



Photograph by Rev. Nehemiah Curnock.

SMITH HOUSE, LIGHTCLIFFE.

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FIRST HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE MORAVIANS
IN YORKSHIRE,
AND HOME OF MRS. ELIZABETH HOLMES
OF WESLEY'S JOURNAL.

A paper, prepared by Mr. J. Horsfall Turner, for the Halifax Antiquarian Society in 1908, gives useful notes on the history of this old mansion, associated with the history of Moravianism and of Methodism in Yorkshire. It still stands in the ancient township of Hipperholme-cum-Brighouse, three miles from Halifax. Mr. Turner writes :—"Smith House, though now a somewhat secluded dwelling, is situated on a road formerly much frequented in the days of packhorses, as an old highway from Huddersfield, via Rastrick and Brighouse, and from Elland, via Lane Head, passing this way to Bradford. The present mansion bears over the front door the date 1672. Smith House has given its name to several houses near, one of which is worthy of inspection, namely Upper Smith House, formerly called Hirst's Farm, and since then Lower Crow Nest. A smaller farm is known as Little Smith House, whilst close to the historic house is a large building erected to accommodate the Moravian community in 1742. Near Upper Smith House, at the junction of the road with Lightcliffe and Bailiffe Bridge-road, was formerly a toll-bar cottage where human remains have been found. A large hoard of Roman coins was discovered at Lower Lightcliffe, a few yards further west.

"The Smyths were resident here before 1379, when John Smyth paid a groat as a poll tax, and Thomas and his wife another groat. John, as well as Thomas's wife, had been fined for brewing in 1370. For more than 200 years we come on the names of the Smyths. In 1692 Henry Gill was assessed for the major part of the estate and Mrs. Brooke for the remainder. Some time before 1742 Smith House was the property of John

Holmes, after whose death in that year, Elizabeth, his wife, became a Methodist, and thus gave the house a double religious interest."

The Rev. Benjamin Ingham, "The Yorkshire Evangelist," of Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists* (pp. 57-154) assisted by W. Delamotte (*Proc.*, III, p. 133), had founded his fifty "societies" in Yorkshire. Two or three of them were in Halifax parish, Lightcliffe being one. At his invitation on 26 May, 1742, twenty-six Moravians, Brethren and Sisters, set out from London to help him in Yorkshire. Mr. J. E. Hutton, M.A. (*S. Hist. Mor. Ch.*, p. 193) says they came "in detachments, and as soon as they arrived mapped out the district like a field of battle. At Smith House, near Wyke, they made their head-quarters; at Mirfield was Ockerhausen; at Pudsey, Gussenbauer; at Great Horton, Toeltschig and Piech; at Holbeck, the Browns; while Spangenberg, at Smith House, took the general command of the whole." (On Spangenberg, see *W.H.S. Proc.*, Vol. VI, pp. 143-146, and *New Hist. Meth.*, Vol. I, with portrait, pp. 190, 191: see also Dr. Wauer's *Moravians in England*, p. 87).

To continue Mr. Turner's notes: "Amongst Mr. Ingham's well-to-do supporters were Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, of Smith House, who agreed to his proposal to hand over the management of the Yorkshire Societies to the Moravians, and as this required, according to the Moravian economy, a central place for the Brethren, where the missionaries might establish departments for married members, single brethren, single sisters, day schools, &c., besides a home for the local ministers and those travelling to and from Labrador and foreign places, the Holmes' decided to build suitable accommodation, and a tall building was therefore erected on the east side of Smith House. Mr. Holmes died just about the time when this band of famous Moravians reached Yorkshire—the talk of the whole country. The new edifice was filled to overflowing, and some had to be accommodated at New House, not the one now called the Grange, but, on the authority of a contemporary sketch map, at German House, half a mile away.

