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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Volume XXXII

December 1960

EDITORIAL

WITH this issue of the *Proceedings* we end our thirty-second volume, the sixth with its present editor, who has now held the office single-handed longer than any of his predecessors. This is a suitable time at which to "take stock".

The General Index to our first thirty volumes, compiled by Mr. John A. Vickers, has now been published at 21s. Its closely-packed 61 pages are indispensable to every serious research student, and we hope it will have a wide sale. The printing costs have involved a heavy drain upon our funds, and we urge our members to place their orders quickly, with the reminder that any required volume of the *Proceedings* may be taken out on loan from our Library. Two members of our Society are working on supplementary volumes of Wesley's *Journal* and *Letters*, whilst a larger number are responsible for the British entries in an Anglo-American project, a *Dictionary of World Methodism*. One of the most encouraging signs of the times is that our older members no longer have the field to themselves: there is a goodly succession of younger men with specialized interests who will keep our Society very much alive for many years to come. Our membership is slowly growing, and our finances, though giving us no elbow-room for expansion, are at least stable. This brief, incomplete catalogue demonstrates quite clearly that our Society has by no means outlived its usefulness: we believe that the achievements of the past (*vide* our jubilee issue in March 1943) will be more than matched by the promise of the future.

Perhaps our finest hour was the opening of our Library at Wesley's Chapel last year. Those who attended the opening ceremony would be astonished and delighted to see the progress which has since been made through the devoted labours of our Librarian, Mr. Leslie E. S. Gutteridge. There are many gaps to be filled, but accessions are regular and frequent. Already our Library is unique—the only lending library of its kind in the world. Best of all, the Library is being used. How the founders of our Society, and especially our late President (whose collection formed the original nucleus), would rejoice!

THE COLLOQUIAL ELEMENT IN THE ENGLISH OF WESLEY'S "JOURNAL"

(Continued from page 165)

IV

Wesley's colloquialisms offer interesting hints and glimpses to the social historian. First, a group reflecting common life. The term "mob", already mentioned, had as its purely quantitative counterpart the term "heap". The phrase "heap of people" was colloquial. Wesley uses the word of a genteel crowd (iv, p. 392), of a large declension from a society (vi, p. 25—"heaps upon heaps"), and of disorder within a society (vii, p. 488).

Among the common amusements mentioned in the *Journal* there is "chuck-farthing", which was ranked as a national sport in Wesley's time. In his account of the mining village of Plessey he mentions "chuck" and "span-farthing" as if they were distinct games (iii, p. 73). "Chuck" is the slangy abbreviation of "chuck-farthing", which is itself the colloquial form of "span-farthing", originally "span-counter".

The delicacy which resorts to foreign words to veil natural functions and the like hardly existed in Wesley's day. A suicide in a lavatory is spoken of as taking place in "a necessary house" (iv, p. 133). This is certainly a little more delicate and more explicit than the simple "necessary", which besides meaning a privy could have sexual associations. The *S.O.E.D.* dates "necessary house" 1756. This Wesley instance occurs one year earlier.

Amongst the types of conveyance mentioned by Wesley is "the chariot" (e.g. v, p. 93), specifically a light carriage with back seats only. Correctly used, the term was Standard English, but it was a term which could hardly help becoming free in use. Perhaps there is a hint of such usage in *Letters*, iv, p. 255.

Wesley's horses are almost proverbial. One of its beasts had the habit of going "head over heels" (v, p. 361). This colloquial phrase originally ran "heels over head". Partridge dates the corruption from about 1770, which is exactly the year of the *Journal* entry, making this an interesting and valuable literary instance.

Next we may notice several terms which have geographical associations.

In 1784, on one of many visits to Newgate, Wesley preached to forty-seven people who were condemned to death. He says that their chains "clink" (vii, p. 41). In the language of slang, "clink" has long stood for "prison". The term was either dialect or slang, and it seems that Wesley, writing of prison, has selected it by process of association.

Rotherhithe in Cockney slang becomes "Redriff". The word is found in *Journal*, vi, p. 264, and there only in all Wesley's published

writings. The correct form Rotherhithe is frequent. "Redriff" appears often in an early diary (cf. *Journal*, ii, pp. 349-72). By what trick of mind does that solitary slang term escape?

A colloquial error is perpetuated in Wesley's use of the term "piazza", of a colonnade in or around a square. Correctly, a piazza is a square. The common usage is unmistakable in the reference to Lisburn (v, p. 113). When used of Truro (vi, p. 124) it is not quite clear whether it means the colonnade or the square or space itself.

The word "grounds" was widely and diversely used in dialect. Wesley reports hearing it at Shepton Mallet, and then uses it himself (iii, p. 332). It was the name for fields, i.e. enclosed farmland. Although long since obsolete, this instance in 1748 suggests that it lingered longer than some lexicographers have thought.

Some places gain a reputation as being "sinks of iniquity". The *Journal* states that Pill was "a sink of sin almost without equal" (iv, p. 243). A neighbourhood of the town of Whitby is referred to as "the sink" (vii, p. 400) in a way which is somewhere between a Standard English use, here meaning the town drain, and its full figurative use in relation to evil.

