

A Portraiture of Quakerism, Volume 1 eBook

A Portraiture of Quakerism, Volume 1 by Thomas Clarkson

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INTRODUCTION.

MOTIVES FOR THE UNDERTAKING—ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF QUAKERS— GEORGE FOX, THE FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY—SHORT HISTORY OF HIS LIFE.

From the year 1787, when I began to devote my labours to the abolition of the slave trade, I was thrown frequently into the company of the people, called Quakers, these people had been then long unanimous upon this subject. Indeed they had placed it among the articles of their religious discipline. Their houses were of course open to me in all parts of the kingdom. Hence I came to a knowledge of their living manners, which no other person, who was not a Quaker, could have easily obtained.



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As soon as I became possessed of this knowledge, or at least of so much of it, as to feel that it was considerable, I conceived a desire of writing their moral history. I believed I should be able to exhibit to the rest of the world many excellent customs, of which they were ignorant, but which it might be useful to them to know. I believed too, that I should be affording to the Quakers themselves, some lessons of utility, by letting them see, as it were in a glass, the reflection of their own images. I felt also a great desire, amidst these considerations, to do them justice; for ignorance and prejudice had invented many expressions concerning them, to the detriment of their character, which their conduct never gave me reason to suppose, during all my intercourse with them, to be true.

Nor was I without the belief, that such a history might afford entertainment to many. The Quakers, as every body knows, differ more than even many foreigners do, from their own countrymen. They adopt a singular mode of language. Their domestic customs are peculiar. They have renounced religious ceremonies, which all other christians, in some form or other, have retained. They are distinguished from all the other islanders by their dress. These differences are great and striking. And I thought therefore that those, who were curious in the development of character, might be gratified in knowing the principles, which produced such numerous exceptions from the general practices of the world.

But though I had conceived from the operation of these sentiments upon my mind, as long ago as I have stated, a strong desire to write the moral history of the Quakers, yet my incessant occupations on the subject of the slave-trade, and indisposition of body afterwards, in consequence of the great mental exertions necessary in such a cause, prevented me from attempting my design. At length these causes of prevention ceased. But when, after this, the subject recurred, I did not seem to have the industry and perseverance, though I had still the inclination left, for the undertaking. Time, however, continued to steal on, till at length I began to be apprehensive, but more particularly within the last two years, that, if I were to delay my work much longer, I might not live to begin it at all. This consideration operated upon me. But I was forcibly struck by another, namely, that, if I were not to put my hand to the task, the Quakers would probably continue to be as little known to their fellow-citizens, as they are at present. For I did not see who was ever to give a full and satisfactory account of them. It is true indeed, that there are works, written by Quakers, from which a certain portion of their history, and an abstract of their religious principles, might be collected; but none, from whence their living manners could be taken. It is true also that others, of other religious denominations, have written concerning them; but of those authors,

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who have mentioned them in the course of their respective writings, not one, to my knowledge, has given a correct account of them. It would be tedious to dwell on the errors of Mosheim, or of Formey, or of Hume, or on those to be found in many of the modern periodical^[1] publications. It seemed, therefore, from the circumstance of my familiar intercourse with the Quakers, that it devolved upon me particularly to write their history. And I was the more confirmed in my opinion, because, in looking forward, I was never able to foresee the time when any other cause would equally, with that of the slave-trade, bring any other person, who was not of the society, into such habits of friendship with the Quakers, as that he should obtain an equal degree of knowledge concerning them with myself. By this new consideration I was more than ordinarily stimulated, and I began my work.

[Footnote 1: I must except Dr. Toulmin's revision of Neal's history of the Puritans. One or two publications have appeared since, written, in a liberal spirit, but they are confined principally to the religious principles of the Quakers.]

It is not improbable but some may imagine from the account already given, that this work will be a partial one, or that it will lean, more than it ought to do, in favour of the Quakers. I do not pretend to say, that I shall be utterly able to divest myself of all undue influence, which their attention towards me may have produced, or that I shall be utterly unbiased, when I consider them as fellow-labourers in the work of the abolition of the slave-trade; for if others had put their shoulders to the wheel equally with them on the occasion, one of the greatest causes of human misery, and moral evil, that was ever known in the world, had been long ago annihilated, nor can I conceal, that I have a regard for men, of whom it is a just feature in their character, that, whenever they can be brought to argue upon political subjects, they reason upon principle, and not upon consequences; for if this mode of reasoning had been adopted by others, but particularly by men in exalted stations, policy had given way to moral justice, and there had been but little public wickedness in the world. But though I am confessedly partial to the Quakers on account of their hospitality to me, and on account of the good traits in their moral character, I am not so much so, as to be blind to their imperfections. Quakerism is of itself a pure system, and, if followed closely, will lead towards purity and perfection; but I know well that all, who profess it, are not Quakers. The deviation therefore of their practice from their profession, and their frailties and imperfections, I shall uniformly lay open to them, wherever I believe them to exist. And this I shall do, not because I wish to avoid the charge of partiality, but from a belief, that it is my duty to do it.

The society, of which I am to speak, are called^[2] Quakers by the world, but are known to each other by the name of friends, a beautiful appellation, and characteristic of the relation, which man, under the christian dispensation, ought uniformly to bear to man.



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[Footnote 2: Justice Bennet of Derby gave the society the name of Quakers in the year 1650, because the founder of it ordered him, and those present with him, to tremble at the word of the Lord.]

The Founder of the society was George Fox He was born of “honest and sufficient parents,” at Drayton in Leicestershire, in the year 1624. He was put out, when young, according to his own account, to a man, who was a shoe-maker by trade, and who dealt in wool, and followed grazing, and sold cattle. But it appears from William Penn, who became a member of the society, and was acquainted with him that he principally followed the country-part of his master’s business. He took a great delight in sheep, “an employment,” says Penn, “that very well suited his mind in some respects, both for its innocency and its solitude, and was a just figure of his after ministry and service.”

In his youth he manifested a seriousness of spirit, not usual in persons of his age. This seriousness grew upon him, and as it increased he encouraged it, so that in the year 1643, or in the twentieth year of his age, he conceived himself, in consequence of the awful impression he had received, to be called upon to separate himself from the world, and to devote himself to religion.

At this time the Church of England, as a Protestant church, had been established; and many, who were not satisfied with the settlement of it, had formed themselves into different religious sects. There was a great number of persons also in the kingdom, who approving neither of the religion of the establishment, nor of that of the different denominations alluded to, withdrew from the communion of every visible church. These were ready to follow any teacher, who might inculcate doctrines that coincided with their own apprehensions. Thus for a way lay open among many for a cordial reception of George Fox. But of those, who had formed different visible churches of their own, it may be observed, that though they were prejudiced, the reformation had not taken place so long, but that they were still alive to religious advancement. Nor had it taken place so long, but that thousands were still very ignorant, and stood in need of light and information on that subject.

It does not appear, however, that George Fox, for the first three years from the time, when he conceived it to be his duty to withdraw from the world, had done any thing as a public minister of the gospel. He had travelled from the year 1643 to 1646, through the counties of Warwick, Leicester, Northampton, and Bedford, and as far as London. In this interval he appears to have given himself up to solemn impressions, and to have endeavoured to find out as many serious people as he could, with a view of conversing with them on the subject of religion.

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In 1647 he extended his travels to Derbyshire, and from thence into Lancashire, but returned to his native county. He met with many friendly people in the course of this journey, and had many serious conversations with them, but he never joined in profession with any. At Duckenfield, however, and at Manchester, he went among those, whom he termed “the professors of religion,” and according to his own expressions, “he staid a while and declared truth among them.” Of these some were convinced but others were enraged, being startled at his doctrine of perfection. At Broughton in Leicestershire, we find him attending a meeting of the Baptists, at which many of other denominations were present. Here he spoke publicly, and convinced many. After this he went back to the county of Nottingham. And here a report having gone abroad, that he was an extraordinary young man, many, both priests and people, came far and near to see him.

In 1648 he confined his movements to a few counties. In this year we find him becoming a public character. In Nottinghamshire he delivered himself in public at three different meetings, consisting either of priests and professors, as he calls them, or professors and people. In Warwickshire he met with a great company of professors, who were praying and expounding the scriptures, in the fields. Here he discoursed largely, and the hearers fell into contention, and so parted. In Leicestershire he attended another meeting, consisting of Church people, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, where he spoke publicly again. This meeting was held in a church. The persons present discoursed and reasoned. Questions were propounded, and answers followed. An answer given by George Fox, in which he stated that “the church was the pillar and ground of truth, and that it did not consist of a mixed multitude, or of an old house, made up of lime, stones, and wood, but of living stones, living members, and a spiritual household, of which Christ was the head,” set them all on fire. The clergyman left the pulpit, the people their pews, and the meeting separated. George Fox, however, went afterwards to an Inn, where he argued with priests and professors of all sorts. Departing from thence, he took up his abode for some time in the vale of Beever, where he preached Repentance, and convinced many. He then returned into Nottinghamshire, and passed from thence into Derbyshire, in both which counties his doctrines spread. And, after this, warning Justices of the Peace, as he travelled along, to do justice, and notoriously wicked men to amend their lives, he came into the vale of Beever again. In this vale it was that he received, according to his own account, his commission from divine authority, by means of impressions on his mind, in consequence of which he conceived it to be discovered to him, among other things, that he was “to turn the people from darkness to the light.” By this time he had converted many hundreds to his opinions, and divers meetings of Friends, to use his own expression, “had been then gathered.”



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The year 1649 was ushered in by new labours. He was employed occasionally in writing to judges and justices to do justice, and in warning persons to fulfil the duties of their respective stations in life.

This year was the first of all his years of suffering. For it happened on a Sunday morning, that, coming in sight of the town of Nottingham, and seeing the great church, he felt an impression on his mind to go there. On hearing a part of the sermon, he was so struck with what he supposed to be the erroneous doctrine it contained, that he could not help publicly contradicting it. For this interruption of the service he was seized, and afterwards confined in prison. At Mansfield again, as he was declaring his own religious opinions in the church, the people fell upon him and beat and bruised him, and put him afterwards in the stocks. At Market Bosworth he was stoned and driven out of the place. At Chesterfield he addressed both the clergyman and the people, but they carried him before the mayor, who detained him till late at night, at which unseasonable time the officers and watchmen put him out of the town.

And here I would observe, before I proceed to the occurrences of another year, that there is reason to believe that George Fox disapproved of his own conduct in having interrupted the service of the church at Nottingham, which I have stated to have been the first occasion of his imprisonment. For if he believed any one of his actions, with which the world had been offended, to have been right, he repeated it, as circumstances called it forth, though he was sure of suffering for it either from the magistrates or the people. But he never repeated this, but he always afterwards, when any occasion of religious controversy occurred in any of the churches, where his travels lay, uniformly suspended his observations, till the service was over.

George Fox spent almost the whole of the next year, that is, of the year 1650, in confinement in Derby Prison.

In 1651, when he was set at liberty, he seems not to have been in the least disheartened by the treatment he had received there, or at the different places before mentioned, but to have resumed his travels, and to have held religious meetings, as he went along. He had even the boldness to go into Litchfield, because he imagined it to be his duty, and, with his shoes off to pronounce with an audible voice in the streets, and this on the market-day, a woe against that city. He continued also to visit the churches, as he journeyed, in the time of divine service, and to address the priests and the people publicly, as he saw occasion, but not, as I observed before, till he believed the service to be over. It does not appear, however, that he suffered any interruption upon these occasions, in the course of the present year, except at York-Minster; where, as he was beginning to preach after the sermon, he was hurried out of it, and thrown down the steps by the congregation, which was then breaking up. It appears that he had been generally well received in the county of York, and that he had convinced many.

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In the year 1652, after having passed through the shires of Nottingham and Lincoln, he came again into Yorkshire. Here, in the course of his journey, he ascended Pendle-Hill. At the top of this he apprehended it was opened to him, whither he was to direct his future steps, and that he saw a great host of people, who were to be converted by him in the course of his ministry. From this time we may consider him as having received his commission full and complete in his own mind. For in the vale of Beavor he conceived himself to have been informed of the various doctrines, which it became his duty to teach, and, on this occasion, to have had an insight of the places where he was to spread them.

To go over his life, even in the concise way, in which I have hitherto attempted it, would be to swell this introduction into a volume. I shall therefore, from this great period of his ministry, make only the following simple statement concerning it.

He continued his labours, as a minister of the gospel, and even preached, within two days of his death.

During this time he had settled meetings in most parts of the kingdom, and had given to these the foundation of that beautiful system of discipline, which I shall explain in this volume, and which exists among the Quakers at the present day.

He had travelled over England, Scotland, and Wales. He had been in Ireland. He had visited the British West-Indies, and America. He had extended his travels to Holland, and part of Germany.

He had written, in this interval, several religious books, and had addressed letters to kings, princes, magistrates, and people, as he felt impressions on his mind, which convinced him, that it become his duty to do it.

He had experienced also, during this interval, great bodily sufferings. He had been long and repeatedly confined in different gaols of the kingdom. The state of the gaols, in these times, is not easily to be conceived. That of Doomsdale at Launceston in Cornwall, has never been exceeded for filth and pestilential noisomeness, nor those of Lancaster and Scarborough-castles for exposure to the inclemency of the elements. In the two latter he was scarcely ever dry for two years; for the rain used to beat into them, and to run down upon the floor. This exposure to the severity of the weather occasioned his body and limbs to be benumbed, and to swell to a painful size, and laid the foundation, by injuring his health, for future occasional sufferings during the remainder of his life.

With respect to the religious doctrines, which George Fox inculcated during his ministry, it is not necessary to speak of them here, as they will be detailed in their proper places. I must observe, however, that he laid a stress upon many things, which the world

considered to be of little moment, but which his followers thought to be entirely worthy of his spiritual calling. He forbade all the modes and



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gestures, which are used as tokens of obeisance, or flattery, or honour, among men. He insisted on the necessity of plain speech or language. He declaimed against all sorts of music. He protested against the exhibitions of the theatre, and many of the accustomed diversions of the times. The early Quakers, who followed him in all these points, were considered by some as turning the world upside down; but they contended in reply, that they were only restoring it to its pure and primitive state; and that they had more weighty arguments for acting up to their principles in these respects, than others had for condemning them for so doing.

But whatever were the doctrines, whether civil, or moral, or religious, which George Fox promulgated, he believed that he had a divine commission for teaching them, and that he was to be the RESTORER of Christianity; that is, that he was to bring people from Jewish ceremonies and Pagan-fables, with which it had been intermixed, and also from worldly customs, to a religion which was to consist of spiritual feeling. I know not how the world will receive the idea, that he conceived himself to have had a revelation for these purposes. But nothing is more usual than for pious people, who have succeeded in any ordinary work of goodness, to say, that they were providentially led to it, and this expression is usually considered among Christians to be accurate. But I cannot always find the difference between a man being providentially led into a course of virtues and successful action, and his having an internal revelation for it. For if we admit that men may be providentially led upon such occasions, they must be led by the impressions upon their minds. But what are these internal impressions, but the dictates of an internal voice to those who follow them? But if pious men would believe themselves to have been thus providentially led, or acted upon, in any ordinary case of virtue, if it had been crowned with success, George Fox would have had equal reason to believe, from the success that attended his own particular undertaking, that he had been called upon to engage in it. For at a very early age he had confuted many of the professors of religion in public disputations. He had converted magistrates, priests, and people. Of the clergymen of those times some had left valuable livings, and followed him. In his thirtieth year he had seen no less than sixty persons, spreading, as ministers, his own doctrines. These, and other circumstances which might be related, would doubtless operate powerfully upon him to make him believe, that he was a chosen vessel. Now, if to these considerations it be added, that George Fox was not engaged in any particular or partial cause of benevolence, or mercy, or justice, but wholly and exclusively in a religious and spiritual work, and that it was the first of all his religious doctrines, that the spirit of God, *where men were obedient to it, guided them in their spiritual concerns*, he must have believed himself, on the consideration of his unparalleled success, to have been *providentially led*, or to have had an internal or spiritual commission for the cause, which he had undertaken.



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But this belief was not confined to himself. His followers believed in his commission also. They had seen, like himself, the extraordinary success of his ministry. They acknowledged the same internal admonitions, or revelations of the same spirit, in spiritual concerns. They had been witnesses of his innocent and blameless life. There were individuals in the kingdom, who had publicly professed sights and prophecies concerning him. At an early age he had been reported, in some parts of the country, as a youth, who had a *discerning spirit*. It had gone abroad, that he had healed many persons, who had been sick of various diseases. Some of his prophecies had come true in the lifetime of those, who had heard them delivered. His followers too had seen many, who had come purposely to molest and apprehend him, depart quietly, as if their anger and their power had been providentially broken. They had seen others, who had been his chief persecutors, either falling into misfortunes, or dying a miserable or an untimely death. They had seen him frequently cast into prison, but always getting out again by means of his innocence. From these causes the belief was universal among them, that his commission was of divine authority; and they looked upon him therefore in no other light, than that of a teacher, who had been sent to them from heaven.

George Fox was in his person above the ordinary size. He is described by William Penn as a "lusty person." He was graceful in his countenance. His eye was particularly piercing, so that some of those, who were disputing with him, were unable to bear it. He was, in short, manly, dignified, and commanding in his aspect and appearance.

In his manner of living he was temperate. He ate sparingly. He avoided, except medicinally, all strong drink.

Notwithstanding the great exercise he was accustomed to take, he allowed himself but little sleep.

In his outward demeanour he was modest, and without affectation. He possessed a certain gravity of manners, but he was nevertheless affable, and courteous, and civil beyond the usual forms of breeding.

In his disposition he was meek, and tender, and compassionate. He was kind to the poor, without any exception, and, in his own society, laid the foundation of that attention towards them, which the world remarks as an honour to the Quaker-character at the present day. But the poor were not the only persons, for whom, he manifested an affectionate concern. He felt and sympathized wherever humanity could be interested. He wrote to the judges on the subject of capital punishments, warning them not to take away the lives of persons for theft. On the coast of Cornwall he was deeply distressed at finding the inhabitants, more intent upon plundering the wrecks of vessels that were driven upon their shores, than upon saving the poor and miserable mariners, who were clinging to them; and he bore his public testimony against this practice, by sending

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letters to all the clergymen and magistrates in the parishes, bordering upon the sea, and reproving them for their unchristian conduct In the West-Indies also he exhorted those, who attended his meetings to be merciful to their slaves, and to give them their freedom in due time. He considered these as belonging to their families, and that religious instruction was due to these, as the branches of them, for whom one day or other they would be required to give a solemn account. Happy had it been, if these christian exhortations had been attended to, or if those families only, whom he thus seriously addressed, had continued to be true Quakers; for they would have set an example, which would have proved to the rest of the islanders, and the world at large, that the impolicy is not less than the wickedness of oppression. Thus was George Fox probably the first person, who publicly declared against this species of slavery. Nothing in short, that could be deplored by humanity, seems to have escaped his eye; and his benevolence, when excited, appears to have suffered no interruption in its progress by the obstacles, which bigotry would have thrown in the way of many, on account of the difference of a persons country, or of his colour, or of his sect.

He was patient under his own sufferings. To those, who smote his right cheek, he offered his left; and, in the true spirit of christianity, he indulged no rancour against the worst of his oppressors. He made use occasionally of a rough expression towards them; but he would never have hurt any of them, if he had had them in his power.

He possessed the most undaunted courage; for he was afraid of no earthly power. He was never deterred from going to meetings for worship, though he knew the officers would be there, who were to seize his person. In his personal conversations with Oliver Cromwell, or in his letters to him as protector, or in his letters to the parliament, or to king Charles the second, or to any other personage, he discovered his usual boldness of character, and never lost, by means of any degrading flattery, his dignity as a man.

But his perseverance was equal to his courage; for he was no sooner out of gaol, than he repeated the very acts, believing them to be right, for which he had been confined. When he was forced also out of the meeting-houses by the officers of justice, he preached at the very doors. In short, he was never hindered but by sickness, or imprisonments, from persevering in his religious pursuits.

With respect to his word, he was known to have held it so sacred, that the judges frequently dismissed him without bail, on his bare promise that he would be forth coming on a given day. On these occasions, he used always to qualify his promise by the expression, "*if the Lord permit.*"



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Of the integrity of his own character, as a christian, he was so scrupulously tenacious, that, when he might have been sometimes set at liberty by making trifling acknowledgements, he would make none, least it should imply a conviction, that he had been confined for that which was wrong; and, at one time in particular, king Charles the second was so touched with the hardship of his case, that he offered to discharge him from prison by a pardon. But George Fox declined it on the idea, that, as pardon implied guilt, his innocence would be called in question by his acceptance of it. The king, however, replied, that "he need not scruple being released by a pardon, for many a man who was as innocent as a child, had had a pardon granted him." But still he chose to decline it. And he lay in gaol, till, upon a trial of the errors in his indictment, he was discharged in an honourable way.

As a minister of the gospel, he was singularly eminent. He had a wonderful gift in expounding the scriptures. He was particularly impressive in his preaching; but he excelled most in prayer.

Here it was, that he is described by William Penn, as possessing the most awful and reverend frame he ever beheld. His presence, says the same author, expressed "a religious majesty." That there must have been something more than usually striking either in his manner, or in his language, or in his arguments, or in all of them combined, or that he spoke "in the *demonstration* of the spirit and with power," we are warranted in pronouncing from the general and powerful effects produced. In the year 1648, when he had but once before spoken in public, it was observed of him at Mansfield, at the end of his prayer, "*that it was then, as in the days of the apostles, when the house was shaken where they were.*" In the same manner he appears to have gone on, making a deep impression upon his hearers, whenever he was fully and fairly heard. Many clergymen, as I observed before, in consequence of his powerful preaching, gave up their livings; and constables, who attended the meetings, in order to apprehend him, felt themselves disarmed, so that they went away without attempting to secure his person.

As to his life, it was innocent. It is true indeed, that there were persons, high in civil offices, who, because he addressed the people in public, considered him as a disturber of the peace. But none of these ever pretended to cast a stain on his moral character. He was considered both by friends and enemies, as irreproachable in his life.

Such was the character of the founder of Quakerism, He was born in July 1624, and died on the thirteenth of November 1690, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He had separated himself from the world in order to attend to serious things, as I observed before, at the age of nineteen, so that he had devoted himself to the exercises and services of religion for no less a period than forty-eight years. A few hours before



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his death, upon some friends asking him how he found himself, he replied “never heed. All is well. The seed or power of God reigns over all, and over death itself, blessed be the Lord.” This answer was full of courage, and corresponded with that courage, which had been conspicuous in him during life. It contained on evidence, as manifested in his own feelings, of the tranquillity and happiness of his mind, and that the power and terrors of death had been vanquished in himself. It shewed also the ground of his courage and of his confidence. “He was full of assurance,” says William Penn, “that he had triumphed over death, and so much so, even to the last, that death appeared to him hardly worth notice or mention.” Thus he departed this life, affording an instance of the truth of those words of the psalmist, “Behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

PREFATORY ARRANGEMENTS

AND

REMARKS.

PREFATORY ARRANGEMENTS AND REMARKS.

QUAKERISM, A HIGH PROFESSION—QUAKERS GENERALLY ALLOWED TO BE A MORAL PEOPLE—VARIOUS CAUSES OF THIS MORALITY OF CHARACTER—THEIR MORAL EDUCATION, WHICH IS ONE OF THEM, THE FIRST SUBJECT FOR CONSIDERATION —THIS EDUCATION UNIVERSAL AMONG THEM—ITS ORIGIN—THE PROHIBITIONS BELONGING TO IT CHIEFLY TO BE CONSIDERED.

* * * * *

George Fox never gave, while living, nor left after his death, any definition of Quakerism. He left, however, his journal behind him, and he left what is of equal importance, his example. Combining these with the sentiments and practice of the early Quakers, I may state, in a few words, what Quakerism is, or at least what we may suppose George Fox intended it to be.

Quakerism may be defined to be an attempt, under the divine influence, at practical christianity as far as it can be carried. Those, who profess it, consider themselves bound to regulate their opinions, words, actions, and even outward demeanour, by christianity, and by christianity alone. They consider themselves bound to give up such of the customs, or fashions of men, however general, or generally approved, as militate, in any manner, against the letter or the spirit of the gospel. Hence they mix but little with the world, that they may be less liable to imbibe its spirit. Hence George Fox made a



distinction between the members of his own society and others, by the different appellations of *Friends*, and *People of the world*. They consider themselves also under an obligation to follow virtue, not ordinarily, *but even to the death*. For they profess never to make a sacrifice of conscience, and therefore, if any ordinances of man are enjoined them, which they think to be contrary to the divine will, they believe right not to submit to them, but rather, after the example of the apostles and primitive christians, to suffer any loss, penalty, or inconvenience, which may result to them for so doing.

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This then, in a few words, is a general definition of [3]Quakerism. It is, as we see, a most strict profession of practical virtue under the direction of christianity, and such as, when we consider the infirmities of human nature, and the temptations that daily surround it, it must be exceedingly difficult to fulfil. But, whatever difficulties may have lain in the way, or however, on account of the necessary weakness of human nature, the best individuals among the Quakers may have fallen below the pattern of excellence, which they have copied, nothing is more true, than that the result has been, that the whole society, as a body, have obtained from their countrymen, the character of a moral people.

[Footnote 3: I wish to be understood, in writing this work, that I can give no account that will be applicable to all under the name of Quakers. My account will comprehend the general practice, or that which ought to be the practice of those, who profess Quakerism.]

If the reader be a lover of virtue, and anxious for the moral improvement of mankind, he will be desirous of knowing what means the Quakers have used to have preserved, for a hundred and fifty years, this desirable reputation in the world.

If we were to put the question to the Quakers themselves for their own opinion upon it, I believe I can anticipate their reply. They would attribute any morality, they might be supposed to have, *to the Supreme Being*, whose will having been discovered by means of the scriptures, and of religious impressions upon the mind, when it has been calm, and still, and abstracted from the world, they have endeavoured to obey. But there is no doubt, that we may add, *auxiliary causes* of this morality, and such as the Quakers themselves would allow to have had their share in producing it, under the same influence. The first of these may be called their moral education. The second their discipline. The third may be said to consist of those domestic, or other customs, which are peculiar to them, as a society of christians. The fourth of their *peculiar tenets of religion*. In fact, there are many circumstances interwoven into the constitution of the society of the Quakers, each of which has a separate effect, and all of which have a combined tendency, towards the production of moral character.

These auxiliary causes I shall consider and explain in their turn. In the course of this explanation the reader will see, that, if other people were to resort to the same means as the Quakers, they would obtain the same reputation, or that human nature is not so stubborn, but that it will yield to a given force. But as it is usual, in examining the life of an individual, to begin with his youth, or, if it has been eminent, to begin with the education he has received, so I shall fix upon the first of the auxiliary causes I have mentioned, or the *moral education* of the Quakers, as the subject for the first division of my work.



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Of this moral education I may observe here, that it is universal among the society, or that it obtains where the individuals are considered to be true Quakers. It matters not, how various the tempers of young persons may be, who come under it, they must submit to it. Nor does it signify what may be the disposition, or the whim, and caprice of their parents, they must submit to it alike. The Quakers believe that they have discovered that system of morality, which christianity prescribes; and therefore that they can give no dispensation to their members, under any circumstances whatever, to deviate from it. The origin of this system, as a standard of education in the society, is as follows.

When the first Quakers met in union, they consisted of religious or spiritually minded men. From that time to the present, there has always been, as we may imagine, a succession of such in the society. Many of these, at their great meetings, which have been annual since those days, have delivered their sentiments on various interesting points. These sentiments were regularly printed, in the form of yearly epistles, and distributed among Quaker families. Extracts, in process of time, were made from them, and arranged under different heads, and published in one book, under the name of [4]Advices. Now these advices comprehend important subjects. They relate to customs, manners, fashions, conversation, conduct. They contain of course *recommendations*, and suggest *prohibitions*, to the society, as *rules of guidance*: and as they came from spiritually *minded* men on *solemn occasions*, they are supposed to have had a *spiritual origin*. Hence Quaker parents manage their youth according to these *recommendations* and *prohibitions*, and hence this book of extracts (for so it is usually called) from which I have obtained a considerable portion of my knowledge on this subject, forms the basis of the moral Education of the Society.

[Footnote 4: The Book is intitled "Extracts from the minutes made, and from the advices given, at the yearly Meeting of the Quakers in London, since its first Institution."]

Of the contents of this book, I shall notice, while I am treating upon this subject, not those rules which are of a recommendatory, but those, which are of a *prohibitory nature*. Education is regulated either by recommendations, or by prohibitions, or by both conjoined. The former relate to things, where there is a wish that youth should conform to them, but where a trifling deviation from them would not be considered as an act of delinquency publicly reprehensible. The latter to things, where any compliance with them becomes a positive offence. The Quakers, in consequence of the vast power they have over their members by means of their discipline, lay a great stress upon the latter. They consider their prohibitions, when duly watched and enforced, as so many *barriers against vice* or *preservatives of virtue*. Hence they are the grand component parts of their moral education, and hence I shall chiefly consider them in the chapters, which are now to follow upon this subject.



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MORAL EDUCATION OF THE QUAKERS.

CHAP.I.

Moral Education of the Quakers—amusements necessary for youth—Quakers distinguish between the useful and the hurtful—the latter specified and forbidden.

When the blooming spring sheds abroad its benign influence, man feels it equally with the rest of created nature. The blood circulates more freely, and a new current of life seems to be diffused, in his veins. The aged man is enlivened, and the sick man feels himself refreshed. Good spirits and cheerful countenances succeed. But as the year changes in its seasons, and rolls round to its end, the tide seems to slacken, and the current of feeling to return to its former level.

But this is not the case with the young. The whole year to them is a kind of perpetual spring. Their blood runs briskly throughout. Their spirits are kept almost constantly alive; and as the cares of the world occasion no drawback, they feel a perpetual disposition to cheerfulness and to mirth. This disposition seems to be universal in them. It seems too to be felt by us all; that is, the spring, enjoyed by youth, seems to operate as spring to maturer age. The sprightly and smiling looks of children, their shrill, lively, and cheerful voices, their varied and exhilarating sports, all these are interwoven with the other objects of our senses, and have an imperceptible, though an undoubted influence, in adding to the cheerfulness of our minds. Take away the beautiful choristers from the woods, and those, who live in the country, would but half enjoy the spring. So, if by means of any unparalleled pestilence, the children of a certain growth were to be swept away, and we were to lose this infantile link in the chain of age, those, who were left behind, would find the creation dull, or experience an interruption in the cheerfulness of their feelings, till the former were successively restored.

The bodies, as well as the minds of children, require exercise for their growth: and as their disposition is thus lively and sportive, such exercises, as are amusing, are necessary, and such amusements, on account of the length of the spring which they enjoy, must be expected to be long.

The Quakers, though they are esteemed an austere people, are sensible of these wants or necessities of youth. They allow their children most of the sports or exercises of the body, and most of the amusements or exercises of the mind, which other children of the island enjoy; but as children are to become *men*, and men are to become *moral characters*, they believe that bounds should be drawn, or that an unlimited permission to follow every recreation would be hurtful.



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The Quakers therefore have thought it proper to interfere on this subject, and to draw the line between those amusements, which they consider to be salutary, and those, which they consider to be hurtful. They have accordingly struck out of the general list of these such, and such only, as, by being likely to endanger their morality, would be likely to interrupt the usefulness, and the happiness, of their lives. Among the bodily exercises, *dancing*, and the *diversions of the field*, have been proscribed; among the mental, *music*, *novels*, the *theatre*, and all games of *chance*, of every description, have been forbidden. These are the principal prohibitions, which the Quakers have made on the subject of their moral education. They were suggested, most of them, by George Fox, but were brought into the discipline, at different times, by his successors.

I shall now consider each of these prohibitions separately, and I shall give all the reasons, which the Quakers themselves give, why, as a society of Christians, they have, thought it right to issue and enforce them.

CHAP. II ...SECT. I.

Games of chance—Quakers forbid cards, dice, and other similar amusements—also, concerns in lotteries—and certain transactions in the stocks—they forbid also all wagers, and speculations by a monied stake—the peculiar wisdom of the latter prohibition, as collected from the history of the origin of some of the amusements of the times.

When we consider the depravity of heart, and the misery and ruin, that are frequently connected with gaming, it would be strange indeed, if the Quakers, as highly professing Christians, had not endeavoured to extirpate it from their own body.

No people, in fact, have taken more or more effectual measures for its suppression. They have proscribed the use of all games of chance, and of all games of skill, that are connected with chance in any manner. Hence *cards*, *dice*, *horse-racing*, *cock-fighting*, and all the amusements, which come under this definition, are forbidden.

But as there are certain transactions, independently of these amusements, which are equally connected with hazard, and which individuals might convert into the means of moral depravity and temporal ruin, they have forbidden these also, by including them under the appellation of gaming.

Of this description are concerns in the lottery, from which all Quakers are advised to refrain. These include the purchase of tickets, and all insurance upon the same.

In transactions of this kind there is always a monied stake, and the issue is dependent upon chance. There is of course the same fascinating stimulus as in cards, or dice, arising from the hope of gain. The mind also must be equally agitated between hope

and fear; and the same state of desperation may be produced, with other fatal consequences, in the event of loss.

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Buying and selling in the public stocks of the kingdom is, under particular circumstances, discouraged also. Where any of the members of the society buy into the stocks, under the idea, that they are likely to obtain better security, or more permanent advantages, such a transfer of their property is allowable. But if any were to make a practice of buying or selling, week after week, upon speculation only, such a practice would come under the denomination of gaming. In this case, like the preceding, it is evident, that money would be the object in view; that the issue would be hazardous; and, if the stake or deposit were of great importance, the tranquillity of the mind might be equally disturbed, and many temporal sufferings might follow.

The Quakers have thought it right, upon the same principle, to forbid the custom of laying wagers upon any occasion whatever, or of reaping advantage from any doubtful event, by a previous agreement upon a monied stake. This prohibition, however, is not on record, like the former, but is observed as a traditional law. No Quaker-parent would suffer his child, nor Quaker-schoolmaster the children entrusted to his care, nor any member another, to be concerned in amusements of this kind, without a suitable reproof.

By means of these prohibitions, which are enforced, in a great measure, by the discipline, the Quakers have put a stop to gaming more effectually than others, but particularly by means of the latter. For history has shewn us, that we cannot always place a reliance on a mere prohibition of any particular amusement or employment, as a cure for gaming, because any pastime or employment, however innocent in itself, may be made an instrument for its designs. There are few customs, however harmless, which avarice cannot convert into the means of rapine on the one hand, and of distress on the other.

Many of the games, which are now in use with such pernicious effects to individuals, were not formerly the instruments of private ruin. Horse-racing was originally instituted with a view of promoting a better breed of horses for the services of man. Upon this principle it was continued. It afforded no private emolument to any individual. The bystanders were only spectators. They were not interested in the victory. The victor himself was remunerated not with money, but with crowns and garlands, the testimonies of public applause. But the spirit of gaming got hold of the custom, and turned it into a private diversion, which was to afford the opportunity of a private prize.

Cock-fighting, as we learn from Aelian, was instituted by the Athenians, immediately after their victory over the Persians, to perpetuate the memory of the event, and to stimulate the courage of the youth of Greece in the defence of their own freedom; and it was continued upon the same principle, or as a public institution for a public good. But the spirit of avarice seized it, as it has done the custom of horse-racing, and continued it for a private gain.



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Cards, that is, European cards, were, as all are agreed, of an harmless origin. Charles the sixth, of France, was particularly afflicted with the hypochondriasis. While in this disordered state, one of his subjects invented them, to give variety of amusement to his mind. From the court they passed into private families. And here the same avaricious spirit fastened upon them, and, with its cruel talons, clawed them, as it were, to its own purposes, not caring how much these little instruments of cheerfulness in human disease were converted into instruments for the extension of human pain.

In the same manner as the spirit of gaming has seized upon these different institutions and amusements of antiquity, and turned them from their original to new and destructive uses, so there is no certainty, that it will not seize upon others, which may have been innocently resorted to, and prostitute them equally with the former. The mere prohibition of particular amusements, even if it could be enforced, would be no cure for the evil. The brain of man is fertile enough, as fast as one custom is prohibited, to fix upon another. And if all the games, now in use, were forbidden, it would be still fertile enough to invent others for the same purposes. The bird that flies in the air, and the snail, that crawls upon the ground, have not escaped the notice of the gamester, but have been made, each of them, subservient to his pursuits. The wisdom, therefore, of the Quakers, in making it to be considered as a law of the society, that no member is to lay wagers, or reap advantage from any doubtful event, by a previous agreement upon a monied stake, is particularly conspicuous. For, whenever it can be enforced, it must be an effectual cure for gaming. For we have no idea, how a man can gratify his desire of gain by means of any of the amusements of chance, if he can make no monied arrangements about their issue.

SECT. II.

The first argument for the prohibition of cards, and of similar amusements, by the Quakers, is—that they are below the dignity of the intellect of man, and of his moral and christian character—sentiments of Addison on this subject.

The reasons, which the Quakers give for the prohibition of cards, and of amusements of a similar nature, to the members of their own society, are generally such as are given by other Christians, though they make use of one, which is peculiar to themselves.

It has been often observed, that the word amusement is proper to characterize the employments of children, but that the word utility is the only one proper to characterize the employment of men.

The first argument of the Quakers, on this subject, is of a complexion, similar to that of the observation just mentioned. For when they consider man, as a reasonable being, they are of opinion, that his occupations should be rational. And when they consider him as making a profession of the Christian religion, they expect that his conduct should



be manly, serious, and dignified. But all such amusements, as those in question, if resorted to for the filling up of his vacant hours, they conceive to be unworthy of his intellect, and to be below the dignity of his Christian character.



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They believe also, when they consider man as a moral being, that it is his duty, as it is unquestionably his interest, to aim at the improvement of his moral character. Now one of the foundations, on which this improvement must be raised, is knowledge. But knowledge is only slowly acquired. And human life, or the time for the acquisition of it, is but short. It does not appear, therefore, in the judgment of the Quakers, that a person can have much time for amusements of this sort, if he be bent upon obtaining that object, which will be most conducive to his true happiness, or to the end of his existence here.

Upon this first argument of the Quakers I shall only observe, lest it should be thought singular, that sentiments of a similar import are to be found in authors, of a different religious denomination, and of acknowledged judgment and merit. Addison, in one of his excellent chapters on the proper employment of life, has the following observation: "The next method, says he, that I would propose to fill up our time should be innocent and useful diversions. I must confess I think it is below reasonable creatures, to be altogether conversant in such diversions, as are merely innocent, and have nothing else to recommend them, but that there is no hurt in them. Whether any kind of gaming has even thus much to say for itself I shall not determine: but I think it is very wonderful to see persons of the best sense passing a dozen hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation, but what is made up of a few game-phrases, and no other ideas, but those of red or black spots ranged together in different figures. Would not a man laugh to hear any one of this species complaining that life is short?"

SECT. III.

Cards on account of the manner in which they are generally used, produce an excitement of the passions—historical anecdotes of this excitement—this excitement another cause of their prohibition by the Quakers, because it unfits the mind, according to their notions, for the reception of religious impressions.

The Quakers are not so superstitious as to imagine that there can be any evil in cards, considered abstractedly as cards, or in some of the other amusements, that have been mentioned. The red or the black images on their surfaces can neither pollute the fingers, nor the minds, of those who handle them. They may be moved about, and dealt in various ways, and no objectionable consequences may follow. They may be used, and this innocently, to construct the similitudes of things. They may be arranged, so as to exhibit devices, which may be productive of harmless mirth. The evil, connected with them, will depend solely upon the manner of their use. If they are used for a trial of skill, and for this purpose only, they will be less dangerous, than where they are used for a similar trial, with a monied stake. In the former case, however, they may be made to ruffle the temper, for, in the very midst of victory, the combatant may experience defeat. In the latter case, the loss of victory will be accompanied by a pecuniary loss, and two

causes, instead of one, of the excitement of the passions, will operate at once upon the mind.

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It seldom happens, and it is much to be lamented, either that children, or that more mature persons, are satisfied with amusements of this kind, so as to use them simply as trials of skill. A monied stake is usually proposed, as the object to be obtained. This general attachment of a monied victory to cards is productive frequently of evil. It generates often improper feelings. It gives birth to uneasiness and impatience, while the contest is in doubt, and not unfrequently to anger and resentment, when it is over.

