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A CONCISE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM PENN.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM PENN.

The following is a brief sketch of the life of one who, though perhaps more widely known as the Proprietor and Founder of Pennsylvania, was also eminent as a minister of the gospel in the Society of Friends, and distinguished for his superior intellectual abilities, his varied culture, and, above all, for his devoted Christian character, exemplified both in adversity and prosperity. It is taken principally from a work entitled "Friends in the Seventeenth Century."

He was the son of William Penn, who, trained to nautical life, had by his genius and courage risen rapidly in the navy, until at the age of twenty-nine he became "Vice-Admiral of the Straits." From the account of his life and public career, given by Granville Penn, a descendant, he appears to have been a man who made self-interest a leading principle of conduct, but who, while eagerly coveting wealth and honor, was never accused of being corrupt as a public servant. His son William was born in London, in 1644, and resided with his mother at Wanstead, in Essex, while his father was absent with the fleet over which he had command.

Owing to information received by Cromwell, through some of the spies kept by him in attendance upon the exiled Charles and his court, that, notwithstanding he had sanctioned the promotion of Admiral Penn, and largely rewarded him by an estate in Ireland, for some losses he had sustained there, he was secretly making overtures to bring the squadron he commanded into the service of the Royalists, he lost favor with the Protector. On his return from an unsuccessful expedition against the Spanish West India Islands, he was deprived of his command and thrown into prison, whence Cromwell generously liberated him at his own humble petition. He then took his family over to Ireland, where he continued to reside for some years, on the estate which Cromwell had had bestowed upon him, and which was near Cork. [Pg 4]

In a manuscript written by Thomas Harvey, reciting an account given to him by William Penn, of some of the circumstances of his early life, and which was first published in "The Penns and Peningtons," by M. Webb, it is stated, "That while he was but a child living at Cork with his father, Thomas Loe came thither. When it was rumored a Quaker was come from England, his father proposed to some others to be like the noble Bereans, and hear him before they judged

him. He accordingly sent to Thomas Loe to come to his house; where he had a meeting in the family. Though William was very young, he observed what effect T. Loe's preaching had on the hearers. A black servant of his father could not restrain himself from weeping aloud; and little William looking on his father, saw the tears running down his cheeks also. He then thought within himself, 'What if they would all be Quakers!'" This opportunity he never quite forgot; the remembrance of it still recurring at times. William Penn was then about eleven years of age, and was being educated by a private tutor.

On the retirement of Richard Cromwell from the position for which he had been appointed by his father, Admiral Penn declared for Charles Stuart, and lost no time in going over to the Continent to pay court to him whom he had no doubt would soon be recalled to the throne. Charles employed him in secret service, and rewarded him by the honors of knighthood, and by becoming his debtor for one hundred pounds. [Pg 5]

When a little over fifteen years of age, William Penn entered as a "gentleman commoner," at Oxford, where he remained three years, distinguishing himself as a hard and successful student. After the Restoration, the Court set to work to remodel the University, by displacing those who held Puritanical opinions, or who had found favor during the Commonwealth, and installing others, friendly to the re-established church and the lax moral principles then prevailing. Dr. Owen, conspicuous as a scholar and a strict religionist, was ejected to make room for a royalist partisan, and the students became divided into parties, applauding or denouncing the changes made.

There is reason to believe, from observations made by William Penn himself, that throughout his youth he was repeatedly visited by the Day-Spring from on high, convicting him of that which was evil in his ways, and bringing him into serious thoughtfulness. While at college, his associates appear to have been those of a religious cast of character like himself, and who, with him, were greatly influenced by the teaching and advice of Dr. Owen. It so happened that, while much controversy was going on among the scholars relative to religious opinions and practices, Thomas Loe came to Oxford, and held several meetings. To these meetings William Penn and his associates went, and a deep impression was made upon their minds by the powerful preaching of this devoted servant of Christ. They declined being present at what were now the regular "services" of the college, and did not refrain from speaking depreciatingly of what they designated as the "Popish doctrines and usages" re-introduced among them. For this they were lectured and fined. With the ardor and indiscretion of youth, this supposed indignity was highly resented by them. They not only held private meetings for worship and religious exhortation and prayer, but some of them refused to wear the student's gown and cap, and in some instances tore them off of those they met. How far William Penn was implicated in the latter wrong-doing is not known; but his positive refusal to wear the usual garb, his bold denunciation of the doctrine and practices he believed to be wrong, and his courageous defence of the gospel truths he had heard from Thomas Loe, brought upon him the enmity of the Masters in power, and he was expelled the University. [Pg 6]

Admiral Penn, who had set his heart upon preparing his son for realizing to the full the ambitious hopes and aims entertained by himself for his family, appears to have been little qualified to understand his son's character, or to rightly estimate the principles that actuated him. His pride was mortified, and, as he thought, his promising schemes were blasted. He received William with anger, and for a time would hardly deign to speak to him. Accustomed to command, and to be obeyed without question, he ordered him to give up his newly-formed views of religious duty, and to hold no further intercourse with those who had shared in his rebellious opinions and course. Enraged on finding that his authority, though seconded by the filial affection of his child, was powerless for removing his religious convictions, he resorted to the use of his cane, followed by solitary confinement in his room, and then banishment from the family. [Pg 7]

It was not long, however, before his good sense convinced him that the object he had in view was not to be obtained by severity. He resolved to change his mode of attack, and try if what could not be gained by force might not be brought about by the seductions of a life of gayety and pleasure. Learning that a number of young men, sons of persons considered to be of high families, were about to go on to the Continent and spend some time in study and travelling, he decided to send William with them. Accordingly, furnished with letters that would introduce him into what the world considered the best society, he went to Paris; and, fascinated by the courtly and gay scenes of the company into which he found himself welcomed as an admired guest, he soon caught the worldly spirit that presided over their festivities, and his serious, Quaker-like impressions appeared to pass away, like the morning dew before the burning rays of the sun. He did not, however, allow pleasure to wean him from study. He went to Saumur, and placing himself under the tuition of the learned Moses Amyrault, applied himself to the study of the language and literature of the country, embracing the philosophic basis of divinity. Travelling into Italy, he made himself acquainted with its language, and gratified his taste for the works of the masters in art.

On the breaking out of the war with the Dutch, the Admiral called his son William home, where he arrived after an absence of two years. All trace of the religious seriousness and conscientious restraint that had marked his conduct and manner when he left was gone, and his father was delighted to find his son wearing the carriage and displaying the accomplishments of a self-possessed man of the world. He was at once introduced at Court, and had the opportunity to become acquainted with many who stood high in the brilliant but profligate society that filled the saloons of Whitehall. [Pg 8]

William Penn now entered Lincoln's Inn as a student of law, and in 1665, when twenty-one years of age, there seemed every probability of his making an accomplished courtier, and a successful competitor for the honors of this world. Few could enter life with more flattering and apparently better-grounded prospects of attaining to all that would gratify a mind with strong intellectual powers, and naturally ambitious of preferment. His manly form, blooming with health, betokened physical strength and endurance. His disposition, though lively and active, was marked by docility and sweetness. He possessed ready wit, and his good mental abilities had been well developed and trained by careful culture, and strengthened by extensive and profound literary attainments. Men high in power and place smiled upon him. His father enjoyed close intimacy with the Duke of York, heir presumptive to the crown, and eagerly sought to secure for his son the glory and riches of the world, which courted his acceptance.

The Admiral having been appointed by the Duke of York to accompany him in command of the fleet, took William as one of his staff; but after a short absence the latter was sent home with a [Pg 9] dispatch to the King. The plague was now spreading in London, and soon the whole aspect of the city was sadly changed. The awful scenes of death that were daily occurring and struck the stoutest hearts with dismay, brought to the sensitive mind of the gay young man conviction of the uncertainty of life, and warning of the necessity to prepare for its sudden termination. The Holy Spirit again broke up his false rest, showed him the emptiness of all worldly grandeur, and wooed him to follow Christ Jesus in the regeneration.

After a cruise of about two months, his father returned, flushed with success in the sanguinary contest in which he had been engaged. He found William again serious, and indisposed to continue the course upon which, but a short time before, he had exultantly entered. The increased honors and emoluments heaped on the victorious sailor by the royal brothers, made him still more fearful lest the foolish whimsies, as he thought them, of his son, would yet disappoint his hopes of the hereditary honors that might be settled upon him. Large accession to his Irish estate, derived from royal bounty as a reward for the service rendered, made it necessary that some one should look after his interest there; and having experienced the good effect, as he considered it, of placing his son within the dazzling circle of gay and fashionable life, he hurried him across the Channel, with letters of introduction to the Duke of Ormond, then Lord Deputy of Ireland.

William found the vice-regal Court comparatively free from the dissipation and loose morals of that which surrounded Charles II., and he soon seemed to enter heartily into the enjoyment it [Pg 10] afforded. He joined an expedition sent, under the command of Lord Airan, to quell an insurrection that broke out among the garrison at Carrickfergus, and for a while was so excited by the spirit and enterprise attending active military life, that he became anxious to adopt it as a profession. But his father, when consulted on the subject, decidedly objected, and it was given up.