Several times Wesley drops into the inelegant but expressive custom of calling undesirable places "holes". The reference to Margam (v, p. 281) may be to altitude, but more than that is suggested. When the preaching-house at Waterford is described as "the most miserable hole which I have seen since I left England" (vi, p. 60), and the chapel at Sheriffhales called "a deplorable hole, formerly a stable" (vi, p. 488), the colloquial note is unmistakable. The *O.E.D.* states that this use of "hole" for an abode became colloquial about 1870. Dr. Johnson noted its contemptuous use. If the *O.E.D.* is right, we can only think that Wesley clearly anticipated the trend.

Another instance of this kind, though not so definite, is his use of the word "hit" in relation to track, road, and ford. He writes "We hit all our fords exactly" (iii, p. 280), and "we hit every turning" (iv, p. 139). He is impelling the term along that pathway which leads much later, and in very different circumstances, to the slang phrase "hit the trail".

Finally amongst these geographically-grouped terms may be mentioned "Line" for "Equator". This was perfectly good English, of course, but it often veered towards the colloquial. The word is written with a capital "L" in *Journal*, iv, p. 224. Elsewhere we find a sample of "vulgar" speech about the strength of the sun in relation to its position respecting the Equator (vi, p. 327).

Examples of the slang and jargon of the trades and professions exist in the *Journal*, and some of these may be grouped together at this point.

A bit of the jargon of business occurs appropriately in the way Wesley records his efforts to swell one of his many charitable funds. "I made a push," he writes, "for the lending stock" (v, p. 194).

From the language of sailors come the terms "avast" and "half-sea". The former occurs in the vivid account of an encounter with the crew of a privateer in Falmouth (iii, p. 189). Sailors generally used it to mean "stop" or "hold on". Here it seems to mean "stand back and let us have a try"—upon which the seamen charged down the door. The phrase "half-sea over", which at first sight suggests "tipsiness", in reality means mid-channel, and is used exactly in that sense in iv, p. 154, i.e. here half-way between Holyhead and Ireland. Partridge states that "half-sea" was nautical colloquial for mid-channel from about 1860, and that the phrase "half-seas over" meant the same thing in the sixteenth century, coming to mean "half-drunk" only in the seventeenth century. Has Wesley been influenced unwittingly by this latter meaning? Or was his phrase colloquial for "mid-channel" earlier than Partridge thinks? Whilst speaking of sailors and their slang we may notice the one place in the *Journal* where he uses the colloquial term "tar" (iv, p. 330). There we read of an "honest tar" who behaved badly at preaching.

Wesley's acquaintance with the law was considerable, and items of legal jargon occur here and there, as when with reference to the summary dismissal of cases brought by Methodists he writes "The Grand Jury threw out all the bills" (v, p. 509). Much legal procedure he scorned, as when he called a Chancery Bill "that foul monster". The tone he imparts to the words "A scroll it was of forty-two pages" has a slangy ring (iii, p. 157).

The medical profession, likewise, comes in for some of Wesley's keenest scorn. One of the bluntest of all his strictures is that which runs "the butcher (doctor so called)" (iv, p. 332). The term butcher has not been recorded as slang for doctor, though a common dialect word for "to be or act like a butcher" was "butch". One has heard surgeons called "butchers" in our own day, and similar figures have doubtless been used of the profession at many different times.

A colloquial simile which originally had associations with butchering, strictly speaking, is to "bleed like a pig". Wesley thus describes the effect of a wound maliciously inflicted upon his horse (v, p. 88). The phrase often ran "to bleed like a stuck pig".

We gather from Dr. Johnson that the term "shark" when used of a person was "low". Wesley speaks several times about "the human shark". The rogues who looked after the horses until the ships sailed he calls "these land sharks on our sea-coasts" (v, p. 307). When used of a pickpocket the term was thieves' cant; it was also slang for a customs officer and a press-gang. It may not be possible precisely to classify Wesley's use of the term, but there is no doubt that it is akin to these in tone and meaning.

The sense of familiar affectionate commendation has long been expressed by the phrase "good old". In the *Journal* we read of good old friends, sisters, paths, and so on. A "tough" congregation at Coleraine which turned out at six in the morning in spite of a high and

sharp wind, are called "good old soldiers" (vii, p. 286). The barrack-square, his place of preaching, may have suggested the figure just then, but the phrase was colloquial for an experienced campaigner.

The somewhat similar phrase "old standers" is found in *Journal*, vii, pp. 366, 386. Curnock, in a footnote, hints that the term is prompted by Wesley's being in Staffordshire, and that the figure is based on forestry. But the term is used in mining also, to mean "a pillar left for support". This would perhaps be more appropriate to Staffordshire, and almost certainly is more likely in the reference to Whitehaven. There is quite a possibility indeed that the term "stander" itself is not dialect, for it was Standard English in its literal sense, and in the sense of one of long standing in a profession. Still, "old stander" has a colloquial ring.