But the passions, which are thus excited among youth, are excited also, but worked up to greater mischief, where grown up persons follow these amusements imprudently, than where children are concerned. For though avarice, and impatience, and anger, are called forth among children, they subside sooner. A boy, though he loses his all when he loses his stake, suffers nothing from the idea of having impaired the means of his future comfort, and independence. His next week's allowance, or the next little gift, will set him right again. But when a grown up person, who is settled in the world, is led on by these fascinating amusements, so as to lose that which would be of importance to his present comfort, but more particularly to the happiness of his future life, the case is materially altered. The same passions, which harass the one, will harass the other, but the effects will be widely different. I have been told that persons have been so agitated before the playing of the card, that was to decide their destiny, that large drops of sweat have fallen from their faces, though they were under no bodily exertions. Now, what must have been the state of their minds, when the card in question proved decisive of their loss? Reason must unquestionably have fled. And it must have been succeeded instantly either by fury or despair. It would not have been at all wonderful, if persons in such a state were to have lost their senses, or, if unable to contain themselves, they were immediately to have vented their enraged feelings either upon themselves, or upon others, who were the authors, or the spectators, of their loss.

It is not necessary to have recourse to the theory of the human mind, to anticipate the consequences, that would be likely to result to grown up persons from such an extreme excitement of the passions. History has given a melancholy picture of these, as they have been observable among different nations of the world.

The ancient Germans, according to Tacitus, played to such desperation, that, when they had lost every thing else, they staked their personal liberty, and, in the event of bad fortune, became the slaves of the winners.

D'Israeli, in his curiosities of literature, has given us the following account. "Dice, says he, and that little pugnacious animal, the cock, are the chief instruments employed by the numerous nations of the east, to agitate their minds, and ruin their fortunes, to which the Chinese, who are desperate gamesters, add the use of cards. When all other property is played away, the Asiatic gambler does not scruple to stake his wife, or his child, on the cast of a dye, or on the strength and courage of a martial bird. If still unsuccessful, the last venture is himself."

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“In the island of Ceylon, cock-fighting is carried to a great height. The Sumatrans are addicted to the use of dice. A strong spirit of play characterizes the Malayan. After having resigned every thing to the good fortune of the winner, he is reduced to a horrid state of desperation. He then loosens a certain lock of hair, which indicates war and destruction to all he meets. He intoxicates himself with opium, and working himself to a fit of frenzy, he bites and kills every one, who comes in his way. But as soon as ever this lock is seen flowing, it is lawful to fire at the person, and to destroy him as soon as possible.”

“To discharge their gambling debts, the Siamese sell their possessions, their families, and at length themselves. The Chinese play night and day, till they have lost all they are worth, and then they usually go and hang themselves. In the newly discovered islands of the Pacific Ocean, they venture even their hatchets, which they hold as invaluable acquisitions, on running matches. We saw a man, says Cooke, in his last voyage, beating his breast and tearing his hair in the violence of rage, for having lost three hatchets at one of these races, and which he had purchased with nearly half of his property.”

But it is not necessary to go beyond our own country for a confirmation of these evils. Civilized as we are beyond all the people who have been mentioned, and living where the Christian religion is professed, we have the misfortune to see our own countrymen engaged in similar pursuits, and equally to the disturbance of the tranquillity of their minds, and equally to their own ruin. They cannot, it is true, stake their personal liberty, because they can neither sell themselves, nor be held as slaves. But we see them staking their comfort, and all their prospects in life. We see them driven into a multitude of crimes. We see them suffering in a variety of ways. How often has duelling, with all its horrible effects, been the legitimate offspring of gaming! How many suicides have proceeded from the same source! How many persons in consequence of a violation of the laws, occasioned solely by gaming, have come to ignominious and untimely ends!

Thus it appears that gaming, wherever it has been practised to excess, whether by cards, or by dice, or by other instruments, or whether among nations civilized or barbarous, or whether in ancient or modern times, has been accompanied with the most violent excitement of the passions, so as to have driven its votaries to desperation, and to have ruined their morality and their happiness.



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It is upon the excitement of the passions, which must have risen to a furious height, before such desperate actions as those, which have been specified, could have commenced, that the Quakers have founded their second argument for the prohibition of games of chance, or of any amusements or transactions, connected with a monied stake. It is one of their principal tenets, as will be diffusively shewn in a future volume, that the supreme Creator of the universe affords a certain portion of his own spirit, or a certain emanation of the pure principle, to all his rational creatures, for the regulation of their spiritual concerns. They believe, therefore, that stillness and quietness, both of spirit and of body, are necessary for them, as far as these can be obtained. For how can a man, whose earthly passions are uppermost, be in a fit state to receive, or a man of noisy and turbulent habits be in a fit state to attend to, the spiritual admonitions of this pure influence? Hence one of the first points in the education of the Quakers is to attend to the subjugation of the will; to take care that every perverse passion be checked; and that the creature be rendered calm and passive. Hence Quaker children are rebuked for all expressions of anger, as tending to raise those feelings, which ought to be suppressed. A raising even of their voices beyond due bounds is discouraged, as leading to the disturbance of their minds. They are taught to rise in the morning in quietness, to go about their ordinary occupations with quietness, and to retire in quietness to their beds. Educated in this manner, we seldom see a noisy or an irascible Quaker. This kind of education is universal among the Quakers. It is adopted at home. It is adopted in their schools. The great and practical philanthropist, John Howard, when he was at Ackworth, which is the great public school of the Quakers, was so struck with the quiet deportment of the children there, that he mentioned it with approbation in his work on Lazarettos, and gave to the public some of its rules, as models for imitation in other seminaries.

But if the Quakers believe that this pure principle, when attended to, is an infallible guide to them in their religious or spiritual concerns; if they believe that its influences are best discovered in the quietness and silence of their senses; if, moreover, they educate with a view of producing such a calm and tranquil state; it must be obvious, that they can never allow either to their children, or to those of maturer years, the use of any of the games of chance, because these, on account of their peculiar nature, are so productive of sudden fluctuations of hope, and fear, and joy, and disappointment, that they are calculated, more than any other, to promote a turbulence of the human passions.

SECT. IV.

Another cause of their prohibition is, that, if indulged in, they may produce habits of gaming—these habits after the moral character—they occasion men to become avaricious—dishonest—cruel—and disturbers of the order of nature—observations by Hartley from his essay on man.

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Another reason, why the Quakers do not allow their members the use of cards, and of similar amusements, is, that, if indulged in, they may produce habits of gaming, which, if once formed, generally ruin the moral character.

It is in the nature of cards, that chance should have the greatest share in the production of victory, and there is, as I have observed before, usually a monied stake. But where chance is concerned, neither victory nor defeat can be equally distributed among the combatants. If a person wins, he feels himself urged to proceed. The amusement also points out to him the possibility of a sudden acquisition of fortune without the application of industry. If he loses, he does not despair. He still perseveres in the contest, for the amusement points out to him the possibility of repairing his loss. In short, there is no end of hope upon these occasions. It is always hovering about during the contest. Cards, therefore, and amusements of the same nature, by holding up prospects of pecuniary acquisitions on the one hand, and of repairing losses, that may arise on any occasion, on the other, have a direct tendency to produce habits of gaming.

Now the Quakers consider these habits as, of all others, the most pernicious; for they usually change the disposition of a man, and ruin his moral character.

From generous-hearted they make him avaricious. The covetousness too, which they introduce as it were into his nature, is of a kind, that is more than ordinarily injurious. It brings disease upon the body, as it brings corruption upon the mind. Habitual gamblers regard neither their own health, nor their own personal convenience, but will sit up night after night, though under bodily indisposition, at play, if they can only grasp the object of their pursuit.

From a just and equitable they often render him a dishonest person. Professed gamblers, it is well known, lie in wait for the young, the ignorant, and the unwary: and they do not hesitate to adopt fraudulent practices to secure them as their prey. In intoxication has been also frequently resorted to for the same purpose.

From humane and merciful they change him into hard hearted and barbarous. Habitual gamblers have compassion for neither men nor brutes. The former they can ruin and leave destitute, without the sympathy of a tear. The latter they can oppress to death, calculating the various powers of their declining strength, and their capability of enduring pain.

They convert him from an orderly to a disorderly being, and to a disturber of the order of the universe. Professed gamblers sacrifice every thing, without distinction, to their wants, not caring if the order of nature, or if the very ends of creation, be reversed. They turn day into night, and night into day. They force animated nature into situations for which it was never destined. They lay their hands upon things innocent and useful, and make them noxious. They by hold of things barbarous, and render them still more barbarous by their pollutions.



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Hartley, in his essay upon man, has the following observation upon gaming.

“The practice of playing at games of chance and skill is one of the principal amusements of life. And it may be thought hard to condemn it as absolutely unlawful, since there are particular cases of persons, infirm in body and mind, where it seems requisite to draw them out of themselves by a variety of ideas and ends in view, which gently engage the attention.—But the reason takes place in very few instances.—The general motives to play are avarice, joined with a fraudulent intention explicit or implicit, ostentation of skill, and spleen, through the want of some serious, useful occupation. And as this practice arises from such corrupt sources, so it has a tendency to increase them; and indeed may be considered as an express method of begetting and inculcating self-interest, ill will, envy, and the like. For by gaming a man learns to pursue his own interest solely and explicitly, and to rejoice at the loss of others, as his own gain, grieve at their gain, as his own loss, thus entirely reversing the order established by providence for social creatures.”

CHAP. III.....SECT. I.

Music forbidden—general apology for the Quakers on account of their prohibition of so delightful a science—music particularly abused at the present day—wherein this abuse consists—present use of it almost inseparable from the abuse.

Plato, when he formed what he called his pure republic, would not allow music to have any place in it. George Fox and his followers were of opinion, that it could not be admitted in a system of pure Christianity. The modern Quakers have not differed from their predecessors on this subject; and therefore music is understood to be prohibited throughout the society at the present day.

It will doubtless appear strange that there should be found people, to object to an art, which is capable of being made productive of so much pleasurable feeling, and which, if it be estimated either by the extent or the rapidity of its progress, is gaining in the reputation of the world. But it may be observed that “all that glitters is not gold.” So neither is all, that pleases the ear, perfectly salubrious to the mind. There are few customs, against which some argument or other may not be advanced: few in short, which man has not perverted, and where the use has not become, in an undue measure, connected with the abuse.

Providence gave originally to man a beautiful and a perfect world. He filled it with things necessary and things delightful. And yet man has often turned these from their true and original design. The very wood on the surface of the earth he has cut down, and the very stone and metal in its bowels he has hewn and cast, and converted into a graven image, and worshipped in the place of his beneficent Creator. The food, which has



been given him for his nourishment, he has frequently converted by his intemperance into the means of injuring his health. The wine that was designed to make his heart glad on reasonable and necessary occasions, he has used often to the stupefaction of his senses, and the degradation of his moral character. The very raiment, which has been afforded him for his body, he has abused also, so that it has frequently become a source for the excitement of his pride.



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Just so it has been, and so it is, with music at the present day.

Music acts upon our senses, and may be made productive of a kind of natural delight, for in the same manner as we receive, through the organ of the eye, a kind of involuntary pleasure, when we look at beautiful arrangements, or combinations, or proportions, in nature, and the pleasure may be said to be natural, so the pleasure is neither less, nor less involuntary, nor less natural, which we receive, through the organ of the ear, from a combination of sounds flowing in musical progression.

The latter pleasure, as it seems natural, so, under certain limitations, it seems innocent. The first tendency of music, I mean of instrumental, is to calm and tranquillize the passions. The ideas, which it excites, are of the social, benevolent, and pleasant kind. It leads occasionally to joy, to grief, to tenderness, to sympathy, but never to malevolence, ingratitude, anger, cruelty, or revenge. For no combination of musical sounds can be invented, by which the latter passions can be excited in the mind, without the intervention of the human voice.

But notwithstanding that music may be thus made the means both of innocent and pleasurable feeling, yet it has been the misfortune of man, as mother cases, to abuse it, and never probably more than in the present age. For the use of it, as it is at present taught, is almost inseparable from its abuse. Music has been so generally cultivated, and to such perfection, that it now ceases to delight the ear, unless it comes from the fingers of the proficient. But great proficiency cannot be obtained in this science, without great sacrifices of time. If young females are to be brought up to it, rather as to a profession, than introduced to it as a source of occasional innocent recreation, or if their education is thought most perfect, where their musical attainments are the highest, not only hours, but even years, must be devoted to the pursuit. Such a devotion to this one object must, it is obvious, leave less time than is proper for others, that are more important. The knowledge of domestic occupations, and the various sorts of knowledge, that are acquired by reading, must be abridged, in proportion as this science is cultivated to professional precision. And hence, independently of any arguments, which the Quakers may advance against it, it must be acknowledged by the sober world to be chargeable with a criminal waste of time. And this waste of time is the more to be deprecated, because it frequently happens, that, when young females marry, music is thrown aside, after all the years that have been spent in its acquisition, as an employment, either then unnecessary, or as an employment, which, amidst the new cares of a family, they have not leisure to follow.



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Another serious charge may be advanced against music, as it is practised at the present day. Great proficiency, without which music now ceases to be delightful, cannot, as I have just observed, be made without great application, or the application of some years. Now all this long application is of a sedentary nature. But all occupations of a sedentary nature are injurious to the human constitution, and weaken and disorder it in time. But in proportion as the body is thus weakened by the sedentary nature of the employment, it is weakened again by the enervating powers of the art. Thus the nervous system is acted upon by two enemies at once, and in the course of the long education necessary for this science, the different disorders of hysteria are produced. Hence the females of the present age, amongst whom this art has been cultivated to excess, are generally found to have a weak and languid constitution, and to be disqualified, more than others, from becoming healthy wives, or healthy mothers, or the parents of a healthy progeny.

SECT. II.

Instrumental forbidden—Quakers cannot learn it on the motives of the world—it is not conducive to the improvement of the moral character—affords no solid ground of comfort—nor of true elevation of mind—a sensual gratification—remarks of Cowper—and, if encouraged, would interfere with the duty recommended by the Quakers, of frequent religious retirement.

The reader must always bear it in his mind, if the Quakers should differ from him on any particular subject, that they set themselves apart as a christian community, aiming at christian perfection: that it is their wish to educate their children, not as moralists or as philosophers, but as christians; and that therefore, in determining the propriety of a practice, they will frequently judge of it by an estimate, very different from that of the world.

The Quakers do not deny that instrumental music is capable of exciting delight. They are not insensible either of its power or of its charms. They throw no imputation on its innocence, when viewed abstractly by itself; but they do not see anything in it sufficiently useful, to make it an object of education, or so useful, as to counterbalance other considerations, which make for its disuse.

The Quakers would think it wrong to indulge in their families the usual motives for the acquisition of this science. Self-gratification, which is one of them, and reputation in the world, which is the other, are not allowable in the Christian system. Add to which that where there is a desire for such reputation, an emulative disposition is generally cherished, and envy and vain glory are often excited in the pursuit.

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They are of opinion also, that the learning of this art does not tend to promote the most important object of education, the improvement of the mind. When a person is taught the use of letters, he is put into the way of acquiring natural, historical, religious, and other branches of knowledge, and of course of improving his intellectual and moral character. But music has no pretensions, in the opinion of the Quakers, to the production of such an end. Polybius, indeed relates, that he could give no solid reason, why one tribe of the Arcadians should have been so civilized, and the others so barbarous, but that the former were fond, and the latter were ignorant of music. But the Quakers would argue, that if music had any effect in the civilization, this effect would be seen in the manners, and not in the morals of mankind. Musical Italians are esteemed a soft and effeminate, but they are generally reputed a depraved people. Music, in short, though it breathes soft influences, cannot yet breathe morality into the mind. It may do to soften savages, but a christian community, in the opinion of the Quakers, can admit of no better civilization, than that which the spirit of the supreme being, and an observance of the pure precepts of christianity, can produce.

Music, again, does not appear to the Quakers to be the foundation of any solid comfort in life. It may give spirits for the moment as strong liquor does, but when the effect of the liquor is over, the spirits flag, and the mind is again torpid. It can give no solid encouragement nor hope, nor prospects. It can afford no anchorage ground, which shall hold the mind in a storm. The early christians, imprisoned, beaten and persecuted even to death, would have had but poor consolation, if they had not had a better friend than music to have relied upon in the hour of their distress. And here I think the Quakers would particularly condemn music, if they thought it could be resorted to in the hour of affliction, in as much as it would then have a tendency to divert the mind from its true and only support.

Music, again, does not appear to them to be productive of elevated thoughts, that is, of such thoughts as raise the mind to sublime and spiritual things, abstracted from the inclinations, the temper, and the prejudices of the world. The most melodious sounds that human instruments can make, are from the earth earthly. But nothing can rise higher than its own origin. All true elevation therefore can only come, in the opinion of the Quakers, from the divine source.

The Quakers therefore, seeing no moral utility in music, cannot make it a part of their education. But there are other considerations, of a different nature, which influence them in the same way.

Music, in the first place, is a sensual gratification. Even those who run after sacred music, never consider themselves as going to a place of devotion, but where, in full concert, they may hear the performance of the master pieces of the art. This attention to religious compositions, for the sake of the music, has been noticed by one of our best poets.



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“and ten thousand sit, Patiently present at a sacred song, Commemoration-mad,
content to hear, O wonderful effect of music’s power, Messiah’s eulogy for Handal’s
sake!” COWPER.

But the Quakers believe, that all sensual desires should be held in due subordination to the pure principle, or that sensual pleasures should be discouraged, to much as possible, as being opposed to those spiritual feeling, which constitute the only perfect enjoyment of a christian.

Music, again, if it were encouraged in the society, would be considered as depriving those of maturer years of hours of comfort, which they now frequently enjoy, in the service of religion. Retirement is considered by the Quakers as a christian duty. The members therefore of this society are expected to wait in silence, not only in their places of worship, but occasionally in their families, or in their private chambers, in the intervals of their daily occupations, that, in stillness of heart, and in freedom from the active contrivance of their own wills, they may acquire both directions and strength for the performance of the duties of life. The Quakers therefore are of opinion, that, if instrumental music were admitted as a gratification in leisure hours, it would take the place of many of these serious retirements, and become very injurious to their interests and their character as christians.

SECT. III

Vocal music forbidden—singing in itself no more immoral than reading—but as vocal music articulates ideas, it may convey poison to the mind—some ideas in songs contrary to Quaker notions of morality—as in hunting songs—or in bacchanalian—or in martial—youth make no selection—but learn off that fall in their way.

It is an observation of Lactantius, that the “pleasures we receive through the organ of the ears, may be as injurious as those we receive, through the organ of the eyes.” He does not, however, consider the effect of instrumental music as much to be regarded, “because sounds, which proceed from air, are soon gone, and they give birth to no sentiments that can be recorded. Songs, on the other hand, or sounds from the voice, may have an injurious influence on the mind.”

The Quakers, in their view of this subject, make the same distinction as this ancient father of the church. They have a stronger objection, if it be possible, to vocal, than to instrumental music. Instrumental music, though it is considered to be productive of sensual delight, is yet considered as incapable, on account of its inability to articulate, or its inability to express complex ideas, of conveying either unjust or impure sentiments to the mind. Vocal, on the other hand, is capable of conveying to it poison of this sort. For vocal music consists of songs, or of words musically expressed by the human voice.

But words are the representatives of ideas, and, as for as these ideas are pure or otherwise, so far may vocal music be rendered innocent or immoral.



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The mere singing, it must be obvious, can be no more immoral than the reading, of the same song, singing is but another mode of expressing it. The morality of the action will depend upon the words which it may contain. If the words in a song are pure, if the sentiments in it are just, and if it be the tendency of these to awaken generous and virtuous sympathies, the song will operate no otherwise than a lesson of morality. And will a lesson of morality be less serviceable to us, because it is dressed up in poetry and musically expressed by the human voice, than when it is conveyed to us in prose? But if, on the other hand, the words in a song are in themselves unchaste, if they inculcate false honour, if they lead to false opinions, if they suggest sentiments, that have a tendency to produce depraved feelings, then vocal music, by which these are conveyed in pleasing accents to the ear, becomes a destroyer of morals, and cannot therefore be encouraged by any, who consider parity of heart, as required by the christian religion. Now the Quakers are of opinion, that the songs of the world contain a great deal of objectionable matter in these respects; and that if they were to be promiscuously taken up by children, who have no powers of discriminating between the good and the bad, and who generally lay hold of all that fall in their way, they would form a system of sentimental maxims, very injurious in their tendency to their moral character.

If we were to take a collection of songs as published in books, and were to examine these, we should find that such a system might easily be formed. And if, again, we were to examine the sentiments contained in many of these, by the known sentiments of the Quakers on the several subjects of each, we should find that, as a highly professing people, more objections would arise against vocal music among them, than among other people.

Let us, for example, just glance at that class of songs, which in the collection would be called hunting songs. In these men are invited to the pleasures of the chase, as to pleasures of a superior kind. The triumphs over the timid hare are celebrated in these with a kind of enthusiastic joy, and celebrated too as triumphs, worthy of the character of men. Glory is even attached to these pursuits. But the Quakers, as it will appear in a future chapter, endeavour to prevent their youth from following any of the diversions of the field. They consider pleasures as placed on a false foundation, and triumphs as unmanly and inglorious, which are founded on circumstances, connected with the sufferings of the brute creation. They cannot therefore approve of songs of this order, because they consider them as disseminating sentiments that are both unreasonable and cruel.



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Let us now go to another class, which may be found in the same collection; I mean the bacchanalian. Men are invited here to sacrifice frequently at the shrine of Bacchus. Joy, good humour, and fine spirits, are promised to those, who pour out their libations in a liberal manner. An excessive use of wine, which injures the constitution, and stupifies the faculties, instead of being censured in these songs is sometimes recommended in them, as giving to nature that occasional stimulus, which is deemed necessary to health. Poets too, in their songs, have considered the day as made only for vulgar souls, but the night for the better sort of people, that they may the better pursue the pleasures of the bottle. Others have gone so far in their songs, as to promise long life as a consequence of drinking; while others, who confess that human life may be shortened by such means, take care to throw out, that, as a man's life thus becomes proportionably abridged, it is rendered proportionably a merry one. Now the Quakers are so particularly careful with respect to the use of wine and spirituous liquors, that the society are annually and publicly admonished to beware of excess. Quakers are discouraged from going even to inns but for the purposes of business and refreshment, and are admonished to take care, that they stay there no longer than is necessary for such purposes. The Quakers therefore, cannot be supposed to approve of any of the songs of this class, as far as they recommend or promote drunkenness. And they cannot but consider them as containing sentiments injurious to the morals of their children.

But let us examine another class of songs, that may be found in the same collection. These may be denominated martial. Now what is generally the tenor of these songs? The authors celebrate victories. They endeavour, regardless of the question, whether their own cause be a right or a wrong one, to excite joy at the events, it is their aim frequently to rouse the soul to the performance of martial exploits, as to exploits the fullest of human glory. They frequently threaten enemies with new chastisements, and new victories, and breathe the spirit of revenge. But the Quakers consider all wars, whether offensive or defensive, as against the spirit of the christian religion. They cannot contemplate scenes of victory but with the eye of pity, and the tear of compassion, for the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, whether countrymen or enemies, and for the devastation of the human race. They allow no glory to attach, nor do they give any thing like an honourable reputation, to the Alexanders, the Caesars, or the heroes either of ancient or modern date. They cannot therefore approve of songs of this class, because they conceive them to inculcate sentiments, totally contrary to the mild and peaceful spirit of the christian religion.

If we were to examine the collection farther, we might pick out other songs, which might be reckoned of the class of the impure. Among these will be found ideas, so indelicate, that notwithstanding the gloss, which wit and humour had put over them, the chaste ear could not but be offended by their recital. It must be obvious, in this case also, that not only the Quakers, but all persons filling the stations of parents, would be sorry if their children were to come to the knowledge of some of these.



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It is unnecessary to proceed farther upon this subject. For the reader must be aware that, while the Quakers hold such sentiments, they can never patronise such songs; and that if those who are taught or allowed to sing, generally lay hold of all the songs that come into their way, that is, promiscuously and without selection. The Quakers will have a strong ground as a Christian society, or as a society, who hold it necessary to be watchful over their words as well as their actions, for the rejection of vocal music.

SECT. IV.

The preceding are the arguments of the early Quakers—new state of music has produced new ones—instrumental now censurable for a waste of time—for leading into company—for its connection with vocal.

The arguments which have hitherto appeared against the admission of music into education, are those which were nearly coeval with the society itself. The incapability of music to answer moral ends, the sensuality of the gratification, the impediments it might throw in the way of religious retirement, the impurity it might convey to the mind, were in the mouths of the early Quakers. Music at that time was principally in the hands of those, who made a livelihood of the art. Those who followed it as an accomplishment, or a recreation, were few and these followed it with moderation. But since those days, its progress has been immense. It has traversed the whole kingdom. It has got into almost all the families of rank and fortune. Many of the middle classes, in imitation of the higher, have received it; and, as it has undergone a revolution in the extent, so it has undergone another in the object of its practice. It is learned now, not as a source of occasional recreation, but as a complicated science, where perfection is insisted upon to make it worthy of pursuit. In this new state therefore of music new arguments have arisen on the part of the Quakers, which I shall now concisely detail.

The Quakers, in the first place, are of opinion, that the learning of music, as it is now learned, cannot be admitted by them as a christian society, because, proficiency being now the object of it, as has been before observed, it would keep them longer employed, than is consistent with people, who are commanded to redeem their time.

They believe also that music in its present state, has an immediate tendency to leading into the company of the world. In former times, when music was followed with moderation, it was esteemed as a companion, or as a friend: it afforded relaxation after fatigue, and amusement in solitary hours. It drew a young person to his home, and hindered him from following many of the idle diversions of the times. But now, or since it has been practised with a new object, it produces a different effect. It leads into company. It leads to trials of skill. It leads to the making up of festive parties.

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It leads, for its own gratification, to the various places of public resort. Now this tendency of leading into public is considered by the Quakers as a tendency big with the dissolution of their society. For they have many customs to keep up, which are quite at variance with those of the world. The former appear to be steep and difficult as common paths. Those of the world to be smooth and easy. The natural inclination of youth, more prone to self-gratification than to self-denial, would prefer to walk in the latter. And the influence of fashion would point to the same choice. The liberty too, which is allowed in the one case, seems more agreeable than the discipline imposed in the other. Hence it has been found, that in proportion as young Quakers mix with the world, they generally imbibe its spirit, and weaken themselves as members of their own body.

The Quakers again, have an objection to the learning of instrumental music on account of its almost inseparable connection with vocal, in consequence of which, it leads often to the impurity, which the latter has been shewn to be capable of conveying to the mind.

This connection does not arise so much from the circumstance, that those, who learn to play, generally learn to sing, as from another consideration. Musical people, who have acquired skill and taste, are desirous of obtaining every new musical publication, as it comes out. This desire is produced where there is an aim at perfection in this science. The professed novel reader, we know, waits with impatience for a new novel. The politician discovers anxiety for his morning paper. Just so it is with the musical amateur with respect to a new tune. Now, though many of the new compositions come out for instrumental music only, yet others come out entirely as vocal. These consist of songs sung at our theatres, or at our public gardens, or at our other places of public resort, and are afterwards printed with their music, and exposed to sale. The words therefore, of these songs, as well as the music that is attached to them, fall into the hands of the young amateur. Now as such songs are not always chaste, or delicate, and as they frequently contain such sentiments, as I have shewn the Quakers to disapprove, the young musician, if a Quaker, might have his modesty frequently put to the blush, or his delicacy frequently wounded, or his morality often broken in upon, by their perusal. Hence, though instrumental music might have no immoral tendency in itself, the Quakers have rejected it, among other reasons, on account of its almost inseparable connection with vocal.

SECT. V.

Objection anticipated, that though the arguments, used by the Quakers in the preceding chapters, are generally fair and positive, yet an exceptionable one seems to have been introduced, by which it appears to be inculcated, that the use of a thing ought to be

abandoned on account of its abuse—explanation of the distinction, made by the Quakers, in the use of this argument.



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I purpose to stop for a while, and to make a distinction, which may now become necessary, with respect to the use of what may appear to be a Quaker principle of argument, before I proceed to a new subject.

It may have been observed by some of my readers, that though the Quakers have adduced arguments, which may be considered as fair and positive on the subjects, which have come before us, yet they appear to have adduced one, which is no other, than that of condemning the use of a thing on account of its abuse. Now this mode of reasoning, it will be said has been exploded by logicians, and for this, among other reasons, that if we were bound to relinquish customs in consequence of it, we should be obliged to give up many things that are connected with the comforts, and even with the existence of our lives.

To this observation I must reply, that the Quakers never recommend an abstinence from any custom, merely because the use of it may lead to its abuse.

Where a custom is simply liable to abuse, they satisfy themselves with recommending moderation in the use of it.

But where the abuse of a custom is either, in the first place, necessarily, or, in the second very generally connected with the use of it, they generally consider the omission of it as morally wise and prudent. It is in these two cases only that they apply, or that they lay any stress upon the species of argument described.

This species of argument, under these two limitations, they believe to be tenable in christian morals, and they entertain this belief upon the following grounds.

It may be laid down as a position, that the abuse of any custom which is innocent in itself, is an evil, and that it may become a moral evil. And they conceive it to become a moral evil in the eye of christianity, when it occasions either the destruction of the health of individuals, or the misapplication of their time, or the excitement of their worst passions, or the loss of their moral character.

If therefore the use of any custom be necessarily (which is the first of the two cases) connected with its abuse, and the abuse of it be the moral evil described, the user or practiser cannot but incur a certain degree of guilt. This first case will comprehend all those uses of things, which go under the denomination of gaming.

If again, the use of a custom be either through the influence of fashion, or its own seductive nature, or any other cause, very generally (which is the second case) connected with its abuse, and the abuse be also of the nature supposed, then the user or practiser, if the custom be unnecessary, throws himself wantonly into danger of evil, contrary to the watchfulness which christianity enjoins in morals; and, if he falls, falls by his own fault. This watchfulness against moral danger the Quakers conceive to be

equally incumbent upon Christians, as watchfulness upon persons against the common dangers of life. If two thirds of

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all the children, who had ever gone to the edge of a precipice to play, had fallen down and been injured, it would be a necessary prudence in parents to prohibit all such goings in future. So they conceive it to be only a necessary prudence in morals, to prohibit customs, where the use of them is very generally connected with a censurable abuse. This case will comprehend music, as practised at the present day, because they believe it to be injurious to health, to occasion a waste of time, to create an emulative disposition, and to give an undue indulgence to sensual feeling.

And as the Quakers conceive this species of argument to be tenable in Christian morals, so they hold it to be absolutely necessary to be adopted in the education of youth. For grown up persons may have sufficient judgment to distinguish between the use of a thing and its abuse. They may discern the boundaries of each, and enjoy the one, while they avoid the other. But youth have no such power of discrimination. Like inexperienced mariners, they know not where to look for the deep and the shallow water, and, allured by enchanting circumstances, they may, like those who are reported to have been enticed by the voices of the fabulous Syrens, easily overlook the danger, that assuredly awaits them in their course.

CHAP. IV. SECT. I.

The theatre—the theatre as well as music abused—plays respectable in their origin—but degenerated—Solon, Plato, and the ancient moralists against them—particularly immoral in England in the time of Charles the second—forbidden by George Fox—sentiments of Archbishop Tillotson—of William Law—English plays better than formerly, but still objectionable—prohibition of George Fox continued by the Quakers.

It is much to be lamented that customs, which originated in respectable motives, and which might have been made productive of innocent pleasure, should have been so perverted in time, that the continuation of them should be considered as a grievance by moral men. As we have seen this to be the case, in some measure, with respect to music, so it is the case with respect to plays.

Dramatic compositions appear to have had no reprehensible origin. It certainly was an object with the authors of some of the earliest plays to combine the entertainment with the moral improvement of the mind. Tragedy was at first simply a monody to Bacchus. But the tragedy of the ancients, from which the modern is derived, did not arise in the world, till the dialogue and the chorus were introduced. Now the chorus, as every scholar knows, was a moral office. They who filled it, were loud in their recommendations of justice and temperance. They inculcated a religious observance of the laws. They implored punishment on the abandoned. They were strenuous in their

discouragement of vice, and in the promotion of virtue. This office therefore, being coeval with tragedy itself, preserves it from the charge of an immoral origin.



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Nor was comedy, which took its rise afterwards, the result of corrupt motives. In the most ancient comedies, we find it to have been the great object of the writers to attack vice. If a chief citizen had acted inconsistently with his character, he was ridiculed upon the stage. His very name was not concealed on the occasion. In the course of time however, the writers of dramatic pieces were forbidden to use the names of the persons, whom they proposed to censure. But we find them still adhering to the same great object, the exposure of vice; and they painted the vicious character frequently so well, that the person was soon discovered by the audience, though disguised by a fictitious name. When new restrictions, were afterwards imposed upon the writers of such pieces, they produced a new species of comedy. This is that which obtains at the present day. It consisted of an imitation of the manners of common life. The subject, the names, and the characters, belonging to it, were now all of them feigned. Writers, however, retained their old object of laughing at folly and of exposing vice.

Thus it appears that the theatre, as far as tragedy was employed, inculcated frequently as good lessons of morality, as heathenism could produce, and as far as comedy was concerned, that it became often the next remedy, after the more grave and moral lectures of the ancient philosophers, against the prevailing excesses of the times.

But though the theatre professed to encourage virtue, and to censure vice, yet such a combination of injurious effects was interwoven with the representations there, arising either from the influence of fiction upon morals, or from the sight of the degradation of the rational character by buffoonery, or from the tendency of such representations to produce levity and dissipation, or from various other causes, that they, who were the greatest lovers of virtue in those days, and the most solicitous of improving the moral condition of man, began to consider them as productive of much more evil than of good. Solon forewarned Thespis, that the effects of such plays, as he saw him act, would become in time injurious to the morals of mankind, and he forbade him to act again. The Athenians, though such performances were afterwards allowed, would never permit any of their judges to compose a comedy. The Spartans under Lycurgus, who were the most virtuous of all the people of Greece, would not suffer either tragedies or comedies to be acted at all. Plato, as he had banished music, so he banished theatrical exhibitions from his pure republic. Seneca considered, that vice made insensible approaches by means of the stage, and that it stole on the people in the disguise of pleasure. The Romans, in their purer times, considered the stage to be so disgraceful, that every Roman was to be degraded, who became an actor, and so pernicious to morals, that they put it under the power of a censor, to control its effects.

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But the stage, in the time of Charles the second, when the Quakers first appeared in the world, was in a worse state than even in the Grecian or Roman times. If there was ever a period in any country, when it was noted as the school of profligate and corrupt morals, it was in this reign. George Fox therefore, as a christian reformer, could not be supposed to be behind the heathen philosophers, in a case where morality was concerned. Accordingly we find him protesting publicly against all such spectacles. In this protest, he was joined by Robert Barclay and William Penn, two of the greatest men of those times, who in their respective publications attacked them with great spirit. These publications shewed the sentiments of the Quakers, as a religious body, upon this subject. It was understood that no Quaker could be present at amusements of this sort. And this idea was confirmed by the sentiments and advices of several of the most religious members, which were delivered on public occasions. By means of these publications and advices the subject was kept alive, till it became at length incorporated into the religious discipline of the Quakers. The theatre was then specifically forbidden; and an inquiry was annually to be made from thenceforward, whether any of the members of the society had been found violating the prohibition.

Since the time of Charles the second, when George Fox entered his protest against exhibitions of this sort, it must certainly be confessed, that an alteration has taken place for the better in the constitution of our plays, and that poison is not diffused into morals, by means of them, to an equal extent, as at that period. The mischief has been considerably circumscribed by legal inspection, and, it is to be hoped, by the improved civilization of the times. But it does not appear by any historical testimony we have, that a change has been made, which is at all proportioned to the quantity of moral light, which has been diffused among us since that reign. Archbishop Tillotson was of opinion, "that plays might be so framed, and they might be governed by such rules, as not only to be innocently diverting, but instructive and useful to put some follies and vices out of countenance, which could not perhaps be so decently reprov'd, nor so effectually exposed or corrected any other way." And yet he confesses, that, "they were so full of profaneness, and that they instilled such bad principles into the mind, in his own day, that they ought not to have been tolerated in any civilized, and much less in a Christian nation." William Law, an eminent divine of the establishment, who lived after Tillitson, declared in one of his publications on the subject of the stage, that "you could not then see a play in either house, but what abounded with thoughts, passages, and language contrary to the Christian religion." From the time of William Law to the present about forty years have elapsed, and we do not see, if we



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consult the controversial writers on the subject, who live among us, that the theatre has become much less objectionable since those days. Indeed if the names only of our modern plays were to be collected and published, they would teach us to augur very unfavourably as to the morality of their contents. The Quakers therefore, as a religious body, have seen no reason, why they should differ in opinion from their ancestors on this subject: and hence the prohibition which began in former times with respect to the theatre, is continued by them at the present day.

SECT. II.

Theatre forbidden by the Quakers on account of the manner of the drama—first, as it personates the character of others—secondly, as it professes to reform vice.

The Quakers have many reasons to give, why, as a society of christians they cannot encourage the theatre, by being present at any of its exhibitions. I shall not detail all of them for the reader, but shall select such only, as I think most material to the point.

The first class of arguments comprehends such as relate, to what may be called the manner of the drama. The Quakers object to the manner of the drama, or to its fictitious nature, in consequence of which men personate characters, that are not their own. This personification they hold to be injurious to the man, who is compelled to practise it. Not that he will partake of the bad passions, which he personates, but that the trick and trade of representing what he does not feel, must make him at all times an actor; and his looks, and words, and actions, will be all sophisticated. And this evil will be likely to continue with him in the various changes of his life.

They hold it also to be contrary to the spirit of Christianity. For men who personate characters in this way, express joy and grief, when in reality there may be none of these feelings in their hearts. They express noble sentiments, when their whole lives may have been remarkable for their meanness, and go often afterwards and wallow in sensual delights. They personate the virtuous character to day, and perhaps to-morrow that of the rake, and, in the latter case, they utter his profligate sentiments, and speak his profane language. Now Christianity requires simplicity and truth. It allows no man to pretend to be what he is not. And it requires great circumspection of its followers with respect to what they may utter, because it makes every man accountable for his idle words.

The Quakers therefore are of opinion, that they cannot as men, either professing christian tenets, or christian love, encourage others to assume false characters, or to [5] personate those which are not their own.



[Footnote 5: Rousseau condemns the stage upon the same principle. “It is, says he, the art of dissimulation—of assuming a foreign character, and of appearing differently from what a man really is—of flying into a passion without a cause, and of saying what he does not think, as naturally as if he really did—in a word of forgetting himself to personate others.”]



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They object also to the manner of the drama, even where it professes to be a school for morals. For where it teaches morality, it inculcates rather the refined virtue of heathenism, than the strict, though mild discipline of the gospel. And where it attempts to extirpate vice, it does it rather by making it ridiculous, than by making men shun it for the love of virtue. It no where fixes the deep christian principle, by which men are bound to avoid it as sin, but places the propriety of the dereliction of it rather upon the loss of reputation among the world, than upon any sense of religious duty.

SECT. III.

Theatre forbidden an account of the internal contents of the drama—both of those of tragedy—and of comedy—these contents hold out false morals and prospects—and weaken the sinews of morality —observations of Lord Kaimes upon the subject.

The next class of arguments is taken from the internal contents of the drama.

The Quakers mean that dramatic compositions generally contain false sentiments, that is, such as christianity would disapprove; that, of course they hold out false prospects; that they inculcate false morals; and that they have a tendency from these, and other of their internal contents, to promote dissipation, and to weaken the sinews of morality in those who see them represented upon the stage.

Tragedy is considered by the Quakers, as a part of the drama, where the hero is generally a warrior, and where a portion of human happiness is made to consist of martial glory. Hence it is considered as frequently inculcating proud and lofty sentiments, as cherishing a fierce and romantic spirit, as encouraging rival enmities, as holding of no importance the bond of love and union between man and man. Now as christianity enjoins humility, peace, quietness, brotherly affection, and charity, which latter is not to be bounded by the limits of any country, the Quakers hold as a christian body, that they cannot admit their children to spectacles, which have a tendency to engender a disposition opposite to these.

