

**A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CONCERN  
OF THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS  
HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, IN RELATION  
TO THE GUARDED RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION OF THEIR YOUTH**

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A Brief Account of the Concern of the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in Philadelphia, in relation to the Guarded Religious Education of their youth by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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The committee on the subject of Education having collected a number of Reports and Documents, showing the state and progress of the concern for the religious instruction of the youth,—it was believed the publication of some of the views and remarks thus furnished, might tend to the encouragement of Friends in the further prosecution of this important object. By the information contained in some of these documents and reports, it will be perceived that as Friends have become united in their exertions for the improvement of schools, difficulties have been surmounted, and ways and means have been found for advancing the concern.

In making this use of the reports and statements furnished by individuals as well as meetings, the committee are actuated by a desire to keep alive the concern of the Yearly Meeting; and by exhibiting a view of what has been done, to stimulate Friends to persevere in their endeavours to promote the guarded education of their children, consistent with our religious principles and testimonies.

Although some of the plans and proposals held up to view in the following Account, may not have gone into full operation,—yet the committee are encouraged to hope that as Friends keep alive to the importance of the subject, they may be brought into practical use, to the benefit and improvement of the youth.

10th month, 1835.

## A BRIEF ACCOUNT, &c.

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*At the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia,  
4th month 10th, 1833,*

The present condition of schools within the limits of this meeting, having been introduced to our view by reading the answers to the second annual query,—after deliberate consideration, it was believed that the subject of the right education of our children and youth, particularly in relation to schools, requires renewed attention and care.—Under the exercise produced on this occasion, a proposal was made, and with much unanimity adopted, to separate a committee for the purpose of taking into deliberate consideration the present state of schools, and the education of the children of Friends; in order, either by visiting the schools under the care of Friends, or otherwise to gain a more intimate knowledge of the state of our religious society on this deeply interesting subject,—so that a clear and explicit representation thereof may be made to this meeting next year. And also, if way should open, to make such proposals for improvement in school education as may comport with our religious principles, the welfare and preservation of our children and youth, and the advancement of this concern for their guarded, religious education. To which service a committee of forty-one Friends was appointed. Extract from the minutes.

JOHN COMLY, Clerk.

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*Women's Yearly Meeting, 4th month, 1833.*

By a deputation from the men's meeting, we are informed, that on reading the second annual query, the state of schools and education throughout this Yearly Meeting, weightily engaged their attention, and resulted in the appointment of a committee to investigate, either by visits or otherwise, the schools under the care of our Monthly and Preparative Meetings.

This meeting, at a former sitting, having been exercised on this important subject, was prepared, on renewed consideration, to unite with our brethren therein, and a committee of thirty-six Friends was appointed to the service.

Extract from the minutes of Women's Yearly Meeting.  
LUCRETIA MOTT, Clerk.

The committee appointed in conformity to the preceding minutes, having met, and deliberated on the most likely means of obtaining information relative to the situation of schools, and the general state of education within the limits of this Yearly Meeting, agreed to circulate the following interrogatories; with a hope that Friends in the several Monthly and Preparative Meetings would be willing to give the necessary assistance to the committee, by furnishing clear and explicit answers thereto, with such other information as may be useful in relation to the subject.

*First.* What number of children are there of each sex, under the care of Friends, within the limits of the Monthly or Preparative Meeting, between the ages of four and sixteen years?

*Second.* How many schools are there within the limits of each meeting, that have been established, and are kept up, agreeably to the recommendation of the Yearly Meeting,—and where are they located?

*Third.* What number of children generally attend each school,—designating how many of them are members,—and do they generally attend meetings on week-days?

*Fourth.* What other schools are there within the limits of said meeting, in which Friends' children are taught,—what is their character, and how many children of Friends attend them?

*Fifth.* What branches of education are taught in the schools,—what reading books are used, and are the schools furnished with maps and globes?

*Sixth.* Are there any children of Friends who are sent to West-town or other public boarding schools,—and if so, how many of each sex?

*Seventh.* What number of children are sent to private boarding schools?

*Eighth.* Are there any Friends' children, or children under their care, who are deprived of an opportunity of obtaining a useful education, for want of suitable schools within a reasonable distance, or from any other cause,—and how many of each sex?

*Ninth.* What is the usual price paid for tuition per quarter?

*Tenth.* What is the present amount of funds applicable to the support of schools,—and how much of it is in the possession of Friends?

*Eleventh.* What is the income from the funds,—and how much can be annually applied?

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*At a Meeting of the Committee, 9th mo. 13th, 1833.*

An earnest desire was felt that Friends every where may be incited to increased care and concern in relation to the right education of their children. In order to promote this desirable object, it was concluded to collect the views of our Yearly Meeting, at former times, on the subject of the guarded, religious education of the youth. The following Essay being agreed on at a subsequent meeting of the committee, was directed to be circulated among the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings.

*To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends.*

The committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting on the religious concern for the right education of our youth, having again met, replies to the interrogatories respecting schools, &c. from nearly all the Monthly Meetings, and some of the Preparatives, within the limits of our Yearly Meeting, were produced and read, (a summary of which is inserted in the report to the Yearly Meeting, page 11) furnishing such information as gives evidence of the willingness of Friends to co-operate with the committee in endeavouring to promote the objects of this deeply interesting concern.



