

**FRIENDS ANCIENT
AND MODERN, NO.
9; DANIEL WHEELER**

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Friends Ancient and Modern, No. 9; Daniel Wheeler by Augustus Diamond

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AUGUSTUS DIAMOND

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No. 9.

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BY

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Journal of Rev. Hays
1771-1840

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Born, in London	1771
Death of his father	1778
Death of his mother	1783
Went to sea	1784
Entered the Navy	1786
Enlisted as a soldier	1792
Served in Flanders	1794
Sailed for the West Indies	1795
Conversion, at sea	1795
Left the Army	1796
Joined the Society of Friends, in Sheffield	1799
Married Jane Brady	1800
Recorded a Minister	1816
Invited by Emperor of Russia to St. Petersburg	1817
Removed with his family to Russia	1818
Resigned his appointment there	1832
His wife's death, and illness of family	1832
Liberated by the Society of Friends to visit South Sea Islands, etc., with the Gospel	1832
Left for this Missionary journey in the <i>Henry Freeling</i>	1834
Arrived in London, and visited his family in Russia	1838
Sailed to New York, and attended various Yearly Meetings of Friends	1839
Returned to England, and thence to his son's death-bed in France	1839
Sailed again for America	1840
Died in New York	1840

CHAPTER I

WE are thankful for the biographies we have in the Bible—men and women of like passions with ourselves standing out as examples for us in faith and love and good works. And, as we read about the men and women of our own time who, like those in Hebrews xi., have "through faith . . . wrought righteousness, obtained promises," and "out of weakness were made strong," we feel encouraged and strengthened to bear our witness to the saving and keeping grace of God. But we naturally have a specially warm corner in our hearts for some of our Quaker worthies—those who, as members of our own Society, have not only borne testimony to the common "salvation," but also to the value of those distinguishing principles which mark us out as distinct from Christians in other branches of the Church of Christ.

One of these worthies, who wins our love and excites our interest in a special degree, is Daniel Wheeler, who was born in London on the 27th November, 1771, and so reached manhood just at one of the greatest crises of the world's history—the epoch of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. And the circumstances of his life were such that he was in himself a reflection of his stormy surroundings. The marvel of his life was

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that in his case the storm and tempest—the fighting and the sinning—the warfare without and within—gave place to the beautiful calm of a soul at peace with God and man.

Daniel Wheeler's parents were members of the Church of England, and in a good position. He lost them, however, when he was quite young, his father dying when Daniel was about seven years old, and his mother, whom he speaks of as "a woman of large capacity, combining great sweetness with firmness of mind" when he was twelve. For a time the eldest son, William, carried on the wine business which had been a profitable one under his father's management, but he soon fell into bad habits, and the business had to be sold, and the family was scattered. Daniel remained for a time with the new owners; but later on a merchant who had long been a friend of the family offered him a situation on board a ship which was sailing to Oporto. This offer he readily accepted, and soon went on board. In after-life he spoke strongly of the dangerous character of the trade he was thus delivered from, proving, as it often did, fatal to the character and health of young men engaged in it. But he soon found that a seafaring life was not without its temptations for the young; and he had not yet received that new life that preserves its possessor from them.

On his return to London a second time he found that his friends had procured for him a position as midshipman on board a ship of war. This was considered to be an advance, but, he writes in his narrative, "the

change, however specious in appearance at the time, was to me but as an introduction to a school which is not often equalled, and but seldom surpassed, for vice and immorality."

On his first voyage he experienced a providential escape from shipwreck,—“the dawn of day discovering to us just in time the small island of Grasholm, towards which the vessel was drifting in a direct course, and already within a short distance of the breakers.” After a little more than fourteen months spent on this cruiser, he was transferred to a ship of the line, where the temptations were still greater. Whilst thus placed, the Spirit of God was dealing with him, but he neglected the heavenly voice. He remained six years in the navy. His ship was then paid off, and he resolved to stay on shore; finally, having spent his money and fallen into poverty, he enlisted as a common soldier. This was in 1792, a year of great unrest in Ireland, and before long his regiment was ordered thither. His conduct soon obtained him promotion, with more liberty and better pay as its result. As a consequence, he writes, “I soon began to take my swing in every inordinate gratification to which I was naturally propense, and in which an extensive metropolis furnished ample opportunity to indulge: thus adding sin to sin, and making farther woful work for repentance.”

After leaving Dublin, his regiment was ordered to the Continent to join the British army in Hanover, under the command of the Duke of York. Then began sufferings and hardships which made all that he had hitherto

endured seem light:—"I was without covering over my head," he writes, "and with no couch but the earth, and that, at times, soaked with wet; harassed with fatiguing marches night after night, with little rest by day, amidst hunger and thirst, being often short of food for days together, and occasionally no water to be had without digging a well to procure it, to avoid the unwholesome waters of the stagnant pools." The Allies were quite outmatched by the French generals; their tactics were slow and old-fashioned, while the French cared nothing for precedent; dissensions also arose, and the English had to retreat. As recent events have shown, fraud always thrives on war, and the soldier suffers. It was the same (on Hume and Smollett's authority) a hundred years ago. "Though government had provided amply for their sustenance and comfort, they were left without clothing and food; and the sick were not properly attended to. . . . Numerous deaths were the consequence; and the unfortunates sent to the military hospital were doomed to know the most exquisite distress."

Daniel Wheeler was amongst the invalids, constant exposure having brought on a serious attack of fever, during which he heard one of the surgeons who attended him in the hospital at Rhenūn, say, "He will not want anything long." "But God had work for him that he dreamt not of. Wild and wayward as he was, he was yet "a chosen vessel," destined, like Saul of Tarsus, "to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings." Slowly regaining strength he joined the retreating British force,