

Ormston, as Falconer, had to write some strongly-worded communications to the laird respecting money matters. The laird passed the blame on to his son, under date 1691—“whatever misfortune fall out betwixt Charles and me, ye are the cause.”

Andrew Robeson appears at intervals, but the author was unable to identify him. For Robeson see THE JOURNAL, ix. 161, xv. 152; Camb. *Jnl.*

“Quaker Quiddities”

A LITTLE volume, now quite rare, entitled *Quaker Quiddities : or, Friends in Council : a Colloquy*, has been presented to D. by Allen C. Thomas, of Haverford, Pa., after having formed part of his private library for many years. The anonymous writer, an undergraduate of Providence Friends' School, R.I., dates his Preface “Providence, R.I., 5 mo. 21. 1860” and the book was published at Boston the same year. It was probably written by James Banks Congdon. The Friends in council are “Samuel Bonus” and “Jeremiah Austen” and the colloquy consists of thirty-six pages of blank verse, followed by twelve pages of notes. Samuel pleads for more liberty in matters Quakerly, while Jeremiah holds fast by the Discipline. A rumour of the revision of the Discipline of London Y.M.¹ has reached them :

“SAMUEL

“ ’Twas supposed,
That by the favor of our weightiest Friends,
Who late in London held convening sage,
Some modes less rigid in our marriage rules
Might at the Annual Gathering be approved.
’Twas further rumored that the same high source
Some trifling relaxation might ordain
In those requirings which restrain, so close,
Friends in the matters of attire and speech.”

The quiddities are dress and speech, tones in preaching, restrictions in literature, undue dependence upon silent worship, banning of music, etc.

¹ London Y.M. Discipline was revised in 1861 and issued as *Doctrine, Practice and Discipline*.

“QUAKER QUIDDITIES”

“SAMUEL

“Dost miss the twang conventional, the tone²
Which, by some instinct or some custom strange,
So oft our public ministrations make
Revolting violations of the rules
Which nature, law, and usage have ordained?
How painful and how futile, when the voice
Ranges the gamut in a single word,
And touches every discord on the track!”

Here is an eloquent plea for freedom from a rigid ritual :

“SAMUEL

“Let us not
Place on our rules and forms conventional
The image and the superscript divine.
The precepts of our fathers bear no seal
The wisdom of the children may not break.
Open to bold revision every form
Of marriage rite, of language, and of dress.
True to the inward life, we shall not need
The organ’s peal or hireling’s speech or song
To lead our spirits in the solemn act
Of public worship. We shall ever find
Nearness of access to the Infinite Mind,
When silently we wait; in every act
Of exhortation, prayer, or praise, shall know
The instant guidance of the Master’s hand.”

The dialogue closes thus :

“JEREMIAH

“Farewell! To-day the men’s committee meet,
Appointed in the case of Thomas Swift,
Charged with a serious breach of discipline
In having at his house, for instant use,
A stringèd instrument, piano called.

“SAMUEL

“Farewell! And when you deal with Thomas Swift,
Remember good King David had the same
At home, and in the holy temple too.”

To which is appended this note :

“Notwithstanding the earnestness and eloquence of Samuel, Jeremiah is thinking more about removing that stringèd instrument from Friend Swift’s house, or disowning him for keeping it there, than about weightier matters. . . . As a matter of fact I may as well state that Thomas was disowned. The time, I believe, is not far distant, when Shakspeare will not be banished from the library or the piano from the parlor.”

² For tones in preaching see THE JOURNAL, xv. 125.