

"Beside the laborious productions of the wisdom of this country, manifested to the world by the declarations and addresses from which the foregoing are extracted, with others of a similar nature, demonstrating the natural rights of men in so clear a manner, the following appears to have been adopted as the then faith of the nation, in the Declaration of Independence the 4th of July, 1776, viz., 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that amongst these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'

"At the time of entering into the solemn league and covenant, (20th October, 1774,) to vindicate the rights of man, and promote national righteousness, had any one declared as their opinion that it was of mischievous consequence, tending to render unhappy the helpless victims of despotic tyranny, and excite to insurrection, or attempted to enforce as a political creed, so detestable a position, as that a happy national harmony and union depended on securing to one class of men, the power and privilege of enslaving and exercising an imperious lordship over another part of God's rational creation, such person, though he might not have been stigmatized as a fanatic—would doubtless have been in danger of being proscribed as an enemy to his country, and a traitor to the common cause of equal liberty. Feeling a weight on my spirit, I am thereby impelled, by a sense of duty to the Sovereign of the Universe, and the dictates of humanity, to open my mouth for the dumb, in the cause of such as are appointed to destruction; and if this is fanaticism, enthusiasm, &c., may the Almighty grant a double portion to what I have ever experienced, if it be his holy will! I cannot use the carnal sword in my country's defence, I believe that weapon for a Christian to be unlawful, yet I trust I shall with the weapons that are to me lawful in the cause of my country, manifest as much firmness and stability, though it be but in the exercise of one talent, as those who think themselves justified in the use of other and greater talents: and, therefore, I do indeed feel alarmed, when I consider that the solemn professions so lately made in time of extremity and danger, and held up as the national faith, should so soon on this important occasion seem to be regarded as mere *tricks of state*. What can be thought will be the issue? may it not be considered like trifling with Omnipotence?

"I crave your patience, my fellow-citizens—I am interested in the welfare of this country; but I cannot have any conception that nation will long fare well, when after such declamations against Britain, on account of the despotic measures pursued by her administration, the spirit of tyranny and oppression is suffered so readily to prevail in the councils of American rulers, to a degree in no instance exceeded by Britain; on which head I venture to appeal to the witness for God in your own breasts, which will undoubtedly show the national iniquity is the same, whether it proceed from acts of Convention, or receive its strength from the countenance of Congress.

"Had Congress done as much towards removing this national guilt, as by the tenor of their own vote they have power to do, there is no doubt with me, but that it would at least have given a very powerful check, if not a total stop to the odious traffic, notwithstanding the plea of restriction in the constitution of the general government. But whether you will hear or forbear, I think it my duty to tell you plainly, that I believe the blood of the slain, and the oppression exercised in Africa, promoted by Americans, and in this country also, will stick to the skirts of every individual of your body, who exercise the powers of legislation, and do not exert their talents to clear themselves of this abomination, when they shall be arraigned before the tremendous bar of the judgment-seat of him who will not fail to do right, in rendering unto every man his due; even him who early declared, 'at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man;' before whom the natural black skin of the body will never occasion such degradation. I desire to approach you with proper and due respect, in the temper of a Christian, and the firmness of a veteran American freeman, to plead the cause of injured innocence, and open my mouth for my oppressed brethren, who cannot open theirs for themselves. I ask no pecuniary advantage for myself, neither post nor pension. I feel the sweets of American liberty—I trust I am sensible of, and thankful for the favour; and am not easy to partake of mine so partially, and see, hear, and know of my brethren and fellow-mortals being so arbitrarily and cruelly deprived of theirs, and not enter my protest. I desire to have this favour and blessing continued to myself and posterity, and cannot but view the tenure, both to myself and countrymen, as very precarious, while a plea is founded on the general constitution, in bar of the rights of man; and the equal distribution of justice being confirmed, that the views of a righteous government would be, to promote the welfare of mankind universally, as well those of other nations, as the subjects or citizens of its own; and, therefore, that it is obligatory on the United States, to prevent the citizens thereof injuring the inhabitants of Africa, as those of one state the citizens of another: and I doubt not in the least, if Africa was in a situation to send fleets and armies here to retaliate, but Congress would soon devise ways, without violating the constitution, to prevent our citizens from aggravating them. The almost daily accounts I have of the inhumanity perpetrated in these states on this race of men, distresses me night and day, and brings the subject of the slave-trade with more pressure on my spirit; and I believe I feel a measure of the same obligation that the prophet did when he was ordered to cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. And here I think I can show, that our nation is revolting from the law of God, the law of reason and humanity, and the just principles of government; and with rapid strides establishing tyranny and oppression; to prove which, I need do no more than oppose the present conduct of the

nation, to that part of it which I have now brought to your view, from the former journals of Congress, and then mention the sanction the African slave-trade at this time has from the general government; in proof of which I may refer to the condition on which Congress accepted the cession of the Western territory of North Carolina, viz., *That no regulation made or to be made shall tend to emancipate slaves.*

"I am concerned that the leaders of the people may not cause them to err, or strengthen them in error; the plea now is by state legislators, as well as other classes of citizens, and even those abandoned dealers in the persons of men, that Congress authorizes the traffic, as I myself now believe you virtually do.

