

# Many Views on Many Subjects.

## OLD FREE QUAKER SOCIETY.

It Still Exists and Works in Philadelphia Charities.

To the Editor of *The New York Times*:

I noted something which appeared in *THE NEW YORK TIMES* on Sunday, March 8, Page 6, under the heading "Sale of Quaker Records." What attracted my attention principally was the following: "The last of these interesting broadsides is dated Philadelphia, Oct. 7, 1782, and is an answer to a petition to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, made by Isaac Howell and White Matlack, attacking the civil rights and liberties of the Quakers of Philadelphia."

It may be of interest to the readers of *THE TIMES* to know that in 1782 Isaac Howell and White Matlack were no longer associated with the body of the Society of Quakers in Philadelphia, having left that organization the year previous to the publication of the above mentioned broadside.

They, together with Samuel Wetherill, (who was their preacher and leader,) had been disowned by the original body of Quakers for the following reasons: "For having given allegiance to the State in compliance with the laws. For holding office under the State and under the United States. For bearing arms in the defense of our invaded country, although the laws of the State enjoined and required it of us, and for the payment of taxes required by the law."

The persecution of these and other loyal Quakers by their fellow-members led to the formation of an entirely separate and distinct Society of Friends on Feb. 20, 1781. Samuel Wetherill, who was the head offender, was their leader, giving to the society a plot of ground at the corner of Fifth and Arch Streets for a meeting house, where religious gatherings were held during that stormy period.

The Free Quaker Society (as it was called) still exists, no longer as a religious, but as a philanthropic body, using the revenues of the society for charitable work in Philadelphia. These "Free Quakers" hold a yearly meeting in the original church building every November, at which time upward of two hundred members assemble together, all of them Free Quakers by birthright, the majority (of which I am one) being direct descendants of Samuel Wetherill of Revolutionary times.

MARGARETTA W. WALLACE.

New Brighton, S. I., March 9, 1908.