

‘THE QUAKERS TEA TABLE OVERTURNED’:
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MORAL SATIRE*

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ABSTRACT

‘The Quakers Tea Table Overturned’ is a long unpublished satirical poem, dated 1717, preserved in an eighteenth-century manuscript in Leeds University Library. No other copy is known. On the title-page the author is said to be ‘A Lover of the Ancient plainness & simplicity of that People’, i.e. Quakers. The article provides an introduction to the poem—which possesses literary and linguistic as well as historical interest—together with discussion of its Yorkshire-born author and of the background to its composition. The author’s overriding concern is to convey his strongly held view that tea parties, fashionable in the early eighteenth century, are something that young Quaker women should not be indulging in, for moral reasons. He is revealed to be John Sutcliffe of Clitheroe (1677–1726), a Quaker apothecary.

KEYWORDS

Quakers, satire, English poetry, tea drinking, consumption, manuscripts.

I

Brotherton Collection MS Lt 58, in Leeds University Library, is a 24-leaf manuscript booklet whose sole content is (to quote the title as given) ‘The Quakers Tea Table Overturm’d, The Tea Spill’d and all the China broke’.¹ Following a biblical quotation from 1 Tim. 5:6, ‘She that Liveth in Pleasure is Dead while She Liveth’, the title-page goes on to characterise the work as ‘A Satyrical Poem in 4 Parts’, and the author as ‘A Lover of the Ancient plainness & Simplicity of that People’, that is to say, Quakers. A date is also given, 1717, apparently the date of composition. The poem itself, which runs to 1,112 lines of pentameter couplets, then occupies forty-five numbered pages. The manuscript (a fair copy in a practised hand) does not appear to be the author’s own, because of many evidently transcriptional errors that affect the sense. An inscription in a different hand, written sideways in the outer margin of p. 41 (fol. 22r), reveals that ‘Joseph

Wilkinson had this Booke, 20th of 6th mo., 1728'. On the verso of the final flyleaf, in a bold, flourished hand, is 'John Bigland his the true Owner of this Booke' and again (though not with consistently identical letter-forms) 'John Bigland his the true Owner of this Book 1763 or 4'.²

The author's overriding concern throughout the poem is to convey his strongly held view that tea parties, fashionable in the early eighteenth century, are something that Quakers—particularly young Quaker women—should stay well away from. His reasons relate partly to the cost of what was still an expensive pastime, and to the opportunities for ostentatious display, but they are also more broadly moral: indulging in tea parties, he warns, can lead to a host of unQuakerly practices, ranging from gossip and backbiting to pride and (potentially) sexual sin. This single-minded theme means that 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned' is essentially didactic, which may be said to reduce its attractiveness, but the poem is enlivened by passages written with a much lighter satirical touch, by much closely observed social detail, and by the writer's ability to exploit a literary tradition that he clearly knows well. It is the work of an educated, well-read man.

The poem is divided into four parts of unequal length. Parts 1 and 2 (162 and 238 lines) set the scene; parts 3 and 4 (400 and 312 lines) preach the message. Part 1 begins impressively with a fluent description of why Quakers made the decision to create a moral barrier between themselves and the rest of the world:³

As God had hedg'd his servant Job about,
 Job and his to keep in and Satan out,
 As the true church in holy record seen
 Had under law and gospell been,
 So common prudence wou'd dictate to men 5
 A fence as necessary now as then,
 Loose members to bind in society
 And therewithal keep out the enemy.
 The Elders therefore of that little flock,
 Nicknamed Quakers by wild Ishmael's stock, 10
 Observing as their numbers multiplied
 A danger lest the libertine should slide
 Among the truly faithfull on pretence
 Of Christian freedom and should give offence
 To well enclined seekers yet without, 15
 They in God's wisdom sett themselves about
 In order those within might be retain'd
 And those without might be the better gain'd. (fol. 2r)

In the use of an Old Testament reference ('wild Ishmael's stock') to satirise Quakers' opponents in the established Church⁴ and in the delaying (to lines 5 and 16) of the main clauses of these opening two sentences, there are reminiscences of Dryden's style in his political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). But the author has not Dryden's command of metre (or, of course, his wit), and here and frequently elsewhere he has difficulty maintaining the pentameter rhythm. A more likely influence closer to home is the Quaker Thomas Ellwood's long verse

satire *Rogero-Mastix* (1685), written in the same metre, which begins with a more explicit analogy between Quakers and Old Testament Jews, invoking the story of how the prophet Nehemiah rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem to keep out enemies and ensure the purity of the Jewish people.⁵

