

## New Publications

*Gilletts, Bankers at Banbury and Oxford: a study in local economic history.* By Audrey M. Taylor. pp. xii, i, 247; 10 plates and maps. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964. 35s.

At a Meeting of the Society on 6th April 1961, the author of this book spoke on the subject of Quaker Country Bankers. Those who heard her will especially be interested to read this fuller account of one particular Quaker Country Bank, centred in Banbury and later in Oxford; it was one of the last country banks to be absorbed by a joint stock bank, shortly after the First War.

The same family of Gilletts was also responsible for founding the Discount Company that bears its name; and it is in connection with the approaching centenary of Gillett Brothers Discount Company that the present volume has been written. It covers the period from 1784 until the amalgamation with Barclays in 1919. A subsequent volume, to be published shortly, will tell the history of the discount business.

The author is not a Friend, and she has not attempted to portray the partners in this Quaker Bank otherwise than as bankers; her purpose is to show how closely the fortunes of a nineteenth-century country bank were linked with the economic vicissitudes of the neighbourhood; this is what made inevitable, in the long run, the welding of the smaller units into the nation-wide organizations. But there are some interesting and amusing sidelights on Friends. One of these is that the Gillett family, like some other Quaker families, had members whose zeal as inventors and entrepreneurs was greater than their business capacity; and their financial difficulties were particularly embarrassing to relations who were bankers.

The book is beautifully printed and illustrated.

*Quakers in Russia.* By Richenda C. Scott. pp. 302. 12 plates. London, Michael Joseph. 1964. 30s.

This eagerly-awaited book fulfils expectation. Covering as it does nearly three centuries of varied and sporadic contacts between Russians and Friends, it yet preserves the essential unity of its theme, the constant desire of Friends to be of service to this far-distant and largely unknown land.

Nearly half the book is occupied, as was natural, with the one consecutive piece of service undertaken by Friends, the relief work carried on with scarcely a break for a whole decade during the First World War and after. The story has been told briefly in Ruth Fry's *A Quaker Adventure*, but readers will be very grateful for this much fuller account; it portrays what is perhaps the finest example in our history of the results that can be achieved, in the face of apparently insuperable difficulties, by patience and persistence and the talent for inspired improvisation that has so often marked Friends' work.

The remainder of the book is more episodic; it relates the earlier contacts of Friends with successive Tsars, the help given in the emigration of the Doukhobors, and, at the end, a brief mention of the latest contacts, especially with Soviet youth. In connection with the famous visit of Alexander I to Westminster Meeting, William Allen's account might perhaps have been supplemented by the naively entertaining record of a humbler member of the Meeting, preserved in Beck and Ball, *London Friends' Meetings*, 1869, p. 265.

*Voice of The Lord: a Biography of George Fox.* By Harry Emerson Wildes. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965. pp. 473.

It is very difficult to write a biography of George Fox. A great effort of historical imagination is required to take the writer back into that extraordinary middle of the seventeenth century, when, for a period, men regarded their spiritual lives as their most important concern, and someone like Fox, who seemed to have an answer to their religious problems, was thought of literally as a prophet sent from God.

Yet without such an appreciation, how can Fox be portrayed in the light in which he appeared to his followers and contemporaries, rather than as the intolerant and self-opinionated young man that he may appear to us?

The book is at its best when it is dealing factually with the events of Fox's life, and particularly his voyage to America. The author expresses his strong belief that Fox's influence on and involvement with the colonial projects of Penn and others has been underestimated, and this is probably true. It is appropriate to have a truer emphasis laid on this by an American author.

*The Huntington Library quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 1 (November 1965) includes a paper "Escape from Barbary: a seventeenth-century genre," by G. A. Starr, assistant professor of English, University of California at Berkeley. There is a note on p. 41 concerning the story of Thomas Lurting, mate of a ship captured by Algerines in 1663. Lurting and his crew retake the ship without bloodshed and eventually deposit the pirates safely on their own shores. Lurting's story seems to have appeared first in George Fox's *To The Great Turk* (1680), and it was republished frequently under the title *The Fighting Sailor Turn'd Peaceable Christian*, and also appeared in Sewel's *History* (1722 edition, pp. 387-97). A further note on p. 49 mentioning *Captain Singleton* (by Daniel Defoe) and the Barbary episode in it, suggests that the careers of such men as Thomas Lurting may have contributed to the portrait of Singleton's Quaker aide, William Walters. The author also mentions E. H. W. Meyerstein's edition of Edward Coxere's *Adventures* (Oxford, 1945).

The Huntington Library has acquired the following: Maria Edgeworth. Thirty-eight family letters, and correspondence with Mary Leadbeater about her *Cottage Dialogues*, 1810-28. (p. 89).