But He who watches over the workmanship of his hand, and seeks to save that which is lost, was not leaving William Penn to wander in the paths of folly, without the reproofs of instruction, and in mercy, by his witness in the heart, inclining him to accept those reproofs as the way to life; and it was not long before he was brought to a stand, and made to feel that he must then make his election between the life of a votary of this world and that of a self-denying disciple of a crucified Saviour.

Shangarry Castle, the newly-acquired estate of the Admiral, was near to Cork, and when not employed in bringing the place and the affairs connected with it into order, William was often in the town, where he had been well acquainted when a boy. Having one day, while there, gone into the shop of a woman Friend whom he had formerly known, to make a purchase, and finding she did not recognize him, he introduced himself, and entered into conversation with her; recalling to her recollection the meeting held by Thomas Loe at his father's house. Upon her expressing surprise at his memory of the events, he replied, he thought he would never forget them, and that, if he knew where that Friend was, he would go to hear him again, though it was a hundred miles off. She told him he need not go so far, for that Friend was now in Cork, and was to have a [Pg 11] meeting the next day. Curious again to hear one who had arrested his attention when a boy, and seriously impressed him by his ministry, when at Oxford, he went to the meeting; and after a time Thomas Loe stood up with the expression, "There is a faith that overcomes the world, and there is a faith that is overcome by the world." It struck deep into the heart of William Penn, who was then made to feel keenly that he had been long striving against or slighting his known duty to his Maker, and allowing the world to overcome the drawing of his heavenly Father's love, to bring him out from the thraldom of sin; and as the preacher with fervid eloquence dwelt on the fruits of such faith, he was thoroughly broken down, and wept much. After the meeting he went with Thomas Loe to a Friend's house, where they had a free conversation, and from that time he became a regular attender of the meetings of Friends. As the Light of Christ shone with more and more clearness upon his soul, he saw how grievously he had departed from the right way of the Lord, and was brought under deep repentance therefor. Convinced of the truth of the doctrines held by Friends, he heartily embraced them, and firmly resolved to live and die by them, whatever sacrifices it might cost him.

Being at a meeting in Cork in 1667, he, with others, was arrested by officers who came to break the meeting up, and was sent to prison: though the Magistrate, who recognized him as the son of the lord of Shangarry Castle, offered to set him at liberty if he would give his word "to keep the peace," which he refused. From the prison he addressed a letter to the Earl of Ossory, giving an [Pg 12] account of the arrest and imprisonment of himself and friends, showing their innocence, and

pleading the liberty of conscience demanded by the precepts of the gospel. An order was immediately dispatched by the Earl for his release; and as it was soon noised abroad that Admiral Penn's son had turned Quaker, the Earl wrote to his father, communicating the information. Startled and annoyed by the intelligence, the Admiral ordered William to come home immediately, which he did. Josiah Cole, a minister in the Society of Friends, met him at Bristol; accompanied him to London, and being deeply interested for his stability and preservation, went with him to his father's house. Fully as William had adopted the principles of Friends, and many as were the baptisms he had already passed through, he had not yet adopted the plain dress that distinguished them from others; and his father observing this, and that his rapier still hung by his side, hoped that his friend the Earl had been wrongly informed; and he treated him and his friend during the evening with ordinary courtesy, without alluding to the report that had reached him.

Observing, on the next day, that William did not uncover his head when he came into his presence,—in those days men generally wore their hats in the house,—and that he used thee and thou when addressing him, he demanded an explanation. William frankly told him that, having been convinced of the truth of the religion of the Quakers, he was conscientiously scrupulous against taking off his hat as a token of respect, using the plural language, or compliments. An angry altercation on the part of the father, and deeply distressing on the part of the son, succeeded, and was more than once repeated. Finally, the former, finding that neither argument [Pg 13] nor threats could shake the latter's firm conviction that to comply with his father's wishes would be to violate his duty to his Lord and Master, told him he might thee and thou whom he pleased, and keep on his hat, except in the presence of the King, the Duke of York, and himself; but to or before these he should not thee or thou, or stand covered; and the son, moved by his father's distress and his own filial affection, asked time for consideration before giving a decisive reply. This was reluctantly granted, though he was forbidden to see any Friend, and William retired, to pour out his soul in prayer for right direction and strength to follow it. At their next interview William told his father that he could not comply with his wishes without violating his duty to his God, and must therefore decline. Irritated at what he considered his son's obstinacy, and foolish determination to sacrifice the worldly honors soliciting his acceptance, for a mere whim, the Admiral upbraided him in no measured terms, and when convinced that he would not be changed, turned him out of doors, with the threat that he would disinherit him. Before leaving his home and family, William assured his father how deeply he was grieved; not so much because of his being driven from his paternal roof and brought to poverty, as because he incurred his displeasure, and was thought by him to be an undutiful child. He then left the house, resigned to make the sacrifice required, and "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Friends who knew [Pg 14] the circumstances under which William Penn was placed, received him gladly; and his mother, who yearned over the son of her love, and greatly mourned the course pursued towards him, took means to have him supplied with money sufficient to obtain food and raiment, and so managed as to have an occasional interview with him. It was not long after, that, laying aside his rapier and all ornamentation of dress, he appeared in the plain garb of a Quaker.

Some years after, when writing respecting the trials that befell him about this time, he speaks of "the bitter mockings and scornings that fell upon me, the displeasure of my parents, the cruelty and invective of the priests, the strangeness of all my companions, and what a sign and wonder they made of me; but above all, that great cross of resisting and watching against my own vain affections and thoughts."

As he was given up to endure the baptisms necessary for his purification and refinement, his Divine Master brought him up out of the horrible pit, set his feet upon Himself, the Rock of Ages, and made him a partaker of the powers of the world to come; and having thus prepared him for the work, bestowed on him a gift in the ministry of the gospel of life and salvation. He first came forth in this service in 1668, about two years after his convincement under the ministry of Thomas Loe, and in the twenty-fourth year of his age. His uniformly consistent conduct, and careful maintenance of affectionate filial respect toward his exasperated parent, finally won upon him so far that he permitted him to take up his abode in his house; though it was long after he had been so living, before he would have much intercourse with him. But when, sharing in the [Pg 15] persecution which Friends were then suffering, his son was cast into prison, it was said he secretly used his influence to obtain his liberty.

In 1668 Thomas Loe was called away from the church militant to enter upon his reward in the church triumphant. When on his death-bed, he said to William Penn, who, with other Friends, was waiting on him, "Bear thy cross and stand faithful to God; then He will give thee an everlasting crown of glory, that shall not be taken from thee. There is no other way which shall prosper than that which the holy men of old walked in. God hath brought immortality to light, and life immortal is felt. Glory! glory! to Him, for He is worthy of it. His love overcomes my heart; nay, my cup runs over; glory be to His Name forever." To George Whitehead he remarked, "The Lord is good to me; this day He hath covered me with glory," and as life was leaving his body, he sang, "Glory, glory to Thee forever!" and so sank to sleep in Jesus.

In 1668 William Penn was imprisoned on account of one of his publications, "The Sandy Foundation Shaken." It resulted from himself and George Whitehead having been unfairly prevented from orally replying to a Calvinistic preacher who had assailed the doctrines of Friends. In this tract he was not so guarded in the language he used, but that he was misunderstood by many, and supposed to be unsound on the fundamental doctrines of the proper

divinity and meritorious death and atonement of Christ. The publication attracted general attention, and gave deep offence to some of the Prelates, who either thought it beneath their [Pg 16] dignity to enter into argument with a polemic so young, and as they might think, so unskilled in divinity, or, being more in accordance with their practice and the spirit of the times, and more likely to silence their opponent, they applied to the Secretary of State, and induced him to issue a warrant for his arrest; which William Penn hearing of, went and voluntarily gave himself up, and was committed to the Tower. It was evident that William Penn had some bitter enemies, for a letter was picked up near where he had been standing when he surrendered himself, which contained matter of so treasonable a character, that Lord Arlington, the Secretary of State, on receiving and reading it, went immediately to the Tower and had an interview with him, in which he soon satisfied himself that William Penn knew nothing of the note, and was innocent of any conspiracy.

There had been no indictment, no trial, conviction, nor sentence passed upon the prisoner, and yet he was kept in solitary confinement for about eight months; during which time most of his family and friends were forbidden access to him, and the "Bishop of London" sent him word he should either make a public recantation or die in prison. But though thus closely immured as to his body, his spirit was free, and the word of the Lord was not bound. He prepared himself to weary out the malice of his enemies by patience and meekness, and to be resigned to lay down his life within the walls of the Tower, if the sacrifice was called for, rather than violate his conscience.

To occupy his time profitably, and, as far as he had ability, promote the cause of truth and righteousness, he employed his pen; and his thoughts, probably taking their direction and [Pg 17] coloring from the afflictive circumstances under which he and many other members of the Society to which he was joined were then placed, he wrote the work, since become so celebrated, "No Cross, No Crown." This treatise is admitted to be of extraordinary merit; not only in a literary point of view, considering the short time and the circumstances under which it was produced, but in the clear and cogent manner in which it presents the sinful indulgences of the great body of the professors of Christianity, and enforces the self-denying requisitions of the religion of Christ.