We hear next of the ‘Discipline’ established by Quakers to keep themselves separate from the rest of society, but the examples of forbidden behaviour are listed with a hint of amused detachment (as if by a disinterested outsider) very different from the thunderings to come:

These rules such ceremonies won’t allow
As curtesy finical and foppish bow;⁶
No idle conversation, visit, treat,
As which vain words and vainer thoughts create;
Shows, plays, balls, gaming, musick, recreation,
Taverns and fairs too without good occasion;
Your beauish salutations fetch’d from France
These rules exclude with all extravagance. (fol. 2v)

The author, now moving into full satiric mode, then sets up a scenario in which the devil Apollyon expresses annoyance that, after having tried everything from persecution from without (informers, adversaries) to betrayal from within (false brothers), he is still unable to break the Quakers’ adherence to truth and make them his loyal subjects, like everyone else.⁷ And so, scorning them as ‘A poor illiterate herd, ignoble, base’ (fol. 3v)—the exaggeration again suggesting the author is making fun—he summons Lucifer, as the devil best qualified to entice humankind to pride. He agrees to take on the job and decides, on the basis of his success in tempting Eve in the Garden of Eden, to concentrate his attack on women. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost* (which the author surely knew), he alights upon a high point, from which he looks down into the ‘pale’—the word used frequently in the poem to denote the Quakers’ metaphorically fenced enclosure—and wonders what temptation would best suit his needs. It must be something requiring time and study to master, representing ‘the achme of accomplish’d education’ (fol. 4v); it must be something that Quaker parents (here satirised for the first time) will see as enhancing their daughters’ position in society; and it must not be too gaudy, having instead ‘some show of usefullness’ (fol. 5r).

The second part of the poem opens with Lucifer spotting a carpenter carrying a beautifully crafted tea table. Realizing it would fit the bill, he purchases it and tries (like an auctioneer) to convince Quaker girls of its desirability, but with no success until one does respond. The verbal picture then painted is memorably detailed, with echoes of Belinda’s self-indulgence in Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* (1712, 1714), but perhaps surprisingly, given that the author’s main target is Quaker parents who indulge their daughters’ desire to hold tea parties, the girl who answers Lucifer’s call is an already ungoverned orphan. Her situation and character, however, clearly make her especially vulnerable:

At length a forward wench about fifteen
 Who at the city boarding schoole had been,
 Her honest parents both were laid in the mould,
 Had left her a good quantity of gold,
 Entrusting it and her unto the care
 Of a fam'd preacher who made little spare
 In educating her the modish way;
 She was well vers'd in idleness and play.
 Two lines of English she would read near true;
 Little of needful needle-work she knew.
 A stranger how to wash, to brew and bake,
 The house keep clean, butter and cheese to make.
 In bed till ten, till twelve the glass admire,
 Then dress her waxen babby by the fire;⁸
 Deny'd her lickquorish palate nought that's new,
 A lazy, long and wanton wench she grew. (fol. 6r-v)

It seems evident that at this point in his poem the author, exploiting a familiar satirical theme, is more interested in continuing to build his fiction. The girl he depicts is only too open to Lucifer's temptation, as if exemplifying *Absalom and Achitophel*, ll. 79-80: 'But, when to sin our byast nature leans, / The careful devil is still at hand with means'. Nevertheless she is represented as a Quaker. When she gives way to Lucifer:

One foot upon her father's tomb she plac'd,
 The other to her tutor's head she rais'd.
 Then with bold steps she o'er the Elders tryps,
 O'er all Friends she to the boundry skyps,
 Her body and arm at the full stretch
 Buoy'd up with hopes the tea table to reach (fol. 7r)⁹

