling pin and battledore	..	..	..	..	..	0 : 0 : 4

A Rundlet was a cask, holding about 18½ gallons at this period; the family probably brewed their own beer, as they kept malt in one of the garrets. A Gantry is a four-footed wooden stand for barrels. Clothes were beaten with a battle-door, and in the summer hung out on the hedges to dry; a "winter-hedge" is, therefore, a clothes-horse; my sister met this word in Dorset in the early 1900s. Cakes were baked on the clay backstones; the kitts were the milking-pails, and the milk was curdled to make cheese in the earning-tub. The kimlin was a large tub which could be used for brewing, kneading bread or salting meat.

Quaker exactitude is shown in the prices quoted in the valuation which, as far as I have been able to compare them with Thorold Rogers, are in the main the current market prices. The "large bay mare" which went for £7 was a good one; her value is higher than that of the horse which Thomas Ellwood had distrained for tithe, and which he "would not have took Five Guineas for." The "red cow" which went for £2 10s. was evidently a poor one; for even a barren cow cost £2 12s. 6d. at this time. The two calves, on the other hand, which went for £1 each must have been exceptionally good, as the average price was about 12s.

The whole collection gives a pleasing picture of a full life lived with honesty, thrift, simplicity and independence.