"If your disapprobation of this trade as a body was publicly known to be sincere, I believe it would have a good effect; and if you are so, it is my judgment the people have a right to know and expect it from you. I am persuaded, nine-tenths of the citizens of the United States reprobate the African trade, and consider every slave imported an injury to the public; and that they repose confidence in your wisdom as guardians of the nation, to prevent its injury; and that herein you betray the trust reposed in you, which is indeed a great and weighty trust, even to do that which of right ought to be done by the nation; therefore it requires on this very important subject your deep and serious consideration, what you can do so as to obtain the favour of Divine Providence to this land, which I do indeed believe will be marked with something very different, if such an inhuman traffic is continued.

"Humane petitions have been presented, to excite in Congress benevolent feelings for the sufferings of our fellow-citizens under cruel bondage to Turks and Algerines, and that the national power and influence might be exerted for their relief; with this virtuous application I unite, but lament that any of my countrymen, who are distinguished as men eminently qualified for public station, should be so enslaved by illiberal prejudice, as to treat with contempt a like solicitude for another class of men still more grievously oppressed.

"I profess freely, and am willing my profession was known over the world, that I feel the calls of humanity as strong towards an African in America, as to an American in Algiers, both being my brethren; especially as I am informed the Algerine treats his slave with more humanity; and I believe the sin of oppression on the part of the American, is greatest in the sight of the Father of the family of mankind.

"I hope some will excuse my inserting in this apologetic expostulation, a few texts of Scripture as they revive—I trust there are some of our rulers yet believe in the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. What revives now, is the declaration of our Lord, Matt. 25th chap. and 41st verso. 'Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed,' &c. They also shall answer him, saying, 'When saw we thee an hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or

in prison, and did not minister unto thee ?' His answer then you may read, ' Inasmuch as you did it not to the least of these, ye did it not to me.'

"That I may not be thought to trespass on your patience on this momentous subject, after repeating my special request, that you would, without delay, exert your power and influence to frustrate the avaricious purpose of those mercenaries, who are perhaps now on their voyage from Liverpool to Africa, to bring to some of the Southern states cargoes of innocent human beings into cruel, unconditional bondage,—the grounds I have for this apprehension, are, I believe, not unknown to some among you,—I will draw towards a conclusion, with a quotation from the address of Congress to the Assembly of Jamaica, dated 28th of July, 1776.

" ' We receive uncommon pleasure from observing the principles of our righteous opposition distinguished by your approbation : we feel the warmest gratitude for your pathetic mediation in our behalf with the crown—but are you to blame ? mournful experience tells us, that petitions are often rejected, while the sentiments and conduct of the petitioners entitle what they offer to a happier fate.'

"That wisdom from above may be mercifully vouchsafed to direct the councils of America, that this extensive and rising republic may be exalted by righteousness, and not overturned by pride, oppression, and forgetfulness of the rightful Ruler and Dread of Nations, is the prayer of an enthusiast in a pure and uncorrupted sense, and who is both yours individually, and my country's real friend,

" WARNER MIFFLIN.

" Kent County, State of Delaware, 21st of the First mo., 1792."

(To be continued.)

Relics of the Past.—No. 13.

The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal (1827-1906); Apr 20, 1844; 17, 30; APS Online
pg. 236

For "The Friend."

Relics of the Past.—No. 13.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Here outside limitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the imitator one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Continued from page 230.)

Warner Mifflin was appointed one of the Representatives to the Yearly Meeting in 1793, and attended it, notwithstanding the yellow fever was then raging in the city of Philadelphia. After his return home, he was very much engaged in getting places for coloured children in free states, where they might be carefully brought up and educated. In the Tenth month, 1794, he accompanied Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young to some of the meetings on the Peninsula. After his return from that journey he addressed a letter to his friend H. D., of Philadelphia, from which the following is extracted:—

"Fourteenth of Twelfth mo., 1794.

"Dear Friend:—I am doubtful of my bodily ability to perform a journey to the city. My indisposition, I believe, has been increased by the great exercise of mind I have had lately on account of the poor blacks. I believe I have never had greater, at any time in my life, than during the last two weeks. Most of that time I have had not less than five negroes, day and night, and sometimes as many as eleven for a night. They were chiefly from about the Maryland line, flying for fear of being carried to the South. Several have given such proof as has procured them their freedom. And, I believe, some others will be able to. I really have not known what to do. If I could do it, I have thought it would be a great relief to leave these parts entirely. The many curses, reflections, sour looks, &c., I receive, make it exceedingly disagreeable, even beyond description. I often remember some expressions of dear Isaac Zane, on a committee on the negro subject. He said of himself, adopting the language addressed to David, 'the sword shall never depart from my house.' I thought when I heard him, that if it was never to depart from him, it was not likely to depart from mine.

"Under all my conflicts, I find I have place with men in authority,—and, indeed, at times, all opposition seems to bend before me, and I have to feel that I am in my place. If I had a continued evidence of this, all other things would be of little moment. Doubts on this are the most trying part of the subject. Here I am, and how to be rightly clear of this business is the point. I wish to be where I may intelligibly understand the language of holy certainty, and omit nothing, that of right be-

longs to me to do, and do nothing not sanctioned thereby.

"To the Great Caretaker, therefore, I desire to commit my cause, crave his Divine direction, succour and support, and that he may dispose of me as he pleases."

Many of Warner's letters, about this time, relative to coloured children, which he sent to different Friends in Philadelphia, and to the condition of their parents, are very interesting, but to insert them would unreasonably swell this narrative.

