

Notes and Queries

QUAKERS IN DURHAM DIOCESE

Archaeologia Aeliana, 4th series, vol. 34 (1956), includes an article on Episcopal visitations in the diocese of Durham, 1662-1671, by Rev. J. Rogan (pp. 92-109). The author concludes from the evidence that "Quakers were stronger and more widespread in 1662 than in 1665". Where there was a sizeable group they tended to hold their own, but the smaller groups tended to disappear. Newcastle was a great centre for dissent; here, the Trewhitt family are particularly mentioned as "being Quakers and having frequent and public meetings in the house where resort a numerous company from Northumberland and this county".

YORKSHIRE QUAKERS, 1682

M. Hope Dodds has brought to our notice a document printed in *Notes and Queries*, New series, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 17 (Jan. 1956), by R. M. Faurot of the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York. The document is from Archbishop's Visitation Book, R.VII, A.33, 1682 (York Diocesan Records), and is a letter from the curate of Middleton, near Pickering, proposing to present "Henry Marshall of Aislaby, Tho, Chapman, Henry Skelton of Whrelton [Wrelton], William Storre, all within ye parish of Midleton, and persons for diverse years presented, cited and excommunicated for denying their proportionable assessment to ye church; for not repairing to Divine Service and for not receiving ye Communion".

QUAKERS AS JURYMEN

M. Hope Dodds also notes an article on the Court Baron (*Amateur Historian*, vol. 3, no. 12, 1956, p. 375) which quotes a document of about 1706 in Kent County Archives Office, A.G.47 (60), stating that Quakers were the most prying and therefore the best men to have on juries to inquire into breaches of the customs of the manor.

RICHARD NISBET

Richard Nisbet of the Island of Nevis wrote *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement considered: with cursory hints, to proprietors and to government, for the immediate melioration of the condition of slaves in the sugar colonies; to which are subjoined short and practical discourses to negroes, on the plain and obvious principles of religion and morality* (London: Printed by James Phillips, 1789). Nisbet's interest in the improvement of the lot of the slaves led him to undertake the religious instruction of a few domestic slaves of his own, and the talks he gave them are reprinted in the book. In the preface the author says that the book consists partly of "some observations which once made their appearance in the Gazette of the island of St. Christopher", but he was precluded "by unexpected and unforeseen impediments" from continuing to use that channel. He therefore took the opportunity of a visit to his native country (he dates the preface from London, Nov. 1789) to publish his views on the negroes more fully. The view he took was that "every prejudice

against this unfortunate people is a mere illusion”.

No other publication of Richard Nisbet's appears to survive, but there is the following letter in the Bristol Public Library, C. T. Jefferies collection of MSS. vol. 13, fol. 135, written by him to James Phillips his publisher a couple of years later, dated and addressed in Quaker style, stating that he is giving up the law. Perhaps, like John Woolman, he found that he could not draw up deeds disposing of slaves.

St. Christopher,
7th, 11 Mo. 1791.

Respected Friend,

Finding the practice of the Law, as it is follow'd here, to be incompatible with my persuasions of what is Christian Purity of Truth, I am therefore compell'd to turn my mind to commerce, with the advantage of former experience to profit by. I therefore request to know if you can befriend me so far as to recommend me for a Credit to some friends in the Linen draper, Woollen Drapery, Mercery, Hosiery, Haberdashery, Saddlery, Hats, Shoes & Boots, and Hard Ware Lines, so as that I may

import those articles of good quality & well laid in, as also some in your own way, in small & repeated assortments, making annual payments as nearly as possible, & occasionally more frequently. An Answer hereto will be acceptable to

Your affectionate friend

Rd. Nisbet

[address] James Phillips/Book-seller / George Yard / Lombard Street/London.

SHEFFIELD REFORMERS

An article by Allan W. L. Seaman in the *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society*, vol. 7, part 5 (1956), pp. 215-228, deals with "Reform politics at Sheffield, 1791-97".

The Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information was established during the autumn of 1791. By early December, it was reported, that no person of consequence had come forward to join the reformers except a Quaker physician by the name of Sutcliffe. [ref. to letter Rev. W. Hunter to Earl Fitzwilliam, 12th December, 1791]. In the following months the Society developed; it was served as Secretary by Ashton, another Quaker.

"A Quaker Tercentenary for America?" an article by Henry J. Cadbury discussing the dates at which Friends came to various parts of America and founded meetings, opens the Spring 1956 number of *The Bulletin of Friends Historical Association*. Other papers include one on Mary Rotch of New Bedford (1777-1848) by Murray Gardner Hill; Levinus K. Painter writes on Quakerism in the Monongahela Valley; and Frederick Tolles prints a document of 1756 commenting on Pennsylvania contemporary politics.

The Autumn number (vol. 45, no. 2) contains the first portion of a paper on the Concept of the Church in Seventeenth-Century Quakerism (Emerson W. Shideler); "Successors of Woolman and Benezet"—the beginnings of the Philadelphia Friends Freedmen's Association, by Youra Qualls; and Bernard Shaw and the Quakers (Warren S. Smith). Both numbers have the usual useful notes and bibliographical features.