

In our companion society across the Atlantic, the Friends Historical Association, Thomas E. Drake has succeeded Henry J. Cadbury as President. Thomas Drake is professor of American History at Haverford College, Pennsylvania, and curator of the Quaker Collection there. *Quakers and Slavery in America*, which he published in 1950 was reviewed in Vol. 43 of this *Journal*. Henry J. Cadbury is spending the autumn term at Woodbrooke.

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### William Haseldine Pepys, 1775-1856

A hundred years ago on 17th August, 1856, there died at the ripe age of 81 years an old Friend who was well known in his time as a man of many parts but who is scarcely even a name to thousands of people who benefited from his scientific discoveries, his work as a scientific instrument maker, an administrator, and a successful man of business.

He was born three years before Sir Humphry Davy and survived him by nearly 30 years and like him was an ardent fisherman. Davy quickly realized the value of Pepys' laboratory gas-holder (an appliance now seldom seen except in some museums, but formerly largely used in various schools and colleges as well as in some private laboratories. It was by means of this device that Pepys and William Allen, F.R.S., were able to store and eventually establish the composition of carbon dioxide and to undertake their skilful and accurate work on respiration in which they used other new and accurate apparatus devised and made by Pepys. These classical experiments included those in which they showed that the volume of carbon dioxide expired in a given time was almost exactly equal to that of the oxygen removed from the inspired air. Pepys made numerous scientific discoveries, some chemical, some physical and others of a botanical nature (including some good work on manures) and in connection therewith he devised numerous pieces of scientific apparatus still in use today though his connection with it is almost unknown to those of the present generation who use them.

Pepys, with Allen and others in 1796 formed the Askesian Society from which sprang the British Geological and Mineralogical Societies and the London Institution; he was honorary secretary of the last-named and spent much time in making the large galvanic batteries there which were used by Davy in his great work on electromagnetism.

What vigorous and sturdy men were those eighteenth century scientists, what wide interests many of them had—so different from the narrow specialization now so common today!

Pepys appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, but his name is not mentioned in Raistrick's *Quakers in Science and Industry*. Some particulars about him will be found in Silvanus P. Thompson's *Michael Faraday, His Life and Work*, and in Faraday's book on *Chemical Manipulation*. Other details are also published in "Chemistry and Industry", No. 31 (August 11th, 1956).

A. B. SEARLE