V

The *Journal* reveals the moods of all sorts and conditions of men, and Wesley's versatility in dealing with them.

The diversity of terms which describe human utterance would make a study in itself. Several times he writes of men as "bawling out". At Burnley, for instance, the town-crier "began to bawl amain" in order to stop the preaching (vi, p. 526). Incidentally, when Wesley records that the man's wife "clapped her hands on his mouth" he was very near to a common phrase which many considered to be low.

The volubility of people after a meeting, or after the imposed silence of worship, is almost proverbial. Wesley hits it off perfectly in his record about St. Stephen's Down, Cornwall (iii, p. 377): "Surely never was such a cackling made on the banks of Cayster or the Common of Sedgmoor." The river Cayster was celebrated in classical literature for its quantity of waterfowl. Strictly, "cackle" is slang only with the definite article, but Wesley's "a cackling" veers towards it.

The lively phrase "to box one's ears" may be seen in a typical setting in vi, p. 284. It is apposite in this context, though not dignified. Its conjunction with a most apt classical parenthesis is typical of the breadth of Wesley's mind.

The term "shake" in the sense of to cause to stagger with surprise, etc. has had a vogue in recent years. Wesley frequently used it, and sometimes in this very sense. The idea of shaking people over the mouth of hell by means of "hot" preaching is common enough. Wesley "shakes" his hearers by an application of 1 Corinthians xiii! (vi, pp. 83, 84). The modern slang is suggested once again when in his determination to keep the Methodist rules he says "that this would shake many of them" (iii, p. 68).

English settlers in Ireland were in the habit, in the seventeenth century at least, of distinguishing the native Irish from themselves by the term "Wild Irish". It is probable that Englishmen used the phrase in a more general but uncomplimentary way in the eighteenth century. At any rate Wesley made this entry in his *Journal* (iv, p.

180): "The only wild Irish whom I have yet seen, a knot of officers, were present . . . and behaved tolerably well". "Wild Irish" here cannot be synonymous with "Irishmen", for he had seen thousands. The phrase might have had for Wesley some political significance, but the small "w" suggests colloquial usage.

No one knew better than Wesley how futile religious argument could be. He avoided it where possible, but sometimes he became involved. How much better is his own description of such an experience: "He hooked me unawares into a little dispute" (v, p. 99). The term "hook" in the sense of catch or trick a person was considered to be low.

On one of the occasions when controversy could not be avoided, Wesley remarked that his opponent, Whitefield, had handled his arguments in such a gingerly fashion that he must have been afraid of "burning his fingers" (ii, p. 441). The phrase is usually in the nature of a warning not to do something. Wesley turns it into a statement of regret that something was not done.

The psychology of evangelicalism has sometimes been sentimental and unrealistic. One sign of Wesley's realism is his common language; slang is rarely sentimental. Some people, remembering Wesley's Arminianism, would be shocked if told that he said "he does not go to the Methodists, so all is well, he may go to the devil and welcome" (iv, p. 43). Whatever the theology, the phrase "go to the devil" was hard-worked slang. The "and welcome" is very interesting apart from its surprise, for Partridge gives it as colloquial, non-aristocratic from late nineteenth century. Wesley's use takes us back to the mid-eighteenth century.

A witty piece of pastoral theology occurs in the entry at vi, p. 502. Early-morning preaching was the indispensable condition of physical and spiritual health. Lazy preachers and people, he says, "grow cold by lying in bed". At five a.m. it was often warmer in bed than out of it, but the effort promoted warmth, spiritually for certain. The paradox is heightened by the current catch-phrase for one who was fussy about his health, viz. "He'd catch cold lying in bed".

The nineteenth-century phrase "not for the life of", with its note of exaggeration, previously ran in the simpler form "for life". Wesley used it several times. Earnest attention to preaching is, for example, spoken of as hearing "as for life" (vi, pp. 200, 284, etc.). The phrase occurs elsewhere (e.g. *Letters*, vi, p. 8), though with a different meaning, in the form "a chance for life", and its colloquial character is indicated by the parenthesis "as we say".

Wesley's sober, dignified taste in art and architecture is well seen in the *Journal*. The so-called Temple in Stowe Gardens (vi, p. 257) he calls "an ugly clumsy lump". Apart from its force as criticism, the phrase "ugly lump" was a common-speech form with strong and sometimes low associations.

The little clergyman well knows the language of the street, the

market, the homestead and the inn, and can use it with ease when needed. The following examples are typical of many others. Face to face with a group of men who are hinting at mismanagement and misappropriation by the leaders of the Revival, he listens for a time bewildered and amazed. Then he picks up a clue, and soon, as he says, "it all came out" (iii, p. 49).

The very common phrase "to be at the bottom of", meaning "to be the cause of", has usually an unpleasant ring. It may be seen in an everyday setting relating to a turbulent individual (v, p. 5), and in a more literary way relating to those whose rejection of the Bible, so Wesley thinks, leads them to reject witchcraft as "old wives' fables" (v, p. 265).