Finding that some parts of his "Sandy Foundation Shaken" had been misunderstood or misrepresented, so as to give currency to the charge of his being unsound in relation to the divinity and atonement of Christ, William Penn at once wrote an explanation of what had been misrepresented, and in exposition of his views on these cardinal points of Christian faith. This was entitled, "Innocency with her Open Face." In this work he says, "Let all know, that I pretend to know no other name by which remission, atonement, and salvation can be obtained, but Jesus Christ the Saviour, who is the power and wisdom of God." Asserting his full belief in the divinity of Christ, he observes, "He that is the everlasting Wisdom, the divine Power, the true Light, the only Saviour, the creating Word of all things, whether visible or invisible, and their Upholder by his own power, is without contradiction, God; but all these qualifications and divine properties are, by the concurrent testimony of Scripture, ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore [Pg 18] without scruple, I call and believe him really to be the mighty God."

In replying to Dr. John Collenges, some years after the publication of "The Sandy Foundation Shaken," who had at that time brought forward exceptions to its doctrines, William Perm again explicitly asserts his full belief in the proper divinity of, and atonement made by, Christ: and in the doctrine of justification as held by Friends at that time and ever since. "I do *heartily believe* that Jesus Christ is the only true and everlasting God, by whom all things were made that are made, in the heavens above or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth: that He is as omnipotent, so omniscient and omnipresent, therefore God." And in regard to the atonement and justification, he thus writes, "He that would not have me mistaken, on purpose to render his charge against me just, whether it be so or no, may see in *my apology* for 'The Sandy Foundation Shaken,' that I otherwise meant than I am charactered. In short, I say, both as to this and the other point of justification, that Jesus Christ was a *sacrifice for sin*; that He was set forth to be *a propitiation for the sins of the whole world*; to declare God's righteousness, *for the remission of sins that are passed*, etc.; to all that repented and had faith in His Son. Therein the love of God appeared, that He declared His good-will *thereby* to be reconciled; Christ bearing away the sins that are passed, as the scape-goat did of old; not excluding inward work; for till that is begun, none can be benefitted; though it is not the work, but God's free love, that remits and blots out; of which the death of Christ and His sacrificing himself was a most certain declaration and confirmation. In short, *that* declared remission to all who believe and obey, for the sins that are [Pg 19] past; which is the *first part* of Christ's work (as it is a king's to pardon a traitor before he advanceth him), and hitherto the acquittance imputes a righteousness—inasmuch as men, *on true repentance*, are imputed as clean of guilt as if they had never sinned—and thus far are justified; but the *completion* of this by the working out of sin inherent, must be by the Power and Spirit of Christ in the heart, destroying the old man and his deeds, and bringing in the new and everlasting righteousness. So that which I wrote against, is such doctrine as extended Christ's death and obedience, *not to the first*, but to the second part of justification; not the pacifying of conscience as to past sin; but to complete salvation without cleansing and purging from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, by the internal operation of his holy power and Spirit."

Notwithstanding William Penn is thus clear and explicit in correcting the misunderstanding of his Christian faith, to which some of his expressions in "The Sandy Foundation Shaken" had given rise, and in his full avowal of his belief in the Deity of Christ, and the atonement made by Him for the sins of mankind; as also in the doctrine of justification by faith in Him; yet those who are

anxious to represent Friends as Socinians, or as denying the atonement of Christ, are still so unjust to his unequivocal and widely-published opinions on these points, and so ungenerous to his character and memory, as well as untruthful in their representation of Friends, as to claim him as authority for their disbelief in these fundamental doctrines. [Pg 20]

Though he had addressed a communication to Lord Arlington, Secretary of State, on whose warrant he was committed to the Tower, in which he denied the charges brought against him, so far as he had been able to ascertain them; declaring they were the result of ignorance and malice, and requesting that he might have an audience with the King, in order to hear the accusation of his enemies, and have an opportunity to defend himself; or if he could not have access to the King, then to be brought, with his accusers, face to face before him, the Secretary of State, it was disregarded, nor was the rigor of his confinement abated. "Innocency with her Open Face" had, however, produced a change of public feeling towards him; and his father, who could not but respect the consistent firmness and Christian endurance of his son, and who had himself been passing through a severe ordeal from the machinations of his enemies in the House of Commons, visited him in his dungeon, and began to use the influence he continued to hold with the Duke of York and the King, on his behalf. Whether at his instance or not is not known, but Arlington, though declining to give audience to William Penn himself, sent the King's Chaplain, Stillingfleet, to have an interview with him, and ascertain what concessions he would be willing to make to the offended hierarchy. Their conversation appears to have been conducted in a friendly spirit and manner: the Chaplain holding up the brilliant future that would be realized by Penn if he would recant some of his opinions, and dwelling on the favorable disposition of the Duke of York and King towards him. William told him, "The Tower is the worst argument in the world," and that nothing could induce him to violate his conscientious convictions, so there [Pg 21] seemed nothing gained. But suddenly and unexpectedly an order came from the King for his release, and he left the gloomy confines of his prison-house without making any concession or accepting a pardon. The discharge was believed to have been the work of the Duke of York, and William ever cherished a grateful feeling towards him for this generous act.

In the year 1670, Friends in England underwent great persecution and suffering on account of their religious principles. The law against Dissenters, that had just expired, had failed in its object, and it was therefore determined to try another method, which enlisted the cupidity of the depraved class as informers, and used the almost unrestrained functions of officials clothed with absolute power to impoverish and harass those who met together for Divine worship in a way differing from the "Church of England," in the hope of rendering such unable to live in their native country. Accordingly a third "Act to prevent and suppress seditious conventicles" was passed by Parliament, and received the royal assent in the Fourth month, 1670.

Persecution now ran riot; and the power being by design placed in the hands of the most profligate and debased, rapine, havoc, and impoverishment were spread over the nation by the graceless informers, abetted by a venal magistracy, eager to share in the plunder.

But the storm, biting and incessant as it was, was no more effective in deterring Friends from assembling for the purpose of worshipping their Almighty Father in Heaven, than that which had been raised under the former "Conventicle Act." Grievously spoiled and cruelly abused as they [Pg 22] were, they knew their enemies could truthfully allege nothing against them but that which concerned the law of their God; and in the sincerity of their hearts they made their appeal unto Him, with full confidence that He would extend his fatherly, protecting care over them; would cause the wrath of man to bring Him praise, and when He saw it was enough, would restrain the remainder of wrath, and limit the rage and cruelty of their merciless tormentors. Deprived of the use of their meeting-houses, they assembled as near to them as they could get; and beaten, bruised, imprisoned, and fined, as many of each company were almost sure to be, the next meeting-day found others at the same place, engaged in the performance of the same indispensable duty; ready to encounter, with meekness and patience, the wrath of their persecutors, and to suffer for the maintenance of their rights as men and their obligation as Christians.

Their treatment in London, bad as it was, was thought to be less severe than in many other parts of the Kingdom. Yet in that city, it was a common occurrence for those who attended their meetings for worship, to be beaten with the muskets of the foot-soldiers, and the sabres of the dragoons, until the blood ran down upon the ground; women, sometimes young maidens, were maltreated in the most shameful manner.

On the fourteenth of the Eighth month, 1670, William Penn and William Mead were taken from the meeting held in the street, as near to Grace-church meeting-house as they could get; the former being engaged in ministry at the time. They were brought to trial on the first of the Ninth [Pg 23] month, before the Mayor, Samuel Starling; the Recorder, John Howell; several Aldermen, and the Sheriffs. William Mead had formerly been a captain in the Commonwealth's army, but having embraced the truths of the Gospel as held by Friends, he of course gave up all connection with military life, and is mentioned in the indictment as a linen-draper, in London; though it is probable he resided most of his time in Essex, where he had a considerable landed estate. He afterwards married a daughter of Margaret Fell.

The indictment charged that they, with other persons, to the number of three hundred, with force and arms, unlawfully and tumultuously assembled together, on the fifteenth day of August, 1670, and the said William Penn, by agreement made beforehand with William Mead, preached and spoke to the assembly; by reason whereof, a great concourse and tumult of people continued a

long time in the street, in contempt of the King and his law, to the great disturbance of his peace, and to the terror of many of his liege people and subjects.

The character of the trial might be judged by the first incident that occurred. Being brought before the Court on the third of the Ninth month, an officer took off their hats on their entrance; whereupon the Mayor angrily ordered him to put them on again; which being done, the Recorder fined them forty marks apiece, for alleged contempt of Court, by appearing before it with their hats on. This trial has become celebrated, not only on account of the ability with which William Penn—then in his twenty-sixth year—defended his cause, and sustained the inalienable rights of [Pg 24] Englishmen, but for the inflexible firmness of the jury in maintaining their own rights, and adhering to their conscientious convictions; notwithstanding the iniquitous determination of the Court, to enforce its own will, to convict and punish the prisoners at the bar, and to oblige the jury to become their tools for that purpose.