In the Eleventh month, 1794, the Southern Quarterly Meeting proposed a memorial to the Assembly of Maryland, on behalf of the African people, which was laid before the Meeting for Sufferings for its approbation. Towards the close of 1795, this memorial having been somewhat modified, was presented to the Legislature of Maryland by Warner Mifflin and others, the memorial being as follows:—

"The Quarterly Meeting of the People called Quakers (constituted of the members of that Society, residing on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, South of Cecil County, and the contiguous parts of Delaware and Virginia,) by their committee respectfully represent—

"To the General Assembly of the State of Maryland:—

"That from a sense of duty, and near fellow-feeling with the much injured people of the African race, under the continued grievous and inhuman oppression to which they are subjected, we are incited to renew our application to you on their behalf, apprehending our peaceable demeanour as citizens in your and other governments of the United States, and the care manifested by our members generally, in support of civil and religious order, through a long course of years, justly entitles us to the attention of our rulers, on occasions especially wherein the true interest and real well-being of the community at large is deeply concerned.

"For, as was declared by Congress in the year 1775, 'A reverence for our great Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, must convince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end.'

"An unfeigned and important regard to this solemn declaration, we trust, will induce you seriously and duly to consider how opposite thereto are the very wicked and grievous abuses suffered by that degraded and grossly oppressed class of our fellow-men of the African race, within the limits of your government and its borders; many of whom are unmercifully torn from the tender ties of nature, kidnapped, shackled with irons, carried off, and transported like herds for market, to parts where, we believe, death would, by many of these poor objects of commiseration, be deemed a happy relief.

"The present state of the laws, as we apprehend, being so liable to evasion, and inadequate to the protection justly due to this part of

God's rational creation, that men of depraved minds, void of humanity, and abandoned to dissolute principles, have opportunities, and are frequently in the practice of feloniously seizing and carrying off from the State of Delaware (in violation and defiance of the laws of that State) numbers of black people indiscriminately, whether free persons or others, passing with them into Maryland, and thence southward. Practices so reproachful to government, and shocking to every Christian and virtuous feeling, we hope will not fail of obtaining your close consideration and exertion, worthy of the power wherewith you are entrusted, to put a stop to the continuance of this crying abomination.

"The guilt of violence is charged on the old world as a cause of its destruction; and while it is suffered to exist in so atrocious a degree in this land, is there not reason to dread the righteous judgments of a God of perfect equity and adorable mercy?

"Americans profess, as an enlightened people, to enjoy and promote the just and unalienable rights of man, in an equal, if not a superior degree, to any other people; their language has gone forth, and is in eminent repute among the nations; shall then a flagrant contradiction to such profession be permitted to remain among us?

"That the sovereign Lord of the Universe, who created of one blood all the nations of the earth, may influence your hearts, and dignify you with such a portion of his wisdom and universal love to mankind, that, in your exalted station, the peace, liberty, and happiness of all ranks of the people, may be the real objects of your zeal and care, is the desire of your Friends.

"Signed, &c."

For "The Friend."

Relics of the Past.—No. 14.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Mere outside imitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the imitator one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Continued from page 236.)

The following letter gives some account of the presentation of the address:—

"Twelfth mo. 30, 1795.

"Dear Friend:—By this opportunity I inform thee that a few days since we arrived from Annapolis, where we had been to present the address prepared. Five of our members attended, viz., Tristram and John Needles, Samuel Troth, Samuel Howell, and myself. We were accompanied by Mary Berry, and my wife. Mary had a minute of her Monthly Meeting, being under a concern to hold meetings in that neighbourhood. We were in Annapolis just two weeks; had two public meetings in the State-House, and one in the Methodist meeting-house; they were appointed principally for the blacks. On the whole, I think they were satisfactory, and I hope the cause was not hurt thereby. The women drew up an address also, which was presented with ours, and both well read by the clerk. Some violent opposers turned out to object to committing the memorials to a committee, but they were overruled by a large majority. A dispute then arose as to the manner of appointing a committee;—both sides being very anxious to get men to answer their views. This was favourably determined also, and four out of five considered to be friendly disposed. We waited with patience almost their own time;—I never felt less anxious to push them. I did believe that our being among them would be useful, if nothing was done. Many of them were much alarmed, and many lies were fabricated;—but, I believe, I never met with any who appeared more loath to enter upon a discussion of the subject. I found that they were the more friendly, the longer we stayed. The committee at length reported, that the petitions of the Quakers were on a subject of great magnitude and importance, and not being furnished with the laws of Delaware, thought it best to refer the consideration of the subject to the next sessions. Their report was shown to me before it was given in. I submitted to it, thinking it might be best. It leaves a fair opening for the subject being called up again. I have abundant fears for my country on this account, and yet, sometimes I have some encouragement.

"I have now two men standing, waiting for advice; they have just escaped from the Chesapeake, from the Carolina dealers. I believe I have not been without one or more nearly every day since my return. I am loaded thereby almost as much as I can stand under.

"Tristram Needles and Samuel Troth left Annapolis after the presentation of the addresses;—the women and Samuel Howell were gone four days to Indian Spring and West River meetings, whilst John Needles

and I stuck by the stuff. About the time of the women's return, John began to complain a little for a day or two, then took to his bed, and in three days was a corpse. He seemed to go down to the grave in as much quiet as I ever beheld one. Many of the members of the assembly visited him in his illness, and appeared much concerned for him. I trust this sudden removal, and at such a time, may be in wisdom designed for some purpose, perhaps beyond our prospects. I must bid farewell, and with love to thee and thine, remain thy friend,

WARNER MIFFLIN."