Comedy is considered as holding out prospects, and inculcating morals, equally false and hurtful. In such compositions, for example, a bad impression is not uniformly given of a bad character. Knavery frequently accomplishes its ends without the merited punishment. Indeed treachery and intrigue are often considered but as jocose occurrences. The laws of modern honour are frequently held out to the spectator, as laws that are to influence in life. Vulgar expressions, and even swearing are admitted upon the stage. Neither is chastity nor delicacy always consulted there. Impure allusions are frequently interwoven into the dialogue, so that innocence cannot but often blush. Incidents not very favourable to morals, are sometimes introduced. New dissipated characters are produced to view, by the knowledge of which, the novice in dissipation is not diverted from his new and baneful career, but finds only his scope of



dissipation enlarged, and a wider field to range in. To these hurtful views of things, as arising from the internal structure, are to be added those, which arise from the extravagant love-tales, the ridiculous intrigues, and the silly buffoonery of the compositions of the stage.



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Now it is impossible, the Quakers contend, that these ingredients, which are the component parts of comic amusements, should not have an injurious influence upon the mind that is young and tender and susceptible of impressions. If the blush which first started upon the cheek of a young person on the first hearing of an indecorous or profane sentiment, and continued for some time to be excited at repetitions of the same, should at length be so effectually laid asleep, that the impudent language of ribaldry can awaken it no more, it is clear, that a victory will have been gained over his moral feelings: and if he should remember (and what is to hinder him, when the occurrences of the stage are marked with strong action, and accompanied with impressive scenery) the language, the sentiments, the incidents, the prospects, which dramatic pieces have brought before him, he may combine these, as they rise to memory, with his own feelings, and incorporate them imperceptibly into the habits and manners of his own life. Thus, if vice be not represented as odious, he may lose his love of virtue. If buffoonery should be made to please him, he may lose the dignity of his mind. Love-tales may produce in him a romantic imagination. Low characters may teach him low cunning. If the laws of honour strike him as the laws of refined life, he may become a fashionable moralist. If modes of dissipation strike him as modes of pleasure in the estimation of the world, he may abandon himself to these, and become a rake. Thus may such representations, in a variety of ways, act upon the moral principle, and make an innovation there, detrimental to his moral character.

Lord Kaimes, in his elements of criticism, has the following observations.

“The licentious court of Charles the second, among its many disorders, engendered a pest, the virulence of which subsists to this day. The English comedy, copying the manners of the court, became abominably licentious; and continues so with very little softening. It is there an established rule to deck out the chief characters with every vice in fashion however gross; but as such characters, if viewed in a true light, would be disgusting, care is taken to disguise their deformity under the embellishments of wit, sprightliness and good humour, which, in mixed company makes a capital figure. It requires not much thought to discover the poisonous influence of such plays. A young man of figure, emancipated at last from the severity and restraint of a college education, repairs to the capital disposed to every sort of excess. The play-house becomes his favourite amusement, and he is enchanted with the gaiety and splendour of the chief personages. The disgust which vice gives him at first, soon wears off to make way for new notions, more liberal in his opinion, by which a sovereign contempt of religion, and a declared war upon the chastity of wives, maids and widows, are converted from being infamous vices to be fashionable virtues.



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The infection spreads gradually through all ranks and becomes universal. How gladly would I listen to any one, who should undertake to prove, that what I have been describing is chimerical! But the dissoluteness of our young men of birth will not suffer me to doubt its reality. Sir Harry Wildair has completed many a rake; and in the suspicious husband, Ranger, the humble imitator of Sir Harry, has had no slight influence in spreading that character. What woman, tinctured with the play-house morals, would not be the sprightly, the witty, though dissolute Lady Townley, rather than the cold, the sober, though virtuous Lady Grace? How odious ought writers to be who thus employ the talents they have from their maker most traitorously against himself, by endeavouring to corrupt and disfigure his creatures! If the comedies of Congreve did not rack him with remorse in his last moments, he must have been lost to all sense of virtue.”

SECT. IV.

The theatre forbidden—because injurious to the happiness of man by disqualifying him for the pleasures of religion—this effect arises from its tendency to accustom individuals to light thoughts—to injure their moral feelings—to occasion an extraordinary excitement of the mind—and from the very nature of the enjoyments which it produces.

As the Quakers consider the theatre to have an injurious effect on the morality of man, so they consider it to have an injurious effect on his happiness. They believe that amusements of this sort, but particularly the comic, unfit the mind for the practical performance of the christian duties, and that as the most pure and substantial happiness, that man can experience, is derived from a fulfilment of these, so they deprive him of the highest enjoyment of which his nature is capable, that is, of the pleasures of religion.

If a man were asked, on entering the door of the theatre, if he went there to learn the moral duties, he would laugh at the absurdity of the question; and if he would consent to give a fair and direct answer, he would either reply, that he went there for amusement, or to dissipate gloom, or to be made merry. Some one of these expressions would probably characterise his errand there. Now this answer would comprise the effect, which the Quakers attach to the comic performances of the stage. They consider them as drawing the mind from serious reflection, and disposing it to levity. But they believe that a mind, gradually accustomed to light thoughts, and placing its best gratification in light objects, must be disqualified in time for the gravity of religious exercise, and be thus hindered from partaking of the pleasures which such an exercise must produce.

They are of opinion also, that such exhibitions, having, as was lately mentioned, a tendency to weaken the moral character, must have a similarly injurious effect. For

what innovations can be made on the human heart, so as to seduce it from innocence, that will not successively wean it both from the love and the enjoyment of the Christian virtues?



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The Quakers also believe, that dramatic exhibitions have a power of vast excitement of the mind. If they have no such power, they are insipid. If they have, they are injurious. A person is all the evening at a play in an excited state. He goes home, and goes to bed with his imagination heated, and his passions roused. The next morning he rises. He remembers what he has seen and heard, the scenery, the language, the sentiments, the action. He continues in the same excited state for the remainder of the day. The extravagant passions of distracted lovers, the wanton addresses of actors, are still fresh upon his mind. Now it is contended by the Quakers, that a person in such an excited state, but particularly if the excitement pleases, must be in a very unfavourable state for the reception of the pure principle, or for the promotion of the practical duties of religion. It is supposed that if any religious book, or if any part of the sacred writings, were handed to him in these moments, he would be incapable of enjoying them; and of course, that religious retirement, which implies an abstraction from the tilings of the world, would be impracticable at such a season.

The Quakers believe also, that the exhibitions of the drama must, from their own nature, without any other consideration, disqualify for the pleasures of religion. It was a frequent saying of George Fox, taken from the apostle Peter, that those who indulged in such pleasures were dead, while they were alive; that is, they were active in their bodies; they ran about briskly after their business or their pleasures; they shewed the life of their bodily powers; but they were extinct as to spiritual feeling. By this he meant that the pleasures of the theatre, and others of a similar nature, were in direct opposition to the pleasures of religion. The former were from the world worldly. They were invented according to the dispositions and appetites of men. But the latter were from the spirit spiritual. Hence there was no greater difference between life and death, than between these pleasures. Hence the human mind was made incapable of receiving both at the same time; and hence the deeper it were to get into the enjoyment of the former, the less qualified it must become of course for the enjoyment of the latter.

SECT. V.

Theatre forbidden—because injurious to the happiness of man by disqualifying him for domestic enjoyments—Quakers value these next to the pleasures of religion—sentiments of Cowper—theatre has this tendency, by weaning gradually from a love of home—and has it in a greater degree than any other of the amusements of the world.

The Quakers, ever since the institution of their society, have abandoned the diversions of the world. They have obtained their pleasures from other quarters. Some of these they have found in one species of enjoyment, and others in another. But those, which they particularly prize, they have found in the enjoyment of domestic happiness; and these pleasures they value next to the pleasures of religion.



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[6] "Domestic happiness, thou only bliss Of Paradise, that has survived the fall! Thou art the nurse of virtue—In thine arms She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is, Heav'n-born, and destin'd to the skies again. Thou art not known, where pleasure is ador'd, That reeling goddess, with a zoneless waist And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support; For thou art meek and constant, hating change, And finding, in the calm of truth-tried love, Joys, that her stormy raptures never yield. Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!"

[Footnote 6: COWPER.]

But if the Quakers have been accustomed to place one of the sources of their pleasures in domestic happiness, they may be supposed to be jealous of every thing that appears to them to be likely to interrupt it. But they consider dramatic exhibitions, as having this tendency. These exhibitions, under the influence of plot, dialogue, dress, music, action, and scenery, particularly fascinate. They excite the person, who has once seen them, to desire them again. But in proportion as this desire is gratified, or in proportion as people leave their homes for the amusements of the stage, they lose their relish, and weaken their powers, of the enjoyment of domestic society: that is, the Quakers mean to say, that domestic enjoyments, and those of the theatre, may become, in time, incompatible in the same persons; and that the theatre ought, therefore, to be particularly avoided, as an enemy, that may steal them, and rob them of those pleasures, which experience has taught them to value, as I have observed before, next to the pleasures of religion.

They are of opinion also, that dramatic exhibitions not only tend, of themselves, to make home less agreeable, but that they excite a craving for stimulants, and, above all, teach a dependence upon external objects for amusement. Hence the attention of people is taken off again to new objects of pleasure, which lie out of their own families, and out of the circle of their friends.

It will not take much time to shew, that the Quakers have not been mistaken in this point. It is not unusual in fashionable circles, where the theatre is regularly brought into the rounds of pleasure, for the father and the mother of a family to go to a play once, or occasionally twice, a week. But it seldom happens, that they either go to the same theatre, or that they sit together. Their children are at this time left at home, under, what is considered to be, proper care, but they are probably never seen again by them till the next noon; and perhaps once afterwards in the same day, when it is more than an even chance, that they must be again left for the gratification of some new pleasure. Now this separation of fathers from mothers, and of parents from children, does not augur well of domestic enjoyments or of a love of home.

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But we will trace the conduct of the parents still farther. We will get into their company at their own houses; and here we shall very soon discover, how wearisome they consider every hour, that is spent in the bosom of their families, when deprived of their accustomed amusements; and with what anxiety they count the time, when they are to be restored to their favourite rounds of pleasure. We shall find no difficulty in judging also from their conversation, the measure of their thought or their solicitude about their children. A new play is sure to claim the earliest attention or discussion. The capital style, in which an actor performed his part on a certain night, furnishes conversation for an hour. Observations on a new actress perhaps follow. Such subjects appear more interesting to such persons, than the innocent conversation, or playful pranks, of their children. If the latter are noisy, they are often sent out of the room as troublesome, though the same parents can bear the stunning plaudits, or the discordant groans and hissings of the audience at the theatre. In the mean time their children grow up, and in their turn, are introduced by their parents to these amusements, as to places, proper for the dissipation of vacant hours; till, by frequent attendances, they themselves lose an affection for home and the domestic duties, and have in time as little regard for their parents, as their parents appear to have had for them. Marrying at length, not for the enjoyment of domestic society, they and their children perpetuate the same rounds of pleasure, and the same sentiments and notions.

To these instances many indeed might be added, by looking into the family-histories of those, who are in the habit of frequenting theatres in search of pleasure, by which it would appear, that such amusements are not friendly to the cherishing of the domestic duties and affections, but that, on the other hand, in proportion as they are followed, they tend to sap the enjoyments of domestic life. And here it may be observed, that of all the amusements, which go to the making up of the round of pleasures, the theatre has the greatest share in diverting from the pleasures of home. For it particularly attracts and fascinates, both from the nature, and the diversity, of the amusements it contains. It is also always open, in the season, for resort. So that if private invitations to pleasure should not come in sufficiently numerous, or should be broken off by the indisposition of the parties, who give them, the theatre is always ready to supply any vacancy, that may be occasioned in the round.

SECT. VI.

Quakers conceive they can sanction no amusements, but such as could have originated in christian minds—exhibitions of the drama could have had, they believe, no such origin—early christians abandoned them in their conversion—arguments of the latter on this subject, as taken from Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian, Lactantius and others.



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The Quakers conceive, as a christian society, that they ought to have nothing to do with any amusements, but such as christians could have invented themselves, or such as christians could have sanctioned, by becoming partakers of them. But they believe that dramatic exhibitions are of such a nature as men of a christian spirit could never have invented or encouraged, and that, if the world were to begin again, and were to be peopled by pure christians, these exhibitions could never be called into existence there.

This inference, the Quakers judge to be deducible from the nature of a christian mind. A man, who is in the habit, at his leisure hours, of looking into the vast and stupendous works of creation, of contemplating the wisdom, goodness, and power of the creator, of trying to fathom the great and magnificent plans of his providence, who is in the habit of surveying all mankind with the philosophy of revealed religion, of tracing, through the same unerring channel, the uses and objects of their existence, the design of their different ranks and situations, the nature of their relative duties and the like, could never, in the opinion of the Quakers, have either any enjoyment, or be concerned in the invention, of dramatic exhibitions. To a mind, in the habit of taking such an elevated flight, it is supposed that every thing on the stage must look little, and childish, and out of place. How could a person of such a mind be delighted with the musical note of a fiddler, the attitude of a dancer, the impassioned grimace of an actor? How could the intrigue, or the love-sick tale of the composition please him? or how could he have imagined, that these could be the component parts of a christian's joys?

But this inference is considered by the Quakers to be confirmed by the practice of the early christians. These generally had been Pagans. They had of course Pagan dispositions. They followed Pagan amusements, and, among these, the exhibitions of the stage. But soon after their conversion, that is, when they had received new minds, and when they had exercised these on new and sublime subjects, or, on subjects similar to those described, or, in other words, when they had received the regenerated spirit of christians, they left the amusements of the stage, notwithstanding that, by this act of singularity in a sensual age, they were likely to bring upon themselves the odium and the reproaches of the world.

But when the early christians abandoned the theatre, they abandoned it, as the Quakers contend, not because, leaving Paganism they were to relinquish all customs that were Pagan, but because they saw in their new religion, or because they saw in this newness of their minds, reasons, which held out such amusements to be inadmissible, while they considered themselves in the light of christians. These reasons are sufficiently displayed by the writers of the second, third, and fourth centuries; and as they are alluded to by the Quakers, though never quoted, I shall give them to the reader. He will judge by these, how far the ancient coincide with the modern christians upon this subject; and how for these arguments of antiquity are applicable to modern times.

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The early christians, according to Tertullian, Menucius Felix, Cyprian, Lactantius, and others, believed, that the “motives for going to these amusements were not of the purest sort. People went to them without any view of the improvement of their minds. The motive was either to see or to be seen.”

They considered the manner of the drama as objectionable. They believed “that he who was the author of truth, could never approve of that which was false, and that he, who condemned hypocrisy, could never approve of him, who personated the character of others; and that those therefore, who pretended to be in love, or to be angry, or to grieve, when none of those passions existed in their minds, were guilty of a kind of adultery in the eyes of the Supreme Being.”

They considered their contents to be noxious. They “looked upon them as consistories of immorality. They affirmed that things were spoken there which it did not become christians to hear, and that things were shewn there, which it did not become christians to see; and that, while these things polluted those from whom they come, they polluted those in time, in whose sight and hearing they were shewn or spoken.”

They believed also, “that these things not only polluted the spectators, but that the representations of certain characters upon the stage pointed out to them the various roads to vice, and inclined them to become the persons, whom they had seen represented, or to be actors in reality of what they had seen feigned upon the stage.”

They believed again, “that dramatic exhibitions produced a frame of mind contrary to that, which should exist in a christian’s breast; that there was nothing to be seen upon the stage, that could lead or encourage him to devotion; but, on the other hand, that the noise and fury of the play-house, and the representations there, produced a state of excitement, that disturbed the internal man. Whereas the spirit of a christian ought to be calm, and quiet, and composed, to fit it for the duties of religion.”

They believed also, “that such promiscuous assemblages of men and women were not favourable to virtue; for that the sparks of the passions were there blown into a flame.”

Tertullian, from whom some of the above opinions are taken, gives an invitation to those who were fond of public spectacles, in nearly the following terms.

Are you fond, says he, of the scenic doctrine, or of theatrical sights and compositions? We have plenty of books for you to read. We can give you works in prose and in verse. We can give you apothegms and hymns. We cannot to besure, give you fictitious plots or fables, but we can give you truths. We cannot give you strophies, or the winding dances of the chorus, but we can give you simplicities, or plain and straightforward paths. Are you fond of seeing contests or trials for victory? You shall see these also, and such as are not trivial, but important. You may see, in our christian example, chastity overcoming immodesty. You may see faithfulness giving a death-wound to

perfidy. You may see mercy getting the better of cruelty. You may see modesty and delicacy of sentiment overcoming impurity and impudence. These are the contests in which it becomes us christians to be concerned, and where we ought to endeavour to receive the prize.



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CHAP. V.... SECT. I.

Dancing forbidden—Greeks and Romans differed on this subject—motive on which the Greeks encouraged dancing—motive on which the moderns encouraged it—way in which the Quakers view it—the arguments which they use against it.

As the Quakers have thought it right to prohibit music, and stage-entertainments, to the society, so they have thought it proper to prohibit dancing, none of their children being allowed any instruction in the latter art.

It is remarkable that two of the most civilized nations, as well as two of the wisest men of antiquity, should have differed in their opinions with respect to dancing. The Greeks considered it as a wise and an honourable employment; and most of the nations therefore under that appellation inserted it into their system of education. The name of dancer was so honourable, as to be given to some of their gods. Statues are recorded to have been erected to good dancers. Socrates is said to have admired dancing so much, as to have learnt it in his old age. Dancing, on the other hand, was but little regarded at Rome. It was not admitted even within the pale of accomplishments. It was considered at best as a sorry and trivial employment. Cicero says,

“Nemo, fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit, neque in solitudine, neque in convivio honesto.” That is, “No man dances, in private, or at any respectable entertainment, except he be drunk or mad.”

We collect at least from the above statement, that people of old, who were celebrated for their wisdom, came to very different conclusions with respect to the propriety of the encouragement of this art.

Those nations among the ancients, which encouraged dancing, did it upon the principle, that it led to an agility of body, and a quickness of motion, that would be useful in military evolutions and exploits. Hence swiftness of foot was considered to be an epithet, as honourable as any that could be given to a warrior.

The moderns, on the other hand, encourage dancing, or at least defend it upon different principles. They consider it as producing a handsome carriage of the body; as leading to a graceful and harmonious use of the limbs; and as begetting an erectness of position, not more favourable to the look of a person than to his health.

That dancing produces dispositions of this sort cannot be denied, though certainly not to the extent which many have imagined. Painters, who study nature the most, and are the best judges of the appearance of the human frame, are of opinion, that modern dancing does not produce natural figures or at least such as they would choose for their respective compositions. The military exercise has quite as great a share as dancing in the production of these dispositions. And there are certainly men, who were never

taught either the military exercise or dancing, whose deportment is harmonious and graceful.



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The Quakers think it unnecessary to teach their children dancing, as an accomplishment, because they can walk, and carry their persons with sufficient ease and propriety without it.

They think it unnecessary also, because, however the practice of it may be consistent with the sprightliness of youth, they could never sanction it in maturer age. They expect of the members of their society, that they should abandon amusements, and substitute useful and dignified pursuits, when they become men. But they cannot consider dancing but as an employment that is useless, and below the dignity of the christian-character in persons, who have come to years of discretion. To initiate therefore a youth of twelve or thirteen years of age into dancing, when he must relinquish it at twenty, would, in their opinion, be a culpable waste of his time.

The Quakers, again, cannot view dancing abstractedly, for no person teaches or practises it abstractedly; but they are obliged to view it, in connection with other things. If they view it with its usual accompaniment of music, it would be inconsistent, they think, to encourage it, when they have banished music from their republic. If they view it as connected with an assemblage of persons, they must, they conceive, equally condemn it. And here it is in fact, that they principally level their arguments against it. They prohibit all members of their society from being present at balls, and assemblies; and they think, if their youth are brought up in ignorance of the art of dancing, that this ignorance will operate as one preventative at least against attendances at amusements of this nature.

The Quakers are as strict in their inquiry with respect to the attendances of any of their members at balls, as at theatrical amusements. They consider balls and assemblies among the vain amusements of the world. They use arguments against these nearly similar to those which have been enumerated on the preceding subjects.

They consider them in the first place, as productive of a kind of frivolous levity, and of thoughtlessness with respect to the important duties of life. They consider them, in the second place, as giving birth to vanity and pride. They consider them, again, as powerful in the excitement of some of the malevolent passions. Hence they believe them to be injurious to the religious interests of man; for, by depriving him of complacency of mind, and by increasing the growth of his bad feelings, they become impediments in the way of his improvement as a moral being.

SECT. II.

Arguments of the Quakers examined—three cases made out for the determination of a moral philosopher—case the first—case the second—case the third.



I purpose to look into these arguments of the Quakers, and to see how far they can be supported. I will suppose therefore a few cases to be made out, and to be handed, one by one, to some moral philosopher for his decision. I will suppose this philosopher (that all prejudice of education may be excluded) to have been ignorant of the nature of dancing, but that he had been made acquainted with it, in order that he might be enabled to decide the point in question.



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Suppose then it was reported to this philosopher that, on a certain day, a number of young persons of both sexes, who had casually met at a friend's house, instead of confining themselves to the room on a summer's afternoon, had walked out upon the green; that a person present had invited them suddenly to dance; that they had danced to the sound of musical vibrations for an hour, and that after this they had returned to the room, or that they had returned home. Would the philosopher be able to say in this case, that there was any thing in it, that incurred any of the culpable imputations, fixed upon dancing by the Quakers?

He could hardly, I think, make it out, that there could have been, in any part of the business, any opening for the charges in question. There appears to have been no previous preparations of extravagant dressing; no premeditated design of setting off the person; no previous methods of procuring admiration; no circumstance, in short, by which he could reasonably suppose, that either pride or vanity could have been called into existence. The time also would appear to him to have been too short, and the circumstances too limited, to have given birth to improper feelings. He would certainly see that a sort of levity would have unavoidably arisen on the occasion, but his impartiality and justice would oblige him to make a distinction between the levity, that only exhilarates, and the levity that corrupts, the heart. Nor could he conceive that the dancing for an hour only, and this totally unlooked for, could stand much in the way of serious reflection for the future. If he were desired to class this sudden dancing for an hour upon the green with any of the known pleasures of life, he would probably class it with an hour's exercise in the fields, or with an hour's game at play, or with an hour's employment in some innocent recreation.

But suppose now, that a new case were opened to the philosopher. Suppose it were told him, that the same party had been so delighted with their dance upon the green, that they had resolved to meet once a month for the purpose of dancing, and that they might not be prevented by bad weather, to meet in a public room; that they had met according to their resolution; that they had danced at their first meeting but for a short time; but that at their meetings after, wards, they had got into the habit of dancing from eight or nine at night till twelve or one in the morning; that many of them now began to be unduly heated in the course of this long exercise; that some of them in consequence of the heat in this crowded room, were now occasionally ready to faint; that it was now usual for some of them to complain the next morning of colds, others of head-achs, others of relaxed nerves, and almost all of them of a general lassitude or weariness—what could the philosopher say in the present case?



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The philosopher would now probably think, that they acted unreasonably as human beings; that they turned night into day; and that, as if the evils of life were not sufficient in number, they converted hours, which might have been spent calmly and comfortably at home, into hours of indisposition and of unpleasant feelings to themselves. But this is not to the point. Would he or would he not say, that the arguments of the Quakers applied in the present case? It certainly does not appear, from any thing that has yet transpired on this subject, that he could, with any shadow of reason, accuse the persons, meeting on this occasion, of vanity or pride, or that he could see from any of the occurrences, that have been mentioned, how these evils could be produced. Neither has any thing yet come out, from which he could even imagine the sources of any improper passions. He might think perhaps, that they might be vexed for having brought fatigue and lassitude upon themselves, but he could see no opening for serious anger to others, or for any of the feelings of malevolence. Neither could he tell what occurrence to fix upon for the production of a frivolous levity. He would almost question, judging only from what has appeared in the last case, whether there might not be upon the whole more pain than pleasure from these meetings, and whether those, who on the day subsequent to these meetings felt themselves indisposed, and their whole nervous system unbraced, were not so near the door of repentance, that serious thoughts would be more natural to them than those of a lighter kind.

But let us suppose one other case to be opened to the philosopher. Let us now suppose it to be stated to him, that those who frequented these monthly meetings, but particularly the females, had become habituated to talk, for a day or two beforehand, of nothing but of how they should dress themselves, or of what they should wear on the occasion: that some time had been spent in examining and canvassing the fashions; that the milliner had been called in for this purpose; that the imagination had been racked in the study of the decoration of the person; that both on the morning and the afternoon of the evening, on which they had publicly met to dance, they had been solely employed in preparations for decking themselves out; that they had been nearly two hours under one dresser only, namely the hair-dresser; that frequently at intervals they had looked at their own persons in the glass; that they had walked up and down parading before it in admiration of their own appearance, and the critical detection of any little fold in their dress, which might appear to be out of place, and in the adjustment of the same—what would the philosopher say in this new case?



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He certainly could not view the case with the same complacent countenance as before. He would feel some symptoms of alarm. He would begin to think that the truth of the Quaker-arguments was unfolding itself, and that what appeared to him to have been an innocent amusement, at the first, might possibly be capable of being carried out of the bounds of innocence by such and similar accompaniments. He could not conceive, if he had any accurate knowledge of the human heart, that such an extraordinary attention to dress and the decoration of the person, or such a critical examination of these with a view of procuring admiration, could produce any other fruits than conceit and affectation, or vanity and pride. Nor could he conceive that all these preparations, all this previous talk, all this previous consultation, about the fashions, added to the employment itself of the decoration of the person, could tend to any thing else than to degrade the mind, and to render it light and frivolous. He would be obliged to acknowledge also, that minds, accustomed to take so deep an interest in the fashions and vanities of the world, would not only loath, but be disqualified for serious reflection. But if he were to acknowledge, that these preparations and accompaniments had on any one occasion a natural tendency to produce these effects, he could not but consider these preparations, if made once a month, as likely to become in time systematic nurseries for frivolous and affected characters.

Having traced the subject up to a point, where it appears, that some of the Quaker-arguments begin to bear, let us take leave of our philosopher, and as we have advanced nearly to the ball-room door, let us enter into the room itself, and see if any circumstances occur there, which shall enable us to form a better judgment upon it.

SECT. III.

Arguments of the Quakers still further examined—interior of the ball-room displayed—view of the rise of many of the malevolent passions—these rise higher and are more painful, than they are generally imagined—hence it is probable that the spectators are better pleased than those interested in these dances—conclusion of the arguments of the Quakers on this subject.

I am afraid I shall be thought more cynical than just, more prejudiced than impartial, more given to censure than to praise, if in temples, apparently dedicated to good humour, cheerfulness and mirth, I should say that sources were to be found, from whence we could trace the rise of immoral passions. But human nature is alike in all places, and, if circumstances should arise in the ball-room, which touch as it were the strings of the passions, they will as naturally throw out their tone there as in other places. Why should envy, jealousy, pride, malice, anger, or revenge, shut themselves out exclusively from these resorts, as if these were more than ordinarily sacred, or more than ordinary repositories of human worth.



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In examining the interior of a ball-room it must be confessed, that we shall certainly find circumstances occasionally arising, that give birth to feelings neither of a pleasant nor of a moral nature. It is not unusual, for instance, to discover among the females one that excels in the beauty of her person, and another that excels in the elegance of her dress. The eyes of all are more than proportionally turned upon these for the whole night. This little circumstance soon generates a variety of improper passions. It calls up vanity and conceit in the breasts of these objects of admiration. It raises up envy and jealousy, and even anger in some of the rest. These become envious of the beauty of the former, envious of their taste, envious of their cloathing, and, above all, jealous of the admiration bestowed upon them. In this evil state of mind one passion begets another; and instances have occurred, where some of these have felt displeas'd at the apparent coldness and indifference of their own partners, because they have appear'd to turn their eyes more upon the favourites of the night, than upon themselves.

In the same room, when the parties begin to take their places to dance; other little circumstances not infrequently occur, which give rise to other passions. Many aiming to be as near the top of the dance as possible, are disappointed of their places by others, who have just slept into them, dissatisfaction, and sometimes murmurs, follow. Each in his own mind, supposes his claims and pretensions to the higher place to be stronger on account of his money, his connections, his profession, or his rank. Thus his own dispositions to pride are only the more nursed and fostered. Malice too is often engendered on the occasion; and though the parties would not be allowed by the master of the ceremonies to disturb the tranquillity of the room, animosities have sometimes sprung up between them, which have not been healed in a little time. I am aware that in some large towns of the kingdom regulations are made with a view to the prevention of these evils, but it is in some only; and even where they are made, though they prevent outward rude behaviour, they do not prevent inward dissatisfaction. Monied influence still feels itself often debas'd by a lower place.

If we were to examine the ball-room further, we should find new circumstances arising to call out new and degrading passions. We should find disappointment and discontent often throwing irritable matter upon the mind. Men, fond of dancing, frequently find an over proportion of men, and but few females in the room, and women, wishing to dance, sometimes find an over proportion of women, and but few men; so that partners are not to be had for all, and a number of each class must make up their minds to sit quietly, and to loose their diversion for the night. Partners too are frequently dissatisfied with each other. One thinks his partner too old, another too ugly,

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another below him. Matched often in this unequal manner, they go down the dance in a sort of dudgeon, having no cordial disposition towards each other, and having persons before their eyes in the same room with whom they could have cordially danced. Nor are instances wanting where the pride of some has fixed upon the mediocrity of others, as a reason, why they should reluctantly lend them their hands, when falling in with them in the dance. The slight is soon perceived, and disgust arises in both parties.

Various other instances might be mentioned, where very improper passions are excited. I shall only observe, however, that these passions are generally stronger and give more uneasiness, and are called up to a greater height, than might generally be imagined from such apparently slight causes. In many instances indeed they have led to such serious misunderstandings, that they were only terminated by the duel.

From this statement I may remark here, though my observation be not immediately to the point, that there is not probably that portion of entertainment, or that substantial pleasure, which people expected to find at these monthly meetings. The little jealousies arising about precedency, or about the admiration of one more than of another; the falling in occasionally with disagreeable partners; the slights and omissions that are often thought to be purposely made; the head-achs, colds, sicknesses, and lassitude afterwards, must all of them operate as so many drawbacks from this pleasure: and it is not unusual to hear persons, fond of such amusements, complaining afterwards that they had not answered. There is therefore probably more pleasure in the preparations for such amusements, and in the previous talk about them, than in the amusements themselves.

It is also probable that the greatest pleasure felt in the ball-room, is felt by those, who get into it as spectators only. These receive pleasure from the music, from the beat of the steps in unison with it, but particularly from the idea that all, who join in the dance, are happy. These considerations produce in the spectator cheerfulness and mirth; and these are continued to him more pure and unalloyed than in the former case, because he can have no drawbacks from the admission into his own breast of any of those uneasy, immoral passions, above described.

But to return to the point in question. The reader has now had the different cases laid before him as determined by the moral philosopher. He has been conducted also through the interior of the ball-room. He will have perceived therefore that the arguments of the Quakers have gradually unfolded themselves, and that they are more or less conspicuous, or more or less true, as dancing is viewed abstractedly, or in connection with the preparations and accompaniments, that may be interwoven with it. If it be viewed in connection with these preparations and accompaniments, and if these should be found to be so inseparably



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connected with it, that they must invariably go together, which is supposed to be the case where it is introduced into the ball-room, he will have no difficulty in pronouncing that, in this case, it is objectionable as a christian recreation. For it cannot be doubted that it has an immediate tendency, in this case, to produce a frivolous levity, to generate vanity and pride, and to call up passions of the malevolent kind. Now in this point of view it is, that the Quakers generally consider dancing. They never view it, as I observed before, abstractedly, or solely by itself. They have therefore forbidden it to their society, believing it to be the duty of a Christian to be serious in his conversation and deportment; to afford an example of humility; and to be watchful and diligent in the subjugation of his evil passions.

CHAP. VI.

Novels—novels forbidden—their fictitious nature no argument against them—arguments of the Quakers are, that they produce an affectation knowledge—a romantic spirit—and a perverted morality—and that by creating an indisposition towards other kinds of reading, they prevent moral improvement and real delight of mind—hence novel-reading more pernicious than many other amusements.

Among the prohibitions, which the Quakers have adopted in their moral education, as barriers against vice, or as preservatives of virtue, I shall consider that next, which relates to the perusal of improper books. George Fox seems to have forgotten nothing, that was connected with the morals of the society. He was anxious for the purity of its character, he seemed afraid of every wind that blew, lest it should bring some noxious vapour to defile it. And as those things which were spoken or represented, might corrupt the mind, so those which were written and printed, might equally corrupt it also. He recommended therefore, that the youth of his newly formed society should abstain from the reading of romances. William Penn and others, expressed the same sentiments on this subject. And the same opinion has been held by the Quakers, as a body of christians, down to the present day. Hence novels, as a particular species of romance, and as that which is considered as of the worst tendency, have been particularly marked for prohibition.

Some Quakers have been inclined to think, that novels ought to be rejected on account of the fictitious nature of their contents. But this consideration is, by no means, generally adopted by the society, as an argument against them. Nor would it be a sound argument, if it were. If novels contain no evil within themselves, or have no evil tendency, the mere circumstance of the subject, names or characters being feigned, will not stamp them as censurable. Such fiction will not be like the fiction of the drama, where men act and personate characters that are not their own. Different men, in different ages of

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the world, have had recourse to different modes of writing, for the promotion of virtue. Some have had recourse to allegories, others to fables. The fables of Aesop, though a fiction from the beginning to the end, have been useful to many. But we have a peculiar instance of the use and innocence of fictitious descriptions in the sacred writings. For the author of the christian religion made use of parables on many and weighty occasions. We cannot therefore condemn fictitious biography, unless it condemn itself by becoming a destroyer of morals.

The arguments against novels, in which the Quakers agree as a body, are taken from the pernicious influence they have upon the minds of those, who read them.

The Quakers do not say, that all novels have this influence, but that they have it generally. The great demand for novels, in consequence of the taste, which the world has shewn for this species of writing, has induced persons of all descriptions, and of course many who have been but ill qualified to write them. Hence, though some novels have appeared of considerable merit, the worthless have been greatly preponderant. The demand also has occasioned foreign novels, of a complexion by no means suited to the good sense and character of our country, to be translated into our language. Hence a fresh weight has only been thrown into the preponderating scale. From these two causes it has happened, that the contents of a great majority of our novels have been unfavourable to the improvement of the moral character. Now when we consider this circumstance, and when we consider likewise, that professed novel-readers generally read all the compositions of this sort that come into their way, that they wait for no selection, but that they devour the good, the bad, and the indifferent alike, we shall see the reasons, which have induced the Quakers to believe, that the effect of this species of writing upon the mind has been generally pernicious.

One of the effects, which the Quakers consider to be produced by novels upon those who read them, is an affectation of knowledge, which leads them to become forward and presumptuous. This effect is highly injurious, for while it raises them unduly in their own estimation, it lowers them in that of the world. Nothing can be more disgusting, in the opinion of the Quakers, than to see persons assuming the authoritative appearance of men and women before their age or their talents can have given them any pretensions to do it.

Another effect is the following. The Quakers conceive that there is among professed novel readers a peculiar cast of mind. They observe in them a romantic spirit, a sort of wonder-loving imagination, and a disposition towards enthusiastic flights of the fancy, which to sober persons has the appearance of a temporary derangement. As the former effect must become injurious by producing forwardness, so this must become so by producing unsteadiness, of character.

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A third effect, which the Quakers find to be produced among this description of readers, is conspicuous in a perverted morality. They place almost every value in feeling, and in the affectation of benevolence. They consider these as the true and only sources of good. They make these equivalent, to moral principle. And actions flowing from feeling, though feeling itself is not always well founded, and sometimes runs into compassion even against justice, they class as moral duties arising from moral principles. They consider also too frequently the laws of religion as barbarous restraints, and which their new notions of civilized refinement may relax at will. And they do not hesitate, in consequence, to give a colour to some fashionable vices, which no christian painter would admit into any composition, which was his own.

To this it may be added, that, believing their own knowledge to be supreme, and their own system of morality to be the only enlightened one, they fall often into scepticism, and pass easily from thence to infidelity. Foreign novels, however, more than our own, have probably contributed to the production of this latter effect.

These then are frequently the evils, and those which the Quakers insist upon, where persons devote their spare-time to the reading of novels, but more particularly among females, who, on account of the greater delicacy of their constitutions, are the more susceptible of such impressions. These effects the Quakers consider as particularly frightful, when they fall upon this sex. For an affectation of knowledge, or a forwardness of character, seems to be much more disgusting among women than among men. It may be observed also, that an unsteady or romantic spirit or a wonder-loving or flighty imagination, can never qualify a woman for domestic duties, or make her a sedate and prudent wife. Nor can a relaxed morality qualify her for the discharge of her duty as a parent in the religious education of her children.

But, independently of these, there is another evil, which the Quakers attach to novel-reading, of a nature too serious to be omitted in this account. It is that those who are attached to this species of reading, become indisposed towards any other.

This indisposition arises from the peculiar construction of novels. Their structure is similar to that of dramatic compositions. They exhibit characters to view. They have their heroes and heroines in the same manner. They lay open the checkered incidents in the lives of these. They interweave into their histories the powerful passion of love. By animated language, and descriptions which glow with sympathy, they rouse the sensibility of the reader, and fill his soul with interest in the tale. They fascinate therefore in the same manner as plays. They produce also the same kind of [7] mental stimulus, or the same powerful excitement of the mind. Hence it is that this indisposition is generated. For if other books contain neither characters, nor incidents, nor any of the high seasoning, or gross stimulants, which belong to novels they become insipid.



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[Footnote 7: I have been told by a physician of the first eminence, that music and novels have done more to produce the sickly countenances and nervous habits of our highly educated females, than any other causes that can be assigned. The excess of stimulus on the mind from the interesting and melting tales, that are peculiar to novels, affects the organs of the body, and relaxes the tone of the nerves, in the same manner as the melting tones of music have been described to act upon the constitution, after the sedentary employment, necessary for skill in that science, has injured it.]

It is difficult to estimate the injury which is done to persons, by this last mentioned effect of novel-reading upon the mind. For the contents of our best books consist usually of plain and sober narrative. Works of this description give no extravagant representations of things, because their object is truth. They are found often without characters or catastrophies, because these would be often unsuitable to the nature of the subject of which they treat. They contain repellants rather than stimulants, because their design is the promotion of virtue. The novel-reader therefore, by becoming indisposed towards these, excludes himself from moral improvement, and deprives himself of the most substantial pleasure, which reading can produce. In vain do books on the study of nature unfold to him the treasures of the mineral or the vegetable world. He foregoes this addition to his knowledge, and this innocent food for his mind. In vain do books on science lay open to him the constitution and the laws of the motion of bodies. This constitution and these laws are still mysteries to him. In vain do books on religion discover to him the true path to happiness. He has still this path to seek. Neither, if he were to dip into works like these, but particularly into those of the latter description, could he enjoy them. This latter consideration makes the reading of novels a more pernicious employment than many others. For though there may be amusements, which may sometimes produce injurious effects to those, who partake of them, yet these may be counteracted by the perusal of works of a moral tendency. The effects, on the other hand, which are produced by the reading of novels, seem to admit of no corrective or cure; for how, for instance, shall a perverted morality, which is considered to be one of them, be rectified, if the book which is to contain the advice for this purpose, be so uninteresting, or insipid, that the persons in question have no disposition to peruse it?

CHAP. VII-SECT. I.

Diversions of the field—diversions of the field forbidden—general thoughtlessness on this subject—sentiments of Thomson—sentiments of George Fox—of Edward Burroughs—similar sentiments of Cowper—law of the society on the subject.