To reduce a man to silence by surprise or defeat is trenchantly expressed by such a phrase as "to leave him standing". At Hexham Wesley found a wild congregation, but preached to such good effect that he could say "we left them standing, and staring one at another" (iii, p. 288). The colloquial expression in this context well expresses literal fact and figurative meaning.

These glimpses of Wesley as revealed by his style may be concluded by noticing that he has sometimes recorded examples of how his opponents spoke of him, and of Methodism. In the Preface to the third part of the *Journal* (ii, p. 68), he echoes their derogatory phrase "such a fellow", and in iv, p. 43, he notes the term's use about the preachers generally.

There were some who thought Wesley was fanatical or unbalanced. When this was put in the form of "Enthusiast", he took care to repudiate the charge. Doubtless such opinions were often put in more colloquial speech. A man told him to his face at Bradford-on-Avon that at Oxford they thought he was "crack-brained" (ii, p. 243).

The strength and nature of anti-Methodist feeling may be studied in the controversial literature, running into many volumes. Another way of looking at the matter is by means of the colloquialisms which the Revival used and those it evoked. A colloquialism occurring in a letter incorporated in the *Journal* (iii, p. 222) speaks volumes: said a lady, "I . . . could not abide the Methodists".

VI

The words and phrases gathered together in this section have either some literary association or some distinctive lexicographical interest.

If the reader looks up the phrase "animal spirits" in the *S.O.E.D.* he will find it given as colloquial for "nervous vivacity" and dated 1739. Partridge gives the same literary reference (Jane Austen), but dates its colloquial life from c. 1810. Wesley's *Journal* supports the earlier date. He reports hearing the term in 1739 itself (ii, p. 328), where it reads like common speech. It occurs also on pp. 329 and 494 of that volume. It is found again in the *Works* in 1784 (x, p. 475 and xi, p. 517), and Wesley's parenthesis in each case reveals it

as common speech for "high-spirits". The psychology does not here concern us.

After reading a tract on Freemasonry, Wesley wrote "If it be [true] what an amazing banter upon all mankind is Freemasonry" (v, p. 514). Swift considered the term "banter" low in origin and use, and did his utmost to stamp it out. Wesley here uses it as a substantive to mean "imposition". Partridge gives the slang life of this usage as from about 1685 to about 1820. Literary instances are not plentiful.

At Terryhoogan, Ireland, Wesley spent a night in a tiny room which he calls "the prophet's chamber" (iv, p. 379), concerning which he notes "The ceiling, floor and walls were all of the same marble, vulgarly called clay". If he had written "clay vulgarly called marble" it would not be more enigmatic. The present writer has found no appropriate slang, colloquial or dialect use of the word "clay" for marble. Perhaps the room had a clay-slate interior, but would Wesley have called this marble? Perhaps he heard an Irish word which he has rendered phonetically as "clay".

Twice in the *Journal* Wesley reports conversations which contained the word "damned" as an intensive adjective (i, p. 261 and ii, p. 319). The printed *Journal* gives only the terminal letters of the word joined by a dash. Partridge states that the word was Standard English until about 1800. Wesley's sensitiveness about the term, if indeed the device is his and not his editor's, may be explained by his view that it was overworked, meaningless and coarse.

An educated man may drop into incorrect or loose forms of speech. A good example from the *Journal* (vi, p. 429) runs "We hired a coach for Rotterdam at half-a-crown per head". The phrase "per head" comes into popular speech by way of the legal "per capita", which, of course, it does not translate. Wesley would not fall into the modern barbarism, as Fowler calls it, of writing "per capita" to mean "each person", but a purist would not commend the easy-going phrase "per head" where the word "each" would serve perfectly.

Wesley wrote about a certain lady that she was "the picture of friendliness and hospitality" (vi, p. 427). Phrases like "the picture of health" are said by Partridge to have become colloquial a little before 1870. The *S.O.E.D.* dates the pre-colloquial use of the term in the sense of "type" or "illustration" from about 1656. This *Journal* instance is about mid-way between these dates, and its colloquial character suggests that Partridge's date should be put back some years.

Quite often Wesley brings together as dual adjectives, or as adjective and noun, words which are in their literal meaning contradictory. Thus he speaks of a man recently deceased as "the poor rich man" (v, p. 435). Curnock accepts the suggestion that this recalls some lines of Cowley. However, it is equally probable that the use of "poor" here is colloquial in the sense of "pitiable". This usage is even more common about the dead than the living.

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by

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ERRATA

VOL. XXXI.

Page 176, line 20. For "3rd Edition" read "4th Edition"

VOL. XXXII.

Page 69, line 31. For "East" read "West"

Page 96. The reference in the text to footnote 2 should be attached to the earlier quotation, commencing "Poor Beverly Allen . . ."

[The Index has been compiled by our Assistant Secretary, the Rev. Thomas Shaw, of Truro, to whom our gratitude is hereby expressed.—
EDITOR.]