In order more fully to open the nature of the exercise which engages our attention, the committee believe it right to revive the concern and advices of the Yearly Meeting on the subject, as exhibited by the Extracts in former years.

By a reference to the proceedings of our Yearly Meeting, it appears that the guarded education of the rising generation, has from time to time claimed the deep attention of Friends. As early as the year 1746, we find that meeting engaged in concern on this important subject, and recommending Friends in the several Monthly Meetings, "to encourage and assist each other in the settlement of schools for the instruction of their children, and to employ such masters and mistresses as were concerned not only to instruct their children in useful learning, but such who in the wisdom of God and a spirit of meekness, might be enabled to instruct them in their duty to God and one another."

In the year 1750, means were devised by the Yearly Meeting for the improvement of schools, under a concern that the youth of the society might be trained up in useful learning, under the tuition of *religious*, prudent persons, as *schoolmasters*. And in the next year, Monthly and Quarterly Meetings were earnestly pressed to active exertions in this important work.

In 1774, the Yearly Meeting was again deeply exercised on this subject; and "parents and others to whom the weighty trust of education was committed, were earnestly excited to a faithful discharge of their duty herein, both in respect to placing children under *exemplary* and *religious* schoolmasters and mistresses for useful and proper learning, as well as to inculcate in their tender minds the pure doctrines of the gospel, agreeably to the principles of our holy profession."

Also, in the year 1777, when the calamities of war and its deeply painful consequences were felt, Friends were renewedly awakened to a sense of their many deficiencies towards their offspring, and a lively concern was revived in the Yearly Meeting for the religious instruction of the youth in Friends' families, and also for their school education;— and this weighty subject was unanimously recommended to the deep attention and speedy care of Quarterly Meetings. A committee also was appointed to take this concern particularly under their care, to advise and assist therein as might be found necessary. This committee, after dili-

gent and faithful attention to the state of schools, made, in the following year, a report of their labours; and the Yearly Meeting entering into a lively exercise on this important subject, were united in concern for the restoration of primitive care in the education of youth,—for the establishment of schools,—and for the training up of children in useful learning, under the tuition of religious, prudent persons, suitably qualified for that service. And in order to promote this good work, it was feelingly recommended to Friends to give proper encouragement to such teachers as were capable, by example and precept, to promote their growth in piety and virtue as well as due instruction in the various branches of useful learning;—intimating, that by “employing persons for schoolmasters who have not submitted to the operation of Truth, their example has had a tendency to strengthen a disposition in our youth to avoid the cross, and unite with the spirit of the world;” and that to a want of liberality toward suitably qualified tutors might be justly attributed the low state of society with respect to school education, and many hurtful and corrupt things consequent therefrom.

Again, in 1779, the Yearly Meeting, “being fervently concerned for the pious education of the youth and their preservation from corrupt conversation, and the various temptations to which they are exposed, recommended this important matter to the deep and solid attention of parents and all others who have the weighty trust of the youth committed to them.”

For several years after this period, the right education of the youth annually claimed the weighty attention of the Yearly Meeting, and advices similar to the foregoing were issued. In consequence of which, and of the labour and concern of Friends at home, much improvement was made in schools, and the benefits thereof considerably diffused. But of latter years, it is apprehended there has been too much relaxation of that godly concern of parents and heads of families, in maintaining a guarded care over the youth at home, and also in their school education, which our discipline, and the nature of our religious profession require and enjoin. Hence, by a comparison of the state of society, as exhibited in the replies to the interrogatories, with the views and concern of the Yearly Meeting, as expressed in the preceding extracts, there appears to be much occasion

for the exercise which claimed the attention and care of our last Yearly Meeting.

We tenderly sympathize with parents who are piously concerned for the right education of their children, and also with the dear youth, in the trials and exposures to which they are subject; particularly in acquiring useful literary instruction. By the accounts produced, we perceive that more than four-fifths of the children under Friends' care, of an age to be sent to school, are not taught in schools under the care of Friends; and of those that are, many have not the opportunity of attending week-day meetings. We also find that a large number of our youth are placed, in great measure, from amongst Friends, in order to obtain necessary school learning; and that some are deprived of an opportunity of acquiring useful literary instruction. These are affecting circumstances, incompatible with the discipline and concern of the Yearly Meeting; and in our apprehension require renewed consideration and attention, as well as the state of schools generally.

In order to gain a more intimate knowledge of the difficulties and trials to which Friends are subject, in procuring a proper guarded education for their children—and in order to discover, as Truth may open the way, what remedy or assistance may be applied, or what improvement is necessary to be made.—the committee is induced to propose and request, that Friends in the several Monthly Meetings will furnish us with clear, explicit, and particular accounts of the difficulties and obstructions which prevent them from a compliance with the directions and advices of the Yearly Meeting on the subject of education; or from having well regulated schools, taught by exemplary members, where their children may have an opportunity of acquiring useful school learning, in accordance with our religious principles and testimonies, and a right concern for their real welfare and improvement.

Signed on behalf of the committee of the Yearly Meeting on the subject of education.

JOHN COMLY,  
JAMES MOTT,  
HANNAH WILLIAMS,  
MARTHA CLEAVER.