—which Lucifer then teaches her how to use. In consequence ('So vices in an endless series run', fol. 7v) the now bedazzled girl purchases not only coffee, chocolate, and different kinds of tea, but piece after piece of the costly equipment deemed necessary for the business of holding a tea party.¹⁰ The list is detailed enough, but the author satirically apologises for very likely having omitted something because of his aversion to 'this science', which is worthy, he maintains, of being accounted the eighth liberal art (fol. 8r). When everything is ready, 'four neighbouring girls' (not, apparently, Quakers) are invited to the house, and led to a room with appropriately unQuakerly furnishings: 'A room with scutcheons, paint and pictures lin'd, / Joys calculated to debauch her mind' (fol. 8v). Her friends pay the wished-for compliments—

'This table is of better wood then mine,
 Its moulding and japan prodigious fine'
 (Says one). Another takes up Holland ware
 And that 'It looks like china' does declare,
 The third, 'This coffee's roasted mighty well',
 The fourth, 'No chocolate can this excell'. (fols 8v-9r)¹¹

—and so the tea party begins. The author again goes into detail about (for example) ‘The sugar, hammer, hatchet, tonges and spoon’ (fol. 9r),¹² before recounting first the carefully fashionable way in which each of the girls drinks her dish of tea and then the nature of their conversation, which is concerned almost wholly with the cost of things.

It is in this section that the author’s tone turns bitter and, indeed, misogynistic. He criticises (at length) not only the content of the girls’ chatter but their practice of talking simultaneously while not listening (‘All being speakers there’s no auditory’, fol. 10r), producing a confused babble of gossip worse, he says, than the dance of the atoms postulated by the philosopher Thomas Hobbes. Not content with this, he castigates them for abandoning ‘their mother dialect and native tone’ (fol. 9v) in favour of artificially fashionable ways of speaking that resemble the caterwauling of animals:

Some mince it short and some trip up half spoke
 Their words between the pallate and the throat.
 Some lisp, some squeak, and some delight to snaffle;
 To ape ’em would the shroudest mimick baffle.
 Who might ’em not, so strange a sound they make,
 For animals of a new species take. (fol. 10r)

Night bringing the party to an end, he dispatches them scornfully: ‘Fine scarlet misses all or callicoes, / Heads dress’d like owls and silver lased shoes’ (fol. 10r), ‘scarlet’ no doubt with an imputation of immorality.

Other words are clearly also designed to be derogatory. The word ‘snaffle’, here with the meaning of to speak through the nose, has strong associations with horses,¹³ as have the terms ‘knab’ and ‘curry’ in the couplet that immediately follows the compliments (quoted above) paid by the girls’ friends: ‘She fleers to hear each prais’d by one or other; / The fools thus knab and curry one another’ (fol. 9r). ‘Fleer’, which probably bears the sense of to smile with scornful satisfaction, has other meanings associated with grimacing and distorting the countenance.¹⁴ ‘Knab’, meaning to bite gently, nibble, is usually applied to horses or other animals,¹⁵ while the meanings of ‘curry’ (transitively, as here) include to rub down (a horse), dress leather, and tickle or scratch, although the normally intransitive sense of curry (to flatter, cajole) was no doubt mainly in the author’s mind.¹⁶ The same phrase, ‘knab and curry one another’, occurs, remarkably, in Roger L’Estrange’s popular prose translation of Quevedo’s *Visions*, first published in 1667, where it is also applied, derogatively, to flatterers: ‘After this Manner, these Asses Knab and Curry one Another, and play the Fools by Turns’, but it may be that the phrase was in common use.¹⁷ Indeed the very similar ‘claw and curry one another’ occurs in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras* (1.740), of which this part of ‘The Quakers Tea Table Overturned’ is somewhat reminiscent, despite its five-stress line: colloquialisms, crude rhymes, bathos, and authorial interventions all feature alongside the animal imagery.¹⁸

Thus worked up, in part 3 of the poem the author turns his fire on Quaker parents. You should be setting examples to others, he says (‘You stand above the

common sort a stair', fol. 10v), but you tend to reject criticism, making 'the launces of my satyr' all the more necessary to remove the 'gangrene'. He works through a range of arguments related to the drain on the parents' financial resources, to how parents should remember that they were not allowed any extravagance when young, particularly in matters of clothing, and to how tea parties can be just as wasteful of time and money as cards and dice, which are rightly condemned by Quakers. As before, there is nothing modest about the extreme (but deliberately provocative) way in which he expresses himself. Financing tea parties now, he contends, will very likely condemn the parents' future descendants to a life of either destitution or degeneracy:

Your ofspring yet unborn may curse the day
 That you to these enormities gave way,
 When that shall all in treats consumed be
 That should excuse their hands from drudgery,
 Or if your substance should hold out so long
 It's odds but they'le have mix'd themselves among
 The world, grown degenerate and wild,
 The common issue of a pamper'd child. (fol. 11v)

And he argues, speciously, that the money lost in gambling at least goes to somebody else, whereas when it is spent on tea it is never seen again.