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Another *Journal* word which Curnock considered to need a comment is "show" (i, p. 330), but the mere note that the term occurs in Shakespeare, Milton, and Addison, is ambiguous. It is not certain what Wesley means by it. It appears to relate to the alleged engagement of Miss Sophy Hopkey and Williamson, which he thought was being pretended so as to spur him (Wesley) on. It would owe more to common than to literary usage. It was on the way to becoming colloquial. If by it Wesley means "affair" or "matter" it anticipates later slang, and would have interest on that account.

The last term to be considered is "True-Blues", which is either self-styled or a nickname for a group of Volunteers which filled the front gallery of the preaching-room at Aughrim (vi, p. 188). Since long before Wesley's time "true-blue" has been colloquial for staunchly faithful. As a proper name, its life was short and localized. This is one more instance of Wesley's quick ear for common speech, and interest in local life.

VII

The *Journal* has long been celebrated as a mirror of eighteenth-century Britain. One reason why it is such good reading is that it contains much of the vulgar tongue. Its style, so far as the personal element is concerned, is nearer to that of the novelist than the chronicler's or traveller's. It would require a lengthy study to work this out fully. Two simple comparisons should be enough to whet the appetite of any interested student. If the *Journal* and the *Letters* are compared with Ned Ward's *London Spy*, their linguistic similarities will be surprising to many people. Similarly, if Wesley's writings were put alongside Anthony Trollope's novels, for example, it would appear at once how largely idiomatic and conversational Wesley's style often is.

GEORGE LAWTON.

Probably no publication of John Wesley achieved so wide a sale or excited so much curiosity as *Primitive Physick*. We are therefore confident that the reprint published by the Epworth Press (pp. 127, 12s. 6d.) will not be a drug on the market. This edition contains the full text of Wesley's 824 remedies for 288 "diseases", together with his Preface, as they appeared in the twenty-third (1791) edition. Eighteen pages of erudite and useful introduction are contributed by so competent an authority as Dr. A. Wesley Hill.

The pleasure with which we greet this reprint is tinged with regret that the opportunity was not taken to include a list of editions and an indication of the differences in their contents. Space might also have been found for the inclusion of Wesley's lesser-known medical work, *The Desideratum: or Electricity made Plain and Useful*. Our final grumble is that Wesley's original final *k* is omitted from the title, which now appears as *Primitive Physic*. However, we are glad that a new generation can now assess the splendid work which Wesley did in the sphere of healing through this rudimentary "Home Doctor", though readers should be warned that the National Health Service now provides cheaper and more effective remedies for the sufferer of today.

THREE WESLEY LETTERS

THE "unceasing effort and liberal outlay" which John Telford expended in his search for Wesley letters when preparing his eight-volume Standard Edition did not result in a complete collection, as he himself realized. Fresh letters constantly make their appearance: three more have recently emerged from their long obscurity, and are printed here for the first time. The first letter came as a gift to our Society's Library from the Misses Tomkins, of Coaticook, Quebec, Canada. The second and third letters recently came up for sale at Sotheby's. They were bought by Epworth Secondhand Books, whose manager, Mr. Leslie Gutteridge, kindly allowed me to transcribe them before they were offered for resale.

I

Many Wesley letters turn up in distant lands because they have travelled there with their owners as family heirlooms, but our first letter has come from Canada because that was its rightful home. It was sent to John Stretton, of Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, an Irishman from Limerick whose name figures largely in the story of Methodist origins in Canada. He removed to Newfoundland about 1770, became a local preacher, and built a chapel at Harbour Grace at his own expense. It was the first Methodist chapel in Eastern British America, and "in the absence of any regularly appointed minister, he continued for years to conduct stated services".¹ Alexander Sutherland, in his *Methodism in Canada*, states that of all the pioneers of Newfoundland Methodism, John Stretton must have the foremost place.

JOHN WESLEY TO JOHN STRETTON

London

March 9, 1786

My Dear Brother,

The opposition of Mr. Balfour was only intended to exercise your trust in God. And the issue of it is an additional proof, that our Lord has all power in Heaven & Earth. I believe before you have lived a year longer, you will [have?] all the advantages wch your Brethren in the Southern Provinces have. The more proof you have of him, the more you will be convinced, that John M^cgeary is a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed. His one care is, to follow Christ:

To trace his Example
The World to disdain
And constantly trample
On Pleasure & Pain.

I am,

Your Affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

The superscription is:

To / Mr. John Stretton / in / Harbour Grace

The story of the introduction of Methodism into Newfoundland can be read in full in the first volume of the *History of the Wesleyan*

¹ Crookshank's *History of Methodism in Ireland*, i, p. 169.

Methodist Missionary Society, and it is necessary to mention here only those points which help to elucidate the letter.