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The diversions of the field are usually followed by people, without any consideration, whether they are justifiable, either in the eye of morality or of reason. Men receive them as the customs of their ancestors, and they are therefore not likely to entertain doubts concerning their propriety. The laws of the country also sanction them; for we find regulations and qualifications on the subject. Those also who attend these diversions, are so numerous, and their rank, and station, and character, are often such, that they sanction them again by their example, so that few people think of making any inquiry, how far they are allowable as pursuits.

But though this general thoughtlessness prevails upon this subject, and though many have fallen into these diversions as into the common customs of the world, yet benevolent and religious individuals have not allowed them to pass unnoticed, nor been backward in their censures and reproofs.

It has been matter of astonishment to some, how men, who have the powers of reason, can waste their time in galloping after dogs, in a wild and tumultuous manner, to the detriment often of their neighbours, and to the hazard of their own lives; or how men, who are capable of high intellectual enjoyments, can derive pleasure, so as to join in shouts of triumph, on account of the death of an harmless animal; or how men, who have organic feelings, and who know that other living creatures have the same, can make an amusement of that, which puts brute-animals to pain.

Good poets have spoken the language of enlightened nature upon this subject. Thomson in his Seasons, introduces the diversions of the field in the following manner.

“Here the rude clamour of the sportsman’s joy,
The gun fast-thund’ring, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the muse to sing the rural game.”

But further on he observes,

“These are not subjects for the peaceful muse;
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mix’d animal-creation round.
Alive and happy; ’Tis not joy to her
This falsely cheerful barbarous game of death.”

Cowper, in his task, in speaking in praise of the country, takes occasion to express his disapprobation of one of the diversions in question.

“They love the country, and none else, who seek
For their own sake its silence and its shade,
Delights, which who would leave, that has a heart



Susceptible of pity, or a mind,
Cultur'd, and capable of sober thought,
For all the savage din of the swift pack
And clamours of the field? Detested sport
That owes its pleasures to another's pain,
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued
With eloquence, that agonies inspire
Of silent tears, and heart-distending sighs!
Vain tears alas! and sighs, that never find
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!"



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In these sentiments of the poets the Quakers, as a religious body, have long joined. George Fox specifically reprobated hunting and hawking, which were the field diversions of his own time. He had always shewn, as I stated in the introduction, a tender disposition to brute-animals, by reprovng those, who had treated them improperly in his presence. He considered these diversions, as unworthy of the time and attention of men, who ought to have much higher objects of pursuit. He believed also, that real christians could never follow them; for a christian was a renovated man, and a renovated man could not but know the works of creation better, than to subject them to his abuse.

Edward Burroughs, who lived at the same time, and was an able minister of the society, joined George Fox in his sentiments with respect to the treatment of animals. He considered that man in the fall, or the apostate man, had a vision so indistinct and vitiated that he could not see the animals of the creation, as he ought, but that the man, who was restored, or the spiritual christian, had a new and clear discernment concerning them, which would oblige him to consider and treat them in a proper manner.

This idea of George Fox and of Edward Burroughs seems to have been adopted or patronized by the Poet Cowper.

“Thus harmony, and family accord,
Were driven from Paradise; and in that hour
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell’d
To such gigantic and enormous growth,
Were sown in human natures fruitful soil.
Hence date the persecution and the pain,
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,
Or his base gluttony, are causes good,
And just, in his account, why bird and beast
Should suffer torture—”

Thus the Quakers censured these diversions from the first formation of their society, and laid down such moral principles with respect to the treatment of animals, as were subversive of their continuance. These principles continued to actuate all true Quakers, who were their successors; and they gave a proof, in their own conduct, that they were influenced by them, not only in treating the different animals under their care with tenderness, but in abstaining from all diversions in which their feelings could be hurt. The diversions however, of the field, notwithstanding that this principle of the brute-creation had been long recognized, and that no person of approved character in the society followed them, began in time to be resorted to occasionally by the young and thoughtless members, either out of curiosity, or with a view of trying them, as means of



producing pleasure. These deviations, however from the true spirit of Quakerism became at length known. And the Quakers, that no excuse might be left to any for engaging in such pursuits again, came to a resolution in one of their yearly meetings, giving advice upon the subject in the following words.



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[8]"We clearly rank the practice of hunting and shooting for diversion with vain sports; and we believe the awakened mind may see, that even the leisure of those whom providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods, is but ill filled up with these amusements. Therefore, being not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let our leisure be employed in serving our neighbour, and not in distressing the creatures of God for our amusement."

[Footnote 8: Book of Extracts.]

I shall not take upon me to examine the different reasons upon which we find the foundation of this law. I shall not enquire how far a man's substance, or rather his talent, is wasted or misapplied, in feeding a number of dogs in a costly manner, while the poor of the neighbourhood may be starving, or how far the galloping after these is in the eye of christianity a misapplication of a person's time. I shall adhere only to that part of the argument, how far a person has a right to make a [9]pleasure of that, which occasions pain and death to the animal-creation: and I shall shew in what manner the Quakers argue upon this subject, and how they persuade themselves, that they have no right to pursue such diversions, but particularly when they consider themselves as a body of professing christians.

[Footnote 9: The Quakers and the poet Cowper likewise, in their laudable zeal for the happiness of the brute-creation, have given an improper description of the nature of the crime of these diversions. They have made it to consist in a man's deriving pleasure from the sufferings of the animals in question, whereas it should have been made to consist in his making a pleasure of a pursuit which puts them to pain. The most abandoned sportsman, it is to be presumed, never hunts them because he enjoys their sufferings. His pleasure arises from considerations of another nature.]

SECT. II.

Diversions of the field judged first by the morality of the Old Testament—original charter to kill animals—condition annexed to it—sentiments of Cowper—rights and duties springing from this charter—violation of it the violation of a moral law—diversions in question not allowable by this standard.

The Quakers usually try the lawfulness of field-diversions, which include hunting and shooting, by two standards, and first by the morality of the old Testament.

They believe in common with other christians, that men have a right to take away the lives of animals for their food. The great creator of the universe, to whom every thing that is in it belongs, gave to Noah and his descendants a grant or charter for this purpose. In this charter no exception is made. Hence wild animals are included in it



equally with the tame. And hence a hare may as well be killed, if people have occasion for food, as a chicken or a lamb.

They believe also that, when the creator of the universe gave men dominion over the whole brute-creation, or delivered this creation into their hands, he intended them the right of destroying such animals, as circumstances warranted them in supposing would become injurious to themselves. The preservation of themselves, which is the first law of nature, and the preservation of other animals under their care, created this new privilege.

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But though men have the power given them over the lives of animals, there is a condition in the same charter, that they shall take them with as little pain as possible to the creatures. If the death of animals is to be made serviceable to men, the least they can do in return is to mitigate their sufferings, while they expire. This obligation the Supreme Being imposed upon those, to whom he originally gave the charter, by the command of not eating their flesh, while the life's blood was in it. The Jews obliged all their converts to religion, even the proselytes of the gate, who were not considered to be so religious as the proselytes of the covenant, to observe what they called the seventh commandment of Noah, or that "they should^[10] not eat the member of any beast that was taken from it, while it was alive." This law therefore of blood, whatever other objects it might have in view, enjoined that, while men were engaged in the distressing task of taking away the life of an animal, they should respect its feelings, by abstaining from torture, or all unnecessary pain.

[Footnote 10: It seems almost impossible, that men could be so depraved, as to take flesh to eat from a poor animal, while alive, and yet from the law enjoined to proselytes of the gate it is probable, that it was the case. Bruce, whose travels into Abyssynia are gaining in credit, asserts that such customs obtained there. And the Harleian Miscellany, vol. 6. P. 126, in which is a modern account of Scotland, written in 1670, states the same practice as having existed in our own island.]

[11]On Noah, and in him on all mankind The Charter was conferr'd, by which we hold The flesh of animals in fee, and claim O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death. But read the instrument, and mark it well. The oppression of a tyrannous control Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin, Feed on the slain; but spare the living brute.

[Footnote 11: Cowper.]

From this charter, and from the great condition annexed to it, the Quakers are of opinion that rights and duties have sprung up; rights on behalf of animals, and duties on the part of men; and that a breach of these duties, however often, or however thoughtlessly it may take place, is a breach of a moral law. For this charter did not relate to those animals only, which lived in the particular country of the Jews, but to those in all countries wherever Jews might exist. Nor was the observance of it confined to the Jews only, but it was to extend to the Proselytes of the covenant and the gate. Nor was the observance of it confined to these Proselytes, but it was to extend to all nations; because all animals of the same species are in all countries organized alike, and have all similar feelings; and because all animals of every kind are susceptible of pain.

In trying the lawfulness of the diversions of the field, as the Quakers do by this charter, and the great condition that is annexed to it, I purpose, in order to save time, to confine myself to hunting, for this will appear to be the most objectionable, if examined in this manner.

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It must be obvious then, that hunting, even in the case of hares, is seldom followed for the purposes of food. It is uncertain in the first place, whether in the course of the chase they can be preserved whole when they are taken, so as to be fit to be eaten. And, in the second, it may be observed, that we may see fifty horsemen after a pack of hounds, no one of whom has any property in the pack, nor of course any right to the prey. These cannot even pretend, that their object is food, either for themselves or others.

Neither is hunting, where foxes are the objects in view, pursued upon the principle of the destruction of noxious animals. For it may be observed, that rewards are frequently offered to those, who will procure them for the chase: that large woods or covers are frequently allotted them, that they may breed, and perpetuate their species for the same purposes, and that a poor man in the neighbourhood of a foxhunter, would be sure to experience his displeasure, if he were caught in the destruction of any of these animals.

With respect to the mode of destroying them in either of these cases, it is not as expeditious, as it might be made by other means. It is on the other hand, peculiarly cruel. A poor animal is followed, not for minutes, but frequently for an hour, and sometimes for hours, in pain and agony. Its sufferings begin with its first fear. Under this fear, perpetually accompanying it, it flies from the noise of horses, and horsemen, and the cries of dogs. It pants for breath, till the panting becomes difficult and painful. It becomes wearied even to misery, yet dares not rest. And under a complication of these sufferings, it is at length overtaken, and often literally torn to pieces by its pursuers.

Hunting therefore does not appear, in the opinion of the Quakers, to be followed for any of those purposes, which alone, according to the original charter, give mankind a right over the lives of brutes. It is neither followed for food, nor for prevention of injury to man, or to the creatures belonging to him. Neither is life taken away by means of it, as mercifully as it ought to be, according to the meaning of the [12] great condition. But if hunting be not justifiable, when examined upon these principles, it can never be justifiable in the opinion of the Quakers, when it is followed on the principle of pleasure, all destruction of animal-life upon this last principle, must come within the charge of wanton cruelty, and be considered as a violation of a moral law.

[Footnote 12: The netting of animals for food, is perfectly unobjectionable upon these principles.]

SECT. III.

Divisions of the field judged by the morality of the New-Testament—the renovated man or christian has a clearer knowledge of creation and of its uses—he views animals as the creatures of God—hence he finds animals to have rights independently of any

*written law—he collects again new rights from the benevolence of his new feelings—
and new rights again from the written word of revelation.*



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The Quakers try the lawfulness of these diversions again by the morality of the New-Testament They adopt, in the first place, upon this occasion, the idea of George Fox and of Edward Burroughs, which has been already stated; and they follow it up in the manner which I shall now explain.

They believe that a man under the new covenant, or one who is really a christian, is a renovated man. As long as Adam preserved his primeval innocence, or continued in the image of his Maker, his spiritual vision was clear. When he lost this image, it became dim, short, and confused. This is the case, the Quakers believe, with every apostate or wicked man. He sees through a vitiated medium. He sees of course nothing of the harmony of the creation. He has but a confused knowledge of the natures and ends of things. These natures and these ends he never examines as he ought, but in the confusion of his moral vision, he abuses and perverts them. Hence it generally happens, that an apostate man is cruel to his brute. But in proportion as he is restored to the divine image, or becomes as Adam was before he fell, or in proportion as he exchanges earthly for spiritual views, he sees all things through a clearer medium. It is then, the Quakers believe, that the creation is open to him, and that he finds his creator has made nothing in vain. It is then that he knows the natures of things; that he estimates their uses and their ends, and that he will never stretch these beyond their proper bounds. Beholding animals in this sublime light, he will appreciate their strength, their capacities, and their feelings; and he will never use them but for the purposes intended by providence. It is then that the creation will delight him. It is then that he will find a growing love to the animated objects of it. And this knowledge of their natures, and this love of them, will oblige him to treat them with tenderness and respect. Hence all animals will have a security in the breast of every christian or renovated man against oppression or abuse. He will never destroy them wantonly, nor put them to unnecessary pain. Now the Quakers are of opinion, that every person, who professes christianity, ought to view things as the man, who is renovated, would view them, and that it becomes them therefore in particular, as a body of highly professing christians, to view them in the same manner. Hence they uniformly look upon animals, not as brute-machines, to be used at discretion, but as the creatures of God, of whose existence the use and intention ought always to be considered, and to whom duties arise out of this spiritual feeling, independently of any written law in the Old-Testament, or any grant or charter, by which their happiness might be secured.



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The Quakers therefore, viewing animals in this light, believe that they are bound to treat them accordingly. Hence the instigation of two horses by whips and spurs for a trial of speed, in consequence of a monied stake, is considered by the Quakers to be criminal. The horse was made for the use of man, to carry his body and to transport his burdens; but he was never made to engage in painful conflicts with other horses on account of the avarice of his owner. Hence the pitting together of two cocks for a trial of victory is considered as equally criminal. For the cock, whatever may be his destined object among the winged creation, has been long useful to man in awakening him from unseasonable slumber, and in sounding to him the approach of day. But it was never intended, that he should be employed to the injury and destruction of himself, or to the injury and destruction of his own species. In the same manner the Quakers condemn the hunting of animals, except on the plea of necessity, or that they cannot be destroyed, if their death be required, in any other way. For whatever may be their several uses, or the several ends of their existence in creation, they were never created to be so used by man, that they should suffer, and this entirely for his sport. Whoever puts animals to cruel and unnatural uses, disturbs, in the opinion of the Quakers, the harmony of the creation, and offends God.

The Quakers in the second place, are of opinion that the renovated man must have, in his own benevolent spirit, such an exalted sense of the benevolent spirit of the Creator, as to believe, that he never constituted any part of animated nature, without assigning it its proper share of happiness during the natural time of its existence, or that it was to have its moment, its hour, its day, or its year of pleasure. And, if this be the case, he must believe also, that any interruption of its tranquillity, without the plea of necessity, must be an innovation of its rights as a living being.

The Quakers believe also, that the renovated man, who loves all the works of the creator, will carry every divine law, which has been revealed to him, as far as it is possible to be carried on account of a similarity of natures through all animated creation, and particularly that law, which forbids him to do to another, what he would dislike to be done unto himself. Now this law is founded on the sense of bodily, and on the sense of the mental feelings. The mental feelings of men and brutes, or the reason of man and the instinct of animals, are different. But their bodily feelings are alike; and they are in their due proportions, susceptible of pain. The nature therefore of man and of animals is alike in this particular. He can anticipate and know their feelings by his own. He cannot therefore subject them to any action unnecessarily, if on account of a similar construction of his own organs, such an action would produce pain to himself. His own power of feeling strongly commands sympathy to all that can feel: and that general sympathy, which arises to a man, when he sees pain inflicted on the person of any individual of his own species, will arise, in the opinion of the Quakers, to the renovated man, when he sees it inflicted on the body of a brute.



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CHAP. VIII.

Objections started by philosophical moralists to the preceding system of education—this system a prohibitory one—prohibitions sometimes the cause of greater evil than they prevent—they may confuse morality—and break the spirit—they render the vicious more vicious—and are not to be relied upon as effectual, because built on a fake foundation—ignorance no guardian of virtue—causes, not sub-causes, are to be contended against —no certain security but in knowledge and a love of virtue—prohibitions, where effectual, produce but a sluggish virtue.

I have now stated the principal prohibitions, that are to be found in the moral education of the Quakers, and I have annexed to these the various reasons, which the Quakers themselves give, why they were introduced into their society. I have therefore finished this part of my task, and the reader will expect me to proceed to the next subject. But as I am certain that many objections will be started here, I shall stop for a few minutes to state, and to consider them.

The Quakers differ on the subject of moral education, very materially from the world, and indeed from those of the world, who having had a more than ordinarily liberal education, may be supposed to have, in most cases, a more than ordinarily correct judgment. The Quaker system, as we have seen, consists principally of specific prohibitions. These prohibitions again, are extended occasionally to things, which are not in themselves vicious. They are extended, again, to these, because it is possible that they may be made productive, of evil. And they are founded apparently on the principle, that ignorance of such things secures innocence, or that ignorance, in such cases, has the operation of a preventive of vice, or a preservative of virtue.

Philosophical moralists on the other hand, are friends to occasional indulgences. They see nothing inherently or necessarily mischievous, either in the theatre or in the concert-room, or in the ball-room, or in the circulating library, or in many other places of resort. If a young female, say they, situated in a provincial town, were to see a play annually, would it not give her animation, and afford a spring to her heart? or if a youth were to see a play two or three times in the year, might not his parents, if they were to accompany him, make it each time, by their judicious and moral remarks, subservient to the improvement of his morals? neither do these moralists anticipate any danger by looking to distant prospects, where the things are innocent in themselves. And they are of opinion, that all danger may be counteracted effectually, not by prohibitory checks and guards, but by storing the mind with knowledge, and filling it with a love of virtue. The arguments therefore, which these will advance against the system of the moral education of the Quakers, may be seen in the following words.



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“All prohibitions, they contend, should be avoided, as much as possible, in moral education; for prohibitions may often become the cause of greater immorality, than they were intended to prevent. The fable of the hen, whose very prohibition led her chickens to the fatal well, has often been realized in life, there is a certain curiosity in human nature to look into things forbidden. If Quaker youth should have the same desires in this respect as others, they cannot gratify them but at the expence of their virtue. If they wish for novels, for example, they must get them clandestinely. If to go to the theatre, they must go in secret. But they must do more than this in the latter case, for as they would be known by their dress, they must change it for that of another person. Hence they may be made capable of intrigue, hypocrisy, and deceit.”

“Prohibitions, again, they believe, except they be well founded, may confound the notions of children on the subject of morality; for if they are forbidden to do what they see worthy and enlightened persons do, they may never know where to fix the boundaries between vice and virtue.”

“Prohibitions, again, they consider, if made without an allowance of exceptions, as having a tendency to break the spirit of youth. Break a horse in the usual way, and teach him to stop with the check of the reins, and you break him, and preserve his courage. But put him in a mill to break him, and you break his life and animation. Prohibitions therefore may hinder elevated feeling, and may lead to poverty and sordidness of spirit.”

“Prohibitions, again, they believe, if youth once depart from the right way, render them more vicious characters than common. This arises from the abruptness or suddenness of transition. For having been shut up within narrow boundaries for a part of their lives, they go greater lengths, when once let loose, than others, who have not been equally curbed and confined.”

“But while they are of opinion, that prohibitions are likely to be thus injurious to Quaker-youth, they are of opinion, that they are never to be relied upon as effectual guardians of morality, because they consider them as built upon false principles.”

“They are founded, they conceive, on the principle, that ignorance is a security for innocence, or that vice is so attractive, that we cannot resist it but by being kept out of the way. In the first case, they contend that the position is false; for ignorant persons are of all others the most likely, when they fall into temptations, to be seduced, and in the second, they contend that there is a distrust of divine providence in his moral government of the world.”



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“They are founded, again, they conceive, on false principles, inasmuch as the Quakers confound causes with sub-causes, or causes with occasions. If a person, for example, were to get over a hedge, and receive a thorn in his hand, and die of the wound, this thorn would be only the occasion, and not the cause of his death. The bad state in which his body must have been, to have made this wound fatal, would have been the original cause. In like manner neither the theatre, nor the ball-room are the causes of the bad passions, that are to be found there. All these passions must have existed in persons previously to their entrance into these places. Plays therefore, or novels, or public dances, are only the sub-causes, or the occasions of calling forth the passions in question. The real cause is in the infected state of the mind, or in the want of knowledge, or in the want of a love of virtue.”

“Prohibitions therefore, though they may become partial checks of vice, can never, they believe, be relied upon as effectual guardians of virtue. Bars and bolts seldom prevent thieves from robbing a house. But if armed men should be in it, who would venture to enter in? In the same manner the mind of man should be armed or prepared. It should be so furnished, that men should be able to wander through a vicious world, amidst all its foibles and its follies, and pass uncontaminated by them. It should have that tone given to it, which should hinder all circumstances from becoming occasions. But this can never be done by locking up the heart to keep vice out of it, but by filling it with knowledge and with a love of virtue.”

“That this is the only method to be relied upon in moral education, they conceive may be shewn by considering upon whom the pernicious effects of the theatre, or of the ball-room, or of the circulating library, principally fall. Do they not fall principally upon those, who have never had a dignified education. ‘Empty noddles, it is said, are fond of playhouses,’ and the converse, is true, that persons, whose understandings have been enriched, and whose tastes have been corrected, find all such recreations tiresome. At least they find so much to disgust them, that what they approve does not make them adequate amends. This is the case also with respect to novels. These do harm principally to barren minds. They do harm to those who have no proper employment for their time, or to those, who in the manners, conversation, and conduct, of their parents, or others with whom they associate, have no examples of pure thinking, or of pure living, or of a pure taste. Those, on the other hand, who have been taught to love good books, will never run after, or be affected by, bad ones. And the same mode of reasoning, they conceive, is applicable to other cases. For if people are taught to love virtue for virtue’s sake, and, in like manner, to hate what is unworthy, because they have a genuine and living knowledge of its unworthiness, neither the ball, nor concert-room, nor the theatre, nor the circulating library, nor the diversions of the field, will have charms enough to seduce them, or to injure the morality of their minds.”



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To sum up the whole. The prohibitions of the Quakers, in the first place, may become injurious, in the opinion of these philosophical moralists, by occasioning greater evils, than they were intended to prevent. They can never, in the second place, be relied upon as effectual guardians of virtue, because they consider them to be founded on false principles. And if at any time they can believe them to be effectual in the office assigned them, they believe them to be productive only of a cold or a sluggish virtue.

MORAL EDUCATION.

CHAP. IX.... SECT. I.

Reply of the Quakers to these objections—they say first, that they are to be guided by revelation in the education of their children—and that the education, which they adopt, is sanctioned by revelation, and by the practice of the early Christians—they maintain again, that the objections are not applicable to them, for they pre-suppose circumstances concerning them, which are not true—they allow the system of filling the mind with virtue to be the most desirable—but they maintain that it cannot be acted upon abstractedly—and, that if it could, it would be as dangerous, as the philosophical moralists make their system of the prohibitions.

To these objections the Quakers would make the following reply.

They do not look up either to their own imaginations, or to the imaginations of others, for any rule in the education of their children. As a christian society, they conceive themselves bound to be guided by revelation, and by revelation only, while it has any injunctions to offer, which relate to this subject.

In adverting to the Old Testament, they find that no less than nine, out of the ten commandments of Moses, are of a prohibitory nature, and, in adverting to the new, that many of the doctrines of Jesus Christ and the apostles are delivered in the form of prohibitions. They believe that revealed religion prohibits them from following all those pursuits, which the objections notice; for though there is no specific prohibition of each, yet there is an implied one in the spirit of christianity, Violent excitements of the passions on sensual subjects must be unfavourable to religious advancement. Worldly pleasures must hinder those, which are spiritual. Impure words and spectacles must affect morals. Not only evil is to be avoided, but even the appearance of evil. While therefore these sentiments are acknowledged by christianity, it is to be presumed that the customs, which the objections notice, are to be avoided in christian education. And as the Quakers consider these to be forbidden to themselves, they feel themselves obliged to forbid them to others. And, in these particular prohibitions, they consider themselves as sanctioned both by the writings and the practice of the early christians.



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In looking at the objections, which have been made with a view of replying to them, they would observe first, that these objections do not seem to apply to them as a society, because they presuppose circumstances concerning them, which are not true. They presuppose first, that their moral education is founded on prohibitions solely, whereas they endeavour both by the communication of positive precepts, and by their example, to fill the minds of their children with a love of virtue. They presuppose again, that they are to mix with the world, and to follow the fashions of the world, in which case a moderate knowledge of the latter, with suitable advice when they are followed, is considered as enabling them to pass through life with less danger than the prohibition of the same, whereas they mix but little with others of other denominations. They abjure the world, that they may not imbibe its spirit. And here they would observe, that the knowledge, which is recommended to be obtained, by going through perilous customs is not necessary for them as a society. For living much at home, and mixing almost solely with one another, they consider their education as sufficient for their wants.

If the Quakers could view the two different systems abstractedly, that of filling the heart with virtue, and that of shutting it out from a knowledge of vice, so that they could be acted upon separately, and so that the first of the two were practicable, and practicable without having to go through scenes that were dangerous to virtue, they would have no hesitation in giving the preference to the former; because if men could be taught to love virtue for virtue's sake, all the trouble of prohibitions would be unnecessary.

But the Quakers would conceive that the system of filling the mind with virtue, if acted upon abstractedly, or by itself, would be impracticable with respect to youth. To make it practicable children must be born with the full grown intellect and experience of men. They must have an innate knowledge of all the tendencies, the bearings, the relations, and the effects of virtue and vice. They must be also strong enough to look temptation in the face; whereas youth have no such knowledge, or experience, or strength, or power.

They would consider also the system of filling the mind with virtue, as impossible, if attempted abstractedly or alone, because it is not in human wisdom to devise a method of inspiring it with this essence, without first teaching it to abstain from vice. It is impossible, they would say, for a man to be virtuous, or to be in love with virtue, except he were to lay aside his vicious practices. The first step to virtue, according both to the Heathen and the Christian philosophy, is to abstain from vice. We are to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well. This is the process recommended. Hence prohibitions are necessary. Hence sub-causes as well as causes are to be attacked. Hence abstinence from vice is a Christian, though it may be a sluggish, virtue. Hence innocence is to be aimed at by an ignorance of vice. And hence we must prohibit all evil, if we wish for the assistance of the moral governor of the world.



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But if the system of filling the heart with virtue were ever practicable of itself, that is, without the aid of prohibitions, yet if it be to be followed by allowing young persons to pass through the various amusements of the world which the Quakers prohibit, and by giving them moral advice at the same time, they would be of opinion, that more danger would accrue to their morality, than any, which the prohibitions could produce. The prohibitions, as far as they have a tendency to curb the spirit, would not be injurious, in the opinion of the Quakers, because it is their plan in education to produce humble, and passive, and obedient characters; and because spirit, or highmindedness, or high feeling, is no trait in the Christian character. As far as the curiosity, which is natural to man, would instigate him to look into things forbidden, which he could not always do in the particular situation of the Quakers, without the admission of intrigue, or hypocrisy, or deceit, prohibitions would be to be considered as evils, though they would always be necessary evils. But the Quakers would apprehend that the same number of youth would not be lost by passing through the ordeal of prohibitory education, as through the ordeal of the system, which attempts to fill the mind with virtue, by inuring it to scenes, which may be dangerous to its morality; for if tastes are to be cultivated, and knowledge to be had, by adopting the amusements prohibited by the Quakers, many would be lost, though some might be advanced to virtue. For parents cannot always accompany their children to such places, nor, if they could, can they prevent these from fascinating. If these should fascinate, they will suggest repetitions. But frequent repetitions, where you accustom youth to see, to hear, and to think, what ought never to be heard, seen, or thought of by Christians, cannot but have the effect of tinging the character in time. This mode of education would be considered by the Quakers as answering to that of “dear bought experience.” A person may come to see the beauty of virtue, when his constitution has been shattered by vice. But many will perish in the midst of so hazardous a trial.[13]

[Footnote 13: Though no attempt is to be made to obtain knowledge, according to the Christian system, through the medium of customs which may be of immoral tendency, yet it does not follow that knowledge, properly obtained, is not a powerful guardian of virtue. This important subject may probably be resumed in a future volume.]

SECT. II.

Quakers contend, by way of farther reply to the objections, that their education has been practically or experimentally beneficial—two facts in behalf of this assertion—the first is that young Quakers get earlier into the wisdom of life than many others—the second, that there are few disorderly persons in the society—error corrected, that the Quakers turn persons out of the society, as soon as they begin to be vicious, that it may be rescued from the disgrace of a bad character.



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The answers, which have hitherto been given to the reader, may be considered as the statement of theory against theory. But the Quakers, would say farther upon this subject, that they have educated upon these principles for a hundred and fifty years, and that, where they have been attended to, their effects have been uniformly beneficial. They would be fearful therefore of departing from a path, which they conceive their own experience and that of their ancestors has shewn them to be safe, and which after all their inquiries, they believe to be that which is pointed out to them by the Christian religion.

I shall not attempt to follow up this practical argument by any history of the lives of the Quakers, but shall content myself with one or two simple facts, which appear to me to be materially to the point.

In the first place I may observe that it is an old saying, that it is difficult to put old heads on young shoulders. The Quakers, however, do this more effectually than any other people. It has often been observed that a Quaker boy has an unnatural appearance. This idea has arisen from his dress and his sedateness, which together have produced an appearance of age above the youth in his countenance, or the stature of his person. This, however, is confessing, in some degree, in the case before us, that the discretion of age has appeared upon youthful shoulders. It is certainly an undeniable fact, that the youth of this society, generally speaking, get earlier into a knowledge of just sentiments, or into a knowledge of human nature, or into a knowledge of the true wisdom of life, than those of the world at large. I have often been surprised to hear young Quakers talk of the folly and vanity of pursuits, in which persons older than themselves were then embarking for the purposes of pleasure, and which the same persons have afterwards found to have been the pursuits of uneasiness and pain.

Let us stop for a while, just to look at the situation of some of those young persons, who, in consequence of a different education, are introduced to the pleasures of the world, as to those, which are to constitute their happiness. We see them running eagerly first after this object, then after that. One man says to himself "this will constitute my pleasure." He follows it. He finds it vanity and vexation of spirit. He says again "I have found myself deceived. I now see my happiness in other pleasures, and not in those where I fancied it." He follows these. He becomes sickened. He finds the result different from his expectations. He pursues pleasure, but pleasure is not there.

[14]"They are lost In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd, And never won. Dream after dream ensues; And still they dream, that they shall still succeed And still are disappointed."

[Footnote 14: Cowper.]



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Thus after having wasted a considerable portion of his time, he is driven at last by positive experience into the truth of those maxims, which philosophy and religion have established, and in the pursuit of which alone he now sees that true happiness is to be found. Thus, in consequence of his education, he loses two thirds of his time in tedious and unprofitable, if not in baneful pursuits. The young Quaker, on the other hand, comes, by means of his education, to the same maxims of philosophy and religion, as the foundation of his happiness, at a very early period of life, and therefore saves the time, and preserves the constitution which the other has been wasting for want of this early knowledge. I know of no fact more striking, or more true in the Quaker-history, than this, namely, that the young Quaker, who is educated as a Quaker, gets such a knowledge of human nature, and of the paths to wisdom and happiness, at an early age, that, though he is known to be a young mariner by the youth displayed in his countenance, he is enabled to conduct his bark through the dangerous rocks and shoals of life, with greater safety than many others, who have been longer on the ocean of this probationary world.

I may observe again, as the second fact, that it is not unusual to hear persons say, that you seldom see a disorderly Quaker, or, that a Quaker-prostitute or a Quaker criminal is unknown. These declarations, frequently and openly made, shew at least that there is an opinion among the world at large, that the Quakers are a moral people.

The mention of this last fact leads me to the notice, and the correction, of an error, which I have found to have been taken up by individuals. It is said by these that the Quakers are very wary with respect to their disorderly members, for that when any of them behave ill, they are expelled the society in order to rescue it from the disgrace of a bad character. Thus if a Quaker woman were discovered to be a prostitute, or a Quaker man to be taken up for a criminal offence, no disgrace could attach to this society as it would to others; for if, in the course of a week, after a discovery had been made of their several offences, any person were to state that two Quaker members had become infamous, it would be retorted upon him, that they were not members of the society.

It will be proper to observe upon the subject of this error, that it is not so probable that the Quakers would disown these, after the discovery of their infamy, to get rid of any stain upon the character of the society, as it is that these persons, long before the facts could be known, had been both admonished and disowned. For there is great truth in the old maxim "Nemo fecit repente 'turpissimus;" or "no man was ever all at once a rogue."



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So in the case of these persons, as of all others, they must have been vicious by degrees: they must have shewn symptoms of some deviations from rectitude, before the measure of their iniquity could have been completed. But by the constitution of Quakerism, as will appear soon, no person of the society can be found erring even for the first time, without being liable to be privately admonished. These admonitions may be repeated for weeks, or for months, or even for years, before the subjects of them are pronounced so incorrigible as to be disowned. There is great reason therefore to presume, in the case before us, though the offenders in question would have undoubtedly been disowned by the Quakers, after they were known to be such, yet that they had been disowned long before their offences had been made public.

Upon the whole it may be allowed, that young Quakers arrive at the knowledge of just sentiments, or at the true wisdom of life earlier than those, who are inured to the fashions of the world; and it may be allowed also that the Quakers, as a body, are a moral people. Now these effects will generally be considered as the result of education; and though the prohibitions of the Quakers may not be considered as the only instruments of producing these effects, yet they must be allowed to be component parts of the system, which produces them.

DISCIPLINE OF THE QUAKERS.

CHAP. I.... SECT. I.

Discipline of two kinds—as it relates to the regulation of the internal affairs of the society—or to the cognizance of immoral conduct—difficulty of procuring obedience to moral precepts—this attempted to be obviated by George Fox—outlines of his system for this purpose—additions made to his system since his time—objections to the system considered—this system, or the discipline of the Quakers, as far as this branch of it is concerned, the great foundation-stone on which their moral education is supported.

The discipline of the Quakers is divisible into two parts. The first may comprehend the regulation of the internal affairs of the society, such as the management of the poor belonging to it, the granting of certificates of removal to its members, the hearing of their appeals upon various occasions, the taking cognizance of their proposals of marriage, and the like. The second may comprehend the notice or observance of the moral conduct of individuals, with a view of preserving the rules, which the Quakers have thought it their duty to make, and the testimonies which they have thought it their duty to bear, as a Christian people. It is to the latter part of the discipline that I shall principally confine myself in the ensuing part of my work.

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Nothing is more true than that, when men err in their moral practice, it is not for want of good precepts or of wholesome advice. There are few books from which we cannot collect some moral truths; and few men so blind, as not to be able to point out to us the boundaries of moral good. The pages of revelation have been long unfolded to our view, and diffusively spread among us. We have had the advantage too of having their contents frequently and publicly repeated into our ears. And yet, knowing what is right, we cannot pursue it. We go off, on the other hand, against our better knowledge, into the road to evil. Now, it was the opinion of George Fox, that something might be done to counteract this infirmity of human nature, or to make a man keep up to the precepts which he believed to have been divinely inspired, or, in other words, that a system of Discipline might be devised, for regulating, exciting, and preserving the conduct of a Christian.

This system he at length completed, and, as he believed, with the divine aid, and introduced it into the society with the approbation of those who belonged to it.

The great principle, upon which he founded it, was, that every christian was bound to watch over another for his good. This principle included two ideas. First, that vigilance over the moral conduct of individuals was a christian duty. Secondly, that any interference with persons, who might err, was solely for their good. Their reformation was to be the only object in view. Hence religious advice was necessary. Hence it was to be administered with tenderness and patience. Hence nothing was to be left undone, while there was a hope that any thing could be done, for their spiritual welfare.

From this view of the subject he enjoined it to all the members of his newly formed society, to be watchful over the conduct of one another, and not to hesitate to step in for the recovery of those, whom they might discover to be overtaken with a fault.

He enjoined it to them again, that they should follow the order recommended by Jesus Christ upon such occasions.[15] "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but, if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen-man or a Publican."

[Footnote 15: Matt. 18. 15, 16, 17.]



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For the carrying of this system into execution in the order thus recommended, he appointed Courts, or meetings for dicipline, as the Quakers call them, with the approbation of the society, where the case of the disorderly should be considered, if it should be brought to the cognizance of the church; and where a record should be kept of the proceedings of the society respecting it. In these courts or meetings the poor were to have an equal voice with the rich.—There was to be no distinction but in favour of religious worth; And here it is to be remarked, that he was so desirous, that the most righteous judgment should be pronounced upon any offender, that he abandoned the usual mode of decision, in general so highly valued, by a majority, of voices, and recommended the decision to be made according to the apparent will of the virtuous, who might be present.—And as expulsion from membership with the church was to be considered as the heaviest punishment, which the Quakers, as a religious body, could inflict, he gave the offender an opportunity of appealing to meetings, different from those in which the sentence had been pronounced against him, and where the decisive voices were again to be collected from the preponderant weight of religious character.

He introduced also into his system of dicipline privileges in favour of women, which marked his sense of justice, and the strength and liberality of his mind. The men he considered undoubtedly as the heads of the church, and from whom all laws concerning it ought to issue. But he did not deny women on that account any power, which he thought it would be proper for them to hold. He believed them to be capable of great usefulness, and therefore admitted them to the honour of being, in his own society, of nearly equal importance with the men.—In the general duty, imposed upon members, of watching over one another, he laid it upon the women, to be particularly careful in observing the morals of those of then own sex. He gave them also meetings for dicipline of their own, with the power, of recording their own transactions, so that women were to act among courts or meetings of women, as men among those of men. There was also to be no office in the society belonging to the men, but he advised there should be a corresponding one belonging to the women. By this new and impartial step he raised the women of his own community beyond the level of women in others, and laid the foundation of that improved strength of intellect, dignity of mind, capability of business, and habit of humane offices, which are so conspicuous among Female-Quakers at the present day.

With respect to the numerous offices, belonging to the discipline, he laid it down as a principle, that the persons, who were to fill them, were to have no other emolument or reward, than that, which a faithful discharge of them would bring to their own consciences.

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These are the general outlines of the system of discipline, as introduced by George Fox. This system was carried into execution, as he himself had formed it, in his own time. Additions, however, have been made to it since, as it seemed proper, by the society at large. In the time of George Fox, it was laid upon every member, as we have seen, to watch over his neighbour for his spiritual welfare. But in 1698, the society conceiving, that what was the business of every one might eventually become the business of no one, appointed officers, whose particular duty it should be to be overseers of the morals of individuals; thus hoping, that by the general vigilance enjoined by George Fox, which was still to continue, and by the particular vigilance then appointed, sufficient care would be taken of the morals of the whole body. In the time, again, of George Fox, women had, only their monthly and quarterly meetings for discipline, but it has since been determined, that they should have their yearly meetings equally with the men. In the time, again, of George Fox, none but the grave members were admitted into the meetings for discipline, but it has been since agreed, that young persons should have the privilege of attending them, and this, I believe, upon the notion, that. While these meetings would qualify them for transacting the business of the society, they might operate as schools for virtue.

This system of discipline, as thus introduced by George Fox, and as thus enlarged by the society afterwards, has not escaped, notwithstanding the loveliness of its theory, the censure of the world.

It has been considered in the first place, as a system of espionage, by which one member is made a spy upon, or becomes an informer against another. But against this charge it would be observed by the Quakers, that vigilance over morals is unquestionably a Christian duty. It would be observed again that the vigilance which is exercised in this case, is not with the intention of mischief, as in the case of spies and informers, but with the intention of good. It is not to obtain money, but to preserve reputation and virtue. It is not to persecute but to reclaim. It is not to make a man odious, but to make him more respectable. It is never an interference with innocence. The watchfulness begins to be offensive only, where delinquency is begun.

The discipline, again, has been considered as too great an infringement, of the liberty of those, who are brought under it. Against this the Quakers would contend, that all persons who live in civil society, must give up a portion of their freedom, that more happiness and security may be enjoyed. So, when men enter into Christian societies, they must part with a little of their liberty for their moral good.

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But whatever may be the light in which persons, not of the society, may view this institution, the Quakers submit to, and respect it. It is possible there may be some, who may feel it a restraint upon their conduct. And there is no doubt, that it is a restraint upon those, who have irregular desires to gratify, or destructive pleasures to pursue. But generally speaking, the youth of the society, who receive a consistent education, approve of it. Genuine Quaker parents, as I have had occasion to observe, insist upon the subjugation of the will. It is their object to make their children lowly, patient and submissive. Those therefore, who are born in the society, are born under the system, and are in general educated for it. Those who become converted to the religion of the society, know beforehand the terms of their admission. And it will appear to all to be at least an equitable institution, because in the administration of it, there is no exception of persons. The officers themselves, who are appointed to watch over, fall under the inspection of the discipline. The poor may admonish the rich, and the rich the poor. There, is no exception, in short, either for age, or sex, or station.