"Besides the famous learned preachers, Toeltschig, Ockerhausen, Spangenberg, Böhler, Nyberg (whose daughter became the wife of Jeremiah Carter, of Giles House family), La Trobe, and many others, Smith House entertained Count Zinzendorf, Baron Watteville, and other eminent men. About the same time Mr. Wesley split away from Moravian influence, and his ardent followers did the same. Mr. Ingham, who had married Lady Hastings, sister of the Countess of Huntingdon, having transferred

his societies to the Brethren, also left them, and followed his own course, which does not seem to have been as beneficial to the public or as happy to himself as his earlier labours in the cause of Moravianism and Methodism, and to which justice has never been done. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth, Mr. Venn, of Huddersfield, Mr. Romaine, Mr. John Wesley, visited Mrs. Holmes, at Smith House, and the Moravians (except for the School a few years longer) migrated to Lower Wyke, and the central establishment was founded at Fulneck, near Pudsey."

Spangenberg tells in his *Life of Zinzendorf* that the Count visited Smith House on 25 Feb., 1743, with his daughter, Anna Nitschman, and James Hutton. He conversed with Spangenberg on the affairs of the church, and was "extremely pleased" with the worthy people, addressing them with much unction and effect, and finding time to see and converse with them singly (p. 318).

Toeltschig (more correctly Töltschig) finds a place in Wesley's *Georgia Journal*, 26 May, 1738, and there is a good note on him in the new edition, p. 478. John Nelson, in his *Journal*, sorrowfully refers to the doctrinal difference between them. (*E.M.P.*, I, 48).

The old Moravian Chapel at Wyke is still standing, and Mr. Harlow gave a photograph of it in the *M.R.* for 1899, No. 2196.

At Fulneck was built a chapel, 1746; a minister's house, 1748; Brethren and Sisters' Houses, 1752; the Widows' House, 1763; a shop and inn, 1771, and lastly, a Boys' Boarding School. Thus Fulneck became the second Yorkshire Moravian headquarters. (Hutton, p. 197).

On 2 June, 1742, John Wesley rode over to Smith House from Birstal, six miles away, whither he had gone at John Nelson's invitation. His *Journal* notes: "I was invited to Mrs. Holmes' near Halifax, where I preached at noon on 'Ask and ye shall receive.' Thence rode to Dr. L.'s (Legh) the Vicar of Halifax, a candid enquirer after truth. I called upon Mrs. Holmes on my return, when her sister a little surprised me by asking—'Ought not a Minister of Christ to do three things: First, To preach His Law, in order to convince of sin; then, To offer free pardon, through faith in His blood, to all convinced sinners; and, in the third place, To preach His law again, as a rule for those that believe?' I think, if anyone does otherwise, he is no true Minister of Christ. He divides what God has joined, and cannot be said to preach the whole Gospel."

The Rev. J. E. Harlow writes in *M.R.*: "At about this time

Mr. Holmes died ; possibly before Mr. Wesley's visit, or it may have been a year later. Mrs. Holmes was not so strongly with the Moravians as her husband had been, and the Brethren, anxious to avoid even the appearance of wishing to influence the widow in their favour, withdrew from Smith House, and made themselves a home in another part of Lightcliffe. Mrs. Holmes not only invited John Wesley to her house, but seems to have thrown it open for periodical Methodist services."

The *Journal*, Tuesday, 19 April, 1774, records: "Mrs. Holmes, who has been for some years confined to her bed, sent and desired I would preach at her house. As I stood in the passage, both she could hear, and all that stood in the adjoining rooms. I preached on Revelation xiv. 1-5. It was a refreshing season to her and to many."

Five years before her death, which took place in 1781, Wesley says:—

"Friday, 19 April, 1776—I preached at Smith House, for the sake of that lovely woman, Mrs. Holmes. It does me good to see her ; such is her patience, or, rather, thankfulness, under almost continual pain."