Mr. Balfour was the episcopal missionary, probably under the authority of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He does not appear to have looked favourably upon Methodist work. John McGeary, like Stretton, was an Irishman. Wesley had a "long conversation" with him at Bristol in September 1784, and describes him as "one of our American preachers, just come to England. He gave me a pleasing account of the work of God there continually increasing, and vehemently importuned me to pay one more visit to America before I die."²

In April 1785 McGeary was helping Joseph Taylor in the Gloucester circuit. Wesley described him at that time as "an active, zealous man", and in October of the same year sent him to Newfoundland in response to an appeal made by Stretton the previous autumn. This was the first appearance of Newfoundland on the "Stations". Stretton was pleased with McGeary, and thought him "a good man and a good preacher", but within a few weeks "everything here appears so disagreeable to Mr. McGeary that I fear he will not abide long".³ Just over a year later Wesley wrote to William Black in Nova Scotia: "Poor John McGeary appears to be utterly discouraged, not only through want of success, but through want of the conveniences, yea, necessities of life."⁴ McGeary, moreover, did not get on too well with either the lay preachers or the episcopal missionary,⁵ and when he imprudently married the daughter of a planter without her father's consent, his influence was ended. In the autumn of 1788 he returned to England, "leaving little or no fruit of his labours behind him, save dissentions and heart-burnings".⁶ At the following Conference he was appointed to Redruth, but in 1790 he was back again in Newfoundland, where he stayed for two years. In 1792 he returned to the English work, but in 1793 his name appears in the *Minutes* amongst those who "desist from travelling". Sutherland suggests that McGeary's instability is a proof that "even Wesley, with his remarkable penetration, did not always 'size up' his men correctly."⁷

The four lines which close the letter are from *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749), Vol. II, Part II, No. 17 in the section "Hymns for Christian Friends" (*Poetical Works*, v, p. 427). It appears as the first verse of hymn 484 in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*.⁸

It is interesting to note that Ireland gave to Newfoundland its first lay and itinerant preachers, and also that the present Premier of Newfoundland is an honoured member of our Society.

² *Journal*, vii, p. 23.

³ Sutherland: *Methodism in Canada*, p. 110.

⁴ *Letters*, vii, p. 371.

⁵ *ibid.*, viii, p. 48.

⁶ Sutherland, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁸ The original version in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* read "To track Thy example", but this was altered to "trace" in 1780 and so remained. On the other hand, the first edition of the 1780 *Collection* read "And joyfully trample . . .", but this was altered back to the original "constantly trample" in the second and subsequent editions.

II

Whittlebury in Northamptonshire is not exactly the hub of the universe, but it was a place very dear to Wesley's heart. It is a hamlet on the road from Towcester to Buckingham, a little to the west of the old Watling Street.⁹ Methodism came to Whittlebury in 1760 through the preaching of Thomas Grover,¹⁰ and tradition says that the first Methodist society was formed by John Murlin.

Elizabeth Padbury, to whom this letter was sent, was the eldest of thirteen children born to Thomas and Judith Padbury. She was born in 1751, and her father was a farmer and baker. The first services were held in his house (now the village post-office), and he became a pillar of the Methodist society. Wesley visited the hamlet more than twenty times, and once described the society as "the flower of all our societies in the circuit, both for zeal and simplicity".¹¹ An article in the *Methodist Times*¹² stated that on one occasion Wesley was accompanied to Whittlebury by Fletcher and Coke, and that they all stayed at Padbury's house. Telford gives a variant of this story: "Wesley once met his brother Charles and Fletcher at Whittlebury",¹³ but I can find no evidence to substantiate either version.

The building of the little chapel at Whittlebury was begun in 1763, but local opposition, led by the rector, delayed its completion for nearly twenty years. It was finally opened in 1783, and Wesley gave three donations totalling £14 towards its cost. Though it was enlarged in 1812, the chapel, still in use, seats only one hundred people. The society account book, begun in 1762, contained many interesting items relating to Wesley's visits. Unfortunately the book has disappeared, but some of its contents are given in the *Methodist Times* article referred to.

JOHN WESLEY TO MISS ELIZABETH PADBURY

Janu. 10. 1783.

My Dear Sister

It is not an easy thing for me, to refuse any thing which *you* desire. As soon as Dr. Coke return's to London, (which I suppose will be in two or three weeks) I doubt not but George Whitfield will be ready, to take up his cross again. It is certain there is an absolute necessity that something should be done. And it should be done as soon as you possibly can, for fear the Roof sh^d fall in. I hope *you* are gaining ground daily. I love you much & am, My Dear Betsy,

Yours most affectionately,

J. WESLEY

The superscription is :

To / Miss Padbury, / At Whittlebury / near / Towcester.

Whittlebury seems to be a classic example of an obscure village cause, with a distinguished history, which would have remained unknown but for Wesley's connexion with it. There must be many such in Methodism. Elizabeth Padbury and her family have earned

⁹ Not on Watling Street, as Telford states.¹⁰ See Wesley's account in *Journal*, vi, p. 43.¹² 27th January 1910.¹¹ *Journal*, vi, p. 214.¹³ *Letters*, vii, p. 193.

immortal fame for a little hamlet where Wesley was so often a welcome guest.

III

This letter is perhaps the least interesting of the three, for it adds nothing to our biographical or historical knowledge. Its recipient, Miss Jane Hilton of Beverley, was one of Wesley's frequent correspondents in his later years, for thirty-six letters addressed to her are printed in the *Standard Letters*. Thirty-two of them, indeed, were made available after her death by one of her sons for publication in Thomas Jackson's edition of the *Works*.