The memorial presented by Mary Barry and Anno Mifflin, alluded to above, contains the information that they were two of a committee of women Friends, appointed to consider the affecting subject, which had claimed the attention of the men. It endeavours to awaken feelings of commiseration for the poor blacks, by referring to the cruel separations they frequently had to endure from the dearest connections in life; by the fear of the judgments of the Almighty, and the just condemnation of coming generations, if the Legislature shall still allow the trade; and it strives to stir them up by legal enactments to end it.

(To be continued.)

For "The Friend."

Relics of the Past.—No. 15.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Mere outside imitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the imitator one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Continued from page 247.)

Warner was in Philadelphia in the spring of 1790, labouring with the members of Congress, and other influential persons, on behalf of the rights of the slave. Whilst there, he had the opportunity of enjoying the company of his friends Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young, who were preparing to return to England, having completed their religious visit to Friends in this country.

In the fifth month he was with his friend John Parrish in New York, and attended the Yearly Meeting at that place. Whilst there, they laboured, as opportunity offered, on behalf of the poor Indian, and the despised, persecuted negro. A letter from John Parrish, will exhibit some of their labours.

"New York, Fifth month 30th, 1790.

"Dear Henry :—I received thy acceptable letter, with the enclosed, which came seasonably, and I hope answered a good purpose. I introduced it to the committee appointed by the Yearly meeting on Indian affairs. The committee is about thirty in number, and met on Seventh-day evening after the close of a very solemn annual assembly, which had been owned by the Master's presence. The committee, after discoursing, and solidly deliberating on the subject, chose a clerk, and concluded to fix stated times when it should meet.

At present it did not appear to be ripe enough to go into a subscription. On the whole, I hope the subject is pretty well on its way to produce some good effects in due season. The sitting of the committee closed just in the twilight, and I proposed to my friend Warner, that we should go from thence to see Governor Jay. It seemed likely to be our only opportunity, as he would probably return home in the morning. Accordingly, we went accompanied by Thomas Eddy, who introduced us. We met with a cordial reception, and the interview was to mutual satisfaction. After ordering pipes and tobacco, the subject of his embassy to England, came on the carpet, and he in a free manner informed us of several interviews he had had with Lord Granville on the subject of the treaty. Lord Granville, he said, seemed quite disposed in an amicable way to accommodate matters between the two nations. He cleared up very much to my satisfaction that part respecting the negroes. The conversation turned pretty much on the subject of the black people, and the necessity of its moving forward by gradations. From this it passed to the Indians, when I took the opportunity to introduce Colonel Pickering's letter, which he read with pleasure, and said he was a good man. The Governor highly approved of Friends' proceedings, and cheerfully offered every assistance he could afford us, and wished us success.

"We had a very agreeable interview with him, which closed about 11 o'clock. He fol-

lowed us to the door, and kindly invited us to come again.

"And now, after giving thee this short detail, I may just inform thee, that after a week of laborious exercise, I have been to-day weather-bound, but have in prospect to set off in the morning for Westbury, to be at their week-day meeting on Fourth day, and next day at the monthly meeting at Flushing. This is as far as I see at present. * * * I conclude and am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN PARRISH."

Warner understanding that a lawyer in Philadelphia had acted in a slave case, in a manner which he thought base and unchristian, visited him to show him the error of his way. The enraged attorney turned him out of his house for his honest plain dealing. This, however, did not deter the unflinching advocate for the just and right, from addressing a reproofing, expostulating letter to the lawyer on the subject, which he, however, sent open to his Friends in Philadelphia, that they might read it, and judge of its fitness and Christian spirit, before it should be delivered. In a letter which he sent to a Friend, dated Ninth month, 4th, 1790, he says,—

"That Carolina proceeding is abominable.* Indeed, the cloud at times looks exceeding heavy, and as though heavy things were to be. At times it seems a little otherwise. May neither heights nor depths of any nature or kind be permitted to turn the feet of our minds from pursuing the one thing needful. With love to thee and thine, I am thine, I trust, in a measure of best fellowship.

WARNER MIFFLIN."

The time had now come when Warner believed it would be right in him to defend his character through the press from the odium cast upon it by slave-holders and their associates. For this purpose he prepared his "Defence," which has already in these relics been so abundantly quoted. Having been examined by his Friends, it was published about the close of 1790, being dated in the Eleventh month. We shall now proceed with extracts from this work :—

"And now, my fellow citizens, let me call your serious attention to the present condition of our land. You, more especially, who believe in a God,—in the superintendence of his Providence,—and in the Sacred Records. Let us ruminato on what is perpetrated within its borders, we who have been so highly favoured of the Almighty; and make so great profession respecting liberty to the world. I believe it can be proved, that since the revolution, even within the small compass of the State of Delaware and its adjoining part of Maryland, there hath been more free blacks kidnapped and carried into slavery, than there has been of American citizens captured by the Algerines. Where are the feeling parents, who suffered inexpressible grief on account of their darling children stripped from them in the late war? Are not those in any degree brought to feel another's woe?

* This alludes to the case of a number of blacks set free by Friends, having been sold by order of Court again into bondage.