There is a letter by Wesley's helper, John Bennet, in the Colman collection (printed in *M.R.* for 1902, No. 2353), dated Chinley, 22 Oct., 1748, in which there is a reference to this good woman. After describing a riot at Rough Lee, Lancashire, he tells of a visit to Yorkshire, and says, "I was with Mrs. Holmes, she seems openhearted towards us, and yet I really think she has drunk deep into the German spirit. She intends to invite Mr. Whitefield to call and preach at her house, though she supposes it will not please the brethren at all." Mrs. Holmes appears to have been a generous woman, with a will of her own. Whether she succeeded in securing a visit from Whitefield, Tyerman does not tell us. There is a letter in the *Life of Berridge* (p. 408), which may have been written to her by the good vicar of Everton a year before her death, in which there is reference to the depressing sufferings of her later years. "Afflictions have been to me some of my greatest mercies," writes Berridge, "You have need, and are required to rejoice in the Lord evermore. Rejoice in Jesus that He hath quickened you. Rejoice that you are drawn to seek His face. Rejoice for the glimpses of His countenance, and the frequent refreshings of His word. These are tokens of love."

Mr. Turner tells us that "John Holmes was the son of Joshua Holmes, of Smith House, and, on the death of his widow, eulogised by Wesley, the property went to Elizabeth, daughter of

PROCEEDINGS.

Joshua, who married Abraham Radcliffe, of Brighouse, who was born at Meltham in 1696. He and his wife were buried at Lightcliffe. Their oldest son, William, a merchant, born 1733, and an influential man at Brighouse, was also buried at Lightcliffe, in 1778. Charles, the fifth son, was born at Brighouse and baptised at Rastrick 1739, died at Smith House 1817, and was buried at Lightcliffe. He married Charlotte, daughter of Charles Radcliffe, of York, who was cousin of Abraham Radcliffe, of Brighouse, and she was therefore cousin of Sir Joseph Pickford Radcliffe, the Anti-Luddite. She was buried at Lightcliffe twenty years before her husband (1797). William Towne Radcliffe, their son born 1789, died in 1862, and the only other child, Charlotte Lucretia Francina, born at Smith House, 1794, was buried at Coney Street, York, where she was at school and was burnt to death."

It is pleasant to record that a Moravian pastor still has charge of the old chapel at Wyke, and that Smith House, so rich in Moravian and Methodist associations, is in the hands of careful occupants. The ancient staircase by which Wesley ascended to rest is well preserved.

THOS. E. BRIGDEN.

LETTER FROM JOHN GOODWIN TO—

Bristol,

Feb^y. 26, 78.

My Dear Bro^r.

Your petition came at an unfavourable time, just after we had collected all we cou'd for Bath Chappel, which I suppose will be y^e second in y^e Kingdom. However I have done a little for you, collected Ten pounds, which you may draw upon Bro^r Atley for when you please. The People murmur'd a little for your not (apportioning?) y^e Sum, supposing you intend a little for y^e House as well as for y^e poor people.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Mr. Hilton ¹ speaks y^e plain language, ² but is as a dead man out of mind with us ; I believe not one will follow him in Bristol. We have an happy union among our selves, I do not know that there is a jarring string amongst us Preachers and People. The work prospers much better in Bristol & Bath than in y^e country part of our Circuit ; Kingswood is upon y^e decline. We apprehend a division will soon take place there ; Proctor has left the Society, has got a party into his sentiment of no Sin in a believer, who very rarely come to hear us, and meet by themselves when we meet y^e Society. We have had no disturbance with them yet, but hope some thing will be done when Mr. Wesley comes.

Yours most affect^y,

J. GOODWIN.

Believing in the great value of old letters, I venture to transcribe the foregoing one.