JOHN WESLEY TO MISS JANE HILTON

London

Feb. 2. 1769

My Dear Sister,

I have not rec^d any Letter from you, since that of Dec^r 11th. I almost wondered, that you did not write & began to fear, you had almost forgot me: So that your last gave me Joy mixt with Grief. I was grieved that you sh^d be under any Concern. And yet I cou'd not but feel a very sensible Joy, at having a fresh proof of your Affection. Never think, my Dear Friend, that my Affection for you can be lessened, by the Freedom with w^{ch} you speak or write. This is the most endearing Circumstance of all. Pour out your soul without reserve. I shall be the better instructed how to write. And certainly if I observe any thing amiss, I will tell you. For I know God has given you a teachable spirit. From *me*, at least, you can bear any thing: For I believe there are not many persons, whom you love better.

Do you never lose your sense of y^e Presence of God? Do you always pray? And in every thing give thanks? Does He "bid you even in sleep go on"? Does the enemy get no advantage over you in Dreams? What do you commonly dream of? Are you still sensible of God, when you wake, at night, or in the morning? Does your Soul ascend to Him continually?

My Dear Jenny,
Adieu!

The superscription is:

To / Jenny Hilton / In Beverley / Yorkshire

Jane Hilton was the daughter of Francis Hilton, a "respectable shoemaker" of Beverley, in whose house Methodist services in the town were first held. Wesley's first preaching in Beverley was "in Mr. Hilton's yard, near the great street in Beverley" in July 1759. Jane became a Methodist in September 1764, and Wesley's extant correspondence with her begins two years later. The letter printed above follows the pattern of the other thirty-six: they are all concerned almost entirely with spiritual counsel. Almost the only facts they contain are that Miss Hilton consulted Wesley about her proposed marriage to Mr. William Barton (which took place shortly after the present letter was written), and later about their temporary removal to Hull; and Wesley in one letter advised her to drink nettle-tea. Mrs. Barton died in August 1826, and an extended biographical notice appeared in the *Methodist Magazine*, 1828, pp. 222 ff.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

JOHN WESLEY, ORDINARY

WHO was John Wesley's ecclesiastical superior while he was in Georgia? The answer helps to explain his ready acceptance of the position maintained in Lord Peter King's book (*Journal*, iii, p. 232).

Wesley's appointment was made by the Trustees of Georgia. Their "Transactions" for 10th October 1735 read: "Authorised the said Revd Mr John Wesley to perform all Religious and Ecclesiastical Offices in the said new Town [Savannah]". When revoked on 26th April 1738 the words "in the said new Town" are replaced by "in Georgia".

Wesley was not licensed by the Bishop of London, as is shown by the circumstances surrounding the appointment of his successor, who until his appointment was not an ordained clergyman. Item 3 of the Trustees' "Transactions" for 5th July 1738 reads:

The Revd Mr Norris attended, being last Sunday ordained Deacon by the Bishop of London, who promised to ordain him Priest the Sunday following, but the Bishop (as he informed us) is very angry with the Trustees, for not yielding that those we send to Georgia to preach should take a license from him, and threatens to try his right with us at law.

We always opposed his Lordships lycensing our Minister because in that case we should not be able to remove a bad one without expense and much loss of time, unless his Lordship consented thereto . . . and we think it better for the Souls of our people that a good man should by our mistake be removed, if such a case should happen, than that a bad one should be continued by the Bishop. Besides it is doubtful if the Bishop has a right to insist on lycensing Ministers for Georgia, it being a Province newly erected, and since the power given him by his Majesty to license for America. His power also is only from the Secretary of State.

A week later:

Mr William Norris attended and acquainted us that the Bishop had . . . confer'd Priests orders on him . . .

He added that the Bishop had also given him his licence but that he (Mr Norris) did not ask for it.

That his Lordship had also advised him not to split on the Rock his Predecessor had done, meaning Mr Jo Wesley.

The Bishop's sliding his license into Mr Norris's hand unasked and contrary (as he well knew to the minds of the Trustees) was an artifice to maintain his pretended jurisdiction within our Province. However we past [sic] it by as of no consequence to our own right, who think ourselves the Ordinaries¹ of our Province; For should his Lordship upon any false suggestions recall that Licence, and we think fit to continue Mr Norris, that Recall would be of no Effect.

We made out and Seal'd his Commission to perform Ecclesiastical offices in Georgia, and deliver'd him some short instructions to follow.

¹ The *Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines an Ordinary as "An ecclesiastical judge; one who has ordinary and immediate jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters. In the Anglican Church the bishop is the ordinary of his own diocese."

Hence it can be seen that the Trustees (in accordance with their Charter which gave complete religious freedom) "always opposed his Lordship's lycensing our Ministers" on the ground that he had no jurisdiction in their colony.