It is not necessary, at least in the present place, that I should go farther, and rake up all the objections, that may be urged upon this subject. I shall therefore only observe here, that the discipline of the Quakers, notwithstanding all its supposed imperfections, whatever, they may be, is the grand foundation-stone, upon which their moral education is supported. It is the grand partition wall between them and vice. If this part of the fabric were ever allowed to, be undermined, the building would fall to pieces; though the Quakers might still be known by their apparel and their language, they would no longer be so remarkable as they are now generally confessed to, be, for their moral character.

SECT. II.

Manner of the administration of the discipline of the Quakers—Overseers appointed to every particular meeting—Manner of reclaiming an individual—first by admonition—this sometimes successful—secondly by dealing—this sometimes successful—but if unsuccessful, the offender is disowned—but he may appeal afterwards to two different courts or meetings for redress.—

Having now given the general outlines of the discipline of the Quakers, I shall proceed to explain the particular manner of the administration of it.

To administer it effectually all individuals of the society, as I have just stated, whether men or women, are allowed the power of watching over the conduct of one another for their good, and of interfering if they should see occasion.

But besides this general care two or more persons of age and experience, and of moral lives and character, and two or more women of a similar description, are directed to be appointed, to have the oversight of every congregation or particular meeting in the

kingdom. These persons are called overseers, because it is their duty to oversee their respective flocks.

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If any of the members should violate the prohibitions mentioned in the former part of the work, or should become chargeable with injustice, drunkenness, or profane swearing, or neglect of their public worship, or should act in any way inconsistently with his character as a christian, it becomes the particular duty of these overseers, though it is also the duty of the members at large, to visit him in private, to set before him the error and consequences of his conduct, and to endeavour by all the means in their power to reclaim him. This act on the part of the overseer is termed by the society admonishing. The circumstances of admonishing and of being admonished are known only to the parties, except the case should have become of itself notorious; for secrecy is held sacred on the part of the persons who admonish. Hence it may happen, that several of the society may admonish the same person, though no one of them knows that any other has been visiting him at all. The offender may be thus admonished by overseers and other individuals for weeks and months together, for no time is fixed by the society, and no pains are supposed to be spared for his reformation. It is expected, however, in all such admonitions, that no austerity of language or manner should be used, but that he should be admonished in tenderness and love.

If an overseer, or any other individual, after having thus laboured to reclaim another for a considerable length of time, finds that he has not succeeded in his work, and feels also that he despairs of succeeding by his own efforts, he opens the matter to some other overseer, or to one or more serious members, and requests their aid. These persons now wait upon the offender together, and unite their efforts in endeavouring to persuade him to amend his life. This act, which now becomes more public by the junction of two or three in the work of his reformation, is still kept a secret from other individuals of the society, and still retains the name of admonishing.

It frequently happens that, during these different admonitions, the offender sees his error, and corrects his conduct. The visitations of course cease, and he goes on in the estimation of the society as a regular or unoffending member, no one knowing but the admonishing persons, that he has been under the discipline of the society. I may observe here, that what is done by men to men is done by women to women, the women admonishing and trying to reclaim those of their own sex, in the same manner.

Should, however, the overseers, and other persons before mentioned, find after a proper length of time that all their united efforts have been ineffectual, and that they have no hope of success with respect to his amendment, they lay the case, if it should be of a serious nature, before a [16]court, which has the name of the monthly meeting. This court, or meeting, make a minute of the case, and appoint a committee to visit him. The committee in consequence, of their appointment wait upon him. This act is now considered as a public act, or as an act of the church. It is not now termed admonishing, but changes its name to [17]dealing. The offender too, while the committee are dealing with him, though he may attend the meetings of the society for worship, does not attend those of their discipline.



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[Footnote 16: Certain acts of delinquency are reported to the monthly meeting, as soon as the truth of the facts can be ascertained, such as a violation of the rules of the society, with respect to marriage, payment of tythes, *etc.*]

[Footnote 17: Women, though they may admonish, cannot deal with women, this being an act of the church, till they have consulted the meetings of the men. Men are generally joined with women in the commission for this purpose.]

If the committee, after having dealt with the offender according to their appointment, should be satisfied that he is sensible of his error, they make a report to the monthly court or meeting concerning him. A minute is then drawn up, in which it is stated, that he has made satisfaction for the offence. It sometimes happens, that he himself sends to the same meeting a written acknowledgement of his error. From this time he attends the meetings for discipline again, and is continued in the society, as if nothing improper had taken place. Nor is any one allowed to reproach him for his former faults.

Should, however, all endeavours prove ineffectual, and should the committee, after having duly laboured with the offender, consider him at last as incorrigible, they report their proceedings to the monthly meeting. He is then publicly excluded from membership, or, as it is called, [18]disowned. This is done by a distinct document, called a testimony of disownment, in which the nature of the offence, and the means that have been used to reclaim him, are described. A wish is also generally expressed in this document, that he may repent, and be taken into membership again. A copy of this minute is always required to be given to him.

[Footnote 18: Women cannot disown, the power of disowning, is an act of the church, being vested in the meetings of the men.]

If the offender should consider this act of disowning him as an unjust proceeding, he may appeal to a higher tribunal, or to the quarterly court, or meeting. This quarterly court or meeting, then appoint a committee, of which no one of the monthly meeting that condemned him can be a member, to reconsider his case. Should this committee report, and the quarterly meeting in consequence decide against him, he may appeal to the yearly. This latter meeting is held in London, and consists of deputies and others from all parts of the kingdom. The yearly meeting then appoint a committee of twelve deputies, taken from twelve quarterly meetings, none of whom can be from the quarterly meeting that passed sentence against him, to examine his case again. If this committee should confirm the former decisions, he may appeal to the yearly meeting at large; but beyond this there is no appeal. But if he should even be disowned by the voice of the yearly meeting at large, he may, if he lives to give satisfactory proof of his amendment, and sues for readmission into the society, be received into membership again; but he can only be received through the medium of the monthly meeting, by which he was first disowned.



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SECT. III

Two charges usually brought against this administration of the discipline—that it is managed with an authoritative spirit—and that it is managed partially—these charges are considered.

As two charges are usually brought against the administration of that part of the discipline, which has been just explained, I shall consider them in this place.

The first usually is, that, though the Quakers abhor what they call the authority of priest craft, yet some overseers possess a portion of the spirit of ecclesiastical dominion; that they are austere, authoritative, and over bearing in the course of the exercise of their office, and that, though the institution may be of Christian origin, it is not always conducted by these with a Christian spirit. To this first charge I shall make the following reply.

That there may be individual instances, where this charge may be founded, I am neither disposed, nor qualified, to deny. Overseers have their different tempers, like other people; and the exercise of dominion has unquestionably a tendency to spoil the heart. So far there is an opening for the admission of this charge. But it must be observed, on the other hand, that the persons, to be chosen overseers, are to be by the laws of the society^[19] “as upright and unblameable in their conversation, as they can be found, in order that the advice, which they shall occasionally administer to other friends, may be the better received, and carry with it the greater weight and force on the minds of those, whom they shall be concerned to admonish.” It must be observed again that it is expressly enjoined them, that “they are to exercise their functions in a meek, calm, and peaceable spirit, in order that the admonished may see that their interference with their conduct proceeds from a principle of love and a regard for their good, and preservation in the truth.”

[Footnote 19: Book of extracts.]

And it must be observed again, that any violation of this injunction would render them liable to be admonished by others, and to come under the discipline themselves.

The second charge is, that the discipline is administered partially; or that more favour is shewn to the rich than to the poor, and that the latter are sooner disowned than the former for the same faults.

This latter charge has probably arisen from a vulgar notion, that, as the poor are supported by the society, there is a general wish to get rid of them.—But this notion is not true. There is more than ordinary caution in disowning those who are objects of support, add to which, that, as some of the most orderly members of the body are to be found among the poor, an expulsion of these, in a hasty manner, would be a diminution

of the quantum of respectability, or of the quantum of moral character, of the society at large.



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In examining this charge, it must certainly be allowed, that though the principle “of no respect of persons” is no where carried to a greater length than in the Quaker Society, yet we may reasonably expect to find a drawback from the full operation of it in a variety of causes. We are all of us too apt, in the first place, to look up to the rich, but to look down upon the poor. We are apt to court the good will of the former, when we seem to care very little even whether we offend the latter. The rich themselves and the middle classes of men respect the rich more than the poor; and the poor show more respect to the rich than to one another. Hence it is possible; that a poor man may find more reluctance in entering the doors of a rich man to admonish him, than one who is rich to enter the doors of the poor for the same purpose, men, again, though they may be equally good, may not have all the same strength of character. Some overseers may be more timid than others, and this timidity may operate upon them more in the execution of their duty upon one class of individuals, than upon another. Hence a rich man may escape for a longer time without admonition, than a poorer member. But when the ice is once broken; when admonition is once begun; when respectable persons have been called in by overseers or others, those causes, which might be preventive of justice, will decrease; and, if the matter should be carried to a monthly or a quarterly meeting, they will wholly vanish. For in these courts it is a truth, that those, who are the most irreproachable for their lives, and the most likely of course to decide justly on any occasion, are the most attended to, or carry the most weight, when they speak publicly. Now these are to be found principally in the low and middle classes, and these, in all societies, contain the greatest number of individuals. As to the very rich, these are few indeed compared with the rest, and these may be subdivided into two classes for the farther elucidation of the point. The first will consist of men, who rigidly follow the rules of the society, and are as exemplary as the very best of the members. The second will consist of those, who we members according to the letter, but not according to the spirit, and who are content with walking in the shadow, that follows the substance of the body. Those of the first class will do justice, and they will have on equal influence with any. Those of the second, whatever may be their riches, or whatever they may say, are seldom if ever attended to in the administration of the discipline.

From hence it will appear, that if there be any partiality in the administration of this institution, it will consist principally in this, that a rich man may be suffered in particular cases, to go longer without admonition than a poorer member; but that after admonition has been begun, justice will be impartially administered; and that the charges of a preference, where disowning is concerned, has no solid foundation for its support.



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SECT. IV.

Three great principles discoverable in the discipline, as hitherto explained—these applicable to the discipline of larger societies, or to the criminal codes of states—lamentable, that as Christian principles, they have not been admitted into our own—Quakers, as far as they have had influence in legislation, have adopted them—exertions of William Penn—Legislature of Pennsylvania as example to other countries in this particular.

I find it almost impossible to proceed to the great courts or meetings of the Quakers, which I had allotted for my next subject, without stopping a while to make a few observations on the principles of that part of the discipline, which I have now explained.

It may be observed, first, that the great object of this part of the discipline is the reformation of the offending person: secondly, that the means of effecting this object consists of religious instruction or advice: and thirdly, that no pains are to be spared, and no time to be limited, for the trial of these means, or, in other words, that nothing is to be left undone, while there is a hope that the offender may be reclaimed. Now these principles the Quakers adopt in the exercise of their discipline, because, as a Christian community, they believe they ought to be guided only by Christian principles, and they know of no other, which the letter, or the spirit of Christianity, can warrant.

I shall trespass upon the patience of the reader in this place, only till I have made an application of these principles, or till I have shewn him how far these might be extended, and extended with advantage to morals, beyond the limits of the Quaker-society, by being received as the basis, upon which a system, of penal laws might be founded, among larger societies, or states.

It is much to be lamented, that nations, professing Christianity, should have lost sight, in their various acts of legislation, of Christian principles: or that they should not have interwoven some such beautiful principles as those, which we have seen adopted by the Quakers, into the system of their penal laws. But if this negligence or omission would appear worthy of regret, if reported of any Christian nation, it would appear most so, if reported of our own, where one would have supposed, that the advantages of civil and religious liberty, and those of a reformed religion, would have had their influence is the correction of our judgments, and in the benevolent dispositions of our will. And yet nothing is more true, than that these good influences have either never been produced, or, if produced, that they have never been attended to, upon this subject. There seems to be no provision for religious instruction in our numerous prisons. We seem to make no patient trials of those, who are confined in them, for their reformation. But, on the other hand, we seem to hurry them off



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the stage of life, by means of a code, which annexes death to two hundred different offences, as if we had allowed our laws to be written by the bloody pen of the pagan Draco. And it seems remarkable, that this system should be persevered in, when we consider that death, as far as the experiment has been made in our own country, has little or no effect as a punishment for crimes. Forgery, and the circulation of forged paper, and the counterfeiting of the money of the realm, are capital offences, and are never pardoned. And yet no offences are more frequently committed than these. And it seems still more remarkable, when we consider, in addition to this, that in consequence of the experiments, made in other countries, it seems to be approaching fast to an axiom, that crimes are less frequent, in proportion as mercy takes place of severity, or as there are judicious substitutes for the punishment of death.

I shall not inquire, in this place, how far the right of taking away life on many occasions, which is sanctioned by the law of the land, can be supported on the ground of justice, or how for a greater injury is done by it, than the injury the criminal has himself done. As Christians, it seems that we should be influenced by Christian principles. Now nothing can be more true, than that Christianity commands us to be tender hearted one to another, to have a tender forbearance one with another, and to regard one another as brethren. We are taught also that men, independently of their accountableness to their own governments, are accountable for their actions in a future state, and that punishments are unquestionably to follow. But where are our forbearance and our love, where is our regard for the temporal and eternal interests of man, where is our respect for the principles of the gospel, if we make the reformation of a criminal a less object than his punishment, or if we consign him to death, in the midst of his sins, without having tried all the means in our power for his recovery?

Had the Quakers been the legislators of the world, they had long ago interwoven the principles of their discipline into their penal codes, and death had been long ago abolished as a punishment for crimes. As far as they have had any power with legislatures, they have procured an attention to these principles. George Fox remonstrated with the judges in his time on the subject of capital punishments. But the Quakers having been few in number, compared with the rest of their countrymen, and having had no seats in the legislature, and no predominant interest with the members of it, they have been unable to effect any change in England on this subject. In Pennsylvania, however, where they were the original colonists, they have had influence with their own government, and they have contributed to set up a model of jurisprudence, worthy of the imitation of the world.



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William Penn, on his arrival in America, formed a code of laws chiefly on Quaker principles, in which, however, death was inscribed as a punishment, but it was confined to murder. Queen Anne set this code aside, and substituted the statute and common law of the mother country. It was, however, resumed in time, and acted upon for some years, when it was set aside by the mother country again. From this time it continued dormant till the separation of America from England. But no sooner had this event taken place, which rendered the American states their own legislators, than the Pennsylvanian Quakers began to aim at obtaining an alteration of the penal laws. In this they were joined by worthy individuals of other denominations; and these, acting in union, procured from the legislature of Pennsylvania, in the year 1786, a reform of the criminal code. This reform, however, was not carried, in the opinion of the Quakers, to a sufficient length. Accordingly, they took the lead again, and exerted themselves afresh upon this subject. Many of them formed themselves into a society "for alleviating the miseries of public prisons." Other persons co-operated with them in this undertaking also. At length, after great perseverance, they prevailed upon the same legislature, in the year 1790, to try an ameliorated system. This trial answered so well, that the same legislature again, in the year 1794, established an act, in which several Quaker principles were incorporated, and in which only the crime of premeditated murder was punishable with death.

As there is now but one capital offence in Pennsylvania, punishments for other offences are made up of fine, imprisonment, and labour; and these are awarded separately or conjointly, according to the magnitude of the crime.

When criminals have been convicted, and sent to the great gaol of Philadelphia to undergo their punishment, it is expected of them that they should maintain themselves out of their daily labour; that they should pay for their board and washing, and also for the use of their different implements of labour; and that they should defray the expences of their commitment, and of their prosecutions and their trials. An account therefore is regularly kept against them, and if at the expiration of the term of their punishment, there should be a surplus of money in their favour, arising out of the produce of their work, it is given to them on their discharge.

An agreement is usually made about the price of prison-labour between the inspector of the gaol and the employers of the criminals.

As reformation is now the great object in Pennsylvania, where offences have been committed, it is of the first importance that the gaoler and the different inspectors should be persons of moral character. Good example, religious advice, and humane treatment on the part of these, will have a tendency to produce attention, respect, and love on the part of the prisoners, and to influence their moral conduct. Hence it is a rule never to be departed from, that none are to be chosen as successors to these different officers, but such, as shall be found on inquiry to have been exemplary in their lives.



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As reformation, again, is now the great object, no corporal punishment is allowed in the prison. No keeper can strike a criminal. Nor can any criminal be put into irons. All such punishments are considered as doing harm. They tend to extirpate a sense of shame. They tend to degrade a man and to make him consider himself as degraded in his own eyes; whereas it is the design of this change in the penal system, that he should be constantly looking up to the restoration of his dignity as a man, and to the recovery of his moral character.

As reformation, again, is now the great object, the following[20] system is adopted. No intercourse is allowed between the males and the females, nor any between the untried and the convicted prisoners. While they are engaged in their labour, they are allowed to talk only upon the subject, which immediately relates to their work. All unnecessary conversation is forbidden. Profane swearing is never overlooked. A strict watch is kept, that no spirituous liquors may be introduced. Care is taken that all the prisoners have the benefit of religious instruction. The prison is accordingly open, at stated times, to the pastors of the different religious denominations of the place. And as the mind of man may be worked upon by rewards as well as by punishments, a hope is held out to the prisoners, that the time of their confinement may be shortened by their good behaviour. For the inspectors, if they have reason to believe that a solid reformation has taken place in any individual, have a power of interceding for his enlargement, and the executive government of granting it, if they think it proper. In the case, where the prisoners are refractory, they are usually put into solitary confinement, and deprived of the opportunity of working. During this time the expences of their board and washing are going on, so that they are glad to get into employment again, that they may liquidate the debt, which, since the suspension of their labour, has been accruing to the gaol.

[Footnote 20: As cleanliness is connected with health, and health with morals, the prisoner are obliged to wash and clean themselves every morning before their work, and to bathe in the summer-season, in a large reservoir of water, which is provided in the court yard of the prison for this purpose.]

In consequence of these regulations, those who visit the criminals in Philadelphia in the hours of their labour, have more the idea of a large manufactory, than of a prison. They see nail-makers, sawyers, carpenters, joiners, weavers, and others, all busily employed. They see regularity and order among these. And as no chains are to be seen in the prison, they seem to forget their situation as criminals, and to look upon them as the free and honest labourers of a community following their respective trades.



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In consequence of these regulations, great advantages have arisen both to the criminals, and to the state. The state has experienced a diminution of crimes to the amount of one half since the change of the penal system, and the criminals have been restored, in a great proportion, from the gaol to the community, as reformed persons. For few have been known to stay the whole term of their confinement. But no person could have had any of his time remitted him, except he had been considered both by the inspectors and the executive government as deserving it. This circumstance of permission to leave the prison before the time expressed in the sentence, is of great importance to the prisoners. For it operates as a certificate for them of their amendment to the world at large. Hence no stigma is attached to them for having been the inhabitants of a prison. It may be observed also, that some of the most orderly and industrious, and such as have worked at the most profitable trades, have had sums of money to take on their discharge, by which they have been able to maintain themselves honestly, till they could get into employ.

Such is the state, and such the manner of the execution of the penal laws of Pennsylvania, as founded upon Quaker-principles, so happy have the effects of this new system already been, that it is supposed it will be adopted by the other American States.

May the example be universally followed! May it be universally received as a truth, that true policy is inseparable from virtue; that in proportion as principles become lovely on account of their morality, they will become beneficial, when acted upon, both to individual and to States; or that legislators cannot raise a constitution upon so fair and firm a foundation, as upon the gospel of Jesus Christ!

CHAP. II.

Monthly court or meeting—constitution of this meeting—each county is usually divided into parts—in each of these parts or divisions are several meeting-houses, which have their several congregations attached to them—one meeting-house in each division is fixed upon for transacting the business of all the congregations in that division—deputies appointed from every particular meeting or congregation in each division to the place fixed upon for transacting the business within it—nature of the business to be transacted—women become deputies, and transact business, equally with the men.

I come, after this long digression, to the courts of the Quakers. And here I shall immediately premise, that I profess to do little more than to give a general outline of these. I do not intend to explain the proceedings, preparatory to the meetings there, or to state all the exceptions from general rules, or to trouble the memory of the reader with more circumstances than will be sufficient to enable him to have a general idea of this part of the discipline of the Quakers.



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The Quakers manage their discipline by means of monthly, quarterly, and yearly courts, to which, however they themselves uniformly give the name of meetings.

To explain the nature and business of the monthly or first of these meetings, I shall fix upon some county in my own mind, and describe the business, that is usually done in this in the course of the month. For as the business, which is usually transacted in any one county, is done by the Quakers in the same manner and in the same month in another, the reader, by supposing an aggregate of counties, may easily imagine, how the whole business of the society is done for the whole kingdom.

The Quakers^[21] usually divide a county into a number of parts, according to the Quaker-population of it. In each of these divisions there are usually several meeting-houses, and these have their several congregations attached to them. One meeting-house, however, in each division, is usually fixed upon for transacting the business of all the congregations that are within it, or for the holding of these monthly courts. The different congregations of the Quakers, or the members of the different particular meetings, which are settled in the northern part of the county, are attached of course to the meeting-house, which has been fixed upon in the northern division of it because it gives them the least trouble to repair to it on this occasion. The numbers of those again, which are settled in the southern, or central, or other parts of the county, are attached to that, which has been fixed upon in the southern, or central, or other divisions of it, for the same reason. The different congregations in the northern division of the county appoint, each of them, a set of deputies once a month, which deputies are of both sexes, to repair to the meeting-house, which has been thus assigned them. The different congregations in the southern, central, or other divisions, appoint also, each of them, others, to repair to that, which has been assigned them in like manner. These deputies are all of them previously instructed in the matters, belonging to the congregations, which they respectively represent.

[Footnote 21: This was the ancient method, when the society was numerous in every county of the kingdom, and the principle is still followed according to existing circumstances.]

At length the day arrives for the monthly meeting. The deputies make ready to execute the duties committed to their trust. They repair, each sett of them, to their respective places of meeting. Here a number of Quakers, of different ages and of both sexes, from their different divisions, repair also. It is expected that^[22] all, who can conveniently attend, should be present on this occasion.

[Footnote 22: There may be persons, who on account of immoral conduct cannot attend.]

When they are collected at the meeting-house, which was said to have been fixed upon in each division, a meeting for worship takes place. All persons, both men and women,

attend together. But when this meeting is over, they separate into different apartments for the purposes of the discipline; the men to transact by themselves the business of the men, and of their own district, the women to transact that, which is more limited, namely such as belongs to their own sex.

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In the men's meeting, and it is the same in the women's, the names of the deputies beforementioned, are first entered in a book, for, until this act takes place, the meeting for discipline is not considered to be constituted.

The minutes of the last monthly meeting are then generally read, by which it is seen if any business of the society was left unfinished. Should any thing occur of this sort, it becomes the [23]first object to be considered and dispatched.

[Footnote 23: The London monthly meetings begin differently from those in the country.]

The new business, in which the deputies were said to have been previously instructed by the congregations which they represented comes on. This business may be of various sorts. One part of it uniformly relates to the poor. The wants of these are provided for, and the education of their children taken care of, at this meeting. Presentations of marriages are received, and births, marriages, and funerals are registered. If disorderly members, after long and repeated admonitions, should have given no hopes of amendment, their case is first publicly cognizable in this court. Committees are appointed to visit, advise, and try to reclaim them. Persons, reclaimed by these visitations, are restored to membership, after having been well reported of by the parties deputed to visit them. The fitness of persons, applying for membership, from other societies, is examined here. Answers also are prepared to the [24]queries at the proper time. Instructions also are given, if necessary, to particular meetings, suited to the exigencies of their cases; and certificates are granted to members on various occasions.

[Footnote 24: These queries will be explained in the next chapter.]

In transacting this, and other business of the society, all members present we allowed to speak. The poorest man in the meeting-house, though he may be receiving charitable contributions at the time, is entitled to deliver his sentiments upon any point. He may bring forward new matter. He may approve or object to what others have proposed before him. No person may interrupt him, while he speaks. The youth, who are sitting by, are gaining a knowledge of the affairs and discipline of the society, and are gradually acquiring sentiments and habits, that are to mark their character in life. They learn, in the first place, the duty of a benevolent and respectful consideration for the poor. In hearing the different cases argued and discussed, they learn, in some measure, the rudiments of justice, and imbibe opinions of the necessity of moral conduct. In these courts they learn to reason. They learn also to hear others patiently, and without interruption, and to transact business, that may come before them in maturer years with regularity and order.



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I cannot omit to mention here the orderly manner in which, the Quakers, conduct their business on these occasions. When a subject is brought before them, it is canvassed to the exclusion of all extraneous matter, till some conclusion results. The clerk of the monthly meeting then draws up a minute, containing, as nearly as he can collect, the substance of this conclusion. This minute is then read aloud to the auditory, and either stands or undergoes an alteration, as appears, by the silence or discussion upon it, to be the sense of the meeting. When fully agreed upon, it stands ready to be recorded. When a second subject comes on, it is canvassed, and a minute is made of it, to be recorded in the same manner, before a third is allowed to be introduced. Thus each point is settled, till the whole business of the meeting is concluded.

I may now mention that in the same manner as the men proceed in their apartment on this occasion, the women proceed in their own apartment or meeting also. There are women-deputies, and women-clerks. They enter down the names of these deputies, read the minutes, of the last monthly meeting, bring forward the new matter, and deliberate and argue on the affairs of their own sex. They record their proceedings equally. The young females also, are present, and have similar opportunities of gaining knowledge, and of improving their judgments, and of acquiring useful and moral habits, as the young men.

It is usual, when the women have finished the business of their own meeting, to send one of their members to the apartments of the men, to know if they have any thing to communicate. This messenger having returned, and every thing having been settled and recorded in both meetings, the monthly meeting is over, and men, women, and youth of both sexes, return to their respective homes.

In the same manner as the different congregations, or members of the different meetings, in any one division of the county, meet together, and transact their monthly business, so other different congregations, belonging to other divisions of the same county, meet at other appointed places, and dispatch their business also. And in the same manner as the business is thus done in one county, it is done in every other county of the kingdom once a month.

CHAP. III.

Quarterly court or meeting—constitution of this meeting—one place in each county is now fixed upon for the transaction of business—this place may be different in the different quarters of the year—deputies from the various monthly meetings are appointed to repair to this place—nature of the business to be transacted—certain queries proposed—written answers carried to these by the deputies just mentioned—Queries proposed in the womens meeting also, and answered in the same manner.—

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The quarterly meeting of the Quakers, which comes next in order, is much more numerously attended than the monthly. The monthly, as we have just seen, superintend the concerns of a few congregations or particular meetings which were contained in a small division of the county. The quarterly meeting, on the other hand, superintends the concerns of all the monthly meetings in the county at large. It takes cognizance of course of the concerns of a greater portion of population, and, as the name implies, for a greater extent of time. The Quaker population of a [25] whole county is now to assemble in one place. This place, however, is not always the same. It may be different, to accommodate the members in their turn, in the different quarters of the year.

[Footnote 25: I still adhere, to give the reader a clearer idea of the discipline, and to prevent confusion, to the division by county, though the district in question may not always comprehend a complete county.]

In the same manner as the different congregations in a small division of a county have been shewn to have sent deputies to the respective monthly meetings within it, so the different monthly meetings in the same county send each of them, deputies to the quarterly. Two or more of each sex are generally deputed from each monthly meeting. These deputies are supposed to have understood, at the monthly meeting, where they were chosen, all the matters which the discipline required them to know relative to the state and condition of their constituents. Furnished with this knowledge, and instructed moreover by written documents on a variety of subjects, they repair at a proper time to the place of meeting. All the Quakers in the district in question, who are expected to go, bend their direction hither. Any person travelling in the county at this time, would see an unusual number of Quakers upon the road directing their journey to the same point. Those who live farthest from the place where the meeting is held, have often a long journey to perform. The Quakers are frequently out two or three whole days, and sometimes longer upon this occasion. But as this sort of meeting takes place but once in the quarter, the loss of their time, and the fatigue of their journey, and the expences attending it, are borne cheerfully.

When all of them are assembled, nearly the same custom obtains at the quarterly, as has been described at the monthly meeting. A meeting for worship is first held. The men and women, when this is over, separate into their different apartments, after which the meeting for discipline begins in each.

I shall not detail the different kinds of business, which come on at this meeting. I shall explain the principal subject only.

The society at large have agreed upon a number of questions, or queries as they call them, which they have committed to print, and which they expect to be read and answered in the course of these quarterly meetings The following is a list of them.



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I. Are meetings for worship and discipline kept up, and do Friends attend them duly, and at the time appointed; and do they avoid all unbecoming behaviour therein?

II. Is there among you any growth in the truth; and hath any convincement appeared since last year?

III. Are Friends preserved in love towards each other; if differences arise, is due care taken speedily to end them; and are Friends careful to avoid and discourage tale-bearing and detraction?

IV. Do Friends endeavour by example and precept to train up their children, servants, and all under their care, in a religious life and conversation, consistent with our Christian profession, in the frequent reading of the holy scriptures, and in plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel?

V. Are Friends just in their dealings and punctual in fulfilling their engagements; and are they annually advised carefully to inspect the state of their affairs once in the year?

VI. Are Friends careful to avoid all vain sports and places of diversion, gaming, all unnecessary frequenting of taverns, and other public houses, excess in drinking, and other intemperance?

VII. Do Friends bear a faithful and Christian testimony against receiving and paying tythes, priests demands, and those called church-rates?

VIII. Are Friends faithful in our testimony against bearing arms, and being in any manner concerned in the militia, in privateers, letters of marque, or armed vessels, or dealing in prize-goods?

IX. Are Friends clear of defrauding the king of his customs, duties and excise, and of using, or dealing in goods suspected to be run?

X. Are the necessities of the poor among you properly inspected and relieved; and is good care taken of the education of their offspring?

XI. Have any meetings been settled, discontinued, or united since last year?

XII. Are there any Friends prisoners for our testimonies; and if any one hath died a prisoner, or been discharged since last year, when and how?

XIII. Is early care taken to admonish such as appear inclinable to marry in a manner contrary to the rules of our society; and to deal with such as persist in refusing to take counsel?



XIV. Have you two or more faithful friends, appointed by the monthly meeting, as overseers in each particular meeting; are the rules respecting removals duly observed; and is due care taken, when any thing appears amiss, that the rules of our discipline be timely and impartially put in practice?

XV. Do you keep a record of the prosecutions and sufferings of your members; is due care taken to register all marriages, births, and burials; are the titles of your meeting houses, burial grounds, &c. duly preserved and recorded; and are all legacies and donations properly secured, and recorded, and duly applied?

These are the Questions, which the society expect should be publicly asked and answered in their quarterly courts or meetings. Some of these are to be answered in one quarterly meeting, and [26] others in another; and all of them in the course of the year.

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[Footnote 26: The Quakers consider the punctual attendance of their religious meetings, the preservation of love among them, and the care of the poor, of such particular importance, that they require the first, third, and tenth to be answered every quarter.]

The clerk of the quarterly meeting, when they come to this part of the business, reads the first of the appointed queries to the members present, and is then silent. Soon after this a deputy from one of the monthly meetings comes forward, and producing the written documents, or answers to the queries, all of which were prepared at the meeting where he was chosen, reads that document, which contains a reply to the first query in behalf of the meeting he represents. A deputy from a second monthly meeting then comes forward, and produces his written documents also, and answers the same query in behalf of his own meeting in the same manner. A deputy from a third where there are more than two meetings then produces his documents in his turn, and replies to it also, and this mode is observed, till all the deputies from each of the monthly meetings in the county have answered the first query.

When the first query has been thus fully answered, silence is observed through the whole court. Members present have now an opportunity of making any observations they may think proper. If it should appear by any of the answers to the first query, that there is any departure from principles on the subject it contains in any of the monthly meetings which the deputies represent, it is noticed by any one present. The observations made by one frequently give rise to observations from another. Advice is sometimes ordered to be given, adapted to the nature of this departure from principles; and this advice is occasionally circulated, through the medium of the different monthly meetings, to the particular congregation, where the deviation has taken place.

When the first query has been thus read by the clerk, and answered by the deputies, and when observations have been made upon it, and instructions given as now described, a second query is read audibly, and the same process takes place, and similar observations are sometimes made, and instructions given.

In the same manner a third query is read by the clerk, and answered by all the deputies, and observed upon by the meeting at large; and so on a fourth, and a fifth, till all the queries, set apart for the day are answered.

It may be proper now to observe, that while the men in their own meeting-house are thus transacting the quarterly business for themselves, the women, in a different apartment or meeting-house, are conducting it also for their own sex. They read, answer, and observe upon, the queries in the same manner. When they have settled their own business, they send one or two of their members, as they did in the case of the monthly meeting, to the apartment of the men, to know if they have any thing to communicate to them. When the business is finished in both meetings, they break up, and prepare for their respective homes.



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CHAP. IV.

Great yearly court or meeting—constitution of this meeting—one place only of meeting fixed upon for the whole kingdom—this the metropolis—deputies appointed to it from the quarterly meetings—business transacted at this meeting—matters decided, not by the influence of numbers, but by the weight of religious character—no head or chairman of this meeting—character of this discipline or government of the Quakers—the laws, relating to it better obeyed than those under any other discipline or government—reasons of this obedience.

In the order, in which I have hitherto mentioned the meetings for the discipline of the Quakers, we have seen them rising by regular ascent, both in importance and power. We have seen each in due progression comprizing the actions of a greater population than the foregoing, and for a greater period of time. I come now to the yearly meeting, which is possessed of a higher and wider jurisdiction than any that have been yet described. This meeting does not take cognizance of the conduct of particular or of monthly meetings, but, at one general view, of the state and conduct of the members of each quarterly meeting, in order to form a judgment of the general state of the society for the whole kingdom.

We have seen, on a former occasion, the Quakers with their several deputies repairing to different places in a county; and we have seen them lately with their deputies again repairing to one great town in the different counties at large. We are now to see them repairing to the metropolis of the kingdom.

As deputies were chosen by each monthly meeting to represent it in the quarterly meeting, so the quarterly meetings choose deputies to represent them in the yearly meeting. These deputies are commissioned to be the bearers of certain documents to London, which contain answers in writing to a [27]number of the queries mentioned in the last chapter. These answers are made up from the answers received by the several quarterly meetings from their respective monthly meetings. Besides these they are to carry with them other documents, among which are accounts of sufferings in consequence of a refusal of military service, and of the payment of the demands of the church.

[Footnote 27: Viz. numbers 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,10,11,12]

The deputies who are now generally four in number for each quarterly meeting, that is, four of each sex (except for the quarterly meetings of York and London, the former of which generally sends eight men and the [28] latter twelve, and each of them the like number of females) having received their different documents, set forward on their journey. Besides these many members of the society repair to the metropolis. The distance of three or four hundred miles forms no impediment to the journey. A man

cannot travel at this time, but he sees the Quakers in motion from all parts, shaping their course to London, there to exercise, as will appear shortly, the power of deputies, judges, and legislators in turn, and to investigate and settle the affairs of the society for the preceding year.

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[Footnote 28: The quarterly meeting of London includes Middlesex.]

It may not be amiss to mention a circumstance, which has not unfrequently occurred upon these occasions. A Quaker in low circumstances, but of unblemished life, has been occasionally chosen as one of the deputies to the metropolis even for a county, where the Quaker-population has been considered to be rich. This deputy has scarcely been able, on account of the low state of his finances, to accomplish his journey, and has been known to travel on foot from distant parts. I mention this circumstance to shew that the society in its choice of representatives, shews no respect to persons, but that it pays, even in the persons of the poor, the respect that is due to virtue.

The day of the yearly meeting at length arrives. Whole days are now devoted to business, for which various committees are obliged to be appointed. The men, as before, retire to a meeting-house allotted to them, to settle the business for the men and the society at large, and the women retire to another, to settle that, which belongs to their own sex. There are nevertheless, at intervals, meetings for worship at the several meeting houses in the metropolis.

One great part of the business of the yearly meeting is to know the state of the society in all its branches of discipline for the preceding year. This is known by hearing the answers brought to the queries from the several quarterly meetings, which are audibly read by the clerk or his assistant, and are taken in rotation alphabetically. If any deficiency in the discipline should appear by means of these documents, in any of the quarterly meetings, remarks follow on the part of the auditory, and written advices are ordered to be sent, if it should appear necessary, which are either of a general nature, or particularly directed to those where the deficiency has been observed.

Another part of the business of the yearly meeting is to ascertain the amount of the money, called "FRIENDS SUFFERINGS," that is of the money, or the value of the goods, that have been taken from the Quakers for [29] tithes and church dues; for the society are principled against the maintenance of any religious ministry, and of course cannot conscientiously pay toward the support of the established church. In consequence of their refusal of payment in the latter case, their goods are seized by a law-process, and sold to the best bidder. Those, who have the charge of these executions, behave differently. Some wantonly take such goods, as will not sell for a quarter of their value, and others much more than is necessary, and others again kindly select those, which in the sale will be attended with the least loss. This amount, arising from this confiscation of their property, is easily ascertained from the written answers of the deputies. The sum for each county is observed, and noted down. The different sums are then added together, and the amount for the whole kingdom within the year is discovered.



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[Footnote 29: Distraints or imprisonment for refusing to serve in the militia are included also under the head "sufferings."]

In speaking of tithes and church-dues I must correct an error, that is prevalent. It is usually understood, when Quakers suffer on these accounts, that their losses are made up by the society at large. Nothing can be more false than this idea. Were their losses made up on such occasions, there would be no suffering. The fact is, that whatever a person loses in this way is his own total loss; nor is it ever refunded, though, in consequence of expensive prosecutions at law, it has amounted to the whole of the property of those, who have refused the payment of these demands. If a man were to come to poverty on this account, he would undoubtedly be supported, but he would only be supported as belonging to the poor of the society.

Among the subjects, introduced at this meeting, may be that of any new regulations for the government of the society. The Quakers are not so blindly attached to antiquity, as to keep to customs, merely because they are of an ancient date. But they are ready, on conviction, to change, alter, and improve. When, however, such regulations or alterations are proposed, they must come not through the medium of an individual, but through the medium of one of the quarterly meetings.

There is also a variety of other business at the yearly meeting. Reports are received and considered on the subject of Ackworth school, which was mentioned in a former part of the work as a public seminary of the society.

Letters are also read from the branches of the society in foreign parts, and answers prepared to them.

Appeals also are heard in various instances, and determined in this court.

I may mention here two circumstances, that are worthy of notice on these occasions.

It may be observed that whether such business as that, which I have just detailed or any of any other sort comes before the yearly meeting at large, it is decided, not by the influence of numbers, but by the weight of religious character. As most subjects afford cause for a difference of opinion, so the Quakers at this meeting are found taking their different sides of the argument, as they believe it right. Those however, who are in opposition to any measure, if they perceive by the turn the debate takes, either that they are going against the general will, or that they are opposing the sentiments of members of high moral reputation in the society, give way. And so far do the Quakers carry their condescension on these occasions, that if a few ancient and respectable individuals seem to be dissatisfied with any measure that may have been proposed, though otherwise respectably supported, the measure is frequently postponed, out of tenderness to the feelings of such members, and from a desire of gaining them in time by forbearance. But, in whatever way the question before them is settled,

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no division is ever called for. No counting of numbers is allowed. No protest is suffered to be entered. In such a case there can be no ostensible leader of any party; no ostensible minority or majority. The Quakers are of opinion that such things, if allowed, would be inconsistent with their profession. They would lead also to broils and divisions, and ultimately to the detriment of the society. Every measure therefore is settled by the Quakers at this meeting in the way I have mentioned, in brotherly love, and as the name of the society signifies, as Friends.

The other remarkable circumstance is, that there is no ostensible president or [30] head of this great assembly, nor any ostensible president or head of any one of its committees; and yet the business of the society is conducted in as orderly a manner, as it is possible to be among any body of men, where the number is so great, and where every individual has a right to speak.