"Some say that negroes pay no regard to the natural ties of husband and wife, parent and child. I know to the contrary. Unnatural and hardened characters there are in all nations; but that such abound more among this people than others, in proportion to their circumstances, I cannot admit. Where such instances have arisen, to whom must we apply the guilt? On the poor tried blacks, or on nominal professors of the blessed name of Christ—those who with relentless tyranny can advertise amongst other stock on a farm, a number of these brethren by creation? When the afflicted sufferers are called up for sale, reluctantly advancing with tears falling from their eyes—(oh, blush, Americans, at this!)—perhaps a trader in human flesh from Georgia, bids off a mother and her child; and an adventurer from Kentucky proves the highest bidder for the father and another child. Thus are families torn asunder,—the marriage tie violated, and made of no account,—and their cup of human misery filled up with mingled bitters. And perhaps among the spectators of these hapless victims to avarice, even among the speculators, may be found professed ministers of the gospel, who not only behold without reproof these proceedings, but are partakers of this gain of oppression.* Is there any spirited disapprobation manifested against this kind of traffic where it prevails? Is there not too generally a silent acquiescence therewith? and have I advanced aught but undeniable truths on the subject? I have not said any thing of their hard fare in tyrannical families; though I acknowledge, with satisfaction, their condition is much meliorated in a general way within the last twenty years, as to their domestic usage; yet, more distressing separations have taken place among them within that space of

time than heretofore. Let us then, my countrymen, put our souls in their souls' stead, let us imagine how it would feel, to be groaning under the iron hand of oppression and no tribunal on earth wherunto we might apply for relief.

(To be continued.)

* "Numerous are the instances that might be adduced to show the inhuman cruelties inflicted on these helpless people, under the public countenance given to the spirit of oppression and tyranny. A few cases may suffice to give the general features of these enormities, of the certainty whereof I have no doubt of my authority.

"In the county of Kent on Delaware, a negro man, not long since, having petitioned the court for his freedom, and security being required for his appearance in case he should be adjudged a slave, his security took him home to his house to remain till trial; the pretended master or his agents went armed to the house when the master of the family was from home, much terrified the family, violently seized the black man, carried him off, tied a rope round his neck, fastened it to a horse, and drove so fast as to keep the poor black on a run. He was so mangled and bruised that he died next morning. No further notice appears to be taken of this brutality, by legal authority, but the formality of a warrant issued by the chief justice.

"Two negro men, at Snow Hill, Maryland, were charged with breaking into a store, whereof on due examination they were found perfectly innocent; but provisionally in order to convict them, they were inhumanly and illegally tortured to make them confess, by the application of thumb-screws, until their thumbs burst with the pressure.

"A negro man charged with breaking into a smoke house, in Northampton county, Virginia, had his feet put to the fire to bake till they boiled into blisters, to torture him into confession. He was afterwards acquitted of the fact by confession of the evidence which had been suborned against him.

"Of like detestable practices a volume might be filled; but a more particular enumeration would not comport with the brevity intended in the present representation."

For "The Friend."

Relics of the Past.--No. 16.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Mere outside imitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the sinner one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Continued from page 234.)

"It has been infused into the minds of the people by the spirit of seduction, that I have persuaded the blacks to run from their masters; that I give them passes without discriminating between those who are free and others, whenever they apply; and that I keep a large number of absconded slaves in clearing my swamps. This was recently thrown before the members of a legislative body, to counteract any influence I might possibly have there; together with an insinuation that I had offered a bribe to a connection of one then present, on a negro affair. All which assertions I deny as originating from the father of lies; and made I believe to lay waste any possible influence I might have against slavery.

"Added to these are the curses, threats and hard speeches, that have been thrown out against me, for acting only consonant with the principles of the late revolution, in peaceably vindicating the natural rights of men, on the grounds of humanity and obligations of the Christian religion. And I think I may assert, that I never violated the laws of men in this business, unless feeding the hungry can be termed a violation. To some of those poor, distressed people, when absconding as they have represented, on account of very rigorous treatment, I have indeed pitied and given food, in which I considered myself warranted by the law of God, and principle of human sympathy, by relieving for a little space a suffering fellow creature, who called for assistance, hunger and want. But it is the reverse of my judgment of propriety, in preserving the peace of society, to persuade those people from their claimer's service, and beneath the uprightness of my profession to recommend any as free people who are not such. I believe a cause that is sanctioned by Omnipotence, needs no such effort to make it successful, and that the more pure and upright are its espousers, the more will it be advanced. I am of the faith, the voice of the spiritual Moses has been as intelligibly sounded in the ears of Americans, as ever the voice of Moses formerly was heard by the Egyptians, even the Lord from heaven, who is a quickening spirit, and 'If they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, how much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him who speaketh from heaven?' who I believe is advancing to lay waste all opposition in this business; which he will effect in his own time. And it appears by a large part of the wills latterly made, that many who retain their senses, are unwilling to risk a passage into an awful eternity and leave fellow beings as slaves. I marvel there are not many more.

"I am troubled at seeing any run from their masters, and generally counsel such, that it is my judgment they had better remain at home in quiet resignation as much as possible

to their allotment, and that, if through good conduct they should obtain favour from their Maker, he could change the hearts of these their possessors and induce them to liberate. On this ground of inward conviction it is, I wish to see the work carried forward. Some have taken my counsel and returned, others have judged best to pursue their own prospects in the event as it would; and to some others, who by accounts met with hard treatment at home, I could say but little on the subject, only that as they were slaves, it would not do for them to tarry at my house, as I could not by that means do them any good, and it would only give offence to their claimers.*