The indictment was incorrect, even in the statement of the time when the offence was said to have taken place; as it was on the fourteenth of the month, and not on the fifteenth, and therefore it ought to have been quashed by the Court, and the prisoners discharged. The evidence of the three witnesses examined was altogether inconclusive, but William Penn boldly said to the Court, "We confess ourselves to be so far from recanting or declining to vindicate the assembling of ourselves, to preach, pray, or worship the eternal, holy, just God, that we declare to all the world, that we do believe it to be our indispensable duty to meet incessantly on so good an account; nor shall all the powers upon earth be able to divert us from reverencing and adoring the God who made us." He then asked the Court to tell him upon what law the indictment and proceedings were founded. The Recorder answering, the common law, Penn requested him to tell him what law that was; for if it was common, it must be easy to define it. But the Recorder refused to tell him, saying it was *lex non scripta*, and it was not to be expected that he could say at once what it was, for some had been thirty or forty years studying it. Penn observed that Lord Coke had declared that common law was common right, and common right the great chartered privileges confirmed by former Kings. The Recorder, greatly excited, told him he was a [Pg 25] troublesome fellow, and it was not to the honor of the Court to suffer him to go on; but Penn calmly insisted that the Court was bound to explain to the prisoners at their bar the law they had violated, and upon which they were being tried; and he told them plainly that, unless they did so, they were violating the chartered rights of Englishmen, and acting upon an arbitrary determination to sacrifice those rights to their own illegal designs. Whereupon the Mayor and Recorder ordered him to be turned into the bail-dock. William Penn,—"These are but so many vain exclamations; is this justice or true judgment? Must I, therefore, be taken away because I plead for the fundamental laws of England?" Then, addressing himself to the jury, he said: "However, this I leave upon your consciences who are of the jury, and my sole judges, that if these ancient fundamental laws which relate to liberty and property, and are not limited to particular persuasions in matters of religion, must not be indispensably maintained and observed, who can say he hath a right to the coat upon his back. Certainly our liberties are openly to be invaded, our children enslaved, our families ruined, and our estates led away in triumph, by every sturdy beggar and malicious informer, as their trophies, but our pretended forfeits for conscience' sake. The Lord of heaven and earth will be judge between us in this matter." The hearing of this emphatic speech was so troublesome to the Recorder, that he cried, "Be silent there!" At which William Penn returned, "I am not to be silent in a cause wherein I am so much concerned, and not only myself, but many ten thousand families besides." [Pg 26]

Penn being thrust into the bail-dock, William Mead was called up, and was asked if he was present at the meeting. Which question he refused to answer, on the ground that he could not be required to accuse himself. He then told the jury that the indictment was false in many particulars, and that William Penn was right in demanding the law upon which it was based. It charged him with assembling by force and arms, tumultuously and illegally, which was untrue; and he informed them of Lord Coke's definition of a rout or riot, or unlawful assembly. Here the Recorder interrupted him, and endeavored to cast ridicule on what he had said, by taking off his hat and saying, "I thank you for telling us what the law is." On Mead replying sharply to a taunting speech of Richard Brown, the old and inveterate enemy of Friends, the Mayor told him "he deserved to have his tongue cut out." He, too, was put into the bail-dock, and the Court proceeded to charge the jury. Whereupon William Penn cried out with a loud voice to the jury, to take notice, that it was illegal to charge the jury in the prisoners' absence, and without giving them opportunity to plead their cause. The Recorder ordered him to be put down. William Mead then remonstrating against such "barbarous and unjust proceedings," the Court ordered them both to be put into a filthy, stinking place, called "the hole." After an absence of an hour and a half, eight of the jury came down agreed, but four staid up and would not assent. The Court sent for the four, and menaced them for dissenting. When the jury was all together, the prisoners were brought to the bar, and the verdict demanded. The Foreman said William Penn was guilty of [Pg 27] speaking in Grace-church Street. The Court endeavored to extort something more, but the Foreman declared he was not authorized to say anything but what he had given in. The Recorder, highly displeased, told them they might as well say nothing, and they were sent back. They soon returned with a written verdict, signed by all of them, that they found William Penn guilty of speaking or preaching in Grace-church Street, and William Mead not guilty. This so incensed the Court, that they told them they *would* have a verdict they would accept, and that "they should be locked up without meat, drink, fire, or tobacco: you shall not think thus to abuse the Court. We will have a verdict, by the help of God, or you shall starve for it." Against this outrageous infraction of justice and right, William Penn remonstrated, saying: "My jury, who are my judges, ought not to be thus menaced; their verdict should be free, and not compelled; the Bench ought

to wait upon them, but not forestall them. I do desire that justice may be done me, and that the arbitrary resolves of the Bench may not be made the measure of my jury's verdict." The Recorder cried out, "Stop that prating fellow's mouth, or put him out of Court." Penn insisted that the agreement of the twelve men was a verdict, and that the Clerk of the Court should record it; and, addressing the jury, he said: "You are Englishmen; mind your privileges; give not away your right!" To which some of them replied, "Nor will we ever do it."

The jury were sent to their room, and the prisoners to jail, the former being deprived of food, drink, and every accommodation. The same verdict was returned the next morning; calling from the Bench upbraiding and threats, similar to those so lavishly bestowed on the jury before: the [Pg 28] Recorder, in his passion, going so far as to say, "Till now, I never understood the reason of the policy and prudence of the Spaniards in suffering the Inquisition among them; and certainly, it will never be well with us till something like the Spanish Inquisition be in England." Again the jury was sent back to their room, and the prisoners returned to Newgate; both being so kept for another twenty-four hours; the jury without victuals, drink, or other accommodations. The next morning they were again brought into Court, and the usual question respecting their verdict being put, the Foreman first replied, "You have our written verdict already." The Recorder refusing to allow it to be read, the Clerk repeated the query, "How say you, is William Penn guilty or not guilty?" The Foreman answered: "Not guilty." The same verdict was given in the case of William Mead. The jury being separately questioned, they all made the same reply. The Recorder, exasperated at their decision and firmness, after pouring out his invectives upon them, said: "The Court fines you forty marks a man, and imprisonment till paid."

William Penn now demanded his liberty; but the Mayor said, "No, you are in for your fines." "Fines! for what?" replied Penn. "For contempt of Court," was the answer. Penn then declared that, according to the laws, no man could be fined without a trial by jury; but the Mayor ordered him and Mead first to the bail-dock, and then to the jail; where the jury was likewise consigned.

But this noble stand of the jury for law and right was not allowed to terminate in the punishment of these upright men, and the continued gratification of the revenge of the unjust Judges. After [Pg 29] ineffectually demanding of the Court their release two or three times, a writ of *habeas corpus* was granted by Judge Vaughan; who, upon hearing the case, decided their fine and imprisonment illegal, and set them free.

The usage of the Courts had not before been reduced to a legal and positive form. It had been the occasional practice of the Bench to impose fines on "inconvenient juries," and had long remained practically an unsettled question, whether a jury had a right so far to exercise its own discretion as to bring in a verdict contrary to the sense of the Court. This important point was now decided; the Judges—there were others associated with Vaughan—adopting the views that it was the special function of the jury to judge of the evidence, and that the Bench, though at liberty to offer suggestions for the consideration of the jurymen, might not lawfully coerce them.

William Penn, anxious to have the cases of himself and his friend reviewed by a Superior Court, wrote to his father, affectionately desiring him not to interfere to have him released. But the old man, who was fast declining, and anxious to have the company and attentions of his son, to whom he was not only reconciled, but on whose filial affection and care he had learned to lean for comfort and support, was not willing to wait the tardy process of law; and therefore paid the fines of both the Friends, and had them set free. The Admiral survived but a few days the liberation of his son; in which time he sent one of his friends to the King and Duke of York, to make his dying request, that, so far as they could, they would hereafter befriend his loved son; [Pg 30] which both promised to do. Addressing his son shortly before his death, he said: "Son William, if you and your friends keep to your plain way of preaching, and your plain way of living, you will make an end of the priests to the end of the world." Again—sensible, it is probable, of the wrong he had before committed in his course towards his son—he said, emphatically: "Let nothing in the world tempt you to wrong your conscience. I charge you, do nothing against your conscience; so you will keep peace at home, which will be a feast to you in the day of trouble."

Near the close of this year, William Penn was again arrested at Wheeler Street meeting, by some of the officers of Robinson, Lieutenant of the Tower, who had sent them there for the purpose, and he was taken before him. His examination, as published, shows his Christian courage and firmness, as he exposed the duplicity of Robinson in his profession of friendship for him; and asserted his innocence of the charges made against him. He was sent to Newgate for six months; during which time he drew up an account of the memorable trial at the Old Bailey; also several dissertations which were afterwards published as tracts: one of these was, "The great Case of Liberty of Conscience, once more briefly Debated, and Defended by authority of Scripture, Reason, and Antiquity."

Soon after his release he married Gulielma Maria Springett, daughter of Sir William Springett. She was a pious young woman, of well-educated and amiable manners. After his marriage he settled in Hertfordshire.

In 1677 George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and some other Friends, went over to Holland [Pg 31] on a religious visit, and travelled into Germany. In the course of this journey, William Penn and two other Friends visited Elizabeth, Princess Palatine of the Rhine, at her Court at Herwerden. She was the oldest daughter of Frederick V., Elector Palatine, and at one time King of Bohemia; her mother being the sister of Charles I. of England. She is represented to have been a woman of good natural capacity, well educated, and of amiable disposition and manners; and to have governed her small territory with good judgment and much consideration for the welfare of her

subjects. Having been brought under the power of religion, she manifested strong interest in others who were sincere in their religious convictions, and was opposed to interference with liberty of conscience. Having become acquainted with the religious tenets of Friends, by conversation with Robert Barclay and Benjamin Furly, who visited her in 1676, and with women Friends from Amsterdam, she found them to answer to the convictions of Truth on her own mind; and she not only gladly received Friends when they came to see her, but in her letters to several of the more prominent members among them, and to others at the English Court, she unhesitatingly expressed her high estimation of them, and her disapproval of the persecution to which those that held them were subjected.