[Footnote 30: Christ is supposed by the Quakers to be the head, under whose guidance all their deliberations ought to take place.]

The state of the society having, by this time been ascertained, both in the meetings of the women and of the men, from the written answers of the different deputies, and from the reports of different committees, and the [31]other business of the meeting having been nearly finished, a committee, which had been previously chosen, meet to draw up a public letter.

[Footnote 31: This may relate to the printing of books, to testimonies concerning deceased ministers, addresses to the king, if thought necessary, and the like.]

This letter usually comprehends three subjects: first, the state of the society, in which the sufferings for tithes and other demands of the church are included. This state, in all its different branches, the committee ascertain by inspecting the answers, as brought by the deputies before mentioned.

A second subject, comprehended in the letter, is advice to the society for the regulation of their moral and civil conduct. This advice is suggested partly from the same written answers, and partly by the circumstances of the times. Are there, for instance, any vicious customs creeping into the society, or any new dispositions among its members contrary to the Quaker principles? The answers brought by the deputies shew it, and advice is contained in the letter adapted to the case. Are the times, seasons of difficulty and embarrassment in the commercial world? Is the aspect of the political horizon gloomy, and does it appear big with convulsions? New admonition and, advices follow.

A third subject, comprehended in the letter, and which I believe since the year 1787 has frequently formed a standing article in it, is the slave-trade. The Quakers consider this



trade as so extensively big with misery to their fellow creatures, that their members ought to have a deep and awful feeling, and a religious care and concern about it. This and occasionally other subjects having been duly weighed by the committee, they begin to compose the letter.

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When the letter is ready, it is brought into the public meeting, and the whole of it, without interruption, is first read audibly. It is then read over again, and canvassed, sentence by sentence. Every sentence, nay every word, is liable to alteration; for any one may make his remarks, and nothing can stand but by the sense of the meeting. When finally settled and approved, it is printed and dispersed among the members throughout the nation. This letter may be considered as informing the society of certain matters, that occurred in the preceding year, and as conveying to them admonitions on various subjects. This letter is emphatically stiled "the General Epistle." The yearly meeting, having now lasted about ten days, is dissolved after a solemn pause, and the different deputies are at liberty to return home.

This important institution of the yearly meeting brings with it, on every return, its pains and pleasures. To persons of maturer years, who sit at this time on committee after committee, and have various offices to perform, it is certainly an anniversary of care and anxiety, fatigue and trouble. But it affords them, on the other hand, occasions of innocent delight. Some, educated in the same school, and others, united by the ties of blood and youthful friendship, but separated from one another by following in distant situations the various concerns of life, meet together in the intervals of the disciplinary business, and feel, in the warm recognition of their ancient intercourse, a pleasure, which might have been delayed for years, but for the intervention of this occasion. To the youth it affords an opportunity, amidst this concourse of members, of seeing those who are reputed to be of the most exemplary character in the society, and whom they would not have had the same chance of seeing at any other time. They are introduced also at this season to their relations and family friends. They visit about, and form new connections in the society, and are permitted the enjoyment of other reasonable pleasures.

Such is the organization of the discipline or government of the Quakers. Nor may it improperly be called a government, when we consider that, besides all matters relating to the church, it takes cognizance of the actions of Quakers to Quakers, and of these to their fellow-citizens, and of these again to the state; in fact of all actions of Quakers, if immoral in the eye of the society, us soon at they we known. It gives out its prohibitions. It marks its crimes. It imposes offices on its subjects. It culls them to disciplinary duties.[32]This government however, notwithstanding its power, has, as I observed before, no president or head, either permanent or temporary. There is no first man through the whole society. Neither has it any badge of office, or mace, or constables staff or sword. It may be observed also, that it has no office of emolument, by which its hands can be strengthened, neither minister, elder, [33]clerk,



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overseer, nor deputy, being paid; and yet its administration is firmly conducted, and its laws better obeyed, than laws by persons, under any other denomination or government. The constant assemblage of the Quakers at their places of worship, and their unwearied attendances at the monthly and quarterly meetings, which they must often frequent at a great distance, to their own personal inconvenience, and to the hindrance of their worldly concerns, must be admitted, in part, as proofs of the last remark. But when we consider them as a distinct people, differing in their manner of speech and in their dress and customs from others, rebelling against fashion and the fashionable world, and likely therefore to become rather the objects of ridicule than of praise; when we consider these things, and their steady and rigid perseverance in the peculiar rules and customs of the society, we cannot but consider their obedience to their own discipline, which makes a point of the observance of these singularities, as extraordinary.

[Footnote 32: The government or discipline is considered as a theocracy.]

[Footnote 33: The clerk, who keeps the records of the society in London, is the only person who has a salary.]

This singular obedience, however, to the laws of the society may be accounted for on three principles. In the first place in no society is there so much vigilance over the conduct of its members, as in that of the Quakers, as this history of their discipline must have already manifested. This vigilance of course, cannot miss of its effect. But a second cause is the following. The Quaker-laws and regulations are not made by any one person, nor by any number even of deputies. They are made by themselves, that is by the society in yearly meeting assembled. If a bad law, or the repeal of a good one, be proposed, every one present, without distinction, has a right to speak against the motion. The proposition cannot pass against the sense of the meeting. If persons are not present, it is their own fault. Thus it happens that every law, passed at the yearly meeting, may be considered, in some measure, as the law of every Quaker's own will, and people are much more likely to follow regulations made by their own consent, than those which are made against it. This therefore has unquestionably an operation as a second cause. A third may be traced in the peculiar sentiments, which the Quakers hold as a religious body. They believe that many of their members, when they deliver themselves publicly on any subject at the yearly meeting, are influenced by the dictates of the pure principle, or by the spirit of truth. Hence the laws of the society, which are considered to be the result of such influences, have with them the sanction of spiritual authority. They pay them therefore a greater deference on this account, than they would to laws, which they conceive to have been the production of the mere imagination, or will, of man.



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CHAP. V.

Disowning—foundation of the right of disowning—disowning no slight punishment—wherein the hardship or suffering consists.

I shall conclude the discipline of the Quakers by making a few remarks on the subject of disowning.

The Quakers conceive they have a right to excommunicate or disown; because persons, entering into any society, have a right to make their own reasonable rules of membership, and so early as the year 1663, this practice had been adopted by George Fox, and those who were in religious union with him. Those, who are born in the society, are bound of course, to abide by these rules, while they continue to be the rules of the general will, or to leave it. Those who come into it by conviction, are bound to follow them, or not to sue for admission into membership. This right of disowning, which arises from the reasonableness of the thing, the Quakers consider to have been pointed out and established by the author of the christian religion, who determined that [34]if a disorderly person, after having received repeated admonitions, should still continue disorderly, he should be considered as an alien by the church.

[Footnote 34: Matt. 18.v. 17.]

The observations, which I shall make on the subject of disowning, will be wholly confined to it as it must operate as a source of suffering to those, who are sentenced to undergo it. People are apt to say, “where is the hardship of being disowned? a man, though disowned by the Quakers, may still go to their meetings for worship, or he may worship if he chooses, with other dissenters, or with those of the church of England, for the doors of all places of worship are open to those, who desire to enter them.” I shall state therefore in what this hardship consists, and I should have done it sooner, but that I could never have made it so well understood as after an explanation had been given of the discipline of the Quakers, or as in the present place.

There is no doubt that a person, who is disowned, will be differently affected by different considerations. Something will depend upon the circumstance, whether he considers himself as disowned for a moral or a political offence. Something, again, whether he has been in the habit of attending the meetings for discipline, and what estimation he may put upon these.

But whether he has been regular or not in these attendances, it is certain that he has a power and a consequence, while he remains in his own society, which he loses when he leaves it, or when he becomes a member of the world. The reader will have already observed, that in no society is a man, if I may use the expression, so much of a man, as in that of the Quakers, or in no society is there such an equality of rank and privileges.

A Quaker is called, as we have seen, to the exercise of important and honourable functions.



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He sits in his monthly meeting, as it were in council, with the rest of the members. He sees all equal but he sees none superior, to himself. He may give his advice on any question. He may propose new matter. He may argue and reply. In the quarterly meetings he is called to the exercise of the same privileges, but on a larger scale. And at the yearly meeting he may, if he pleases, unite in his own person the offices of council, judge, and legislator. But when he leaves the society, and goes out into the world, he has no such station or power. He sees there every body equal to himself in privileges, and thousands above him. It is in this loss of his former consequence that he must feel a punishment in having been disowned. For he can never be to his own feelings what he was before. It is almost impossible that he should not feel a diminution of his dignity and importance as a man.

Neither can he restore himself to these privileges by going to a distant part of the kingdom and residing among quakers there, on a supposition that his disownment may be concealed. For a Quaker, going to a new abode among Quakers, must carry with him a certificate of his conduct from the last monthly meeting which he left, or he cannot be received as a member.

But besides losing these privileges, which confer consequence upon him, he loses others of another kind. He cannot marry in the society. His affirmation will be no longer taken instead of his oath. If a poor man, he is no longer exempt from the militia, if drawn by submitting to three months imprisonment; nor is he entitled to that comfortable maintenance, in case of necessity, which the society provide for their own poor.

To these considerations it may not perhaps be superfluous to add, that if he continues to mix with the members of his own society, he will occasionally find circumstances arising, which will remind him of his former state: and if he transfers his friendship to others, he will feel awkward and uneasy, and out of his element, till he has made his temper, his opinions, and his manners, harmonize with those of his new associates of the world.

PECULIAR CUSTOMS OF THE QUAKERS.

CHAP. I. SECT. I.

Dress—Quakers distinguished by their dress from others—great extravagance in dress in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—this extravagance had reached the clergy—but religious individuals kept to their antient dresses—the dress which the men of this description wore in those days—dress of the women of this description also—George Fox and the Quakers springing out of these, carried their plain habits with them into their new society.



I have now explained, in a very ample manner, the moral education and discipline of the Quakers. I shall proceed to the explanation of such customs, as seem peculiar to them as a society of christians.



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The dress of the Quakers is the first custom of this nature, that I purpose to notice. They stand distinguished by means of it from all other religious bodies. The men wear neither lace, frills, ruffles, swords, nor any of the ornaments used by the fashionable world. The women wear neither lace, flounces, lappets, rings, bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings, nor any thing belonging to this class. Both sexes are also particular in the choice of the colour of their clothes. All gay colours such as red, blue, green, and yellow, are exploded. Dressing in this manner, a Quaker is known by his apparel through the whole kingdom. This is not the case with any other individuals of the island, except the clergy; and these, in consequence of the black garments worn by persons on account of the death of their relations, are not always distinguished from others.

I know of no custom among the Quakers, which has more excited the curiosity of the world, than this of their dress, and none, in which they have been more mistaken in their conjectures concerning it.

[35]In the early times of the English History, dress had been frequently restricted by the government.—Persons of a certain rank and fortune were permitted to wear only cloathing of a certain kind. But these restrictions and distinctions were gradually broken down, and people, as they were able and willing, launched out into unlimited extravagance in their dress. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and down from thence to the time when the Quakers first appeared, were periods, particularly noticed for prodigality in the use of apparel, there was nothing too expensive or too preposterous to be worn. Our ancestors also, to use an ancient quotation, “were never constant to one colour or fashion two months to an end.” We can have no idea by the present generation, of the folly in such respects, of these early ages. But these follies were not confined to the laity. Affectation of parade, and gaudy cloathing, were admitted among many of the clergy, who incurred the severest invectives of the poets on that account. The ploughman, in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, is full upon this point. He gives us the following description of a Priest

“That hye on horse wylleth to ride,
In glytter ande gold of great araye,
'I painted and pertred all in pryde,
No common Knyght may go so gaye;
Chaunge of clothyng every daye,
With golden gyrdles great and small,
As boysterous as is here at baye;
All suche falshed mote nede fell.”

[Footnote 35: See Strut’s Antiquities.]

To this he adds, that many of them had more than one or two mitres, embellished with pearls, like the head of a queen, and a staff of gold set with jewels, as heavy as lead. He then speaks of their appearing out of doors with broad bucklers and long swords, or

with baldrics about their necks, instead of stoles, to which their basellards were attached.



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“Bucklers brode and sweardes longe,
Baudryke with baselards kene.”

He then accuses them with wearing gay gowns of scarlet and green colours, ornamented with cut-work, and for the long pykes upon their shoes.

But so late as the year 1652 we have the following anecdote of the whimsical dress of a clergyman. John Owen, Dean of Christ church, and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, is represented as wearing a lawn-band, as having his hair powdered and his hat curiously cocked. He is described also as wearing Spanish leather-boots with lawn-tops, and snake-bone band-strings with large tassels, and a large set of ribbands pointed at his knees with points or tags at the end. And much about the same time, when Charles the second was at Newmarket, Nathaniel Vincent, doctor of divinity, fellow of Clare-hall, and chaplain in ordinary to his majesty, preached before him. But the king was so displeased with the foppery of this preacher's, dress, that he commanded the duke of Monmouth, then chancellor of the university, to cause the statutes concerning decency of apparel among the clergy to be put into execution, which was accordingly done. These instances are sufficient to shew, that the taste for preposterous and extravagant dress must have operated like a contagion in those times, or the clergy would scarcely have dressed themselves in this ridiculous and censurable manner.

But although this extravagance was found among many orders of society at the time of the appearance of George Fox, yet many individuals had set their faces against the fashions of the world. These consisted principally of religious people of different denominations, most of whom were in the middle classes of life. Such persons were found in plain and simple habits notwithstanding the contagion of the example of their superiors in rank. The men of this description generally wore plain round hats with common crowns. They had discarded the sugar-loaf hat, and the hat turned up with a silver clasp on one side, as well as all ornaments belonging to it, such as pictures, feathers, and bands of various colours. They had adopted a plain suit of clothes. They wore cloaks, when necessary, over these. But both the clothes and the cloaks were of the same colour. The colour of each of them was either drab or grey. Other people who followed the fashions, wore white, red, green, yellow, violet, scarlet, and other colours, which were expensive, because they were principally dyed in foreign parts. The drab consisted of the white wool undyed, and the grey of the white wool mixed with the black, which was undyed also. These colours were then the colours of the clothes, because they were the least expensive, of the peasants of England, as they are now of those of Portugal and Spain. They had discarded also, all ornaments, such as of lace, or bunches of ribbands at the knees, and their buttons were generally of alchymy, as this composition was then termed, or of the same colour as their clothes.



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The grave and religious women also, like the men, had avoided the fashions of their times. These had adopted the cap, and the black hood for their headdress. The black hood had been long the distinguishing mark of a grave matron. All prostitutes, so early as Edward the third, had been forbidden to wear it. In after-times it was celebrated by the epithet of venerable by the poets, and had been introduced by painters as the representative of virtue. When fashionable women had discarded it, which was the case in George Fox's time, the more sober, on account of these ancient marks of its sanctity, had retained it, and it was then common among them. With respect to the hair of grave and sober women In those days, it was worn plain, and covered occasionally by a plain hat or bonnet. They had avoided by this choice those preposterous head-dresses and bonnets, which none but those, who have seen paintings of them, could believe ever to have been worn. They admitted none of the large ruffs, that were then in use, but chose the plain handkerchief for their necks, differing from those of others, which had rich point, and curious lace. They rejected the crimson sattin doublet with black velvet skirts, and contented themselves with a plain gown, generally of stuff, and of a drab, or grey, or buff, or buffin colour, as it was called, and faced with buckram. These colours, as I observed before, were the colours worn by country people; and were not expensive, because they were not dyed. To this gown was added a green apron. Green aprons had been long worn in England, yet, at the time I allude to, they were out of fashion, so as to be ridiculed by the gay. But old fashioned people still retained them. Thus an idea of gravity was connected with them; and therefore religious and steady women adopted them, as the grave and sober garments of ancient times.

It may now be observed that from these religious persons, habited in this manner, in opposition to the fashions of the world, the primitive Quakers generally sprung. George Fox himself wore the plain grey coat that has been noticed, with alchymy buttons, and a plain leather girdle about his waist. When the Quakers therefore first met in religious union, they met in these simple clothes. They made no alteration in their dress on account of their new religion. They prescribed no form or colour as distinguishing marks of their sect, but they carried with them the plain habits of their ancestors into the new society, as the habits of the grave and sober people of their own times.

SECT. II.

But though George Fox introduced no new dress into the society, he was not indifferent on the subject—he recommended simplicity and plainness—and declaimed against the fashions of the times—supported by Barclay and Penn—these explained the objects of dress—the influence of these explanations—dress at length incorporated into the discipline—but no standard fixed either of shape or colour—the objects of dress only recognized, and simplicity recommended—a new Era—great variety allowable by the discipline—Quakers have deviated less from the dress of their ancestors than other people.



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Though George Fox never introduced any new or particular garments, when he formed the society, as models worthy of the imitation of those who joined him, yet, as a religious man, he was not indifferent upon the subject of dress. Nor could he, as a reformer, see those extravagant fashions, which I have shewn to have existed in his time, without publicly noticing them. We find him accordingly recommending to his followers simplicity and plainness of apparel, and bearing his testimony against the preposterous and fluctuating apparel of the world.

In the various papers, which he wrote or gave forth upon this subject, he bid it down as a position, that all ornaments, superfluities, and unreasonable changes in dress, manifested an earthly or worldly spirit. He laid it down again, that such things, being adopted principally for the lust of the eye, were productive of vanity and pride, and that, in proportion as men paid attention to these outward decorations and changes, they suffered some loss in the value and dignity of their minds. He considered also all such decorations and changes, as contrary both to the letter and the spirit of the scriptures. Isaiah, one of the greatest prophets under the law, had severely reproved the daughters of Israel on account of their tinkling ornaments, cauls, round tires, chains, bracelets, rings, and ear-rings. St. Paul also and St. Peter had both of them cautioned the women of their own times, to adorn themselves in modest apparel, and not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. And the former had spoken to both sexes indiscriminately not to conform to the world, in which latter expression he evidently included all those customs of the world, of whatsoever nature, that were in any manner injurious to the morality of the minds of those who followed them.

By the publication of these sentiments, George Fox shewed to the world, that it was his opinion, that religion, though it prescribed no particular form of apparel, was not indifferent as to the general subject of dress. These sentiments became the sentiments of his followers. But the society was coming fast into a new situation. When the members of it first met in union, they consisted of grown up persons; of such, as had had their minds spiritually exercised, and their judgments convinced in religious matters; of such in fact as had been Quakers in spirit, before they had become Quakers by name. All admonitions therefore on the subject of dress were unnecessary for such persons. But many of those, who had joined the society, had brought with them children into it, and from the marriages of others, children were daily springing up. To the latter, in a profligate age, where the fashions were still raging from without, and making an inroad upon the minds and morals of individuals, some cautions were necessary for the preservation of their innocence in such a storm. For these were the reverse of their parents. Young, in point of age, they were



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Quakers by name, before they could become Quakers in spirit. Robert Barclay therefore, and William Penn, kept alive the subject of dress, which George Fox had been the first to notice in the society. They followed him on his scriptural ground. They repeated the arguments, that extravagant dress manifested an earthly spirit, and that it was productive of vanity and pride. But they strengthened the case by adding arguments of their own. Among these I may notice, that they considered what were the objects of dress. They reduced these to two, to decency, and comfort, in which latter idea was included protection from the varied inclemencies of the weather. Every thing therefore beyond these they considered as superfluous. Of course all ornaments would become censurable, and all unreasonable changes indefensible, upon such a system.

These discussions, however, on this subject never occasioned the more ancient Quakers to make any alteration in their dress, for they continued as when they had come into the society, to be a plain people. But they occasioned parents to be more vigilant over their children in this respect, and they taught the society to look upon dress, as a subject connected with the christian religion, in any case, where it could become injurious to the morality of the mind. In process of time therefore as the fashions continued to spread, and the youth of the society began to come under their dominion, the Quakers incorporated dress among other subjects of their discipline. Hence no member, after this period, could dress himself preposterously, or follow the fleeting fashions of the world, without coming under the authority of friendly and wholesome admonition. Hence an annual inquiry began to be made, if parents brought up their children to dress consistently with their christian profession. The society, however, recommended only simplicity and plainness to be attended to on this occasion. They prescribed no standard, no form, no colour, for the apparel of their members. They acknowledged the two great objects of decency and comfort, and left their members to clothe themselves consistently with these, as it was agreeable to their convenience or their disposition.

A new aera commenced from this period. Persons already in the society, continued of course in their ancient dresses: if others had come into it by conviction, who had led gay lives, they laid aside their gaudy garments, and took those that were more plain. And the children of both, from this time, began to be habited from their youth as their parents were.

But though the Quakers had thus brought apparel under the disciplinary cognizance of the society, yet the dress of individuals was not always alike, nor did it continue always one and the same even with the primitive Quakers. Nor has it continued one and the same with their descendants. For decency and comfort having been declared to be the true and only objects of dress, such a latitude was given, as



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to admit of great variety in apparel. Hence if we were to see a groupe of modern Quakers before us, we should probably not find any two of them dressed alike. Health, we all know, may require alteration in dress. Simplicity may suggest others. Convenience again may point out others; and yet all these various alterations may be consistent with the objects before specified. And here it may be observed that the society, during its existence for a century and a half, has without doubt, in some degree, imperceptibly followed the world, though not in its fashions, yet in its improvements of cloathing.

It must be obvious again, that some people are of a grave, and that others are of a lively disposition, and that these will probably never dress alike. Other members again, but particularly the rich, have a larger intercourse than the rest of them, or mix more with the world. These again will probably dress a little differently from others, and yet, regarding the two great objects of dress, their cloathing may come within the limits which these allow. Indeed if there be any, whose apparel would be thought exceptionable by the society, these would be found among the rich. Money, in all societies, generally takes the liberty of introducing exceptions. Nothing, however is more true, than that, even among the richest of the Quakers, there is frequently as much plainness and simplicity in their outward dress, as among the poor; and where the exceptions exist, they are seldom carried to an extravagant, and never to a preposterous extent.

From this account it will be seen, that the ideas of the world are erroneous on the subject of the dress of the Quakers; for it has always been imagined, that, when the early Quakers first met in religious union, they met to deliberate and fix upon some standard, which should operate as a political institution, by which the members should be distinguished by their apparel from the rest of the world. The whole history, however, of the shape and colour of the garments of the Quakers is, as has been related, namely, that the primitive Quakers dressed like the sober, steady, and religious people of the age, in which the society sprung up, and that their descendants have departed less in a course of time, than others, from the dress of their ancestors. The mens hats are nearly the same now, except that they have stays and loops, and many of their clothes are nearly of the same shape and colour, as in the days of George Fox. The dress of the women also is nearly similar. The black hoods indeed have gone, in a certain degree, out of use. But many of such women, as are ministers and elders, and indeed many others of age and gravity of manners, still retain them. The green apron also has been nearly, if not wholly laid aside. There was here and there an ancient woman, who used it within the last ten years, but I am told that the last of these died lately. No other reasons can be given, than those which have been assigned, why



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Quaker-women should have been found in the use of a colour, which is so unlike any other which they now use in their dress. Upon the whole, if the females were still to retain the use of the black hood and the green apron, and the men were to discard the stays and loops for their hats, we should find that persons of both sexes in the society, but particularly such as are antiquated, or as may be deemed old fashioned in it, would approach very near to the first or primitive Quakers in their appearance, both as to the sort and to the shape, and to the colour of their clothes. Thus has George Fox, by means of the advice he gave upon this subject, and the general discipline which he introduced into the society, kept up for a hundred and fifty years, against the powerful attacks of the varying fashions of the world, one steady, and uniform, external appearance among his descendants; an event, which neither the clergy by means of their sermons, nor other writers, whether grave or gay, were able to accomplish during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and which none of their successors have been able to accomplish from that time to the present.

SECT III.

The world usually make objections to the Quaker-dress—the charge is that there is a preciseness in it which is equivalent to the worshipping of forms—the truth of this charge not to be ascertained but by a knowledge of the heart—but outward facts mate against it—such as the origin of the Quaker-dress—and the Quaker-doctrine on dress—doctrine of christianity on this subject—opinion of the early christians upon it—reputed advantages of the Quaker-dress.

I should have been glad to have dismissed the subject of the Quaker-dress in the last section, but so many objections are usually made against it, that I thought it right to stop for a while to consider them in the present place. Indeed, if I were to choose a subject, upon which the world had been more than ordinarily severe on the Quakers, I should select that of their dress. Almost every body has something to say upon this point. And as in almost all cases, where arguments are numerous, many of them are generally frivolous, so it has happened in this also. There is one, however, which it is impossible not to notice upon this subject.

The Quakers, it is confessed by their adversaries, are not chargeable with the same sort of pride and vanity, which attach to the characters of other people, who dress in a gay manner, and who follow the fashions of the world, but it is contended, on the other hand, that they are justly chargeable with a preciseness, that is disgusting, in the little particularities of their cloathing. This precise attention to particularities is considered as little better than the worshipping of lifeless forms, and is usually called by the world the idolatry of the Quaker-dress.



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This charge, if it were true, would be serious indeed. It would be serious, because it would take away from the religion of the Quakers one of its greatest and best characters. For how could any people be spiritually minded, who were the worshippers of lifeless forms? It would be serious again, because it would shew their religion, like the box of Pandora, to be pregnant with evils within itself. For people, who place religion in particular forms, must unavoidably become superstitious. It would be serious again, because if parents were to carry such notions into their families, they would produce mischief. The young would be dissatisfied, if forced to cultivate particularities, for which they see no just or substantial reason. Dissentions would arise among them. Their morality too would be confounded, if they were to see these minutiae idolized at home, but disregarded by persons of known religious character in the world. Add to which, that they might adopt erroneous notions of religion. For they might be induced to lay too much stress upon the payment of the anise and cummin, and too little upon the observance of the weightier matters of the law.

As the charge therefore is unquestionably a serious one, I shall not allow it to pass without some comments. And in the first place it maybe observed that, whether this preciseness, which has been imputed to some Quakers, amounts to an idolizing of forms, can never be positively determined, except we had the power of looking into the hearts of those, who have incurred the charge. We may form, however, a reasonable conjecture, whether it does or not by presumptive evidence, taken from incontrovertible outward facts.

The first outward fact that presents itself to us, is the fact of the origin of the Quaker-dress, if the early Quakers, when they met in religious union, had met to deliberate and fix upon a form or standard of apparel for the society, in vain could any person have expected to repel this charge. But no such standard was ever fixed. The dress of the Quakers has descended from father to son in the way that has been described. There is reason therefore to suppose, that the Quakers as a religious body, have deviated less than others front the primitive habits of their ancestors, rather from a fear of the effects of unreasonable changes of dress upon the mind, than from an attachment to lifeless forms.

The second outward fact, which may be resorted to as furnishing a ground for reasonable conjecture, is the doctrine of the Quakers upon this subject. The Quakers profess to follow christianity in all cases, where its doctrines can be clearly ascertained. I shall state therefore what christianity says upon this point. I shall shew that what Quakerism says is in unison with it. And I shall explain more at large the principle, that has given birth to the discipline of the Quakers relative to their dress.



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Had christianity approved of the make or colour of any particular garment, it would have approved of those of its founder and of his apostles. We do not, however, know, what any of these illustrious personages wore. They were probably dressed in the habits of Judean peasants, and not with any marked difference from those of the same rank in life. And that they were dressed plainly, we have every reason to believe, from the censures, which some of them passed on the superfluities of apparel. But christianity has no where recorded these habits as a pattern, nor has it prescribed to any man any form or colour for his clothes.

But christianity, though it no where places religion in particular forms, is yet not indifferent on the general subject of dress. For in the first place it discards all ornaments, as appears by the testimonies of St. Paul and St. Peter before quoted, and this it does evidently on the ground of morality, lest these, by puffing up the creature, should be made to give birth to the censurable passions of vanity and lust. In the second place it forbids all unreasonable changes on the plea of conformity with the fashions of the world: and it sets its face against these also upon moral grounds; because the following of the fashions of the world begets a worldly spirit, and because, in proportion as men indulge this spirit, they are found to follow the loose and changeable morality of the world, instead of the strict and steady morality of the gospel.

That the early christians understood these to be the doctrines of christianity, there can be no doubt. The Presbyters and the Asceticks, I believe, changed the Pallium for the Toga in the infancy of the christian world; but all other christians were left undistinguished by their dress. These were generally clad in the sober manner of their own times. They observed a medium between costliness and sordidness. That they had no particular form for their dress beyond that of other grave people, we learn from Justin Martyr. "They affected nothing fantastic, says he, but, living among Greeks and barbarians, they followed the customs of the country, and in clothes, and in diet, and in all other affairs of outward life, they shewed the excellent and admirable constitution of their discipline and conversation." That they discarded superfluities and ornaments we may collect from various authors of those times. Basil reduced the objects of cloathing to two, namely, "Honesty and necessity," that is, to decency and protection. Tertullian laid it down as a doctrine that a Christian should not only be chaste, but that he should appear so outwardly. "The garments which we should wear, says Clemens of Alexandria, should be modest and frugal, and not wrought of divers colours, but plain." Crysostom commends Olympias, a lady of birth and fortune, for having in her garment nothing that was wrought or gaudy. Jerome praises Paula, another lady of quality, for the same reason. We find also that an unreasonable change of cloathing, or a change to please the eye of the world, was held improper. Cyril says, "we should not strive for variety, having clothes for home, and others for ostentation abroad." In short the ancient fathers frequently complained of the abuse of apparel in the ways described.



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Exactly in the same manner, and in no other, have the Quakers considered the doctrines of Christianity on the subject of dress. They have never adopted any particular model either as to form or colour for their clothes. They have regarded the two objects of decency and comfort. But they have allowed of various deviations consistently with these. They have in fact fluctuated in their dress. The English Quaker wore formerly a round hat. He wears it now with stays and loops. But even this fashion is not universal, and seems rather now on the decline. The American Quaker, on the other hand, has generally kept to the round hat. Black hoods were uniformly worn by the Quaker-women, but the use of these is much less than it was, and is still decreasing. The Green aprons also were worn by the females, but they are now wholly out of use. But these changes could never have taken place, had there been any fixed standard for the Quaker dress.

But though the Quakers have no particular model for their clothing, yet they are not indifferent to dress where it may be morally injurious. They have discarded all superfluities and ornaments, because they may be hurtful to the mind. They have set their faces also against all unreasonable changes of forms for the same reasons. They have allowed other reasons to weigh with them in the latter case. They have received from their ancestors a plain suit of apparel, which has in some little degree followed the improvements of the world, and they see no good reason why they should change it; at least they see in the fashions of the world none but a censurable reason for a change. And here it may be observed, that it is not an attachment to forms, but an unreasonable change or deviation from them, that the Quakers regard. Upon the latter idea it is, that their discipline is in a great measure founded, or, in other words, the Quakers, as a religious body, think it right to watch in their youth any unreasonable deviation from the plain apparel of the society.

This they do first, because any change beyond usefulness must be made upon the plea of conformity to the fashions of the world.

Secondly, because any such deviation in their youth is considered to shew, in some measure, a deviation from simplicity of heart. It bespeaks the beginning of an unstable mind. It shews there must have been some improper motive for the change. Hence it argues a weakness in the deviating persons, and points them out as objects to be strengthened by wholesome admonition.

Thirdly, because changes, made without reasonable motives, would lead, if not watched and checked, to other still greater changes, and because an uninterrupted succession of such changes would bring the minds of their youth under the most imperious despotisms, the despotism of fashion; in consequence of which they would cleave to the morality of the world instead of the morality of the gospel.



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And fourthly, because in proportion as young persons deviate from the plainness and simplicity of the apparel as worn by the society, they approach in appearance to the world; they mix with it, and imbibe its spirit and admit its customs, and come into a situation which subjects them to be disowned. And this is so generally true, that of those persons, whom the society has been obliged to disown, the commencement of a long progress in irregularity may often be traced to a deviation from the simplicity of their dress. And here it may be observed, that an effect has been produced by this care concerning dress, so beneficial to the moral interests of the society, that they have found in it a new reason for new vigilance on this subject. The effect produced is a general similarity of outward appearance, in all the members, though there is a difference both in the form and colour of their clothing; and this general appearance is such, as to make a Quaker still known to the world. The dress therefore of the Quakers, by distinguishing the members of the society, and making them known as such to the world, makes the world overseers as it were of their moral conduct. And that it operates in this way, or that it becomes a partial check in favour of morality, there can be no question. For a Quaker could not be seen either at public races, or at cock fightings, or at assemblies, or in public houses, but the fact would be noticed as singular, and probably soon known among his friends. His clothes would betray him. Neither could he, if at a great distance from home, and if quite out of the eye and observation of persons of the same religious persuasion, do what many others do. For a Quaker knows, that many of the customs of the society are known to the world at large, and that a certain conduct is expected from a person in a Quakers habit. The fear therefore of being detected, and at any rate of bringing infamy on his cloth, if I may use the expression, would operate so as to keep him out of many of the vicious customs of the world.

From hence it will be obvious that there cannot be any solid foundation for the charge, which has been made against the Quakers on the subject of dress. They are found in their present dress, not on the principle of an attachment to any particular form, or because any one form is more sacred than another, but on the principle, that an unreasonable deviation from any simple and useful clothing is both censurable and hurtful, if made in conformity with the fashions of the world. These two principles, though they may produce, if acted upon, a similar outward appearance in persons, are yet widely distinct as to their foundation, from one another. The former is the principle of idolatry. The latter that of religion. If therefore there are persons in the society, who adopt the former, they will come within the reach of the charge described. But the latter only can be adopted by true Quakers.

CHAP. II.



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Quakers are in the use of plain furniture—this usage founded on principles, similar to those on dress—this usage general—Quakers have seldom paintings, prints, or portraits in their houses, as, articles of furniture—reasons for their disuse of such articles.

As the Quakers are found in the use of garments, differing from those of others in their shape and fashion, and in the graveness of their colour, and in the general plainness of their appearance, so they are found in the use of plain and frugal furniture in their houses.

The custom of using plain furniture has not arisen from the circumstance, that any particular persons in the society, estimable for their lives and characters, have set the example in their families, but from the, principles of the Quaker-constitution itself. It has arisen from principles similar to those, which dictated the continuance of the ancient Quaker-dress. The choice of furniture, like the choice of clothes, is left to be adjudged by the rules of decency and usefulness, but never by the suggestions of shew. The adoption of taste, instead of utility, in this case, would be considered as a conscious conformity with the fashions of the world. Splendid furniture also would be considered as pernicious as splendid clothes. It would be classed with external ornaments, and would be reckoned equally productive of pride, with these. The custom therefore of plainness in the articles of domestic use is pressed upon all Quakers: and that the subject may not be forgotten, it is incorporated in their religious discipline; in consequence of which, it is held forth to their notice, in a public manner, in all the monthly and quarterly meetings of the kingdom, and in all the preparative meetings, at least once in the year.

It may be admitted as a truth, that the society practice, with few exceptions, what is considered to be the proper usage on such occasions. The poor, we know, cannot use any but homely-furniture. The middle classes are universally in such habits. As to the rich, there is a difference in the practice of these. Some, and indeed many of them, use as plain and frugal furniture, as those in moderate circumstances. Others again step beyond the practice of the middle classes, and buy what is more costly, not with a view of shew, so much as to accommodate their furniture to the size and goodness of their houses. In the houses of others again, who have more than ordinary intercourse with the world, we now and then see what is elegant, but seldom what would be considered to be extravagant furniture. We see no chairs with satin bottoms and gilded frames, no magnificent pier-glasses, no superb chandeliers, no curtains with extravagant trimmings. At least, in all my intercourse with the Quakers, I have never observed such things. If there are persons in the society, who use them, they must be few in number, and these must be conscious that, by the introduction of such finery[36] into their houses, they are going against the advices annually given them in their meetings on this subject, and that they are therefore violating the written law, as well as departing from the spirit of Quakerism.



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[Footnote 36: Turkey carpets are in use, though generally gaudy, on account of their wearing better than others.]

But if these or similar principles are adopted by the society on this subject, it must be obvious, that in walking through the rooms of the Quakers, we shall look in vain for some articles that are classed among the furniture of other people. We shall often be disappointed, for instance, if we expect to find either paintings or prints in frame. I seldom remember to have seen above three or four articles of this description in all my intercourse with the Quakers. Some families had one of these, others a second, and others a third, but none had them all. And in many families neither the one nor the other was to be seen.

One of the prints, to which I allude, contained a representation of the conclusion of the famous treaty between William Penn and the Indians of America. This transaction every body knows, afforded, in all its circumstances, a proof to the world, of the singular honour and uprightness of those ancestors of the Quakers who were concerned in it. The Indians too entertained an opinion no less favourable of their character, for they handed down the memory of the event under such [37]impressive circumstances, that their descendants have a particular love for the character, and a particular reliance on the word, of a Quaker at the present day. The print alluded to was therefore probably hung up as the pleasing record of a transaction, so highly honourable to the principles of the society; where knowledge took no advantage of ignorance, but where she associated herself with justice, that she might preserve the balance equal. "This is the only treaty," says a celebrated writer, "between the Indians and the Christians, that was never ratified by an oath, and was never broken."

[Footnote 37: The Indians denominated Penn, brother Onas, which means in their language a pen, and respect the Quakers as his descendants.]

The second was a print of a slave-ship, published a few years ago, when the circumstances of the slave-trade became a subject of national inquiry. In this the oppressed Africans are represented, as stowed in different parts according to the number transported and to the scale of the dimensions of the vessel. This subject could not be indifferent to those, who had exerted themselves as a body for the annihilation of this inhuman traffic. The print, however, was not hung up by the Quakers, either as a monument of what they had done themselves, or as a stimulus to farther exertion on the same subject, but, I believe, from the pure motive of exciting benevolence; of exciting the attention of those, who should come into their houses, to the case of the injured Africans, and of procuring sympathy in their favour.

The third contained a plan of the building of Ackworth-school. This was hung up as a descriptive view of a public seminary, instituted and kept up by the subscription and care of the society at large.



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But though all the prints, that have been mentioned, were hung up in frames on the motives severally assigned to them, no others were to be seen as their companions. It is in short not the practice^[38] of the society to decorate their houses in this manner.

[Footnote 38: There are still individual exceptions. Some Quakers have come accidentally into possession of printings and engravings in frame, which, being innocent in their subject and their lesson, they would have thought it superstitious to discard.]

Prints in frames, if hung up promiscuously in a room, would be considered as ornamental furniture, or as furniture for shew. They would therefore come under the denomination of superfluities; and the admission of such, in the way that other people admit them would be considered as an adoption of the empty customs or fashions of the world.

But though the Quakers are not in the practice of hanging up prints in frames, yet there are amateurs among them, who have a number and variety of prints in their possession. But these appear chiefly in collections, bound together in books, or preserved in book covers, and not in frames as ornamental furniture for their rooms. These amateurs, however, are but few in number. The Quakers have in general only a plain and useful education. They are not brought up to admire such things, and they have therefore in general but little taste for the fine and masterly productions of the painters' art.

Neither would a person, in going through the houses of the Quakers, find any portraits either of themselves, or of any of their families, or ancestors, except, to the latter case, they had been taken before they became Quakers. The first Quakers never had their portraits taken with their own knowledge and consent. Considering themselves as poor and helpless creatures, and little better than dust and ashes, they had but a mean idea of their own images. They were of opinion also, that pride and self-conceit would be likely to arise to men from the view, and ostentatious parade, of their own persons. They considered also, that it became them, as the founders of the society, to bear their testimony against the vain and superfluous fashions of the world. They believed also, if there were those whom they loved, that the best method of shewing their regard to these would be not by having their fleshly images before their eyes, but by preserving their best actions in their thoughts, as worthy of imitation; and that their own memory, in the same manner, should be perpetuated rather in the loving hearts, and kept alive in the edifying conversation of their descendants, than in the perishing tablets of canvas, fixed upon the walls of their habitations. Hence no portraits are to be seen of many of those great and eminent men in the society, who are now mingled with the dust.

These ideas, which thus actuated the first Quakers on this subject, are those of the Quakers as a body at the present day. There may be here and there an individual, who has had a portrait of some of his family taken. But such instances may be considered

as rare exceptions from the general rule. In no society is it possible to establish maxims, which shall influence an universal practice.



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CHAP. III.....SECT. I.