"Is there a white man among thousands, who if captured among the Algerines, would not embrace his liberty should opportunity present? If I were a humane Algerine, residing in their land, and an American in escaping from his master ventured to call at my house, informing me he had not eaten any thing for several days, would my countrymen judge it criminal in me to feed him? What then should be the conduct of the higher professors of Christianity, in a similar case, towards a people, who differ from us by a few darker shades in their skin? Is there any part of our religion that would authorize us to seize such and drag them again into chains? Or would it not be as great a violation of the righteous law of God, who the Scripture testifies is no respecter of persons, but who hath created of one blood all nations of men, to seize on one of a dark complexion as one of a fairer hue? Is it not through the principles of tyranny and despotism yet too prevalent in America, in cherishing ideas of too much distinction among men on this subject, that they are not only yet retained in slavery, but even, when from a sense of religion and justice their masters have dispensed to them the blessing of liberty, they have not an equitable chance to vindicate their right, when it is encroached upon by kidnapping. Even where these acts are known in many neighbourhoods, what a

dastardly spirit pervades the minds of the people, lest they should offend some neighbour. They are afraid to step forward in a prosecution; and if any are impelled to undertake it from sympathy with the sufferer, they are oft put to great difficulties for want of suitable evidence, as those whites who may have due knowledge of the matter, oft evade giving their testimony through fear of making enemies. Thus in seeing the thief, yet by silence consenting, according to Scripture, they become equally guilty. If there were thousands of blacks who could give clear evidence, the law will not admit it as valid. Is not this arbitrary and very unjust?

"I dread the consequence of a continuance of wrong things in our land; have we not seen evident tokens of Divine displeasure? Hath not the sword, the famine, and pestilence made their appearance in various parts? As a gentle rod shaking over us, they are calling loudly to greater degrees of humility, repentance and amendment of life; lest offended Omnipotence should pour forth upon us more abundantly the vials of his wrath, and tribulation, anguish and woe, be the complicated portion of the inhabitants of America. Let us then by a strict attention to the discharge of our duty towards God and man so act as to invite the Lord's blessings upon us. He is ever ready to shower down his favours on the obedient workmanship of his hands. That this may be our happy experience, is the desire and prayer of a lover of this country, a peaceable subject to its laws, and an universal friend to mankind.

"WARNER MIFFLIN.

"Kent, on Delaware, Eleventh mo., 1796."

(To be continued.)

* Warner Mifflin's principle and practice, may be suitably set forth in the following anecdote recently told of him by a slave-holder. Warner had been pleading with an individual in Virginia for the freedom of a slave which he himself had had some interest in. The master who had found this servant entirely faithful and trustworthy, refused to liberate him, or to sell him, on any reasonable terms. After Warner had exhausted his powers of reasoning and persuasion, he begged as a favour that he might have a private opportunity with the negro before he left the house. The slave-holder was very reluctant to give consent; expecting that Warner would embrace the opportunity to urge the slave to escape. At last he appeared to yield,—but when the individual was introduced, took care to secrete himself in a position which enabled him to overhear all that passed.

Warner informed the black man that he had done all that he could do to obtain his freedom, but had not been able to effect it; and now he desired that he would be resigned to his situation and faithfully and diligently serve his master; concluding with stating that he did believe that by so doing he would shorten the time of his bondage. The slave-holder was much struck with the Christian spirit of the advice of Warner, so different from what he had expected to hear. It so affected him, that he could not feel easy so long as the man was in bondage to him;—and after a time he was constrained to liberate him.

Relics of the Past.—No. 17.
The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal (1827-1906); May 18, 1844; 17, 34; APS Online
pg. 268

For "The Friend."

Relics of the Past.—No. 17.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Mere outside imitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the imitator one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Continued from page 260.)

Warner Mifflin continued to labour indefatigably in the cause of suffering humanity, devoting his time, his talents, and his money, to the promotion of the good of mankind. His house was still the asylum of the coloured people in their varied distresses, and though he could not always relieve, he had an ear to hear, and a heart to feel for them.

Although a man of good judgment, yet Warner was sometimes imposed upon, through his desire to benefit others. In 1797 an individual who possessed a strong imagination, with little stability of character, having persuaded himself that some new discovery he had made was likely to produce vast profits, endeavoured to lead Warner to furnish the means to enable him to try the experiment. Doubtful, and fearful as to the result, yet influenced by a respect for the man, and a wish to oblige, he engaged in the enterprise, where-

by he lost a considerable sum of money. The history of this enterprise is a deeply instructive one, and might furnish a salutary lesson to all such as are trusting an inflated imagination to calculate for them the profits of their speculations, or to predict for them the future.

In the year 1707, a large portion of the people called Nicholites, residing in the State of Delaware, and the Eastern shore of Maryland, made application to be received as members of the Society of Friends. These people had been principally gathered as a distinct society through the instrumentality of Joseph Nichols. A short account of them, drawn from such sources of information as are accessible, may be of some interest to the general reader.

Joseph Nichols appears to have been a man of strong powers of mind, and in his youth to have possessed a very pleasant and vivacious spirit, which made him a general favourite with his acquaintances, particularly the irreligious portion of them. He was forward in all merry-makings, and was wont to spend the First-day of the week with his youthful associates in dancing, or singing, and other vain amusements. Although he no doubt often felt the reproofs of the Holy Spirit for the way he was mispending his time, yet, for a season, these secret convictions had little permanent effect upon him.