The position of the Bishop of London in relation to the American Colonies was, to say the least, peculiar.² When Bishop Gibson was translated to London he searched for the legal basis of his alleged authority across the Atlantic, and found none. Therefore he obtained Letters Patent under the Great Seal dated 31st October 1726, which lapsed with the death of George I and had to be renewed under George II on 29th April 1728. These Letters Patent empowered him to undertake visitation of the churches, to discipline priests and deacons, and to appoint Commissaries to exercise delegate jurisdiction "in respect of Colonies, plantations, and other places under English rule in America according to the Laws and Canons of the English Church".³ Although he did appoint Commissaries in various provinces, they experienced many difficulties. In Royal Colonies real power was in the hands of the vestries: some would refuse to have a clergyman inducted, so that his position was more that of a chaplain and he could be dismissed at their will. In the Proprietary Colonies real power rested with the proprietors (including the appointment of a Governor), and the Commissioner could not do his work without the proprietors' approval. Georgia, as will be seen above, was further peculiar in that it was granted a charter after the Bishop's jurisdiction was defined. Whether the Trustees or the Bishop were in the right is a nice legal point, but the Bishop did not appoint a Commissary, nor did he place Georgia under the charge of Mr. Garden in Carolina.

The Trustees' claim to be "Ordinaries" in Georgia is obviously vitiated by their lay status; but their use of the word reminds us that Wesley was charged with using it of himself (*Journal*, i, p. 386), "thereby claiming a jurisdiction which we believe is not due to him and whereby we should be precluded from access to redress by any superior jurisdiction". In common with many other charges against him, this charge reads as if it had a real basis in fact and that Wesley's defence would have been "true but no offence". Though he objects when a Mr. Hugh Anderson joins in and adds to the charge (*Journal*, i, p. 398), the original charge rests upon a conversation when Causton was present (p. 390), and no attempt is made to deny this by his defenders in their letter to the Trustees (p. 395).

In other words, long before Wesley read Lord Peter King's book asserting that bishops and presbyters were equal in order but different in that the presbyter "could not actually discharge the particular Acts of his Ministerial Function without leave from the Bishop of a Parish or Diocese", he had himself discharged the "particular

² See Norman Sykes's *Edmund Gibson*.

³ Public Records Office Patent Rolls 1—14 George II, p. 48, No. 16.

acts of his Ministerial Function without" the Bishop's leave, and had claimed in Georgia that immediate jurisdiction which in England is exercised by the bishop as the ordinary of the diocese.

When Wesley read King he remembered Georgia, and the book had an immediate acceptance with him. Georgia prepared the way for many of the later features of Methodism, and not least for the events of 2nd September 1784. VICTOR E. VINE.

OUR BRANCHES AND KINDRED SOCIETIES

The fifteenth annual issue of *Bathafarn*, the Journal of the Historical Society of the Methodist Church in Wales, contains only one article in English. It is an important and authoritative account of the first Methodist Society in Wales (at Cardiff) by the editor, Mr. A. H. Williams. . . . Our New Zealand Branch sends a handful of local histories, which are their version of our *Proceedings*. Their Society has 325 members, and a healthy financial position. . . . The latest *Journal and Proceedings* of the Australasian Methodist Historical Society, Sydney, and *Heritage*, the Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of Victoria, are both to hand, and show that our friends "down under" are maintaining their fine traditions. . . . The second issue of the *Journal* of our Cornish Branch is as good as the first. Its varied contents include articles on "Meeting House Licences at Quarter Sessions", "Cornish Chapels which may have followed the City Road style", and "Tracking early chapels", together with an account of three local pilgrimages by our Cornish members. Both the enterprise and the magazine of our Cornish friends are to be highly commended. . . . The eleventh Bulletin of the Society of Cirplanologists contains much interesting information about early Plans, "Some reflections on Plan printing", by a printer, and the promise of the publication in the spring of a Register of pre-1861 Plans.

The second issue of *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion* contains a valuable list of "Documentary Materials for the Study of Sierra Leone Church History", by A. F. Walls, including four pages relating to Methodism. . . . The Epworth Press has re-issued as a "paperback" Bernard Martin's biography of John Newton under the new title of *An Ancient Mariner* (pp. 240, 3s. 6d.). This is a revised edition with additional material, and it is a pleasure to commend again this excellent study of one of the leaders of the evangelical revival, previously reviewed in *Proceedings*, xxviii, p. 42. . . . *The Glorious Company*, by Frederick C. Gill (Epworth Press, pp. vi, 231, 15s.) is the second and final volume of "Lives of Great Christians for Daily Devotion". Fletcher, Adam Clarke, Susanna Wesley and George Whitefield are amongst the Methodists whose biographies appear. This is an excellent book, but why, oh why, is the type so small, especially for bedside reading? . . . *Trewint in its historical setting*, by Thomas Shaw (pp. 8, 8d. post paid from the author at The Manse, Probus, Truro, Cornwall) is a little guide to the famous Isbell cottage. All the known facts are here for the benefit of the hundreds of summer visitors to this little Methodist shrine. . . . Reginald Kissack has written *Methodists in Italy* (Cargate Press, pp. 40, 2s.). Essentially an *apologia*, this booklet includes a valuable account of the history of Methodism in Italy, a story which deserves to be widely known.