The readers of this journal will not need to be informed that John Hilton, after he had been an itinerant preacher for thirteen years, withdrew from the Methodists, whom he regarded as a fallen people, and became a Quaker. Among his writings was one issued in 1778, the year of the above letter, and entitled *Reasons for Quitting the Methodist Society ; being a Defence of Barclay's Apology* : 8 vo., pp. 66. For other particulars relating to this good and gifted mystic, see Tyerman, iii, 245—6, with footnote from Moore, ii, 273—4. The report that Methodism was a decaying power led to an anxious conversation in the Conference at Bristol in August, 1777, every assistant being particularly asked by Wesley, "Have you reason to believe, from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been?" Hilton's case is mentioned by Wesley in the *Journal*, 5 August, 1777, and also at length in a letter inserted in the *Methodist Magazine*, 1807.

Of Proctor I find no mention by Wesley ; but Kingswood was unfortunate in the number of its troublers.

R. BUTTERWORTH.

1. Myles' *Chronological History* gives his name as Helton. Wesley spells the name in the same way, *Journal*, 29 April, 1770, but Hilton, 5 Aug., 1777.

2. The language of "thee" and "thou."

SIDELIGHTS ON JOHN WESLEY'S JOURNAL.

The following extracts are from a very rare and curious volume entitled :—

“*The Date Book for Lincoln and neighbourhood, from the earliest time to the present. Collected with care, and from the most authentic sources.*”

“The old man rejoices to recall the memory of past events, and to narrate them to others.”—*Aristotle.*

“Entered at Stationers’ Hall. Lincoln :—Printed and pub^d. by R. E. Leary, sen., 19, Strait. Postage free 30 stamps.

EXTRACT I.

“1744. Jan. 24. Mr. Wesley beginning to preach to a very numerous auditory in the Court of the Three Cups Inn, at Taunton, had scarce named his text when the Mayor came in formality and ordered the Proclamation to be read, which immediately silenced the Preacher.”

N.B. No entry in Wesley’s *Journal* between 11 Jan. and 25 Jan. On 25 Jan. he preached at Bath. But cf. *Wes. Journal* under Friday, 23 Sept., 1743, for a similar occurrence “in the yard of our inn”, with interruption by the *Mayor elect.* Query : Who was the Mayor of Taunton in Jan^r. 1744 ?

EXTRACT II.

“1786. May 10. The Rev. John Wesley, who arrived a few days ago in Dublin, visited most of the principal towns in Ireland, with his usual celerity, though in the 84th year of his age. He may be truly considered as a prodigy of the present century, who at this advanced age rises every morning at four o’clock, preaches twice, frequently three times, and travels 40 or 50 miles a day; and, what is more extraordinary, remains a stranger to weariness.”

N.B. The date 1786 must be a mistake. Wesley was not in Ireland then. It should probably be 1787, when J. W. was “in the 84th year of his age.”

EXTRACT III.

“1791. The remains of Mr. Wesley, after lying in his Tabernacle [sic] in state, dressed in the gown, cassock, and band which he usually wore, and on his head the old clerical cap, the Bible in one hand and a white handkerchief in the other, were,

agreeably to his own directions, in the manner of the interment of the late Mr. Whitefield, deposited near his chapel at the Foundry, Moorfields, London."

MARMADUKE RIGGALL.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

451. "PLOUGHING THE SANDS."—Has any member drawn attention to the fact that this phrase, which has played a prominent part in the political controversies of recent years, is John Wesley's? In the *Journal*, Tuesday, 3 December, 1765, he writes, "I rode to Dover, and found a little company more united together than they have been for many years. Whilst several of them continued to rob the King, we seemed to be ploughing upon the sand: but since they have cut off the right hand, the word of God sinks deep into their hearts."
—*Mr. Robert Morgan.*

In a letter from Wesley to Rev. Walter Sellon, dated London, 30 December, 1766, the same phrase is used: "Are you tired with ploughing on the sand?"—*J.C.N.*

In response to the suggestion of Rev. R. Butterworth (*Proc. vii.*, p. 137) a number of names of "Existing Methodist chapels built previously to 1791" have been noted in the MSS. *Journals* of the W.H.S. The Editors will be glad to receive particulars of other such buildings, with photographs of any that are of special interest.