The Friends named, having requested permission to have a religious opportunity with her, it was readily granted; she having in her family at that time the Countess of Hornes, her intimate friend, and a French lady. Of this interview William Penn thus writes in his journal: "I can truly say it, [Pg 32] and that in God's fear, I was very deeply and reverently affected with the sense that was upon my spirit of the great and notable day of the Lord, and the breaking in of his eternal power upon all nations; and of the raising of the slain Witness to judge the world; who is the Treasury of life and peace, of wisdom and glory, to all that receive Him in the hour of his judgments, and abide with Him. The sense of this deep and sure foundation, which God is laying as the hope of eternal life and glory for all to build upon, filled my soul with an holy testimony to them, which in a living sense was followed by my brethren; and so the meeting ended about the eleventh hour."

In the afternoon they held another meeting with them, which was also so remarkably favored, that William Penn says: "Well, let my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, when I shall forget the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the sure mercies of our God to us, his travailing servants, that day."

Subsequently, on their return towards Holland, these Friends again stopped at Herwerden, and upon informing the Princess of their arrival, they were again gladly received by her and her friends. A meeting being held with them and some others whom they had invited, the next morning, William Penn states in his journal: "About eight the meeting began, and held till eleven, several persons of the city, as well as those of her own family, being present. The Lord's power very much affected them, and the Countess was twice much broken while we spoke. After the people were gone out of the chamber, it lay upon me from the Lord to speak to them two—the [Pg 33] Princess and the Countess—with respect to their particular conditions; occasioned by these words from the Princess, 'I am fully convinced; but oh! my sins are great.' While I was speaking, the glorious power of the Lord wonderfully rose, yea, after an awful manner, and had a deep entrance upon their spirits; especially the Countess, so that she was broken to pieces: God hath raised, and I hope fixed, his own testimony in them."

The next day they had a parting interview in the chamber of the Princess, which was equally favored. "Magnified be the name of the Lord; He overshadowed us with His glory. His heavenly, breaking, dissolving power richly flowed among us, and his ministering angel of life was in the midst of us."

During the time of severe suffering through which Friends were passing in Great Britain after the Restoration, as was natural, on finding that redress or abatement of their grievances was almost beyond hope, they seriously entertained a project for finding homes somewhere beyond the reach of their fellow-men, who seemed bent on extirpating them, by the slow process of the cruel punishments inflicted for their religious faith. George Fox, in common with several other prominent members, seriously contemplated the purchase of a tract of land from the Indians in North America; where, not the whole body of Friends in Great Britain, but such as felt themselves free to leave their native land, might emigrate and enjoy the right of worshipping the Almighty according to the dictates of their consciences.

Josiah Cole, while engaged in religious service in America, was commissioned to look out, and enter into treaty for such a resting-place; and at one time he had several interviews with the [Pg 34] chiefs of the Susquehanna Indians, in order to treat with them for a part of their territory. Owing to a war coming on between that tribe and another, the proposed purchase fell through.

In 1676 William Penn, as trustee for the creditors of Edward Billinge, one of the proprietors of West Jersey, and afterwards by the purchase of a proprietary right in East Jersey, became concerned in the colonization of that Province. Others were associated with him in the undertaking, among whom were several of his own Society, under whose management a peaceful settlement was effected. A form of government was agreed on for West Jersey, and a declaration of fundamental principles, to be incorporated in it, consented to; among which was the stipulation, "No person to be called in question or molested for his conscience, or for worshipping according to his conscience."

Many Friends of good estates, and highly esteemed for their religious standing and experience, crossed the Atlantic to this land of liberty, and between 1676 and 1681 about fourteen hundred had arrived and settled; principally in the country bordering the eastern shore of the Delaware. These immigrants suffered the privations and hardships incident to beginning civilized life in an unbroken wilderness, surrounded by savages, who were dependent in great measure upon the uncertain supplies of the chase for their own sustenance, and who rarely laid up much in store for future wants. But, by uniform uprightness in all their dealings with these children of the forest, and their Christian kindness towards them, they soon gained their good-will, and, in times of scarcity, excited their sympathy; so that often they were relieved by voluntary offerings of corn [Pg 35] and meat from these untutored red men, when it seemed as though otherwise they must have

suffered for food.

Proud, in the preface to his "History of Pennsylvania," gives in a note an account of these trials, drawn up by one of the Friends who settled in New Jersey, containing the following passages:

"A providential hand was very visible and remarkable in many instances that might be mentioned, and the Indians were even rendered our benefactors and protectors. Without any carnal weapon, we entered the land and inhabited therein, as safe as if there had been thousands of garrisons; for the Most High preserved us from harm, both of man and beast." "The aforesaid people (Friends) were zealous in performing their religious services; for having at first no meeting-house to keep a public meeting in, they made a tent or covert of sail-cloth to meet under; and after they got some little houses to dwell in, then they kept their meetings in one of them till they could build a meeting-house."

In the course of the business which necessarily claimed his attention in the colonization of the province of New Jersey, William Penn naturally had his thoughts frequently directed towards the settlements of his countrymen on the far-distant shores of America; and having been disappointed in the part he took in English politics, in an unsuccessful effort to procure the election of his friend, Algernon Sidney, to Parliament, his interest in that part of the world increased, as his mind became occupied with the idea of settling a free colony in the pathless wilderness on the other side of the Atlantic; where men should live under an elective [Pg 36] government, enact the laws by which they were to be controlled, admit of no master, but all share in equal rights, and rest in the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty. Witnessing the success that attended the removal of Friends to New Jersey, where they were freed from the cruel persecution they had endured while in Great Britain, under which their brethren at home were still suffering grievously, he became desirous to obtain the control of such portion of the yet unappropriated territory over which the King of England claimed the sovereignty, as would enable him to found a colony, and "make a holy experiment"—as he called it—of opening an asylum for the oppressed of every land; where there should be secured equality of political and civil rights, universal liberty of conscience, personal freedom, and a just regard for the rights of property.

Admiral Penn at different times had loaned money to the British government, and to the Duke of York; which the costly profligacy of the Court had prevented being repaid, and, with the interest accruing, it amounted at that time to between sixteen and seventeen thousand pounds sterling. In 1680, William Penn petitioned the King, that in order to cancel the debt, he should grant him the tract of country bounded on the east by the Delaware River, and on the south by Lord Baltimore's Province of Maryland; while the western and northern limits were undefined; though the latter was not to interfere with the Province of New York. But William Penn was by no means popular at the Court. The courtiers despised him for his strict conscientiousness; the clerical party hated him for his Quakerism, and open opposition to their assumed place and power; while [Pg 37] the active interest he had taken in promoting the return of Sidney—a known Republican—to Parliament, had given offence to the King and Duke. Private interests and jealousies were enlisted against him, and the agents of Lord Baltimore and Sir John Werden, deputy for the Duke of York, were assiduous in their efforts to thwart him, and defeat his application.

But he was not a man easily turned aside from pursuing that which he thought right to attain. The Earl of Sutherland was his firm friend in the Privy Council, and there were several other persons of note who took warm interest in the success of his colonial project. Penn sought and obtained an interview with the Duke of York, and succeeded in changing his feelings towards himself, and his views relative to the policy of the grant. But perhaps the most cogent argument with the King and Council was, the persistent presentation by one of the latter that, if the grant was withheld, the money due must be forthcoming. There were many vexatious delays and disappointments; but finally the boundaries of the Province being adjusted as was then thought clearly and definitely, and such clauses introduced into the terms of the patent or charter as were deemed necessary to secure the paramount authority of the King, Charles affixed his signature to it on the fourth of the Third month, 1681. William Penn proposed to call his Province New Wales, but the Secretary, who was a Welshman, would not consent to it. He then suggested Sylvania, to which the King prefixed Penn, out of respect to the late Admiral; and though William objected to [Pg 38] it, as savoring of vanity in him, it was determined to adhere to that name.

By the Charter, William Penn was made sole and absolute proprietary of the Province; with power, with the assent of the freemen residing therein, to make all necessary laws, provided they were not inconsistent with the laws of England; to grant pardons or reprieves, except in cases of wilful murder or treason, and to enjoy all such duties on imports or exports as the representatives of the people might assess. There was a clause in the Charter, inserted at the solicitation of the Bishop of London, that whenever twenty of the inhabitants should petition the said Bishop for a preacher, he should be permitted to reside in the Province.

His design from the first was to establish a government upon Christian principles. In referring to this subject, he says: "And because I have been somewhat exercised at times, about the nature and end of government among men, it is reasonable to expect that I should endeavor to establish a just and righteous one in this Province, that others may take example by it; truly this my heart desires. For nations want a precedent, and till vice and corrupt manners be impartially rebuked and punished, and till virtue and sobriety be cherished, the wrath of God will hang over nations. I do therefore desire the Lord's wisdom to guide me, and those that may be concerned with me, that we may do the thing that is truly wise and just."

