

289.6

Franklin, Almira

The passing of the Quakers.--  
Publication of the Scottsville Literary  
Society, No. 1, Scottsville, NY, Isaac  
Van Hooser, c1903.

~~6~~ 6 vols.; in booklet format;  
In fitted case;

#38

PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE  
SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY  
No. 4.  
HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY

BY  
Mrs. MARY M. FRASER,

SCOTTSVILLE, N. Y.

Isaac Van Hooser, Printer.

1911.





PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE  
SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY  
No. 4.  
HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY

BY  
Mrs. MARY M. FRASER,

SCOTTSVILLE, N. Y.

Isaac Van Hooser, Printer.

1911.

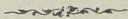
*Edition Limited to 125 Copies.*

*This copy is No. 116*

**HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
SCOTTSVILLE LITERARY SOCIETY**

BY

**Mrs. Mary M. Fraser.**



Read at a roll call and remembrance meeting at Mrs. Fraser's,  
to note the thirtieth year of its existence, on March 25, 1901.



So far as it can be defined the first suggestion for the formation of this Society arose from a casual side-walk conference between Mr. Geo. E. Slocum and myself in the early winter of 1871.\* We were speaking of our sense of loss, by the death, the year previous, of a friend † whose companionship and conversation were

---

\* For date of first meeting of the Society, a list of its charter members, its Constitution, and other items of interest relating to the Society, see Mr. Geo. E. Slocum's "Wheatland, Monroe County, New York. A Brief Sketch of its History," (published at Scottsville, N. Y., in 1908, ) pp 89-91.

† This reference is probably to Major John Mc Vean, the writer's father.



always a stimulus to thought and an impulse to the growth of mental and spiritual life—a man of devout heart, whose labor was worship, for in all the processes of nature, the unceasingly renewed creation in the formation of the soil and the growth of plant life, he recognized the power, wisdom and goodness of God. This conversation with Mr. Slocum and with Mr. T. R. Sibley with whom we took counsel, had been largely on these themes, and on Bible Study, and in the Society we purposed forming, the first idea was to make a specialty of the latter. But Rev. T. A. Weed our pastor at the time, who was consulted, deprecated this idea and advised that our purpose should be mental improvement. Possibly he had a shrewd suspicion that deductions from Bible study might be more orthodox when conducted solely by the clergy, and also wisely considered that conflicting opinions on those vital topics might give rise to unpleasantness. At all events, his advice as to mental culture was adopted, and religion and politics were pronounced *taboo* on our roll of topics. For myself, having been accustomed in our daily life to hear the views of this sound thinker not only in the practical affairs of life and the current topics of the day, but in fields of science and metaphysics, I will confess, gentlemen, that I missed the *man's* point of view in every way, and hoped the formation of this society might in a measure replace what I had lost, being

ready to welcome any and every subject which might engage our attention. Since that time broad avenues of opportunity, interest and occupation have been opened up for the new woman, but, with all these advantages, it must be conceded that either sex, entirely isolated from the outlook of the other, forms maimed and one-sided ideas of life and affairs.

Mr. Slocum has described the first meetings of our Society. During the first year our membership grew to forty two, nearly all of whom were regular attendants and faithful workers. Many came from quite a distance in the country, where, too, our meetings were often held in those days,

A helpful and interesting feature of our earlier meetings was discussion on various questions, frequently on current topics of interest. One or two persons would be appointed to open the subject on each side, followed by a general conversational discussion. This gave opportunity to all for exercise in concentration of ideas and facility of expression, beneficial to all who took part. This seems of late years to have been entirely dropped from the program. It would appear that its renewal might again prove advantageous to the Society.



Among our ever ready and interesting speakers may be mentioned Mr. Weed, Mr. Slocum, Mr. Sibley, Professor D. L. Stewart, W. F. Garbutt, Philip Garbutt, Mr. Paraelyte Sheldon, Mr. Schuyler Budlong, and a number of the changing band of clergymen, and teachers, both male and female, who have been among our most active and useful members. For some fifteen years I kept record of our meetings, and in looking over the reports I find the following as to our tenth Anniversary, December, 1881, when our membership numbered two hundred and twenty five: In a brief review of the decade which this anniversary completes it would almost seem easier to designate what subjects have not engaged our attention than to mention those which have, so varied have been the topics under consideration. Debates upon governmental, financial and philosophical subjects; articles biographical, historical, scientific, literary and artistic in character—could memory retain all the varied lore that has been delved out and laid before the society in the past ten years we should be learned indeed. And yet doubtless there still remain more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. Some years since, however, a friend did say to me that we seemed to have exhausted topics and she did not see but we should have to expire by limitation. But the well of knowledge is as deep and inexhaustible as the love and

goodness of God, and the more we draw therefrom the more clearly do we discern what rich abundance remains.

We have generally marked each anniversary by some special exercise or report; and particularly each decade.

Our longevity has often been attributed to our exclusively mental sustenance. We have, however, on a few occasions had other feasts than those of reason. On the twentieth anniversary a large and able committee spread a banquet here, and all available members were gathered to the feast, where the charter members were escorted to seats of honor by gentlemen of the committee in dress suits and with courtly manners. On the twenty fifth anniversary also a feast was spread here for our enjoyment.

The sixth anniversary was marked to me in a delightful way by a gift from the society of beautiful books, accompanied by most gratifying expressions of their regard. The former are a constant source of enjoyment, and I hope I have in no way forfeited the continuance of the latter, which I most gratefully appreciate.

I consider that our success as a society has mainly been due to a cordial recognition of merit in the work of each member, and in the entire absence of unkindly



criticism of even the most modest effort to sustain a part in our exercises.

And what we have prized equally with our mental growth has been the learning to know and appreciate our friends and neighbors in a way more intimate, and quite different from the mere surface acquaintance of casual social meetings.

Many hearts and homes have been sorely bereaved since this circle of friends was formed, when our valued members have been promoted to the higher life. In the past year our sympathies have been deeply stirred by the tragic affliction of friends who had torn from their homes, in the full vigor of young manhood, a husband, a father, a son, a brother, \* who was all to them that these dear names in their best sense define. This loss is deeply felt by our society, in the work of which he took such an active and helpful part. In him, too, the whole community has lost a helper, in whose interests he always stood for progress and as an exemplar of what our grand Roosevelt calls the "strenuous life" of duty and endeavor.

---

\* No doubt this reference is to Mr. Edward S. Brown.



In this retrospect of thirty years how much of profit and pleasure memory recalls — profit in increase of knowledge, pleasure in cherished friendship which bind our mutual regards in a chain whose links extend throughout the world and to the great hereafter. May the coming years repeat for this society the benefits and enjoyments of the past, and broaden continually our horizon as we advance in knowledge.

MARY M. FRASER.

Scottsville, N. Y., March 25, 1901.

