More Penn Correspondence, Ireland, 1669-1670

The letters to William Penn in July and August, 1670, published in these pages in 1946, when added to his own detailed diary for the preceding eight months, make this Irish visit one of the best known periods in the whole life of the Quaker Founder of Pennsylvania. For this reason it seems worthwhile to add here three or four more pieces belonging to the same period.

William Penn to the Mayor of Dublin

This first contribution is derived from the Letterbook of William Penn in the Granville Penn Collection at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It is without date, but according to Penn’s diary for November 5, 1669, “A paper by way of address” was prepared at the National Meeting of Friends, then meeting in Dublin, and “was carried by William Morris and William Penn to the Mayor who abused them but did not relieve the prisoners of the city.” The Mayor of Dublin in 1669–1670 was Lewis Desmynieres. The letter is written the same day as the interview. The unknown copyist gives no date or address. For the latter, William Penn supplies a destination that has nothing to do with Ireland nor with the particular year 1669. That it was addressed to the Mayor of Dublin seems to be asserted by an unknown scribe against Penn’s own memory and on the basis of the separate “paper” from which it was copied into the letter book. One cannot be sure that this assignment is correct.

1 The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB), LXX (1946), 349–372.
2 Ibid., XL (1916), 46–84. A fresh transcript of this diary with resolution of abbreviations and adequate notes is in an advanced state of preparation and should be published shortly.
3 For a description of this volume, see Ibid., LXVIII (1944), 421–422.
Friend,

It is the Duty of a Magistrate to hear & redress the Oppressed, not to revile them.

I came this Morning in Love to thy Person, & due Respect to thy place, in the behalfe of some imprisoned Friends, and with an address (I think) unblameable: But instead of an Entertainment, becoming so innocent an Application, I and They were most abusively called Rogues, Raskalls, inhuman Rogues, Whelps, deserving to be lasht out of the Town & sent to Barbadoes, and our Paper refused with scorn, & with the greatest Detestation flung to the ground.

What thinkest thou of this Usage? Was it the Good, the Temperate and Mercyfull Spirit in thee, or the Contrary? In what Chapter & Verses in Scripture or the Laws of the Land may the like Passages be found? but are they not expresly contrary to both?

Let me tell thee, that if we were as Contentious, as thou hast shown thyself Injurious, this Treatment would find a resurrection to thy great Disprofit.

But as becomes the Patient & Afflicted Followers of Jesus Christ, who by the Priests & Rulers of his time, with all his Servants, became matter of Reproach & great Tribulation, we heartily forgive thee, & desire that God Almighty would overrule thy Passions & overcome thee with his Spirit of Moderation, that in all things thou mayst better become thy place & answer the Just & mercyfull Ends of Laws & Government, I am what once I was (when better known to thee, & much more in reality).

Thy True Friend,

WP

SIR WILLIAM PENN TO WILLIAM PENN

Although some letters of the son to the Admiral from later in 1670 have been repeatedly published, no letter of this period in the reverse direction is known to me in print. The following letter, dated, but without place of writing, comes from The Historical Society of Pennsylvanias collection. It is an original and has a seal. Its

introductory words remind us of the oft-quoted dying testimony of
the Admiral as reported by the survivor, "Son William, if you and
your friends keep to your plain way of preaching and keep to your
plain way of living you will make an end of the priests to the end of
the world." It is a pitiful and somewhat petulant note of a dying
father. The son's diary mentions writing to his father on November
20, November 27, January 8, January 23-24 and March 9, but not
later, and the last date is well over six weeks before the date of the
Admiral's complaint. The diary also has frequent references to visits
with "old Robert Southwell," e.g., April 21 and May 19, as well as
with Cousin Rooth and Cousin William Penn.