His constant desire, that all his movements might tend to the glory of God, is shown in the spirit which breathes through the following letter, written to Stephen Crisp, on the eve of his departure from England: [Pg 39]

> "Dear S. C.:—My dear and lasting love in the Lord's everlasting truth reaches to thee, with whom is my fellowship in the gospel of peace, that is more dear and precious to my soul than all the treasures and pleasures of this world; for when a few years are past, we shall all go the way whence we shall never return: and that we may unweariedly serve the Lord in our day and place, and in the end enjoy a portion with the blessed that are at rest, is the breathing of my soul!
>
> "Stephen! we know one another, and I need not say much to thee; but this I will say, thy parting dwells with me, or rather thy love at my parting. How innocent, how tender, how like the little child that has no guile! The Lord will bless that ground. I have also a letter from thee which comforted me; for many are my trials, yet not more than my supplies from my Heavenly Father, whose glory I seek, and the renown of his blessed name. And truly, Stephen, there is work enough, and here is room to work in. Surely God will come in for a share in this planting work, and that leaven shall leaven the whole lump in time. I do not believe the Lord's providence had run this way towards me, but that he has an heavenly end and service in it. So with Him I leave all, and myself and thee, and his dear people, and blessed name on earth.
>
> "God Almighty, immortal and eternal, be with us, that in the body and out of the body we may be his forever!"

Amid his preparations for the voyage, he addressed to his wife and children, who were to be left behind, a letter fraught with the most earnest solicitude for their well-being every way, and full of the most tender and judicious counsel. It thus concludes: "So, my God, that hath blessed me with His abundant mercies, both of this and the other and blessed life, be with you all, guide you by His counsel, bless you, and bring you to his eternal glory, that you may shine, my dear children, [Pg 40] in the firmament of God's power, with the blessed spirits of the just, that celestial family, praising and admiring Him, the God and Father of it, forever. For there is no God like unto Him; the God of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of the prophets, the apostles, and martyrs of Jesus, in whom I live forever.

"So farewell to my thrice dearly beloved wife and children!

"Yours, as God pleaseth, in that which no waters can quench, no time forget, nor distance wear away, but remains forever."

Being now feudal sovereign of so extensive a territory, so far as the act of the King and Council could make him, William Penn published a description of the natural features and resources of the country, and invited those who were disposed to change their place of abode and prepared to emigrate, to resort to Pennsylvania, and under its Christian government and special privileges, secure the blessings of freedom and political equality. He did not disappoint his friends in their expectation of the benign form of government he instituted. It was democratic in its spirit, and its provisions were liberal, and fitted to meet the demands of the broad principles of popular rights, as they were from time to time developed. The article in relation to liberty of conscience deserves to be noticed, as the public declaration of the principles of Friends on that point, where they had the power of government in their own hands.

"Almighty God being the only Lord of Conscience, Father of lights and spirits, and the author as well as object of all Divine knowledge, faith and worship; who only can enlighten the mind, and [Pg 41] persuade and convince the understanding of people, in due reverence to his authority over the souls of mankind: It is enacted by the authority aforesaid, (General Assembly met at Chester, Twelve month, fourth, 1682,) that no person now, or at any time hereafter, living in this Province, who shall confess and acknowledge one Almighty God, to be the Creator, upholder and ruler of the world, and professeth him or herself obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly under the civil government, shall in any wise be molested or prejudiced for his or her conscientious persuasion or practice; nor shall he or she at any time be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever, contrary to his or her mind; but shall freely and fully enjoy his or her Christian liberty in that respect, without any interruption or reflection. And if any person shall abuse or deride any other, for his or her different persuasion and practice in matter of religion, such shall be looked upon as a disturber of the peace, and be punished accordingly."

There were no oaths exacted, and no provision made for military defence. He exempted from the penalty of death two hundred crimes for which that punishment was inflicted in England, though life was to be forfeited for wilful murder. With a view of connecting reformation with punishment by imprisonment, prisoners were to be kept at work, and subjected to moral discipline. And it was enacted: "That, as a careless and corrupt administration of justice draws the wrath of God upon Magistrates, so the wildness and looseness of the people provoke the indignation of God against a country; therefore, that all such offences against God as swearing, cursing, lying, profane [Pg 42] talking, drunkenness, drinking of healths, obscene words, (and several other scandalous acts particularly named,) treasons, misprisions, duels, murders, felony, sedition, maims, forcible entries, and other violences to the persons and estates of the inhabitants of the Province; all prizes, stage-plays, cards, dice, May-games, gamesters, masques, revels, bull-baitings, cock-

fightings, bear-baitings, and the like, which excite the people to rudeness, cruelty, and irreligion, shall be respectively discouraged and severely punished, according to the appointment of the Governor and freemen in provincial council and general assembly."

George Fox had repeatedly expressed his Christian solicitude for the colored people held as slaves, at that time, by Friends. He had strongly urged upon all who held them to see to their instruction, especially in the truths of the gospel as recorded in the Scriptures; that after serving for a certain time they should be freed, and that provision should be made for their comfortable enjoyment of old age. William Penn, in the charter he granted to "The Free Society of Traders," inserted the following article, showing how fully he sympathized in this feeling of George Fox, and his desire to promote manumission after a term of service: "Black servants to be free at fourteen years, and, on giving to the Society two-thirds of what they can produce on land allotted to them by the Society, with stock and tools. If they agree not to this, to be servants until they do."

There were about two thousand inhabitants,—exclusive of Indians,—mostly English, Swedes, and Dutch, when William Penn took possession of his Province. The well-known character of the [Pg 43] Proprietor, the strong inducements offered by the system of government proposed, and the natural advantages from soil and climate of the newly-opened domain, all acted as powerful incentives to emigrate; not only to men who were struggling hardly and uncertainly at their native home for the means of subsistence, but to others, who, though with sufficient to live comfortably where they were, were anxious to escape from the intolerant oppression of a Court and hierarchy bent on enforcing the alternatives of conformity to certain prescribed dogmas of their own construction, or suffering, if not ruin, by imprisonment or deprivation of estate.

William Penn arrived in Pennsylvania in 1682, and in that year and the two following fifty vessels came into the Delaware River, bringing several thousand emigrants; the most of them from Great Britain, and some from Germany. Nearly all of them were professors with Friends, and many substantial, consistent members, who came under a sense of religious duty, and made the practice of the religion they had embraced the primary object of life. Some had the benefit of a liberal education, while the great body, farmers, mechanics, or tradesmen, had acquired but the rudiments of English school-learning. Many possessed considerable property, paying cash for the land they took up; and generally the others soon found means to make themselves independent.

Those who came first, as was to be expected, had to encounter the difficulties and privations usually attending pioneers in an uncultivated forest. Some, who brought the frames of small houses with them, were not long in obtaining a comfortable shelter; but very many were obliged [Pg 44] to content themselves with hastily constructed shanties, under the overarching branches of trees; while some dug caves in the bank of the river, and made out to obtain in them some of the comforts of a home. This was before William Penn came out; but Richard Townsend, who came in the same ship with him, thus speaks of his experience: "At our arrival we found it a wilderness; the chief inhabitants were Indians; there were some Swedes, who received us in a friendly manner; and although there was a great number of us, the good hand of Providence was seen in a particular manner, in that provisions were found for us by the Swedes and Indians, at very reasonable rates; as well as brought from divers other parts, that were inhabited before. Our first concern was to keep up and maintain our religious worship, and in order thereto, we had several meetings in the houses of the inhabitants; and one boarded meeting-house was set up, where the city was to be (near the Delaware); and as we had nothing but love and good-will in our hearts one to another, we had very comfortable meetings from time to time, and, after our meeting was over, we assisted each other in building little houses for our shelter."

The high motives that prompted them to exile themselves from their native land, and the fervent religious concern to be engaged in promoting the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, which warmed their hearts, enabled them to bear all they had to endure with cheerfulness. One of them thus expresses himself: "Our business in this new land is not so much to build houses, and establish factories, and promote trade and manufactures, that may enrich ourselves (though all [Pg 45] these things, in their due place, are not to be neglected), as to erect temples of holiness and righteousness, which God may delight in; to lay such lasting frames and foundations of temperance and virtue as may support the future superstructures of our happiness, both in this and the other world."

In taking possession, and in the settlement of Pennsylvania, it had been a subject of much solicitude and care with William Penn, that the whole conduct of the settlers, in their intercourse with the aborigines, should be so marked with kindness, and with consideration for their rights and national customs, as to secure their good-will, and influence them to live in peace and harmony with the new-comers upon their soil. Before coming over himself he had appointed three Commissioners to see to the necessary arrangements for the reception and settlement of the colonists, to lay out the site for a town, and to treat with the Indians. By these he sent an address to the latter, in which he tells them it is his desire to enjoy the country over which he had been made Governor, "with their love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends;" and as he had heard that in some places impositions had been practised upon them which had produced animosity and revenge, it was his sincere desire, and should be his practice, and the practice of those he should send, to treat with them justly for their lands, and to make and preserve a firm treaty of peace.