At last, during the time of a frolic, an intimate friend of his was taken sick, and died suddenly amidst the festivities and mirth. This, through the merciful visitations of the Lord's Holy Spirit, effectually aroused him to a sense of his wickedness;—and he was made to appreciate the awful consequence which would result if he did not amend his ways. A change was soon wrought in him, and by the effectual baptisms of the Holy Ghost and of fire, he appears to have been in a good measure redeemed from evil. The company who on First-days were still drawn about him by his pleasant conversational powers, he now endeavoured to benefit. By his influence he persuaded them to sit down in silence and to listen to a portion of the Holy Scriptures. This practice was continued until he believed it right to appear as a minister among them. The good effect of his ministry was observable in a change wrought as to the general character of the community in which he lived. Many attended his meetings, and in life and conversation bore evidence of having been brought under the cross of Christ.

The doctrines which Joseph Nichols preached, were very much the same with those held by the Society of Friends. He had a testimony against war, against all oaths, against slavery, against a hireling ministry, extravagance in the manner of living, and in clothing;—and against every thing which he thought would minister to the pride and vanity of the creature.

John Woolman, who visited the Nicholites in 1766, thus describes them:—"From Motherkill, we crossed the country about thirty-five miles to Friends at Tuckahoe, in Maryland, and had a meeting there, and at Marshy Creek. At these our last three meetings, was a considerable number of people, follow-

ers of one Joseph Nichols, a preacher; who, I understand, is not in outward fellowship with any religious society of people, but professeth nearly the same principles as our Society doth, and often travels up and down, appointing meetings, to which many people come. I heard Friends speaking of some of their neighbours, who had been irreligious people, that were now his followers, and were become sober, well-behaved men and women. Some irregularities, I hear, have been amongst the people, at several of his meetings; but from the whole of what I have perceived, I believe the man and some of his followers, are honestly disposed, but that skilful sathors are wanting amongst them."

About the commencement of the American Revolution Joseph Nichols died, leaving a great many followers, but no organized society among them. In the year 1780 they first adopted church government; and banded themselves together as a distinct religious community. There were then several who stood as preachers amongst them. They seem to have taken the rules and regulations of the Society of Friends, as models, and made their own nearly conform to them. Children were accounted members whose parents were so, when they were born; marriages were accomplished in their Monthly Meetings; they had select meetings, and ministers were approved and recommended in the same manner as Friends. They had Queries to answer in their Monthly Meetings resembling ours, but more precise on the subjects of dress, furniture and amusements.

As to plainness they carried it so far, that they raised no merely ornamental flowers in their gardens, and admitted none in their houses. They did not approve of mixed colours or materials in their garments, and striped or flower stuffs, black hats and blacked shoes, were not known among them.

Such was this community in 1780;—a people of excellent moral character, of stern integrity, strict and rigid as respected themselves, charitable and kind to others. It was not many years before a large number of the members thought it would be right, and profitable for them to be incorporated in the Society of Friends. The subject was opened in their Monthly Meetings, from time to time, until at last one hundred and six united in signing the following minute:—

"To the members of Third-Haven Monthly Meeting, to be held 25th of Tenth month, 1797:

"We, the people called Nicholites, heretofore present to your view and serious consideration, the names of those that incline to unite with you in membership."

When this was read in Third Haven Monthly Meeting, after consideration, a committee was appointed "to take an opportunity with them, in a collective capacity, and treat the matter with them, as way may open, as to the grounds of their request; and report of their situation, and state of unity in regard thereto, to our next meeting." After a time the Monthly Meeting's committee, and the committee of the Quarterly Meeting being united in judgment that it would be proper,

about 400 individuals were acknowledged as members. It is probable that Warner Mifflin was a member of the Quarterly Meeting's committee,—his wife we know was, and he accompanied her in some of her services amongst this newly received people.

Many of those who did not at first join the Society of Friends were afterwards united to it. From the following letter it appears that Anna Mifflin visited the families thus suddenly brought in amongst Friends.

"Kent, Fifth month, 4th, 1798.

"Dear Friend:—After leaving the city, my wife and self proceeded with our Friend Mary Berry to finish the visit to the families belonging to Chester Particular Meeting,—I hope to a good degree of satisfaction. As to myself, I have not whereof to boast, hardly knowing whether I was of any use to myself or others, further than as a coachman to drive the women about. As I did not know where or how I could have disposed of my time better, the thought tended rather to a settlement of mind, and a good degree of quiet. Whilst in Philadelphia, I received a letter from a Friend at Third Haven, in Maryland, which renewed the exercise of my mind on a subject of uneasiness in that meeting which I had been engaged in. We reached home about dark, and that night this subject had such an effect on my mind, that I told my wife in the morning I believed I must go for that Monthly Meeting. I proposed that she should accompany me; she consented; and about noon we started. I believe our being there was right, and of use in several respects.

"The day after our return my wife proceeded with Mary Berry to the meetings, and some families, in Sussex county. They returned on Sixth-day; and on First-day following I accompanied them to meet with the Quarterly and Monthly Meeting's committee respecting the Nicholites. The next day I parted with my wife, she having a prospect of visiting the families of that people with a minute of our Monthly Meeting. The Quarterly Meeting's committee have concluded to unite with the Monthly Meeting's committee in visiting the remaining applicants among them. The Fifth-day after my return home I went about thirty-five miles to a meeting at North West Fork, proposed for a conference with such of these people who had not applied, and who claimed their meeting-house and records. It so turned out, that there was not many present. They were told we could not indulge our members in holding their meetings in houses, which they were not at liberty to keep in order, and could not have under their direction. Some of them expressed that it would be sorrowful to them for Friends to meet separately. Their Monthly Meeting will be held to-morrow about twenty-five miles from my residence, and then I expect that this subject will be concluded. I feel a concern to attend it, with my brother Daniel, and hope to meet my wife there. * * * I conclude with love to thee and thine, and I hope, and trust, in degree to the cause and testimony of Truth, thy Friend,

"WARNER MIFFLIN."