Language—Quakers differ in their language from others—the first alteration made by George Fox of thou for you—this change had been suggested by Erasmus and Luther—sufferings of the Quakers in consequence of adapting this change—a work published in their defence—this presented to King Charles and others—other works on the subject by Barclay and Penn—in these the word thou shewn to be proper in all languages—you to be a mark of flattery—the latter idea corroborated by Harwell, Maresius, Godeau, Erasmus.

As the Quakers are distinguishable from their fellow-citizens by their dress, as was amply shewn in a former chapter, so they are no less distinguishable from them by the peculiarities of their language.

George Fox seemed to look at every custom with the eye of a reformer. The language of the country, as used in his own times, struck him as having many censurable defects. Many of the expressions, then in use, appeared to him to contain gross flattery, others to be idolatrous, others to be false representatives of the ideas they were intended to convey. Now he considered that christianity required truth, and he believed therefore that he and his followers, who professed to be christians in word and deed, and to follow the christian pattern in all things, as far as it could be found, were called upon to depart from all the censurable modes of speech, as much as they were from any of the customs of the world, which Christianity had deemed objectionable. And so weightily did these improprieties in his own language lie upon his mind, that he conceived himself to have had an especial commission to correct them.

The first alteration, which he adopted, was in the use of the pronoun thou. The pronoun you, which grammarians had fixed to be of the plural number, was then occasionally used, but less than it is now, in addressing an individual. George Fox therefore adopted thou in its place on this occasion, leaving the word you to be used only where two or more individuals were addressed.

George Fox however was not the first of the religious writers, who had noticed the improper use of the pronoun you. Erasmus employed a treatise in shewing the propriety of thou when addressed to a single person, and in ridiculing the use of you on the same occasion. Martin Luther also took great pains to expunge the word you from the station which it occupied, and to put thou in its place. In his Ludus, he ridicules the use of the former by the, following invented sentence, “Magister, Vosestis iratus?” This is as absurd, as if he had said in English “gentlemen art thou angry”?

But though George Fox was not the first to recommend the substitution of thou for you, he was the first to reduce this amended use of it to practice. This he did in his own



person, wherever he went, and in all the works which he published. All his followers did the same. And, from his time to the present, the pronoun thou has come down so prominent in the speech of the society, that a Quaker is generally known by it at the present day.



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The reader would hardly believe, if historical facts did not prove it, how much noise the introduction or rather the amended use of this little particle, as reduced to practice by George Fox, made in the world, and how much ill usage it occasioned the early Quakers. Many magistrates, before whom they were carried in the early times of their institution occasioned their sufferings to be greater merely on this account. They were often abused and beaten by others, and sometimes put in danger of their lives. It was a common question put to a Quaker in those days, who addressed a great man in this new and simple manner, "why you ill bred clown do you thou me?" The rich and mighty of those times thought themselves degraded by this mode of address, as reducing them from a plural magnitude to a singular, or individual, or simple station in life. "The use of thou, says George Fox, was a sore cut to proud flesh, and those who sought self-honour."

George Fox, finding that both he and his followers were thus subject to much persecution on this account, thought it right the world should know, that, in using this little particle which had given so much offence, the Quakers were only doing what every grammarian ought to do, if he followed his own rules. Accordingly a Quaker-work was produced, which was written to shew that in all languages thou was the proper and usual form of speech to a single person, and you to more than one. This was exemplified by instances, taken out of the scriptures, and out of books of teaching in about thirty languages. Two Quakers of the names of John Stubbs and Benjamin Furley, took great pains in compiling it: and some additions were made to it by George Fox himself, who was then a prisoner in Lancaster castle.

This work, as soon as it was published, was presented to King Charles the second, and to his council. Copies of it were also sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and to each of the universities. The King delivered his sentiments upon it so far as to say, that thou was undoubtedly the proper language of all nations. The Archbishop of Canterbury, when he was asked what he thought of it, is described to have been so much at a stand, that he could not tell what to say. The book was afterwards bought by many. It is said to have spread conviction, wherever it went. Hence it had the effect of lessening the prejudices of some, so that the Quakers were never afterwards treated, on this account, in the same rugged manner as they had been before.

But though this book procured the Quakers an amelioration of treatment on the amended use of the expression thou, there were individuals in the society, who thought they ought to put their defence on a better foundation, by stating all the reasons, for there were many besides those in this book, which had induced them to differ from their fellow citizens on this subject. This was done both by Robert Barclay and William Penn in works, which defended other principles of the Quakers, and other peculiarities in their language.



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One of the arguments, by which the use of the pronoun thou was defended, was the same as that, on which it had been defended by Stubbs and Furley, that is, its strict conformity with grammar. The translators of the Bible had invariably used it. The liturgy had been compiled on the same principle. All addresses made by English Christians in their private prayers to the Supreme Being, were made in the language of thou, and not of you. And this was done, because the rules of the English grammar warranted the expression, and because any other mode of expression would have been a violation of these rules.

But the great argument (to omit all others) which Penn and Barclay insisted upon for the change of you, was that the pronoun thou, in addressing an individual, had been anciently in use, but that it had been deserted for you for no other purpose, than that of flattery to men; and that this dereliction of it was growing greater and greater, upon the same principle, in their own times. Hence as christians, who were not to puff up the fleshly creature, it became them to return to the ancient and grammatical use of the pronoun thou, and to reject this growing fashion of the world. "The word you, says William Penn, was first ascribed in the way of flattery, to proud Popes and Emperors, imitating the heathens vain homage to their gods, thereby ascribing a plural honour to a single person; as if one Pope had been made up of many gods, and one Emperor of many men; for which reason you, only to be addressed to many, became first spoken to one. It seemed the word thou looked like too lean and thin a respect; and therefore some, bigger than they should be, would have a style suitable to their own ambition."

It will be difficult for those, who now use the word you constantly to a single person, and who, in such use of it, never attach any idea of flattery to it, to conceive how it ever could have had the origin ascribed to it, or, what is more extraordinary, how men could believe themselves to be exalted, when others applied to them the word you instead of thou. But history affords abundant evidence of the fact.

It is well known that Caligula ordered himself to be worshipped as a god. Domitian, after him, gave similar orders with respect to himself. In process of time the very statues of the emperors began to be worshipped. One blasphemous innovation prepared the way for another. The title of Pontifex Maximus gave way at length for those of Eternity, Divinity, and the like. Coeval with these appellations was the change of the word thou for you, and upon the same principles. These changes, however, were not so disagreeable, as they might be expected to have been, to the proud Romans; for while they gratified the pride of their emperors by these appellations, they made their despotism, in their own conceit, more tolerable to themselves. That one man should be lord over many thousand Romans, who were the masters



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of the world was in itself a degrading thought. But they consoled themselves by the haughty consideration, that they were yielding obedience, not to man, but to an incarnate demon or good genius, or especial envoy from heaven. They considered also the emperor as an office, and as an office, including and representing many other offices, and hence considering him as a man in the plural number, they had less objection to address him in a plural manner.

The Quakers, in behalf of their assertions on this subject, quote the opinions of several learned men, and of those in particular, who, from the nature of their respective writings, had occasion to look into the origin and construction of the words and expressions of language.

Howell, in his epistle to the nobility of England before his French and English Dictionary, takes notice, "that both in France, and in other nations, the word thou was used in speaking of one, but by succession of time, when the Roman commonwealth grew into an empire, the courtiers began to magnify the emperor, as being furnished with power to confer dignities and offices, using the word you, yea, and deifying him with more remarkable titles, concerning which matter we read in the epistles of Symmachus to the emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, where he useth these forms of speaking, *Vestra AETernitas, vestrum numen, vestra serenitas, vestra Clementia*, that is, your, and not thy eternity, godhead, serenity, clemency. So that the word you in the plural number, together with the other titles and compellations of honour, seem to have taken their rise from despotic government, which afterwards, by degrees, came to be derived to private persons." He says also in his History of France, that "in ancient times, the peasants addressed their kings by the appellation of thou, but that pride and flattery first put inferiors upon paying a plural respect to the single person of every superior, and superiors upon receiving it."

John Maresius, of the French Academy, in the preface to his *Clovis*, speaks much to the same effect. "Let none wonder, says he, that the word thou is used in this work to princes and princesses, for we use the same to God, and of old the same was used to Alexanders, Caesars, queens, and empresses. The use of the word you, when only base flatteries of men of later ages, to whom it seemed good to use the plural number to one person, that he may imagine himself alone to be equal to many others in dignity and worth, from whence it came at last to persons of lower quality."

Godeau, in his preface to the translation of the New Testament, makes an apology for differing from the customs of the times in the use of thou, and intimates that you was substituted for it, as a word of superior respect. "I had rather, says he, faithfully keep to the express words of Paul, than exactly follow the polished style of our tongue. Therefore I always use that form of calling God in the singular



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number not in the plural, and therefore I say rather thou than you. I confess indeed, that the civility and custom of this word, requires him to be honored after that manner. But it is likewise on the contrary true, that the original tongue of the New Testament hath nothing common with such manners and civility, so that not one of these many old versions we have doth observe it. Let not men believe, that we give not respect enough to God, in that we call him by the word thou, which is nevertheless far otherwise. For I seem to myself (may be by the effect of custom) more to honor his divine majesty, in calling him after this manner, than if I should call him after the manner of men, who are so delicate in their forms of speech.”

Erasmus also in the treatise, which he wrote on the impropriety of substituting you for thou, when a person addresses an individual, states that this strange substitution originated wholly in the flattery of men.

SECT. II.

Other alterations in the language of the Quakers—they address one another by the title of friends—and others by the title of friends and neighbours, or by their common names—the use of sir and madam abolished—also of master or mister—and of humble servant—also of titles of honor—reasons of this abolition—example of Jesus Christ.

Another alteration, that took place in the language of the Quakers, was the expunging of all expressions from their vocabulary, which were either superfluous, or of the same flattering tendency as the former.

In addressing one another, either personally or by letter, they made use of the word friend, to signify the bond of their own union, and the character, which man, under the christian dispensation, was bound to exhibit in his dealings with his fellow-man. They addressed each other also, and spoke of each other, by their real names. If a man's name was John, they called him John; they talked to him as John, and added only his sir-name to distinguish him from others.

In their intercourse with the world they adopted the same mode of speech: for they addressed individuals either by their plain names, or they made use of the appellations of friends or neighbours.

They rejected the words sir or madam, as then in use. This they did, because they considered them like the word you, as remnants of ancient flattery, derived from the papal and anti-christian ages; and because these words still continued to be considered as tides of flattery, that puffed up people in their own times. Howell, who was before quoted on the pronoun thou, is usually quoted by the Quakers on this occasion also.



He states in his history, that “sir and madam were originally names given to none, but the king, his brother, and their wives, both in France and England. Yet now the ploughman in France is called sir and his wife madam; and men of ordinary trades in England sir, and their wives dame, which is the legal title of a lady, and is the same as madam in French. So prevalent hath pride and flattery been in all ages, the one to give, and the other to receive respect”



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The Quakers banished also the word master, or mister as it is now pronounced, from their language, either when they spoke concerning any one, or addressed any one by letter. To have used the word master to a person, who was no master over them, would have been, they considered, to have indicated a needless servility, and to have given a false picture of their own situation, as well as of those addressed.

Upon the same or similar principles they hesitated to subscribe themselves as the humble or obedient servants of any one, as is now usual, at the bottom of their letters. "Horrid apostacy, says Barclay, for it is notorious that the use of these compliments implies not any design of service." This expression in particular they reprobated for another reason. It was one of those, which had followed the last degree of impious services and expressions, which had poured in after the statues of the emperors had been worshipped, after the titles of eternity and divinity had been ushered in, and after thou had been exchanged for you, and it had taken a certain station, and flourished among these. Good christians, however, had endeavoured to keep themselves clear of such inconsistencies Casaubon has preserved a letter of Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in which he rebukes Sulpicius Severus for having subscribed himself "his humble servant." A part of the letter runs thus.[39] "Take heed hereafter, how thou, being from a servant called unto liberty, dost subscribe thyself servant to one, who is thy brother and fellow servant: for it is a sinful flattery, not a testament of humility, to pay those honours to a man and to a sinner, which are due to the one Lord, one Master, and one God."

[Footnote 39: Paulinus flourished in the year 460. He is reported by Paulus Diacenus to have been an exemplary christian. Among other acts he is stated to have expended all his revenues in the redemption of christian captives; and, at last, when he had nothing left in his purse, to have pawned his own person in favour of a widow's son. The barbarians, says the same author, struck with this act of unparalleled devotion to the cause of the unfortunate, released him, and many prisoners with him without ransom.]

The Quakers also banished from the use of their society all those modes of expression, which were considered as marks or designations of honour among men. Hence, in addressing any peer of the realm, they never used the common formula of "my lord," for though the peer in question might justly be the lord over many possessions, and tenants, and servants, yet he was no lord over their heritages or persons. Neither did they ever use the terms excellency, or grace, or honour, upon similar occasions. They considered that the bestowing of these titles might bring them under the necessity of uttering what might be occasionally false. "For the persons, says Barclay, obtaining these titles, either by election or hereditarily, may frequently be found to have nothing

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really in them deserving them, or answering to them, as some, to whom it is said your excellency may have nothing of excellency in them, and he, who is called your grace, may be an enemy to grace, and he, who is called your honour, may be base and ignoble.” They considered also, that they might be setting up the creature, by giving him the titles of the creator, so that he might think more highly of himself than he ought, and more degradingly than he ought, of the rest of the human race.

But, independently of these moral considerations, they rejected these titles, because they believed, that Jesus Christ had set them an example by his own declarations and conduct on a certain occasion. When a person addressed him by the name of good master, he was rebuked as having done an improper thing. [40] “Why, says our Saviour, callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.” This censure they believe to have been passed upon him, because Jesus Christ knew, that when he addressed him by this title, he addressed him, not in his divine nature or capacity, but only as a man.

[Footnote 40: Matt. xix. 17.]

But Jesus Christ not only refused to receive such titles of distinction himself in his human nature, but on another occasion exhorted his followers to shun them also. They were not to be like the Scribes and Pharisees, who wished for high and eminent distinctions, that is, to be called Rabbi Rabbi of men; but says he, “be[41] ye not called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;” and he makes the desire which he discovered in the Jews, of seeking after worldly instead of heavenly honours, to be one cause of their infidelity towards Christ,[42] for that such could not believe, as received honour from one another, and sought not the honour, which cometh from God only; that is, that those persons, who courted earthly honours, could not have that humility of mind, that spirit that was to be of no reputation in the world, which was essential to those, who wished to become the followers of Christ.

[Footnote 41: Matt xxiii. 8.]

[Footnote 42: John. v. 44.]

These considerations, both those of a moral nature, and those of the example of Jesus Christ, weighed so much with the early Quakers, that they made no exceptions even in favour of those of royal dignity, or of the rulers of their own land. George Fox wrote several letters to great men. He wrote twice to the king of Poland, three or four times to Oliver Cromwell, and several times to Charles the second; but he addressed them in no other manner than by their plain names, or by simple titles, expressive of their situations as rulers or kings.[43]

[Footnote 43: The Quakers never refuse the legal titles in the superscription or direction of their letter. They would direct to the king, as king: to a peer according to his rank, either as a duke, marquis, earl, viscount, or baron: to a clergyman, not as reverend, but as clerk.]



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These several alterations, which took place in the language of the early Quakers, were adopted by their several successors, and are in force in the society at the present day.

SECT. III.

Other alterations in the language—the names of the days and months altered—reasons for this change—the word saint disused—various new phrases introduced.

Another alteration, which took place in the language of the Quakers was the disuse of the common names of the days of the week, and of those of the months of the year.

The names of the days were considered to be of heathen origin. Sunday had been so called by the Saxons, because it was the day, on which they sacrificed to the sun. Monday on which they sacrificed to the moon. Tuesday to the god Tuisco. Wednesday to the god Woden. Thursday to the god Thor, and so on. Now when the Quakers considered that Jehovah had forbidden the Israelites to make mention even of the names of other gods, they thought it inconsistent in Christians to continue to use the names of heathen idols for the common divisions of their time, so that these names must be almost always in their mouths. They thought too, that they were paying a homage, in continuing the use of them, that bordered on idolatry. They considered also as neither Monday, nor Tuesday, nor any other of these days, were days, in which these sacrifices were now offered, they were using words, which conveyed false notions of things. Hence they determined upon the disuse of these words, and to put other names in their stead. The numerical way of naming the days seemed to them to be the most rational, and the most innocent. They called therefore Sunday the first day, Monday the second, Tuesday the third, and soon to Saturday, which was of course the seventh. They used no other names but these, either in their conversation, or in their letters.

Upon the same principles they altered the names of the months also. These, such as March and June, which had been so named by the ancient Romans, because they were sacred to Mars and Juno, were exploded, because they seemed in the use of them to be expressive of a kind of idolatrous homage. Others again were exploded, because they were not the representatives of the truth. September, for example, means the [44]seventh month from the storms. It took this seventh station in the kalendar of Romulus, and it designated there its own station as well as the reason of its name. But when it[45] lost its place in the kalendar by the alteration of the style in England, it lost its meaning. It became no representative of its station, nor any representative of the truth. For it still continues to signify the seventh month, whereas it is made to represent, or to stand in the place of, the ninth. The Quakers therefore banished from their language the ancient names of the months, and as they thought they could not do better than they had done in the case of the days, they placed numerical in their stead. They called January the first month, February the second, March the third, and so on to

December, which they called the twelfth. Thus the Quaker kalendar was made up by numerical distinctions, which have continued to the present day.



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[Footnote 44: Septem ab imbris.]

[Footnote 45: This was in the year 1752, prior to this time the year began on the 25th of March: and therefore September stood in the English as in the Roman kalendar. The early Quakers, however, as we find by a minute in 1697, had then made these alterations; but when the new style was introduced, they published their reasons for having done so.]

Another alteration, which took place very generally in the language of the Quakers, was the rejection of the word saint, when they spoke either of the apostles, or of the primitive fathers. The papal authority had canonized these. This they considered to be an act of idolatry, and they thought they should be giving a sanction to superstition, if they continued the use of such a title, either in their speech or writings. After this various other alterations took place according as individuals among them thought it right to expunge old expressions, and to substitute new; and these alterations were adopted by the rest, as they had an opinion of those who used them, or as they felt the propriety of doing it. Hence new phrases came into use, different from those which were used by the world on the same occasions; and these were gradually spread, till they became incorporated into the language of the society. Of these the following examples may suffice.

It is not usual with Quakers to use the words lucky or fortunate, in the way in which many others do. If a Quaker had been out on a journey, and had experienced a number of fine days, he would never say that he had been lucky in his weather. In the same manner if a Quaker had recovered from an indisposition, he would never say, in speaking of the circumstance, that he had fortunately recovered, but he would say, that he had recovered, and "that it was a favour." Luck, chance, or fortune, are allowed by the Quakers to have no power in the settlement of human affairs.

It is not usual with Quakers to beg ten thousand pardons, as some of the world do, for any little mistake. A Quaker generally on such an occasion asks a persons excuse.

The Quakers never make use of the expression "christian name." This name is called christian by the world, because it is the name given to children in baptism, or in other words, when they are christened, or when they are initiated as christians. But the Quakers are never baptised. They have no belief that water-baptism can make a christian, or that it is any true mark of membership with the christian church. Hence a man's christian name is called by them his first name, because it is the first of the two, or of any other number of names, that may belong to him.

The Quakers, on meeting a person, never say "good morrow," because all days are equally good. Nor in parting with a person at night, do they say "good evening," for a similar reason, but they make use of the expression of "farewell."



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I might proceed, till I made a little vocabulary of Quaker-expressions; but this is not necessary, and it is not at all consistent with my design. I shall therefore only observe, that it is expected of Quakers, that they should use the language of the society; that they should substitute thou for you; that they should discard all flattering titles and expressions; and that they should adopt the numerical, instead of the heathen names, of the days and months. George Fox gave the example himself in all these instances. Those of the society, who depart from this usage, are said by the Quakers to depart from “the plain language.”

SECT. IV.

Great objections by the world against the preceding alterations by the Quakers—first against the use of thou for you—you said to be no longer a mark of flattery—the use of it is said to be connected often with false Grammar—Custom said to give it, like a noun of number, a singular as well as plural Meaning—Consideration of these objections.

There will be no difficulty in imagining, if the Quakers have found fault with the words and expressions adopted by others, and these the great majority of the world, that the world will scrutinize, and find fault with, those of the Quakers in return. This in fact has turned out to be the case.—And I know of no subject, except that of dress, where the world have been more lavish of their censures, than in that before us.

When the Quakers first appeared as a religious community, many objections were thrown but against the peculiarities of their language. These were noticed by Robert Barclay and William Penn. But, since that time, other objections have been started. But as these have not been published (for they remain where they have usually been, in the mouths of living persons) Quaker writers have not felt themselves called upon to attempt to answer them. These objections, however, of both descriptions, I shall notice in the present place.

As the change of the pronoun thou for you was the first article, that I brought forward on the subject of the language of the Quakers, I shall begin with the objections, that are usually started against it.

“Singularity, it is said, should always be avoided, if it can be done with a clear conscience. The Quakers might have had honest scruples against you for thou, when you was a mark of flattery. But they can have no reasonable scruples now, and therefore they should cease to be singular, for the word you is clearly no mark of flattery at the present day. However improper it might once have been, it is now an innocent synonyme.”

“The use again of the word thou for you, as insisted upon by the Quakers, leads them frequently into false grammar. ‘Thee knowest,’ and terms like these, are not unusual in



Quaker mouths. Now the Quakers, though they defended the word thou for you on the notion, that they ought not to accustom their lips to flattery, defended it also strenuously on the notion, that they were strictly adhering to grammar-rules. But all such terms as 'thee knowest,' and others of a similar kind, must recoil upon themselves as incorrect, and as censurable, even upon their own ground."



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“The word you again may be considered as a singular, as well as a plural expression. The world use it in this manner. And who are the makers of language, but the world? Words change their meaning, as the leaves their colour in autumn, and custom has always been found powerful enough to give authority for a change.”

With respect to these objections, it may be observed, that the word you has certainly so far lost its meaning, as to be no longer a mark of flattery. The Quakers also are occasionally found in the use of the ungrammatical expressions, that have been brought against them. And unquestionably, except they mean to give up the grammatical part of the defence by Penn and Barclay, these ought to be done away. That you, however, is of the singular number, is not quite so clear. For while thou is used in the singular number in the Bible, and in the liturgy, and in the prayers of individuals, and while it is the language, as it is, of a great portion of the inhabitants of the northern part of the kingdom, it will be a standing monument against the usurpation and mutilated dominion of you.

SECT. V.

Secondly against the words friend and neighbour, as used by the Quakers—Quakers also said to be wrong in their disuse of titles—for the use of these is sanctioned by St. Luke and St. Paul—answer of Barclay to the latter assertion—this answer not generally deemed satisfactory—observations upon the subject in dispute.

The subject, that comes next in order, will be that of the objections, that are usually made against certain terms used by the Quakers, and against their disuse of titles of honour, as sanctioned by the world.

On the use of the words “friend, and neighbour,” it is usually observed, that these are too limited in their meaning, to be always, if used promiscuously, representatives of the truth. If the Quakers are so nice, that they will use no expression, that is not precisely true, they should invent additional terms, which should express the relative condition of those, with whom they converse. The word “friend” denotes esteem, and the word “neighbour” proximity of dwelling. But all the persons, to whom the Quakers address themselves, are not persons, whom they love and respect, or who are the inhabitants of the same neighbourhood with themselves. There is, it is said, as much untruth in calling a man friend, or neighbour, who is not so, as excellency, in whom there may be nothing that is excellent.

The Quakers, in reply to this, would observe, that they use the word friend, as significative of their own union, and, when they speak to others, as significative of their Christian relation to one another. In the same sense they use the word neighbour. Jesus Christ, when the lawyer asked him who was his neighbour, gave him a short[46] history of the Samaritan, who fell among thieves; from which he suggested on



inference, that the term neighbour was not confined to those, who lived near one another, or belonged to the same sect, but that it might extend to those, who lived at a distance, and to the Samaritan equally with the Jew. In the same manner he considered all men as^[47] brethren. That is, they were thus scripturally related to one another.



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[Footnote 46: Luke x. 39.]

[Footnote 47: Matt, xxiii. 8.]

Another objection which has been raised against the Quakers on this part of the subject, is levelled against their disuse of the titles of honour of the world. St. Luke, it has been said, makes use of the terms most excellent, when he addresses Theophilus, and St. Paul of the words most noble, when he addresses Festus. Now the teachers and promulgators of christianity would never have given these titles, if they had not been allowable by the gospel.

As this last argument was used in the time of Barclay, he has noticed it in his celebrated apology.—“Since Luke, says he, wrote by the dictates of the infallible spirit of God, I think it will not be doubted but Theophilus did deserve it, as being really endued with that virtue; in which case we shall not condemn those, who do it by the same rule. But it is not proved, that Luke gave Theophilus this title, as that which was inherent to him, either by his father, or by any patent Theophilus had obtained from any of the princes of the earth, or that he would have given it to him, in case he had not been truly excellent; and without this be proved, which never can, there can nothing hence be deduced against us. The like may be said of that of Paul to Festus, whom he would not have called such, if he had not been truly noble; as indeed he was, in that he suffered him to be heard in his own cause, and would not give way to the fury of the Jews against him. It was not because of any outward title bestowed upon Festus, that he so called him, else he would have given the same compilation to his predecessor Felix, who had the same office, but being a covetous man we find he gives him no such title.”

This is the answer of Barclay. It has not however been deemed quite satisfactory by the world. It has been observed that one good action will never give a man a right to a general title. This is undoubtedly an observation of some weight. But it must be contended on the other hand, that both Luke and Paul must have been apprised that the religion, they were so strenuous in propagating, required every man to speak the truth. They must have been apprised also, that it inculcated humility of mind. And it is probable therefore that they would never have bestowed titles upon men, which should have been false in their application, or productive of vanity and pride. St. Luke could not be otherwise than aware of the answer of Jesus Christ, when he rebuked the person for giving him the title of good, because he was one of the evangelists, who[48] recorded it, and St. Paul could not have been otherwise than aware of it also, on account of his intimacy with St. Luke, as well as from other causes.

[Footnote 48: Luke xviii, 18.]



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Neither has this answer been considered as satisfactory for another reason. It has been presumed that the expressions of excellent and of noble were established titles of rank, and if an evangelist and an apostle used them, they could not be objectionable if used by others. But let us admit for a moment, that they were titles of rank. How happens it that St. Paul, when he was before Festus, and not in a judicial capacity (for he had been reserved for Caesar's tribunal) should have given him this epithet of noble; and that, when summoned before Felix, and this in a judicial capacity, he should have omitted it? This application of it to the one and not to the other, either implies that it was no title, or, if it was a title as we have supposed, that St. Paul had some reason for this partial use of it. And in this case, no better reason can be given, than that suggested by Barclay. St. Paul knew that Festus had done his duty. He knew, on the other hand, the abandoned character of Felix. The latter was then living, as Josephus relates, in open adultery with Drusilla, who had been married to Azis, and brought away from her husband by the help of Simon a Magician; and this circumstance probably gave occasion to Paul to dwell upon temperance, or continence as the word might be rendered, among other subjects, when he made Felix tremble. But, besides this, he must have known the general character of a man, of whom Tacitus complained, that "his government was distinguished by[49] servility and every species of cruelty and lust."—

[Footnote 49: "Per omnem Saevitiam et Libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit."]

If therefore the epithet of noble was an established title for those Romans, who held the government of Judea, the giving of it to one, and the omission of it to the other, would probably shew the discrimination of St. Paul as a Christian, that he had no objection to give it, where it could be applied with truth, but that he refused it, when it was not applicable to the living character.

But that the expression of excellent or of noble was any title at all, there is no evidence to shew. And first, let us examine the word, which was used upon this occasion. The [50]original Greek word has no meaning as a title in any Lexicon that I have seen. It relates both to personal and civil power, and in a secondary sense, to the strength and disposition of the mind. It occurs but in four places in the New Testament. In two of these it is translated excellent and in the others noble. But Gilbert Wakefield, one of our best scholars has expunged the word noble, and substituted excellent throughout. Indeed of all the meanings of this word noble is the least proper. No judgment therefore can be pronounced in favour of a title by any analysis of the word.

[Footnote 50: [Greek: kralistos]]



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Let us now examine it as used by St. Luke. And here almost every consideration makes against it, as an established title. In the first place, the wisest commentators do not know who Theophilus was. It has been supposed by many learned fathers, such as Epephanus, Salvian, and others, that St. Luke, in addressing his gospel to Theophilus, addressed it as the words, "excellent Theophilus" import, to every "firm lover of God," or, if St. Luke uses the style of [51]Athanasius, to "every good Christian." But on a supposition that Theophilus had been a living character, and a man in power, the use of the epithet is against it as a title of rank; because St. Luke gives it to Theophilus in the beginning of his gospel, and does not give it to him, when he addresses him in the acts. If therefore he had addressed him in this manner, because excellent was his proper title, on one occasion, it would have been a kind of legal, and at any rate a disrespectful omission, not to have given it to him on the other. With respect to the term noble as used by St. Paul to Festus, the sense of it must be determined by general as well as by particular considerations. There are two circumstances, which at the first sight make in favour of it as a title,[52]Lysias addresses his letter to the "most excellent Felix," and the orator [53]Tertullus says, "we except it always and in all places most noble Felix!" But there must be some drawback from the latter circumstance, as an argument of weight. There is reason to suppose that this expression was used by Tertullus, as a piece of flattery, to compass the death of Paul; for it is of a piece with the other expressions which he used, when he talked of the worthy deeds done by the providence of so detestable a wretch, as Felix. And it will always be an objection to noble as a legal title, that St. Paul gave it to one governor, and omitted it to another, except he did it for the reasons, that have been before described. To this it may be added, that legal titles of eminence were not then, as at this time of day, in use. Agrippa had no other, or at least Paul gave him no other title, than that of king. If Porcius Festus had been descended from a Patrician, or had had the statues of his ancestors, he might, on these accounts, be said to have been of a noble family. But we know, that nobody on this account, would have addressed him as noble in those days, either by speech or letter. The first Roman, who was ever honoured with a legal title, as a title of distinction, was Octavius, upon whom the senate, but a few years before the birth of Paul, had conferred the name of Augustus. But no procurator of a province took this title. Neither does it appear that the circumstance gave birth to inferior titles to those in inferior offices in the government. And indeed on the title "Augustus" it may be observed, that though it followed the successors of Octavius, it was but sparingly used, being mostly used on medals, monumental pillars, and in public



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acts of the state. Pliny, in his letters to Trajan, though reputed an excellent prince, addressed him as only sir or master, and he wrote many years after the death of Paul. Athenagoras, in addressing his book, in times posterior to these, to the emperors M. Aurelius Antoninus, and L. Aurelius Commodus, addresses them only by the title of “great princes.” In short titles were not in use. They did not creep in, so as to be commonly used, till after the statues of the emperors had begun to be worshipped by the military as a legal and customary homage. The terms “eternity and divinity” with others were then ushered in, but these were confined wholly to the emperors themselves. In the time of Constantine we find the title of illustrious. This was given to those princes, who had distinguished themselves in war, but it was not continued to their descendants. In process of time, however, it became more common, and the son of every prince began to be called illustrious.

[Footnote 51: [Greek: makarios] and [Greek: philochrisos] are substituted by Athanasius for the word christian.]

[Footnote 52: Acts, xxiii, 26.]

[Footnote 53: Acts, xxiv. 3.]

SECT. VI.

Thirdly against the alteration of the names of the days and months—people, it is said do not necessarily pay homage to Idols, who continue in the use of the ancient names—if the Quaker principles also were generally adopted on this subject, language would be thrown into confusion—Quakers also, by attempting to steer clear of Idolatry, fall into it—replies of the Quakers to these objections.

The next objections for consideration, which are made against the language of the Quakers, are those which relate to their alteration of the names of the days and the months. These objections are commonly made, when the language of the Quakers becomes a subject of conversation with the world.

“There is great absurdity, it is said, in supposing, that persons pay any respect to heathen idols, who retain the use of the ancient names of the divisions of time. How many thousands are there, who know nothing of their origin? The common people of the country know none of the reasons, why the months, and the days are called as they are. The middle classes are mostly ignorant of the same. Those, who are well informed on the subject, never once think, when they mention the months and days, on the reason of the rise of their names. Indeed the almost hourly use of those names secures the oblivion of their origin. Who, when he speaks of Wednesday and Thursday, thinks

that these were the days sacred to Woden and Thor? but there can be no idolatry, where there is no intention to idolize.”



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“Great weakness, it is said again, is manifested by the Quakers, in quarrelling with a few words in the language, and in living at peace with others, which are equally objectionable. Every reason, it is said, must be a weak one, which is not universal. But if some of the reasons, given by the Quakers, were universally applied, they would throw language into as much confusion as the builders of Babel. The word Smith for example, which is the common name of many families, ought to be objected to by this rule, if the person, to whom it belongs, happens to be a carpenter. And the word carpenter which is likewise a family-name, ought to be objected to, if the person so called should happen to be a smith. And, in this case, men would be obliged to draw lots for numbers, and to be called by the numerical ticket, which they should draw.”

“It is objected again to the Quakers, that, by attempting to steer clear of idolatry, they fall into it. The Quakers are considered to be genuine idolaters, in this case. The blind pagan imagined a moral being, either heavenly or infernal, to inhere in a log of wood or a block of stone. The Quakers, in like manner, imagine a moral being, truth or falsehood, to exist in a lifeless word, and this independently of the sense in which it is spoken, and in which it is known that it will be understood. What is this, it is said, but a species of idolatry and a degrading superstition?”

The Quakers would reply to these observations, first, that they do not charge others with idolatry, in the use of these names, who know nothing of their origin, or who feel no impropriety in their use.

Secondly, that if the principle, upon which they found their alterations in language, cannot, on account of existing circumstances, be followed in all cases, there is no reason, why it should not be followed, where it can. In the names of men it would be impossible to adopt it. Old people are going off, and young people are coming up, and people of all descriptions are themselves changing, and a change of names to suit every persons condition, and qualification, would be impossible.

Thirdly, that they pay no more homage or obeisance to words, than the obeisance of truth. There is always a propriety in truth, and an impropriety in falsehood. And in proportion as the names of things accord with their essences, qualities, properties, character, and the like, they are more or less proper. September, for example, is not an appropriate name, if its meaning be enquired into, for the month which it represents: but the ninth month is, and the latter appellation will stand the test of the strictest enquiry.



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They would say again that this, as well as the other alterations in their language has had a moral influence on the society, and has been productive of moral good. In the same manner as the dress, which they received from their ancestors has operated as a guardian, or preservative of virtue, so has the language which they received from them also. The language has made the world overseers of the conduct of the society. A Quaker is known by his language as much as by his dress. It operates, by discovering him, as a check upon his actions. It keeps him also, like the dress distinct from others. And the Quakers believe, that they can never keep up their Christian discipline, except they keep clear of the spirit of the world. Hence it has been considered as of great importance to keep up the plain language; and this importance has been further manifested by circumstances, that have taken place within the pale of the society. For in the same manner as those, who begin to depart from the simplicity of dress, are generally in the way to go off among the world, so are those who depart from the simplicity of the language. Each deviation is a sign of a temper for desertion. Each deviation brings them in appearance nearer to the world. But the nearer they resemble the world in this respect, the more they are found to mix with it. They are of course the more likely to be seduced from the wholesome prohibitions of the society. The language therefore of the Quakers has grown up insensibly as a wall of partition, which could not now, it is contended, be taken away without endangering the innocence of their youth.

SECT. VII.

Advantages and disadvantages of the system of the Quaker, language—disadvantages are that it may lead to superstition—and hypocrisy—advantages are that it excludes flattery—is founded upon truth—promotes truth, and correctness in the expression of ideas—observation of Hobbes—would be the most perfect model for a universal calendar—the use or disuse of this system may either of them be made useful to morality.

I have now given to the reader the objections, that are usually made to the alterations, which the Quakers have introduced into the language of the country, as well as the replies, which the Quakers would make to these objections. I shall solicit the continuance of his patience a little longer, or till I have made a few remarks of my own upon this subject.

It certainly becomes people, who introduce great peculiarities into their system, to be careful, that they are well founded, and to consider how far they may bring their minds into bondage, or what moral effects they may produce on their diameter in a course of time.

On the reformed language of the Quakers it may be observed, that both advantages and disadvantages may follow according to the due or undue estimation in which individuals may hold it.



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If individuals should lay too great a stress upon language, that is, if they should carry their prejudices so far against outward and lifeless words, that they should not dare to pronounce them, and this as a matter of religion, they are certainly in the way of becoming superstitious, and of losing the dignified independence of their minds.

If again they should put an undue estimate upon language, so as to consider it as a criterion of religious purity, they may be encouraging the growth of hypocrisy within their own precincts. For if the use of this reformed language be considered as an essential of religion, that is, if men are highly thought of in proportion as they conform to it rigidly, it may be a covering to many to neglect the weightier matters of righteousness; at least the fulfilling of such minor duties may shield them from the suspicion of neglecting the greater: and if they should be reported as erring in the latter case, their crime would be less credited under their observance of these minutiae of the law.

These effects are likely to result to the society, if the peculiarities of their language be insisted on beyond their due bounds. But, on the other hand, it must be confessed, that advantages are likely to follow from the same system, which are of great importance in themselves, and which may be set off as a counterbalance to the disadvantages described.

The Quakers may say, and this with the greatest truth, “we have never cringed or stooped below the dignity of men. We have never been guilty of base flattery; we have never been instrumental in raising the creature, with whom we have conversed, above his condition, so that in the imagination of his own consequence, he should lose sight of his dependence on the Supreme Being, or treat his fellow-men, because they should happen to be below him, as worms or reptiles of the earth.”

They may say also that the system of their language originated in the purest motives, and that it is founded on the sacred basis of truth.

It may be said also, that the habits of caution which the different peculiarities in their language have introduced and interwoven into their constitution, have taught them particularly to respect the truth, and to aim at it in all their expressions whether in speech or letters, and that it has given them a peculiar correctness in the expression of their ideas, which they would scarcely have had by means of the ordinary education of the world. Hobbes says^[54] “animadvertite, quam sit ab improprietate verborum primum hominibus prolabi in errores circa res,” or “how prone men are to fall into errors about things, when they use improper expressions.” The converse of this proposition may be observed to be true with respect to the Quakers, or it may be observed, that the study of proper expressions has given them correct conceptions of things, and has had an influence in favor of truth. There are no people, though the common notion may be otherwise, who speak so accurately as the Quakers, or whose letters, if examined on any subject, would be so free from any double meaning, so little liable to be mistaken, and so easy to be understood.

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[Footnote 54: Hobbesii Examen. et Emend. Hod. Math. P. 55. Edit. Amstel.]

It may be observed also on the language of the Quakers, that is, on that part of it, which relates to the alteration of the names of the months and days, that this alteration would form the most perfect model for an universal calendar of any that has yet appeared in the world. The French nation chose to alter their calendar, and, to make it useful to husbandry, they designated their months, so that they should be representatives of the different seasons of the year. They called them snowy, and windy, and harvest, and vintage-months, and the like. But in so large a territory, as that of France, these new designations were not the representatives of the truth. The northern and southern parts were not alike in their climate. Much less could these designations speak the truth for other parts of the world: whereas numerical appellations might be adopted with truth, and be attended with usefulness to all the nations of the world, who divided their time in the same manner.

On the latter subject of the names of the days and months, the alteration of which is considered as the most objectionable by the world, I shall only observe, that, if the Quakers have religious scruples concerning them, it is their duty to persevere in the disuse of them. Those of the world, on the other hand, who have no such scruples, are under no obligation to follow their example. And in the same manner as the Quakers convert the disuse of these ancient terms to the improvement of their moral character, so those of the world may convert the use of them to a moral purpose. Man is a reasonable, and moral being, and capable of moral improvement; and this improvement may be made to proceed from apparently worthless causes. If we were to find crosses or other Roman-Catholic relics fixed in the walls of our places of worship, why should we displace them? Why should we not rather suffer them to remain, to put us in mind of the necessity of thankfulness for the reformation in our religion? If again we were to find an altar, which had been sacred to Moloc, but which had been turned into a stepping stone, to help the aged and infirm upon their horses, why should we destroy it? Might it not be made useful to our morality, as far as it could be made to excite sorrow for the past and gratitude for the present? And in the same manner might it not be edifying to retain the use of the ancient names of the days and months? Might not thankful feelings be excited in our hearts, that the crime of idolatry had ceased among us, and that the only remnant of it was a useful signature of the times? In fact, if it be the tendency of the corrupt part of our nature to render innocent things vicious, it is, on the other hand, in the essence of our nature, to render vicious things in process of time innocent; so that the remnants of idolatry and superstition may be made subservient to the moral improvement of mankind.