When, after his arrival on the shores of the Delaware, he had met the Colonial Assembly elected by the inhabitants, and the necessary laws were enacted, and had transacted some other

business immediately pressing upon him, he gave the necessary attention to select the location of the future city, to which he gave the name of Philadelphia. Afterwards he went on to New York, and visited Friends there and on Long Island and in New Jersey. On his return from this journey, he took the necessary measures to have the chiefs of the tribes of Indians occupying that portion of the Province which was likely to be soon required by the settlers, to meet him in council. The place of meeting was in Shackamaxon, a little north of the city, and on the Delaware River. There, under the wide-spread branches of a noble elm-tree, was held the treaty of friendship and perpetual peace, between the natives, the Governor, and the immigrant Friends, which has become world-renowned as the *Great Indian Treaty*. Made in good faith and honesty by both parties, this treaty was defaced by no oath, and remained unbroken so long as Friends held the reins of power in the government. Under its provisions, there sprung up a confiding intimacy between the red men and the white; and so long as the Christian policy inaugurated by William Penn and his brethren in religious profession was adhered to, there was no case of wrong or misunderstanding occurred, which was not speedily settled and removed by resort to the peaceable and just means provided for in its stipulations. [Pg 46]

Thus the benign and peaceable principles of the gospel, as laid down by Christ and His Apostles, and adopted by Friends, were closely adhered to and fully tested in the settlement of Pennsylvania; and the experience of seventy years of uninterrupted peace and prosperity, while the Province was under the control of Friends, conclusively proves how far they exceed all other rules and motives of conduct, however devised by the wisdom of man or enforced by military power. The enlightened and liberal policy of the settlers, together with the simplicity of manners and refinement evinced in their domestic and social economy and general intercourse, contributed to the powerful attraction exerted by the Colony on all who were disposed to escape from the tyrannous exactions and almost continuous commotions agitating and embittering civil society in Europe. [Pg 47]

The just and loving manner in which William Penn treated the Indians from the beginning of his intercourse with them, and the peaceable principles not only professed, but continually acted on by the settlers, besides gaining the confidence of the tribe immediately surrounding them, spread their fame to others more distant; so that during the stay of the Proprietor, when on his first visit to his Province, he made treaties of friendship and amity with nearly twenty different tribes. Nor were the expenditures for the land purchased a mere nominal sum, palmed upon the ignorant natives, easily caught with showy goods, and unaccustomed to estimate things at their real value. From the accounts preserved of these bargains and sales, it appears that, during his lifetime, the Proprietor expended over twenty thousand pounds in the purchase of that portion of the soil which was ceded to him by the aborigines; and yet they were not required to abstain from hunting or fishing within its boundaries, and the laws were so framed as to give them the protection of citizens.

The influx of settlers was unprecedented; the forest began to be cleared, and dwellings were put up rapidly. The soil yielded abundantly, and no calamity occurred for years to check the rapid increase of inhabitants, or create doubts and dissatisfaction as to the course they had taken in removing from their native country. New meetings for worship were established, as the new-comers took up lands in the counties contiguous to the city; so that, in 1684, William Penn wrote, there were eighteen in all, and all were brought within the order of church government, as laid down in the discipline then adopted. [Pg 48]

Shortly after witnessing the prosperous beginning of his new colony, William Penn returned to England, and for a number of years continued to reside in or near London. He had provided for the affairs of the Province during his absence; but such was his unceasing solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the Friends he was about leaving, that, after he had embarked, he addressed them a letter from the ship, in which he says: "Now you are come to a quiet land, provoke not the Lord to trouble it, and as liberty and authority are with you, and in your hands, let the government be upon His shoulders in all your spirits; that you may rule for Him, under whom the princes of this world will one day esteem it their honor to govern and serve in their places. I cannot but say, when these things come mightily upon my mind, as the apostle did of old, 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'

"And thou, Philadelphia, the virgin settlement of this Province, named before thou wert born, what love, what care, what service, and what travail has there been, to bring thee forth and preserve thee from such as would abuse and defile thee. [Pg 49]

"Oh that thou mayst be kept from the evil that would overwhelm thee; that, faithful to the God of thy mercies, in the life of righteousness, thou mayst be preserved to the end. My soul prays to God for thee, that thou mayst stand in the day of trial, that thy children may be blessed of the Lord, and thy people saved by His power."

He had been commended by his father, on his death-bed, to the good offices of the then Duke of York. The respect and kind feeling of the Duke for William Penn appeared to have continued after he became King; and a sense of gratitude and Christian interest, in measure, bound the man he had befriended to his royal benefactor. He was almost daily at Court, and as often his interest there was employed on behalf of those with whom he was united in religious fellowship, or of others who solicited his aid; which his kindness of heart prompted him not to refuse. His house in Kensington was daily thronged with persons who sought his mediation to promote their interests, or desired to engage him to present their petitions or addresses to the King. He received all with courtesy, and aided those he could with cheerfulness; and no one ever charged him with making

gain of his position or influence. Nevertheless, in this way, it is probable he appeared in cases where greater prudence would have restrained him from interfering. Certainly he made many bitter enemies, who hesitated not to proclaim him to be a Jesuit, a hypocrite, and an enemy to the Protestant interest. Accustomed to calumny as a Friend, and conscious of his innocence, William Penn allowed these slanders to possess the public ear, until they came to be credited by many, who, without any particular prejudice against him, supposed that, like other emissaries of Rome, [Pg 50] he was in league with the King in trying to subvert the religion and constitutional liberties of the nation. At length the Secretary for the Plantations, who knew Penn well, and was greatly grieved with the manner in which he was traduced, and fearful of the ultimate result of his persistently declining publicly to defend himself, addressed him by letter; reciting the charges industriously circulated against him, and earnestly requesting he would notice and refute them. To this letter William Penn replied, taking up each accusation separately, and showing their untruth and their absurdity. He did not hesitate to acknowledge the gratitude and kind feeling he entertained toward King James, and that on some occasions, when his opinion had been sought on matters affecting the nation, he had given it; but he declared that, on all such occasions, he had advocated liberty of conscience, and the best interest of Protestant England; and he challenged any one to come forward and show to the contrary. Notwithstanding this explanation of his intimacy at Court, and his positive denial and refutation of the many false stories raised about him, the feeling produced by them was not entirely removed; and in the last month of 1688, as he was walking in Whitehall, he was suddenly summoned to appear before the Lords of the Council. Some of the Council, who were inimical to him, required him to give sureties for his appearance on the first day of the next term of Court. On his appearance there, his case was postponed until the next session; when there appeared to be no accuser or accusation against him, and he was [Pg 51] declared clear in open Court.[A]

[A] The aspersion of the character of William Penn, and the charges brought against his conduct while frequenting the Court of James II., by Macaulay in his History of England, have been fully investigated and refuted by several authors, who have shown the serious mistakes of the historian, and the innocence of Penn of the offences imputed to him.

In 1688 James II., finding himself deserted by the nobility, the gentry, and the army, fled to France, and William, Prince of Orange, who had come over with an army on the invitation of some of the leading statesmen of England, was proclaimed king. Notwithstanding the alienation of the kindly feelings of the people, by the impolitic course pursued by James, and their apparent determination to maintain William and Mary on the throne, the self-exiled monarch resolved to continue whatever effort he could make, with the assistance of his friend Louis XIV., to regain the crown of Great Britain. There were many, who had stood high in State and Church, who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the reigning royal pair. These were termed Non-jurors and Jacobites, and intrigues and covert conspiracies were, for a long time, rife among them. Naturally this gave rise to suspicion and distrust on the part of the party in power. From this cause William Penn was subjected to no little trouble; his intimacy with the former king affording ground to prejudice the minds of many against him. He had already been arrested and discharged, there being no specific charge brought against him. But some letters from James having been intercepted, among them was found one addressed to him. He was again brought before the [Pg 52] Privy Council, and some of those present saying the circumstances required sureties from him, he urgently requested to be allowed to appear before King William himself. This was granted, and, after a conference of two hours, the king was prepared to acquit him of being implicated in any treasonable correspondence with James. Some of the Council, however, were not satisfied without bail being given to appear at Court. On coming before the Court, he was again discharged. While King William was conducting the campaign in Ireland, where James was at the head of an army, fighting for possession of that island, a conspiracy in favor of the latter was discovered, originating in Scotland. Queen Mary ordered the seizure of many supposed to be hostile to the government, and among them William Penn was again included. How long he was detained does not appear, but, at the Michaelmas term of the Court (1690), he was once more cleared of any complicity with the opponents of the government. For many months he had been making preparations to revisit Pennsylvania, and on his discharge he hastened to have everything ready to embark; but, before he could complete his arrangements, he was again brought into difficulty, more serious than at any time before, on account of his connection with the Court of King James. King William had crossed over to Holland, to be present at a Congress held at the Hague, and his absence emboldened the disaffected to enter into another plot for restoring James, who was then at the Court of Louis XIV. Two of their number started to cross the Channel, and have an interview with their absent sovereign; but the plot was discovered, and these emissaries, with their papers, seized. One of them was hung; the other, in order to save his life, [Pg 53] gave testimony against several of the nobility, and implicated William Penn in the conspiracy. A warrant for his arrest was issued, and, on his return from the funeral of George Fox, he narrowly escaped once more being made a prisoner.