A singular circumstance respecting the

property took place; those who had joined Friends, said, and justly, that having left them they had no right to occupy their houses. The others insisted that they should continue to hold meetings therein. Thus circumstanced they remained for a few years, when all the members of the Nicholite Society having joined Friends, the property was, by the old trustees, conveyed to trustees to hold it on behalf of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of North West Fork.

(To be concluded.)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For "The Friend."

Helics of the Past.—No. 18.

No action will conduce to our everlasting happiness, that is not the offspring of a heartfelt conviction of duty. Alas outside imitations of the best actions of the best men, will never advance the sinner one step nearer heaven.

WARNER MIFFLIN.

(Concluded from page 270.)

Before closing these notices it may be proper to introduce a letter which was mislaid, and therefore could not be introduced into its proper chronological place.

During the time that Warner Mifflin was in Newport in 1781, many of the officers of the French army being there, attended Friends' meeting; and their light and irreligious behaviour was unsettling to the company assembled, and very trying to his mind. On his return home, he felt concerned to address a letter to them, which it appears his friend Anthony Benezet translated into French. I have a copy of this document in Anthony's hand-writing.

"Dear friends:—Over and above the universal love that flows in my heart towards all men of every nation as my brethren, children of the same almighty Parent, I felt a particular draft thereof towards many Frenchmen whilst at Newport. Feeling at this time a renewal thereof, with desires for your lasting happiness, and a concern that the dignity of our meetings for the worship of Almighty God may be maintained, and they held in a manner acceptable to him, I am willing to throw before your view some hints that may be profitable for you to consider. Feeling love for you I was pleased to see you come to our meeting, but sorry to notice so much whispering amongst you.

"I desire you may consider that the great object of worship is a God, not only omnipotent, but omnipresent; who beholds the actions of men, and even the thoughts of their hearts, and will finally recompense unto all, according as their deeds or works have been. As we have no expectation of a purgation after death, but believe that as the tree falls so it lies, and in the state that death leaves, judgment certainly finds us, there being no device, knowledge or understanding in the grave, we think it incumbent to improve our time here, in order to be prepared for that most sure and awful period. In order therefore, we are concerned to meet together to wait upon and worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. We believe in the promise of Christ, 'Where two or three are met together in my name there am I in the midst of them.' We deem it necessary on such occasions to attend to the order enjoined in Scripture, viz. 'Be still and know that I am God.' This is the end of our sitting in silence;—to keep the mind still, to wait upon Him to learn his mind and will concerning us. As any transgression rises up to view, we ought to confess the same to him, beg his forgiveness for the past, and pray for preservation for the time to come. When any talk in our meetings, it has a tendency to disturb this silence, and we believe to offend that Great Being whom we are concerned to know, and serve, agreeable to apos-

tolic doctrine, it is life eternal to know him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Knowing him binds us to promote peace on earth, good will to men, and to do unto others as we would wish to be done by. With desire for your eternal welfare, I conclude. Your real friend,

"WARNER MIFFLIN."

Towards the close of Fifth month, 1798, Warner was taken seriously unwell, and even then, we learn from one of his letters written shortly after, he passed through almost daily conflicts of mind on account of the poor blacks. On the 26th of Sixth month, he wrote to H. D. thus:—

"Dear friend:—The day before yesterday I received thine of the 20th instant, by which I am reminded of thy kind sympathy and concern for me, which tends to strengthen the brotherly regard that for years I have had impressed on my mind for thee. I hope there may never be a diminution thereof.

"I have great bodily weakness,—a cough continues, and my breast is disordered. I am getting about, but gain strength very slowly, and have as great a debility of mind as of body. I have no ability scarcely to labour for a crumb, and feel evidently, that nothing I have heretofore done will do to feed upon now. It is great cause for humiliation and bowedness of soul, when I feel as I do, and reflect that there are those who are dignified, strengthened and supported to travel over sea and land, for the promotion of the glorious cause. It is cause of thankfulness that there are those thus favoured continued amongst us, and that the Master of our assemblies has not forsaken us altogether, even in this degenerate and depraved age. * * * Thy friend,

"WARNER MIFFLIN."

When the time of the Yearly Meeting, of 1798, drew nigh, although well aware that the yellow fever was raging with great violence in Philadelphia, Warner Mifflin believed it to be his duty to attend it. He came up, attended the sittings of the Select Meeting held Ninth month 22nd, and those of the general meeting on Second-day following. The Yearly Meeting then adjourned until the Twelfth month, and Warner returned home. After reaching his place of abode, he wrote to a friend, expressing that he felt solid satisfaction in having attended to this duty. He says in the letter, "As I came along homeward, I remembered how careful and watchful a helmsman ought to be, in time of a storm! How quick the attention should be to the helm, lest the vessel receive damage! I have thought much of a sentiment of worthy Isaac Penington, since I came home, that Israel of old was not to know the deliverance before hand, but to trust in the Lord."

The time of his rest drew near. The seeds of the distemper which was prevalent in the city, had taken root in his system, and after a short time he became ill. In great quietness and calmness, he bore the severe pains of his distemper, for six days, and then was sweetly released from suffering. He deceased the 16th day of the Tenth month, 1798, in his 53d year.