April 29 (70)
Sonne William this comes inclosed in my letter to Mr. Southwell
with whom I would have you ajust your account between us & give
him a faire aquitance. If he can within one month send the ballance
of it to mee as I have desired him its well other wise you must
receipt & send it with what else you can spedely. Mr. Southwell is
my good ould friend & I would have you according value & respect
him. I wish you had well don al the business there & that you were
here for I find myselfe to decline. But I would have that grand
things so substantially effected as that wee may have no more futer
desputes or neglects in payment of rent which at hand is dangerous
but much more so remote. I have writ you that Capt. Rooth I intend
to imploy after your departure for my Cozen Will Pen as clarke of
the cheque for two years so that it would be necessary you fully
informe him the true estate of al things. I have answered every
particuller of all your letters but have received no answer of myne
nor so much as one line from you this 5 weeks as I take it, though
I know others that have very lately which I canot easely dejest for
I am sure I have deserved your duty if I never havet it shal not
be my folte. Since my last by the help of John wren I have found
that your mother whilst I was at sea received seventy nine pounds
8s (the other 12s was it seems give to One of the Treasurer's clarkes)

to son, in October, 1667, begin the same way. These are printed in PMHB, XL (1916), 46.

For brief notes on these three men, see PMHB, LXX (1946), 368, 369.
this you must allow him upon clearing his accompt. Pray keep out of harmes waie & the God of mercy direct & preserve you

I am your very affectionate father

W Penn

[Addressed] For William Penne Esqr. /These/ in the county of Corke

[Seal]

ORRERY TO WILLIAM PENN

Roger Boyle (1621–1679), later Baron Broghill and still later first Earl of Orrery, was an old acquaintance of William Penn the elder and of his son. When the latter was arrested in Cork in 1667 and imprisoned by the Mayor, Christopher Rye, he appealed by letter to Broghill, who, as President of Munster, was able to overrule the magistrates and to release the young Quaker. Now three years later the new Mayor had seized some books of William Penn’s—probably the first form of his Great Case of Liberty of Conscience. The following entries in his diary in May, 1670, explain the situation:

13. I was with the Mayor about my books. He abused me with names as coxcomb, jackanapes, fellow, fool, etc.

16. . . . sent a letter to Charleville . . .

20. I received a packet from the Lord Bryan from Charleville. The Mayor upon a letter to him returned the books.

Penn’s letter to Charleville of May 16 was almost certainly addressed to the Earl of Orrery about the books impounded by the Mayor of Cork. It is not preserved and may not have been as extensive as the earlier eloquent letter of appeal. But the answer is extant in original manuscript in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania and is printed below. Orrery, or Broghill as he still signs himself, had resigned as Lord President of Munster in 1668, but the Earl of Inchiquin, Murrough O’Brien (1614–1674), had influence there, having been made Vice-President of Munster on March 5, 1670. He evidently ordered the Mayor to return the books. Broghill’s

7 That is preserved at least in print. See Thomas Wight, History of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers in Ireland, John Rutty, ed. (Dublin, 1751), 113–114.

8 Granville Penn Papers, 11.
letter breathes the spirit of personal friendship and encouragement. In connection with his reference to Penn as a writer, it should be recalled that Broghill himself was a man of letters and a poet.

Charleavill the 18 of May 1670

Sir:

Soe soone as I received your letter I shewed itt to my Brother o'Bryen who hath promissed mee to doe some thing for you; Had I as much power as formerly I have had, itt should be imployed to serve you, & in the Capacity I now am in I'le doe you what Kindefnesse I can; I much wonder that the Major of Corke should give any Gentleman bee hee of what Religion or sect soe ever such ill Language as you send me word he gave you, for severall sorts of Religion, is but variety of opinions, which certainly cannot make any man degenerate from beeing a Gentleman who was borne soe, & although the Major of Corke & you differ about Religion yet he ought to shew you that Civility as your birth requiers; I shall come very speedely to Corke & then I'le gitt him to deliver you y're books. I hope to see you write ere long as much in the defence of the Protestant religion, as you have for the profession of the Quaquers, which I am sure will bee a greate satisfaction to all your freinds & in particular to

Sir, your assured freind &
servant Broghill

[Addressed] ffor my esteemed freind /William Penn Esqr. att/ Corke

MARY PENINGTON TO JOHN PENINGTON

Throughout Penn’s stay in Ireland he was accompanied by John, eldest son of Isaac and Mary Penington, now in his middle teens. The following letter to him from his sister Mary was, therefore, addressed to him in Ireland, and evidently came into the Public Record Office in much the same way as the letters published in these pages in 1946. They were filed among the Irish State Papers and subsequently calendared in that series. This letter showed no Irish connections and was, therefore, filed in the State Papers Domestic (Car. II. 441 No. 70). It was omitted when these were first calendared, hence it was not included in the Extracts from State Papers
relating to Friends, edited by Norman Penney, 1913. It was included in the Charles II Addenda of the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, pages 307 ff. Although this was published in 1939, it was not available to me until 1947 after the war and too late for me to include it as I should have done with the other letters addressed to William Penn and his associates in Ireland.