In what manner he was said to be connected with the conspiracy, or what was the specific charge brought against him, is nowhere clearly stated; but as Lord Preston—one of the captured messengers—declared he was one of the plotters, and a man of the name of William Fuller swore to the correctness of Preston's statement, the matter assumed a serious aspect. As the origin of the plot was believed to have been among the Catholics, the same misrepresentations of Penn being a Jesuit in disguise were again brought forward, and the passions of the people being much inflamed against the intriguing papists, it was thought a fair trial could not be obtained for him. Under these circumstances, some accounts represent that William Penn voluntarily secluded himself where he could not be easily seen; waiting until a time should arrive when he might have

a fair opportunity to clear himself; while others state that, having been examined before the Privy Council, he was ordered to remain a prisoner in his own house, under surveillance. The latter is the more probable, as he could hardly have supposed he could escape the search the government would make for him; especially as he kept up intercourse with his friends. Thus, in the Third month of 1691, he addressed an epistle to the Yearly Meeting in London, in order to remove any unfavorable impression that might have been made in the minds of his brethren by his forced [Pg 54] seclusion. In this he says: "My privacy is not because men have sworn truly, but falsely, against me; for wicked men have laid in wait for me, and false witnesses have laid to my charge things that I knew not; who have never sought myself, but the good of all, through great exercises; and have done some good, and would have done more, and hurt to no man; but always desired that truth and righteousness, mercy and peace, might take place among us."

During his retirement he employed his pen diligently, producing several works of much value. The refusal of Friends in Pennsylvania to contribute money for the erection of forts or other military purposes, had given great offence to the home government, and the enemies of Penn took advantage of this, and of the position he was now in, with charges of treason hanging over him, to obtain an order from the King and Council, in the early part of 1692, to annex the government of Pennsylvania to that of New York, then presided over by Colonel Fletcher. Penn remained shut out from the world, and deprived of opportunity to serve the cause of truth and righteousness, and his brethren of the same faith, except by his pen, for more than two years; his character stained in the estimation of some, and his valuable services forgotten by many others, who, perhaps, thought he had indeed fallen to rise no more. But there were men of eminence who had never believed William Penn guilty of the crime laid to his charge, and were awaiting the right opportunity to have justice done to his position and character. Among these was the celebrated John Locke, who esteemed him, not only as a man of exalted virtue and great literary [Pg 55] attainment, but as a personal friend. He applied to King William for a pardon; but William Penn was too conscious of innocence, and too fully persuaded that in due time his innocence would be made manifest to the world, to be willing to accept of any release that would imply he had been guilty. In the meantime, Lord Preston, who had made the charge against him, had fled the country, and Fuller, his witness, having been detected in perjury, was, by order of Parliament, tried as an imposter, in the Court of the King's Bench, found guilty, and sentenced to stand in the pillory. Lords Ranelagh, Rochester, and Sidney now waited on the King, and, stating that the name of William Penn had never been found in any of the letters or papers connected with the conspiracy, and that the charge against him rested solely on the accusation of two men who were known to be unworthy of belief, urged upon him the injustice and hardship of his case. The King appears to have heard them patiently, and replied that William Penn was an old acquaintance of his; that he had nothing to allege against him, and that he might follow his business as freely as ever. Afterwards the King gave an order to the principal Secretary of State for his freedom; which was communicated to him in the presence of the Marquis of Winchester. He, however, sought and obtained a hearing before the Privy Council; and, after a full examination of the charges, he was honorably acquitted. The cloud that had long obscured his standing and services was now dispelled, and he returned to his family and friends, to resume the position he had before attained in the church, and in civil society. His wife survived his release but little more [Pg 56] than two months.

In 1696 William Penn was married to Hannah, the daughter of Thomas Callowhill, of Bristol,—a sober, religious woman, who survived him several years. Soon after this event he sustained an afflictive bereavement in the death of his eldest son, Springett Penn, in the twenty-first year of his age. He was a pious and amiable young man, of whom, in a touching testimony to his worth, William Penn says, "I lost all that any father can lose in a child."

He had been absent from his colony for many years, though longing to return there, and oversee the working of the government he had instituted, and the growth of the prosperous colony he had been a principal means of planting on the shores of the Delaware. But the various troubles in which he had been involved, and the great loss of pecuniary means that had resulted from his outlay for the Province, and the dishonesty of his agent in Ireland, had so crippled and embarrassed him, that he had been unable to carry out his strong desire to cross the Atlantic, and spend the remainder of life amid the Friends and scenes he pictured eminently propitious to secure comfort and peace. But in 1699, having settled his affairs in England and Ireland, so as not to require his personal oversight, in the Seventh month he embarked with his wife and family for Philadelphia, expecting to end his days in the Province. The voyage, providentially, was a long one; occupying three months; by which delay on the ocean they did not arrive in the city until after the malignant fever, of which so many had died, had passed away. [Pg 57]

William Penn brought with him certificates from three meetings of Friends in England: one from "The Second-day's Meeting of Ministering Friends" in London; one from the "Men's Meeting of Friends" in Bristol, where he had resided for some years, and another from "A Monthly Meeting held at Horsham;" all expressing their full unity with and love for him as a member and minister. The reception of these certificates is recorded on the minutes of the Monthly Meeting of Friends, of Philadelphia.

The arrival of the Proprietor, after an absence of fifteen years, was hailed with joy by the people generally, and doubtless he supposed that he could now pass his days in usefulness and tranquillity. But William Penn soon found that troubles beset him on every hand, and that his wise counsels and cherished plans of improvement were thwarted and opposed by a faction bent upon promoting their own selfish schemes and interests.

A circumstance now occurred which separated him from his American possessions forever. A bill had been introduced into Parliament for changing the colonial into regal government. This measure, if adopted, would take the control of the colony out of his hands, and substitute military rule for the mild and pacific government he had established. From a sense of duty, although very reluctantly, he yielded to the request of his friends in England, that he would immediately return thither.

The news of his intended departure was received by the inhabitants with feelings of sincere regret. Perhaps none felt it more deeply than the aborigines. On this occasion, a number of them waited upon him at his residence at Pennsbury. The interview was conducted with great gravity. [Pg 58] One of the chiefs, in the course of his remarks, said "that they never first broke their covenants with any people;" striking his hand upon his head, he said "they did not make them there, but"—placing it upon his breast—"they made them *there*."

William Penn sailed for England in the Eighth month, 1701, having been in the Province about two years. On the eve of his departure he presented Philadelphia with a charter, constituting it a city.

The bill to change the form of the colonial government was never passed into a law, but other engagements prevented his return to Pennsylvania. In 1705, in a brief but forcible epistle to Friends, he exhorts them to hold all their meetings in that which set them up, the heavenly power of God. In 1706 he removed with his family to Brentford, about eight miles from London. In 1709 he went forth on a gospel mission through the western parts of England, which was his last journey of this kind. In 1710 he removed to Rushcomb, in Buckinghamshire, where he continued to reside until his death. In 1712 he had three attacks of apoplexy. By these his mental powers were so weakened that he was rendered incapable of transacting business. In this situation he remained for several years, without much bodily suffering, and appeared to enjoy great quietness and sweetness of mind. In the latter part of 1714 he was visited by Thomas Story, who says of him, "that he had a clear sense of truth, was plain, by some very clear sentences he spoke in the life and power of Truth, in an evening meeting we had there; wherein we were greatly comforted, so that I am ready to think this was a sort of sequestration of him from all the concerns of this life, which so much oppressed him, not in judgement but in mercy, that he might not be [Pg 59] oppressed thereby to the end."

When visited by two of his friends, in 1716, he still expressed himself sensibly, and at parting thus addressed them: "My love is with you, the Lord preserve you, and remember me in the everlasting covenant."

He continued gradually to grow weaker until the thirtieth of the Fifth month, 1718, when his Divine Master was pleased to summon him from the tribulations of time to the eternal rewards of the righteous.

Thus peacefully passed away one of the most useful men of the age in which he lived: indeed, history makes us acquainted with few so faithfully and fearlessly devoted to the cause of justice, and to the increase of righteousness in the earth. In early life he felt the tendering visitations of the Holy Spirit, and as he submitted thereto, was led in paths of great circumspection and non-conformity to the world, and soon became an object of scorn, reproach, and even bitter persecution. But none of these things moved him; neither did he count his life dear, being mainly desirous that he might bear a faithful testimony to the truth whilst on earth, and finish his course with joy.

Early called to the "ministry of reconciliation," and wisely instructed in the school of Christ, he was enabled, for the good of others, to bring forth out of the heavenly treasury things new and old.

As an author, his many publications are characterized by the forcible manner in which they set forth the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and the necessity of obedience to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. His views of morality and civil government were the fruit of Christian principle, and adapted to all times and all conditions of men. He shows that oaths, whether judicial or [Pg 60] profane, are contrary to the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, and the practice of the primitive Christians, and, in their direct tendency and effects, injurious to morality. He establishes conclusively, that liberty, civil and religious, is the right of all, so far as its exercise does not infringe the rights of others; and he was consequently opposed to all persecution to enforce conformity in religious opinion. In founding his colony of Pennsylvania, he was influenced by the spirit of the gospel, and a desire that its government might be supported without the violation of any Christian precept. His policy grew out of that religion which breathes "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to men;" and the aboriginal inhabitants, by others deemed treacherous and cruel, became the kind friends and faithful allies of his colonists. The pacific principles of the gospel were found in their operation more effectual than munitions of war, to preserve the State in peace and prosperity.

Our narrow limits are insufficient to do justice to the character of William Penn, in setting forth his uprightness, his firmness, his zeal, his diligence, his love of the truth. Whether we consider him as a religious writer, a wise and Christian legislator, or as a faithful and devoted minister of the gospel, we must regard him as a benefactor to mankind. Of such the everlasting memorial is sure: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A CONCISE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF WILLIAM PENN ***

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