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CHAP. IV.

Address—all nations have used ceremonies of address—George Fox bears his testimony against those in use in his own times—sufferings of the Quakers on this account—makes no exception in favor of royalty—his dispute with Judge Glynn—modern Quakers follow his example—use no ceremonies even to majesty—various reasons for their disuse of them.

All nations have been in the habit of using outward gestures or ceremonies, as marks of affection, obeisance or respect. And these outward ceremonies have been different from one another, so much so, that those, which have been adjudged to be suitable emblems of certain affections or dispositions of the mind among one people, would have been considered as very improper emblems of the same, and would have been even thought ridiculous by another, yet all nations have supposed, that they employed the most rational modes for these purposes. And indeed, there were probably none of these outward gestures and ceremonies, which, in their beginning, would not have admitted of a reasonable defence while they continued to convey to the minds of those, who adopted them, the objects, for which they were intended, or while those, who used them, persevered with sincerity in their use, little or no objection could be made to them by the moralist. But as soon as the ends of their institution were lost, or they were used without any appropriate feeling of the heart, they became empty civilities, and little better than mockery or grimace.

The customs of this sort, which obtained in the time of George Fox, were similar to those, which are now in use on similar occasions. People pulled off their hats, and bowed, and scraped with their feet. And these things they did, as marks of civility, friendship, or respect to one another.

George Fox was greatly grieved about these idle ceremonies. He lamented that men should degrade themselves by the use of them, and that they should encourage habits, that were abhorrent of the truth. His feelings were so strong upon this subject, that he felt himself called upon to bear his testimony against them. Accordingly he never submitted to them himself, and those, who received his religious doctrines, followed his example.

The omission of these ceremonies, however, procured both for him and his followers, as had been the case in the change of thou for you, much ill-will, and harsh treatment. The Quakers were derided and abused. Their hats were taken forcibly from their heads, and thrown away. They were beaten and imprisoned on this sole account. And so far did the world carry their resentment towards them for the omission of these little ceremonies, that they refused for some time to deal with them as tradesmen, or to buy things at their shops, so that some Quakers could hardly get money enough to buy themselves bread.



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George Fox, however, and his associates, persevered, notwithstanding this ill usage, in the disuse of all honours, either by the moving of the hat, or the usual bendings of the body; and as that, which was a right custom for one, was a right one for another, they made no exception even in favour of the chief magistrate of the land. George Fox, when he visited Oliver Cromwell as protector, never pulled off his hat; and it is remarkable that the protector was not angry with him for it.

Neither did he pull off his hat to the judges at any time, notwithstanding he was so often brought before them. Controversies sometimes took place between him and them in the public court, upon these occasions, one of which I shall notice, as it marks the manner of conducting the jurisprudence of those times.

When George Fox, and two other friends, were brought out of Launceston gaol, to be tried before judge Glynn, who was then chief justice of England, they came into court with their hats on. The judge asked them the reason of this, but they said nothing. He then told them, that the court commanded them to pull off their hats. Upon this George Fox addressed them in the following manner. "Where, says he, did ever any magistrate, king or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats, when they came before them in their courts, either amongst the Jews, who were God's people, or among the heathen? And if the law of England doth command any such thing, shew me that law, either written or printed." Judge Glynn upon this grew angry, and replied, that "he did not carry his law-books upon his back." But says George Fox, "tell me where it is printed in any statute-book, that I may read it" The judge, in a vulgar manner, ordered him away, and he was accordingly taken away, and put among thieves. The judge, however, in a short time afterwards ordered him up again, and, on his return put to him the following question, "Come, says he, where had they hats from Moses to Daniel? Come, answer me. I have you fast now." George. Fox replied, that "he might read in the third chapter of Daniel, that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coats, their hose, and their hats on." The repetition of this apposite text stopped the judge from any farther comments on the custom, and he ordered him and his companions to be taken away again. And they were accordingly taken away and they were thrust again among thieves. In process of time, however, this custom of the Quakers began to be known among the judges, who so far respected their scruples, as to take care that their hats should be taken off in future in the courts.



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These omissions of the ceremonies of the world, as begun by the primitive Quakers, are continued by the modern. They neither bow nor scrape, nor pull off their hats to any, by way of civility or respect, and they carry their principles, like their predecessors, so far, that they observe none of these exterior parts of politeness even in the presence of royalty. The Quakers are in the habit on particular occasions of sending deputies to the king. And it is remarkable that his present majesty always sees them himself, if he be well, and not by proxy. Notwithstanding this, no one in the deputation ever pulls off his hat. Those, however, who are in waiting in the anti-chamber, knowing this custom of the Quakers, take their hats from their heads, before they enter the room, where the king is. On entering the room, they neither bow nor scrape, nor kneel, and as this ceremony cannot be performed for them by others, they go into the royal presence in a less servile, or more dignified manner, than either the representatives of sovereigns, or those, who have humbled nations by the achievement of great victories.

The ground, upon which the Quakers decline the use of the ordinary ceremonies just mentioned, is, the honours are the honours of the world. Now, as that these of the world, they consider them as objectionable on several accounts.

First, they are no more the criterions of obeisance and respect, than mourning garments are the criterions of sorrow. But Christianity is never satisfied but with the truth. It forbids all false appearances. It allows no image to be held out, that is not a faithful picture of its original, or no action to be resorted to, that is not correspondent with the feelings of the heart.

In the second place the Quakers presume, that, as honours of the world, all such ceremonies are generally of a complimentary nature. No one bows to a poor man. But almost every one to the rich, and the rich to one another. Hence bowing is as much a species of flattery through the medium of the body, as the giving of undeserved titles through the medium of the tongue.

As honours of the world again the Quakers think them censurable, because all such honours were censured by Jesus Christ. On the occasion, on which he exhorted his followers not to be like the Scribes and Pharisees, and to seek flattering titles, so as to be called Rabbi Rabbi of man, he exhorted them to avoid all ceremonious salutations, such as greetings in the market-places. He couples the two different customs of flattering titles and salutations in the same sentence, and mentions them in the same breath. And though the word "greetings" does not perhaps precisely mean those bowings and scrapings, which are used at the present day, yet it means, both according to its derivation and the nature of the Jewish customs, those outward personal actions or gestures, which were used as complimentary to the Jewish world.



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With respect to the pulling off the hat the Quakers have an additional objection to this custom, quite distinct from the objections, that have been mentioned above. Every minister in the Quaker society takes off his hat, either when he preaches, or when he prays. St Paul[55] enjoins this custom. But if they take off their hats, that is, uncover their heads, as an outward act enjoined in the service of God, they cannot with any propriety take them off, or uncover their heads to men, because they would be giving to the creature the same outward honour which they give to the creator. And in this custom they conceive the world to be peculiarly inconsistent. For men go into their churches, and into their meetings, and pull off their hats, or uncover their heads, for the same reason as the Quaker-ministers when they pray (for no other reason can be assigned) and, when they come out of their respective places of worship, they uncover them again on every trivial occasion, to those whom they meet, using to man the same outward mark of homage, as they had just given to God.

[Footnote 55: 1 Cor. Chap. xi.]

CHAP. V.

Manners and conversation—Quakers esteemed reserved—this an appearance owing to their education—their hospitality in their own houses—the freedom allowed and taken—their conversation limited—politics generally excluded—subjects of conversation examined in our towns—also in the metropolis—no such subjects among the Quakers—their conversation more dignified—extraordinary circumstance that takes place occasionally in the company of the Quakers.

The Quakers are generally supposed to be a stiff and reserved people, and to be a people of severe and uncourteous manners. I confess there is something in their appearance that will justify the supposition in the eyes of strangers, and of such as do not know them: I mean of such, as just see them occasionally out of doors, but do not mix with them in their own houses.

It cannot be expected that persons, educated like the Quakers, should assimilate much in their manners to other people. The very dress they wear, which is so different from that of others, would give them a stiff appearance in the eyes of the world, if nothing else could be found to contribute towards it. Excluded also from much intercourse with the world, and separated at a vast distance from it by the singularity of many of their customs, they would naturally appear to others to be close and reserved. Neither is it to be expected that those, whose spirits are never animated by music, or enlivened by the exhibitions of the theatre, or the diversions which others follow, would have other than countenances that were grave. Their discipline also, which calls them so frequently to important duties, and the dispatch of serious business, would produce the same feature. I may observe also, that a peculiarity of gait, which might be mistaken



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for awkwardness, might not unreasonably be expected in those, who had neither learned to walk under the guidance of a dancing, master, nor to bow under the direction of the dominion of fashion. If those and those only are to be esteemed really polished and courteous, who bow and scrape, and salute each other by certain prescribed gestures, then the Quakers will appear to have contracted much rust, and to have an indisputable right to the title of a clownish and inflexible people.

I must observe however that these appearances, though they may be substantial in the estimation of those who do not know them, gradually vanish with those, who do. Their hospitality in their own houses, and their great attention and kindness, soon force out of sight all ideas of uncourteousness. Their freedom also soon annihilates those of stiffness and reserve. Their manners, though they have not the polished surface of those which are usually attached to fashionable life, are agreeable, when known.

There is one trait in the Quaker-manners, which runs through the whole society, as far as I have seen in their houses, and which is worthy of mention. The Quakers appear to be particularly gratified, when those, who visit them, ask for what they want. Instead of considering this as rudeness or intrusion, they esteem it as a favour done them. The circumstance of asking, on such an occasion, is to them a proof, that their visitors feel themselves at home. Indeed they almost always desire a stranger who has been introduced to them "to be free." This is their usual expression. And if he assures them that he will, and if they find him asking for what he wishes to have, you may perceive in their countenances the pleasure, which his conduct has given them. They consider him, when he has used this freedom, to have acted as they express it "kindly." Nothing can be more truly polite than that conduct to another, by which he shall be induced to feel himself as comfortably situated, as if he were in his own house.

As the Quakers desire their visitors to be free, and to do as they please, so they do not fail to do the same themselves, never regarding such visitors as impediments in the way of their concerns. If they have any business or engagement out of doors, they say so and go, using no ceremony, and but few words as an apology. Their visitors, I mean such as stay for a time in their houses, are left in the interim to amuse themselves as they please. This is peculiarly agreeable, because their friends know, when they visit them, that they neither restrain, nor shackle, nor put them to inconvenience. In fact it may be truly said that if satisfaction in visiting depends upon a man's own freedom to do as he likes, to ask and to call for what he wants, to go out and come in as he pleases; and if it depends also on the knowledge he has, that, in doing all these things, he puts no person out of his way, there are no houses, where people will be better pleased with their treatment, than in those of the Quakers.



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This trait in the character of the Quakers is very general. I would not pretend, however, to call it universal. But it is quite general enough to be pronounced a feature in their domestic character. I do not mean by the mention of it, to apologize, in any manner for the ruggedness of manners of some Quakers. There are undoubtedly solitary families, which having lived in places, where there have been scarcely any of their own society with whom to associate, and which, having scarcely mixed with others of other denominations except in the way of trade, have an uncourteousness, ingrafted in them as it were by these circumstances, which no change of situation afterwards has been able to obliterate.

The subjects of conversation among the Quakers differ, like those of others, but they are not so numerous, neither are they of the same kind, as those of other people.

The Quaker conversation is cramped or fettered for two reasons, first by the caution, that prevails among the members of the society relative to the use of idle words, and secondly by the caution, that prevails among them, relative to the adapting of their expressions to the truth. Hence the primitive Quakers were persons of few words.

The subjects also of the Quaker conversation are limited for several reasons. The Quakers have not the same classical or philosophical education, as those of other denominations in an equal situation in life. This circumstance will of course exclude many topics from their discourse.

Religious considerations also exclude others. Politics, which generally engross a good deal of attention, and which afford an inexhaustible fund of matter for conversation to a great part of the inhabitants of the island, are seldom introduced, and, if introduced, very tenderly handled in general among the Quaker-society. I have seen aged Quakers gently reprove others of tenderer years, with whom they happened to be in company, for having started them. It is not that the Quakers have not the same feelings as other men, or that they are not equally interested about humanity, or that they are incapable of opinions on the changeable political events, that are passing over the face of the globe, that this subject is so little agitated among them. They are usually silent upon it for particular reasons. They consider first, that, as they are not allowed to have any direction, and in many cases could not conscientiously interfere, in government-matters, it would be folly to disquiet their minds with vain and fruitless speculations. They consider again, that political subjects frequently irritate people, and make them warm. Now this is a temper, which they consider to be peculiarly detrimental to their religion. They consider themselves also in this life as but upon a journey to another, and that they should get through it as quietly and as inoffensively as they can. They believe again with George Fox, that, "in these lower regions, or in this airy life, all news is uncertain. There is nothing stable. But in the higher regions, or in the kingdom of Christ, all things are stable: and the news is always good and certain." [56]



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[Footnote 56: There is always an exception in favour of conversation on politics, which is, when the government are agitating any question, their interests or their religious freedom is involved.]

As politics do not afford matter for much conversation in the Quaker-society, so neither do some other subjects, that may be mentioned.

In a country town, where people daily visit, it is not uncommon to observe, whether at the card, or at the tea-table, that what is usually called scandal forms a part of the pleasures of conversation. The hatching up of suspicions on the accidental occurrence of trivial circumstances, the blowing up of these suspicions into substances and forms, animadversions on character, these, and such like themes, wear out a great part of the time of an afternoon or an evening visit. Such subjects, however, cannot enter where Quakers converse with one another. To avoid tale-bearing and detraction is a lesson inculcated into them in early youth. The maxim is incorporated into their religion, and of course follows them through life. It is contained in one of their queries. This query is read to them in their meetings, and the subject of it is therefore repeatedly brought to their notice and recollection. Add to which, that, if a Quaker were to repeat any unfounded scandal, that operated to the injury of another's character, and were not to give up the author, or make satisfaction for the same, he would be liable, by the rules of the society, to be disowned.

I do not mean to assert here, that a Quaker never says a harsh thing of another man. All, who profess to be, are not Quakers. Subjects of a scandalous nature may be introduced by others of another denomination, in which, if Quakers are present, they may unguardedly join. But it is certainly true, that Quakers are more upon their guard, with respect to scandalizing others, than many other people. Nor is this unlikely to be the case, when we consider that caution in this particular is required of them by the laws of their religion. It is certainly true also, that such subjects are never introduced by them, like those at country tea-tables, for the sole purpose of producing conversation. And I believe I may add with truth, that it would even be deemed extraordinary by the society, if such subjects were introduced by them at all.

In companies also in the metropolis, as well as in country towns, a variety of subjects affords food for conversation which never enter into the discourse of the Quakers.

If we were to go into the company of persons of a certain class in the metropolis, we should find them deriving the enjoyments of conversation from some such subjects as the following. One of the company would probably talk of the exquisitely fine manner, in which an actress performed her part on a certain night. This, would immediately give birth to a variety of remarks. The name of one actress would bring up that of another, and the name of one



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play that of another, till at length the stage would become the source of supplying a subject for a considerable time. Another would probably ask, as soon as this theatrical discussion was over, the opinion of the company on the subject of the duel, which the morning papers had reported to have taken place. This new subject would give new fuel to the fire, and new discussions would take place, and new observations fly about from all quarters. Some would applaud the courage of the person, who had been killed. Others would pity his hard fate. But none would censure his wickedness for having resorted to such dreadful means for the determination of his dispute. From this time the laws of honour would be canvassed, and disquisitions about punctilio, and etiquette, and honour, would arrest the attention of the company, and supply them with materials for a time. These subjects would be followed by observations on fashionable head-dresses, by the relation of elopements, by the reports of affairs of gallantry. Each subject would occupy its own portion of time. Thus each would help to swell up the measure of conversation, and to make up the enjoyment of the visit.

If we were to go among persons of another class in the metropolis, we should probably find them collecting their entertainment from other topics. One would talk on the subject of some splendid route. He would expatiate on the number of rooms that were opened, on the superb manner, in which they were fitted up, and on the sum of money that was expended in procuring every delicacy that was out of season. A second would probably ask, if it were really known, how much one of their female acquaintance had lost at faro. A third would make observations on the dresses at the last drawing room. A fourth would particularize the liveries brought out by individuals on the birth-day. A fifth would ask, who was to have the vacant red ribbon. Another would tell, how the minister had given a certain place to a certain nobleman's third son, and would observe, that the whole family were now provided for by government. Each of these topics would be enlarged upon, as successively started, and thus conversation would be kept going during the time of the visit.

These and other subjects generally constitute the pleasures of conversation among certain classes of persons. But among the Quakers, they can hardly ever intrude themselves at all. Places and pensions they neither do, nor can, hold. Levees and drawing rooms they neither do, nor would consent to, attend, on pleasure. Red ribbons they would not wear if given to them. Indeed, very few of the society know what these insignia mean. As to splendid liveries, these would never occupy their attention. Liveries for servants, though not expressly forbidden, are not congenial with the Quaker-system; and as to gaming, plays, or fashionable amusements, these are forbidden, as I have amply stated before, by the laws of the society.



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It is obvious then, that these topics cannot easily enter into conversation, where Quakers are. Indeed, nothing so trifling, ridiculous, or disgusting, occupies their minds. The subjects, that take up their attention, are of a more solid and useful kind. There is a dignity, in general, in the Quaker-conversation, arising from the nature of these subjects, and from the gravity and decorum with which it is always conducted. It is not to be inferred from hence, that their conversation is dull and gloomy. There is often no want of sprightliness, wit, and humour. But then this sprightliness, never borders upon folly, for all foolish jesting is to be avoided, and it is always decorous. When vivacity makes its appearance among the Quakers; it is sensible, and it is uniformly in an innocent and decent dress.

In the company of the Quakers a circumstance sometimes occurs, of so peculiar a nature, that it cannot be well omitted in this place. It sometimes happens, that you observe a pause in the conversation. This pause continues. Surprized at the universal silence now prevailing, you look round, and find all the Quakers in the room apparently thoughtful. The history of the circumstance is this. In the course of the conversation the mind of some one of the persons present has been so overcome with the weight or importance of it, or so overcome by inward suggestions or other subjects, as to have given himself up to meditation, or to passive obedience to the impressions upon his mind. This person is soon discovered by the rest on account of his particular silence and gravity. From this moment the Quakers in company cease to converse. They become habitually silent, and continue so, both old and young, to give the apparently meditating person an opportunity of pursuing uninterruptedly the train of his own thoughts. Perhaps, in the course of his meditations, the subject, that impressed his mind, gradually dies away, and expires in silence. In this case you find him resuming his natural position, and returning to conversation with the company as before. It sometimes happens, however, that, in the midst of his meditations, he feels an impulse to communicate to those present the subject of his thoughts, and breaks forth, seriously explaining, exhorting, and advising, as the nature of it permits and suggests. When he has finished his observations, the company remain silent for a short time, after which they converse again as before.

Such a pause, whenever it occurs in the company of the Quakers, may be considered as a devotional act. For the subject, which occasions it, is always of a serious or religious nature. The workings in the mind of the meditating person are considered either as the offspring of a solemn reflection upon that subject, suddenly and almost involuntarily as it were produced by duty, or as the immediate offspring of the agency of the spirit. And an habitual silence is as much the consequence, as if the person present had been at a place of worship.



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It may be observed, however, that such pauses seldom or never occur in ordinary companies, or where Quakers ordinarily visit one another. When they take place, it is mostly when a minister is present, and when such a minister is upon a religious visit to families of a certain district. In such a case such religious pauses and exhortations are not unfrequent. A man however may be a hundred times in the company of the Quakers, and never be present at one of them, and never know indeed that they exist at all.

CHAP. VI.

Custom before meals—ancients formerly made an oblation to Vesta before their meals—Christians have substituted grace—Quakers agree with others in the necessity of grace or thankfulness-but do not adopt it as a devotional act, unless it comes from the heart—allow a silent pause for religious impressions on these occasions—observations on a Scotch grace.

There was a time in the early ages of Greece, when men apparently little better than beasts of prey, could not meet at entertainments, without quarrelling about the victuals before them. The memory of this circumstance is well preserved in the expressions of early writers. In process of time however, regulations began to be introduced, and quarrels to be prevented, by the institution of the office of a divider or distributor of the feast, who should carve the food into equal portions, and help every individual to his proper share. Hence the terms [Greek: Aatfrn] or equal feast, which so frequently occur in Homer, and which were in use in consequence of the division just mentioned, were made use of to shew, that the feasts, then spoken of by him, were different from those of former times. When Homer wishes to describe persons as more civilized than others, he describes them as having this equal feast. That is, men did not appear at these feasts, like dogs and wolves, and instantly devour whatever they could come at, and tear each other to pieces in the end; but they waited till their different portions of meat had been assigned them, and then ate them in amity and peace.

At the time when we find the custom of one man carving for all his guests to have been in use, we find also that another had been introduced among the same people. The Greeks, in the heroic ages, thought it unlawful to eat, till they had first offered a part of their provision to the gods. Hence oblations to Vesta, and afterwards to others, whom their superstition had defied, came into general use, so that these were always made, before the victuals on the table were allowed to be tasted by any of the guests.

These two customs, since that time, have come regularly down to the present day. Every person helps his family and his friends at his own table. But as Christians can make no sacrifices to heathen deities, we usually find them substituting thanksgiving for oblation, and giving to the Creator of the universe instead of an offering of the first fruits from their tables, an offering of gratitude from their hearts.



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This oblation, which is now usually denominated grace, consists of a form of words, which, being expressive either of praise or thankfulness to God for the blessings of food, with which he continues to supply them, is repeated by the master of the family, or by a minister of the gospel if present, before any one partakes of the victuals, that are set before him. These forms, however, differ, as used by Christians. They differ in length, in ideas, in expression. One Christian uses one form, another uses another. It may however be observed, that the same Christian generally uses the same form of words, or the same grace, on the same occasion.

The Quakers, as a religious body, agree in the propriety of grace before their meals, that is in the propriety of giving thanks to the author of every good gift for this particular bounty of his providence as to the articles of their daily subsistence, but they differ as to the manner and seasonableness of it on such occasions. They think that people who are in the habit of repeating a determined form of words, may cease to feel, as they pronounce them, in which case the grace becomes an oblation from the tongue, but not from the heart. They think also that, if grace is to be repeated regularly, just as the victuals come, or as regularly and as often as they come upon the table, it may be repeated unseasonably, that is unseasonably with the state of the heart of him, who is to pronounce it; that the heart of man is not to-day as it was yesterday, nor at this hour what it was at a former, nor on any given hour alike disposed; and that if this grace is to be said when the heart is gay, or light, or volatile, it ceases to be a devotional act, and becomes at least a superfluous and unmeaning, if not a censurable form.

The Quakers then to avoid the unprofitableness of such artificial graces on the one hand, and, on the other, to give an opportunity to the heart to accord with the tongue, whenever it is used in praise of the Creator, observe the following custom. When they are all seated at table, they sit in solemn silence, and in a thoughtful position, for some time. If the master of the family, during this silence, should feel any religious impression on his mind, whether of praise or thankfulness on the occasion, he gives utterance to his feelings. Such praise or thanksgiving in him is considered as a devotional act, and as the Quaker grace. But if, after having waited in silence for some time, he feels no such religious disposition, he utters no religious expression. The Quakers hold it better to say no grace, than to say that, which is not accompanied by the devotion of the heart. In this case he resumes his natural position, breaks the silence by means of natural discourse, and begins to carve for his family or his friends.



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This is the ordinary way of proceeding in Quaker families, when alone, or in ordinary company. But if a minister happens to be at the table, the master of the family, conceiving such a man to be more in the habit of religious impressions than himself, or any ordinary person, looks up as it were to him, as to a channel, from whence it is possible, that such religious exercise may come. If the minister, during the solemn, silent pause, is impressed, he gives utterance as before: if not, he relieves himself from his grave and thoughtful position, and breaks the silence of the company by engaging in natural discourse. After this the company proceed to their meals.

If I were to be asked whether the graces of the Quakers were frequent, I should reply in the negative. I never heard any delivered, but when a minister was present. The ordinary grace therefore of private families consists in a solemn, silent, pause, between the time of sitting down to the table and the note of carving the victuals, during which an opportunity is given for the excitement of religious feelings. A person may dine fifty times at the tables of the Quakers, and see no other substitution for grace than this temporary silent pause.

Indeed no other grace than this can be consistent with Quaker-principles. It was coeval with the institution of the society, and must continue while it lasts. For thanksgiving is an act of devotion. Now no act, in the opinion of the Quakers, can be devotional or spiritual, except it originate from above. Men, in religious matters can do nothing of themselves, or without the divine aid. And they must therefore wait in silence for this spiritual help, as well in the case of grace, as in the case of any other kind of devotion, if they mean their praise or thanksgiving on such occasions to be an act of religion.

There is in the Quaker-grace, and its accompaniments, whenever it is uttered, an apparent beauty and an apparent solemnity, which are seldom conspicuous in those of others. How few are there, who repeat the common artificial graces feelingly, and with minds intent upon the subject! Grace is usually said as a mere ceremony or custom. The Supreme Being is just thanked in so many words, while the thoughts are often rambling to other subjects. The Quaker-grace, on the other hand, whenever it is uttered; does not come out in any mechanical form of words which men have used before, but in expressions adapted to the feelings. It comes forth also warm from the heart. It comes after a solemn, silent, pause, and it becomes therefore, under all these circumstances, an act of real solemnity and genuine devotion.



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It is astonishing how little even men of acknowledged piety seem to have their minds fixed upon the ideas contained in the mechanical graces they repeat. I was one afternoon at a friends house, where there happened to be a clergyman of the Scottish church. He was a man deservedly esteemed for his piety. The company was large. Politics had been discussed some time, when the tea-things were introduced. While the bread and butter were bringing in, the clergyman, who had taken an active part in the discussion, put a question to a gentleman, who was sitting in a corner of the room. The gentleman began to reply, and was proceeding in his answer, when of a sudden I heard a solemn voice. Being surprised, I looked round, and found it was the clergyman, who had suddenly started up, and was saying grace. The solemnity, with which he spoke, occasioned his voice to differ so much from its ordinary tone, that I did not, till I had looked about me, discover who the speaker was. I think he might be engaged from three or four minutes in the delivery of this grace. I could not help thinking, during the delivery of it, that I never knew any person say grace like this man. Nor was I ever so much moved with any grace, or thought I ever saw so dearly the propriety of saying grace, as on this occasion. But when I found that on the very instant the grace was over politics were resumed; when I found that, no sooner had the last word in the grace been pronounced, than the next, which came from the clergyman himself, began by desiring the gentleman before mentioned to go on with his reply to his own political question, I was so struck with the inconsistency of the thing, that the beauty and solemnity of his grace all vanished. This sudden transition from politics to grace, and from grace to politics, afforded a proof that artificial sentences might be so frequently repeated, as to fail to re-excite their first impressions, or that certain expressions, which might have constituted devotional acts under devotional feeling, might relapse into heartless forms.

I should not wish, by the relation of this anecdote, to be understood as reflecting in the slightest manner on the practice of the Scottish church. I know well the general sobriety, diligence, piety and religious example of its ministers. I mentioned it merely to shew, that even where the religious character of a person was high, his mind, by the frequent repetition of the same forms of expression on the same occasions, might frequently lose sight of the meaning and force of the words as they were uttered, so that he might pronounce them without that spiritual feeling, which can alone constitute a religious exercise.

CHAP. VII.

Customs at and after meals—Quakers never drink healths at dinner—nor toasts after dinner—the drinking of toasts a heathen custom—interrupts often the innocence—and leads to the intoxication of the company—anecdote of Judge Hale—Quakers sometimes in embarrassing situations on account of this omission—Quaker-women seldom retire after dinner, and leave the men drinking—Quakers a sober people.



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The Quakers though they are occasionally found in the custom of saying grace, do not, as I have stated, either use it as regularly, or in the same manner as other christians.

Neither do they at their meals, or after their meals, use the same ceremonies as others. They have exploded the unmeaning and troublesome custom of drinking healths at their dinners.

This custom the Quakers have rejected upon the principle, that it has no connection with true civility. They consider it as officious, troublesome, and even embarrassing, on some occasions. To drink to a man, when he is lifting his victuals to his mouth, and by calling off his attention, to make him drop them, or to interrupt two people, who are eating and talking together, and to break the thread of their discourse, seems to be an action, as rude in its principle, as disagreeable in its effects, nor is the custom often less troublesome to the person drinking the health, than to the person whose health is drank. If a man finds two people engaged in conversation he must wait till he catches their eyes, before he can drink himself. A man may also often be put into a delicate and difficult situation, to know whom to drink to first, and whom second, and may be troubled, lest, by drinking improperly to one before another, he may either be reputed awkward, or may become the occasion of offence. They consider also the custom of drinking healths at dinner as unnecessary, and as tending to no useful end. It must be obvious that a man may wish another his health, full as much without drinking it, as by drinking it with his glass in his hand. And it must be equally obvious that wishes, expressed in this manner, can have no medicinal effect.

With respect to the custom of drinking healths at dinner, I may observe that the innovation, which the Quakers seem to have been the first to have made upon the practice of it, has been adopted by many, not out of compliance with their example, but on account of the trouble and inconveniences attending it; that the custom is not now so general as it was; that in the higher and more fashionable circles it has nearly been exploded; and that, among some of the other classes of society, it is gradually declining.

With respect to the custom of drinking toasts after dinner, the Quakers have rejected it for various reasons.

They have rejected it first, because, however desirable it may be that Christians should follow the best customs of the heathens, it would be a reproach to them to follow the worst. Or, in other words, it would be improper for men, whose religion required spirituality of thought and feeling, to imitate the heathens in the manner of their enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The laws and customs of drinking, the Quakers observe, are all of heathen origin. The similitude between these and those of modern tunes is too remarkable to be overlooked; and too striking not to warrant them in concluding, that christens have taken their model on this subject from Pagan practice.



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In every Grecian family, where company was invited, the master of it was considered to be the king or president of the feast, in his own house. He was usually denominated the eye of the company. It was one of his offices to look about and to see that his guests drank their proper portions of the wine. It was another to keep peace and harmony among them. For these purposes his word was law. At entertainments at the public expence the same office existed, but the person, then appointed to it, was nominated either by lot, or by the votes of the persons present.—This custom obtains among the moderns. The master of every family at the present day presides at his own table for the same purposes. And at great and public dinners at taverns, a similar officer is appointed, who is generally chosen by the committee, who first meet for the proposal of the feast.

One of the first toasts, that were usually drank among the ancient Greeks, was to the “gods.” This entirely corresponds with the modern idea of church; and if the government had been only coupled with the gods in these ancient times, it would have precisely answered to the modern toast of church and state.

It was also usual at the entertainments, given by Grecian families, to drink the prosperity of those persons, for whom they entertained a friendship, but who happened to be absent. No toast can better coincide than this, with that, which is so frequently given, of our absent friends.

It was also a Grecian practice for each of the guests to name his particular friend, and sometimes also his particular mistress. The moderns have also a parallel for this. Every person gives (to use the common phrase) his gentleman, and his lady, in his turn.

It is well known to have been the usage of the ancient Greeks, at their entertainments, either to fill or to have had their cups filled for them to the brim. The moderns do precisely the same thing. Glasses so filled, have the particular name of bumpers: and however vigilantly an ancient Greek might have looked after his guests, and made them drink their glasses filled in this manner, the presidents of modern times are equally vigilant in enforcing adherence to the same custom.

It was an ancient practice also with the same people to drink three glasses when the graces, and nine when the muses were named: and three and three times three were drank on particular occasions. This barbarous practice has fortunately not come down to the moderns to its full extent, but they have retained the remembrance of it, and celebrated it in part, by following up their toasts, on any extraordinary occasion, not with three or nine glasses of wine, but with three or nine cheers.

Among the ancients beforementioned, if any of the persons present were found deficient in drinking their proper portions, they were ordered by the president either to drink them or to leave the room. This usage has been a little altered by the moderns. They do not order those persons to leave the company, who do not comply with the

same rules of drinking as the rest, but they subject them to be fined, as it is termed, that is, they oblige them to drink double portions for their deficiency, or punish them in some other manner.



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From hence it will be obvious that the laws of drinking are of heathen origin; that is, the custom of drinking toasts originated, as the Quakers contend, with men of heathen minds and affections for a sensual purpose; and it is therefore a custom, they believe; which men of christian minds and affections should never follow.

The Quakers have rejected the custom again, because they consider it to be inconsistent with their christian character in other respects. They consider it as morally injurious; for toasts frequently excite and promote indelicate ideas, and thus sometimes interrupt the innocence of conversation.

They consider it as morally injurious again, because the drinking of toasts has a direct tendency to promote drunkenness.

They, who have been much in company, must have had repeated opportunities of witnessing, that this idea of the Quakers is founded in truth, men are undoubtedly stimulated to drink more than they like, and to become intoxicated in consequence of the use of toasts. If a man has no objection to drink toasts at all, he must drink that which the master of the house proposes, and it is usual in this case to fill a bumper. Respect to his host is considered as demanding this. Thus one full glass is secured to him at the outset. He must also drink a bumper to the king, another to church and state, and another to the army and navy. He would, in many companies, be thought hostile to government, if, in the habit of drinking toasts, he were to refuse to drink these, or to honour these in the same manner. Thus three additional glasses are entailed upon him. He must also drink a bumper to his own toast. He would be thought to dishonour the person, whose health he had given, if he were to fail in this. Thus a fifth glass is added to his share. He must fill a little besides to every other toast, or he is considered as deficient in respect to the person, who has proposed it. Thus many additional glasses are forced upon him. By this time the wine begins to act, when new toasts, of a new nature assail his ear, and he is stimulated to new potions. There are many toasts of so patriotic, and others of so generous and convivial a nature that a man is looked upon as disaffected, or as devoid of sentiment, who refuses them. Add to this, that there is a sort of shame, which the young and generous in particular feel in being outdone, and in not keeping pace with the rest, on such occasions. Thus toast being urged after toast, and shame acting upon shame, a variety of causes conspires at the same moment to drive him on, till the liquor at length overcomes him and he falls eventually a victim to its power.



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It will be manifest from this account that the laws of drinking, by which the necessity of drinking a certain number of toasts is enjoined, by which bumpers are attached to certain classes of toasts, by which a stigma is affixed to a non-compliance with the terms, by which in fact a regular system of etiquette is established, cannot but lead, except a man is uncommonly resolute or particularly on his guard, to intoxication. We see indeed instances of men drinking glass after glass, because stimulated in this manner, even against their own inclination, nay even against the determination they had made before they went into company, till they have made themselves quite drunk. But had there been no laws of drinking, or no toasts, we cannot see any reason why the same persons should not have returned sober to their respective homes.

It is recorded of the great Sir Matthew Hale, who is deservedly placed among the great men of our country, that in his early youth he had been in company, where the party had drunk to such excess, that one of them fell down apparently dead. Quitting the room, he implored forgiveness of the Almighty for this excessive intemperance in himself and his companions, and made a vow, that he would never drink another health while he lived. This vow he kept to his dying day. It is hardly necessary for me to remark that he would never have come to such a resolution, if he had not believed, either that the drinking of toasts had produced the excesses of that day, or that the custom led so naturally to intoxication, that it became his duty to suppress it.

The Quakers having rejected the use of toasts upon the principles assigned, are sometimes placed in a difficult situation, in which there is an occasion for the trial of their courage, in consequence of mixing with others, by whom the custom is still followed.

In companies, to which they are invited in regular families, they are seldom put to any disagreeable dilemma in this respect. The master of the house, if in the habit of giving toasts, generally knowing the custom of the Quakers in this instance, passes over any Quaker who may be present, and calls upon his next neighbour for a toast. Good breeding and hospitality demand that such indulgence and exception should be given.

There are situations, however, in which their courage is often tried. One of the worst in which a Quaker can be placed, and in which he is frequently placed, is that of being at a common room in an inn, where a number of other travellers dine and sup together. In such companies things are seldom conducted so much to his satisfaction in this respect, as in those described. In general as the bottle passes, some jocose hint is conveyed to him about the toast; and though this is perhaps done with good humour, his feelings are wounded by it. At other times when the company are of a less liberal complexion, there is a determination, soon understood among one another, to hunt him down,



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as if he were fair game. A toast is pressed upon him, though all know that it is not his custom to drink it. On refusing, they begin to tease him. One jokes with him. Another banters him. Toasts both illiberal and indelicate, are at length introduced; and he has no alternative but that of bearing the banter, or quitting the room. I have seen a Quaker in such a company (and at such a distance from home, that the transaction in all probability never could have been known, had he, in order to free himself from their attacks, conformed to their custom) bearing all their raillery with astonishing firmness, and courageously struggling against the stream. It is certainly an awkward thing for a solitary Quaker to fall in such companies, and it requires considerable courage to preserve singularity in the midst of the prejudices of ignorant and illiberal men.

This custom, however, of drinking toasts after dinner, is, like the former of drinking healths at dinner, happily declining. It is much to the credit of those, who move in the higher circles, that they have generally exploded both. It may be probably owing to this circumstance, that though we find persons of this description labouring under the imputation of levity and dissipation, we yet find them respectable for the sobriety of their lives. Drunkenness indeed forms no part of their character, nor, generally speaking, is it a vice of the present age as it has been of former ages; and there seems to be little doubt, that in proportion as the custom of drinking healths and toasts, but more particularly the latter, is suppressed, this vice will become less a trait in the national character.

There are one or two customs of the Quakers, which I shall notice before I conclude this chapter.

It is one of the fashions of the world, where people meet in company, for men and women, when the dinner is over, to drink their wine together, and for the women, having done this for a short time, to retire. This custom of the females withdrawing after dinner was probably first insisted upon from an idea, that their presence would be a restraint upon the circulation of the bottle, as well as upon the conversation of the men. The Quakers, however, seldom submit to this practice. Men and women generally sit together and converse as before dinner. I do not mean by this that women may not retire if they please, because there is no restraint upon any one in the company of the Quakers; nor do I mean to say, that women do not occasionally retire, and leave the men at their wine. There are a few rich families, which, having mixed more than usual with the world, allow of this separation. But where one allows it, there are ninety-nine, who give wine to their company after dinner, who do not. It is not a Quaker-custom, that in a given time after dinner, the one should be separated from the other sex.



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It is a pity that the practice of the Quakers should not have been adopted by others of our own country in this particular. Many advantages would result to those, who were to follow the example. For if women were allowed to remain, chastity of expression and decorum of behaviour would be more likely to be insured. Their presence also would operate as a check upon drunkenness. Nor can there be a doubt, that women would enliven and give a variety to conversation; and, as they have had a different education from men, that an opportunity of mutual improvement might be afforded by the continuance of the two in the society of one another.

It is also usual with the world in such companies, that the men, when the females have retired, should continue drinking till tea-time. This custom is unknown to the Quakers, even to those few Quakers, who allow of a separation of the sexes. It is not unusual with them to propose a walk before tea, if the weather permit. But even in the case where they remain at the table, their time is spent rather in conversing than in drinking. They have no toasts, as I have observed, which should induce them to put the bottle round in a given time, or which should oblige them to take a certain number of glasses. The bottle, however, is usually put round, and each helps himself as he pleases. At length one of the guests, having had sufficient, declines filling his glass. Another, in a little time, declines also for the same cause. A third, after having taken what he thinks sufficient, follows the example. The wine is soon afterwards taken away, and this mostly long before the hour of drinking tea. Neither drunkenness, nor any situation approaching to drunkenness, is known in the Quaker companies. Excess in drinking is strictly forbidden by the laws of the society. It is a subject of one of their queries. It is of course a subject that is often brought to their recollection. Whatever may be the faults of the Quakers, they must be acknowledged to be a SOBER PEOPLE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.