The date and the absence of any address suggest that this sheet was an enclosure in the letter to William Penn of Gulielma Maria Springett of the 16th of 5 mo. 1670, printed in The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXX (1946), 356–359. It was probably intercepted with the other and so came into the State Papers. But when these were separated, sorted, and numbered, its connection with Ireland or William Penn was naturally lost sight of, and it remained in the domestic collection. The handwriting and spelling of this letter are a credit to this thirteen-year-old girl and to her tutor Thomas Ellwood.

My dear Brother,

The reason why I have not written unto thee in so long a time is because I did expect thee home suddenly and therefore my mother did think when thou didst come home to dispose of thee att London and that I should go with thee to London to Jean Bullocks; but seeing thy coming home is so uncertain I think I shall go to London shortly yet I should have been glad off thy company. My mother was at London about a Fortnight ago and heard of one that was come from Barbados that he did think my Brother Isaac might be come home within three or four weekes so I suppose I may see him before I shall see thee. My Father went to Reading not long since to visit friends in prison. But the Jealer through malice and hearing who it was sent to William Amorer who sending For him tendered him the

9 Jane Bullock was presumably already a Quaker schoolmistress, although our references to her as head of the girls' school at Shacklewell in Hackney come from 1677, when she or/and the school were in difficulties (see Norman Penney, ed., The Short Journal and Itinerary Journals of George Fox [Cambridge, 1925], 305, and the manuscript minutes of the Six Weeks Meeting for 1677). She died at Tottenham 1 mo. 31, 1687, when she was described in the burial records as of South Street, Edmonton.

10 On Isaac Penington (1656–1670), see PMHB, LXX (1946), 358 (note 25), and for the probable informant, William Bayly, Ibid., 357 (note 24).

11 Sir William Armorer, a notorious persecutor of Friends. Ibid., (note 22).
oath and so sent him to prison. My mother hath not yet been to see him and doth not know whether she may not be imprisoned also and therefore she thinketh to tarry till we are disposed of.

I do now think the time long before I see thee. I desire thee to remember my love to WP and PF. I have little else at the present besides my very dear love to thy self and so I conclude my self.

the 14th of the 5th month

1670

Thy truly loving sister

Mary Penington

E W doth desire her
dear love to thee and
W P and P F and M S doth remember her love
to thee and to W and P F

Since the writing hereof J. Giger came from my father who was at the sessions at Abington where he was again tendered the oath notwithstanding his pleading that there was no occasion of tendering the oath unto him seeing he came to visit Friends.

Cambridge, Mass.

Henry J. Cadbury

12 The following manuscript record of this event, giving the date and other details, has perhaps not been printed before and may be quoted in extenso: "The last day of the 4th mo. 1670 Isaac Penington came to Reading to visit Friends there in prison and being in prison the next day John Thorp sent John Manerly his turnkey, as he himself confessed to acquaint W A of I P's being in the prison who immediately sent Philip Newlan Constable and his own man to fetch I P before him to his house, and I P being come before him W A said, Have you taken the Oath of Allegiance? I P's answer: That is not a proper question to me at this time. W A: You shall know it is proper, for if you will not take it, you shall go to Gaol, or words to that purpose. . . ." A Record Belonging to the Quarterly Meeting of the people of God in the county of Berks, f. 29, 30, cited from the manuscript notes of W. C. Braithwaite at Friends Library, London.

13 William Penn and Philip Ford.

14 Elizabeth Walmsley. See PMHB, LXX (1946), 358 (note 30).

15 The person with these initials has not been identified. One expects G. S. or G. M. S.

16 John Gigger (or Jiggour) was, according to Thomas Ellwood, a menial servant of Guli Springett. He and his wife were also members along with the Ellwoods and Peningtons of Upperside Monthly Meeting, Bucks. L. V. Hodgkin, Gulielma, Wife of William Penn (London, 1947), 99 note.