Sharpening his lance further ('Prepare yourselves to feell / The wholesome vertues of satyrick steel', fol. 13r), the author then deals in turn with the various points the Quaker parents are made to advance in their defence. Yes, tea may be God-given, and can be conducive to health, but its recreational use is a 'bait to luxury' (fol. 13r). You say you hear your daughters hold tea parties and you hope the practice is harmless: how can you not want to know, and not want to cleanse your houses of the extravagance? You argue that I myself am not free from faults and should first cast out the beam from my own eye, but this does not mean that one Christian should not admonish another when he goes astray! You say you cannot find 'wisht for' companions for your daughters because you live 'remote from Friends' (fol. 14v), and that this does not matter because they can be instructed later: wrong, as our view of the world is fixed early in life ('The poet Horace said it not in vain, / "New casks long their first liquor's smell retain"', fol. 15r).

The author is particularly fired by the parents' excuses that there are far greater sins, and that their daughters keep only the best company. Answering the first point, he contends that tea parties are a slippery slope to other vices:

I know no practice yet within the fence
 So bad so fatal in its consequence...
 ... As small a vice as it is, it paves the way
 Unto the greatest vices of this day.
 It is an entrance to all other sins;
 You know not where she'll end that here begins,

reinforcing the argument in his own extravagant way:

I know no vices no[w] more popular
 Than the tea table and the snuff box are.
 The greatest rakes and bawds with snuff and tea
 Fill up the intervals of debauchery. (fol. 14v)

In response to the defence that their daughters keep company only with ‘The best rank of the town, / Persons of morals and [of] character’ (fol. 15r), he warns nonetheless of their vulnerability to conversation with members of the opposite sex:

She shou’d not be expos’d in tender years
 Alone where I should always be in fears
 How soon affections may entangled be
 By her companions’ brothers’ subtily. (fol. 15r)

And how common it is, he says, to see formerly modest young girls changed by their association with ‘great neighbours’ into criticizing their parents’ furnishings (‘All your best goods she looks upon as timber’, fol. 16r-v), demanding ‘glossy suits’ and ‘airy dresses’, and switching between Quakerly and non-Quakerly language depending on who they are talking to.¹⁹

The author then returns to the particular girl he began with. ‘She’s half in mind to jump over the fence’, he says, namely leave the Quakers, but instead she tries ‘To spread the pest through the Society’ (fol. 16r-v), to the danger of younger members not yet established in a religious way of life. For this purpose she targets what seems to be a particularly important and well-attended Quaker meeting, where the ‘country wenches’—the Quaker girls—are described as already gaily dressed, making them susceptible:

For now approaches the great Meeting time,
 Meeting for Worship and for Discipline,
 The spring and summer season of the year,
 Where many country wenches will appear
 With emulation who shall look most gay
 In burdett, poplin, and rich padissway ²⁰
 She half a dozen marks out, more or less,
 In shining collour and in airy dress.
 During the meeting these the objects are
 Of her devotion, these she makes her care. (fols 16v–17r)

She invites them home to another tea party, conducted in the same style as before. This time, the girl’s companions being explicitly Quaker, the author is most concerned about the opportunities the gathering provides for idle chatter, particularly unQuakerly backbiting and slander, which leads him to one of his most extreme passages:

Backbiting for good breeding here must goe;
 They of the absent blab what ill they know.
 The office of tale-bearing here they keep;
 Here monstrous lyes of every figure creep.
 The mint of mallice, magazine of spite,

On the tea table aptly we may write.
 One vomits out a slander all amain,
 Drink't and at the next treat belch't up again.
 Isaiah's prophecy is here fulfill'd:
 All tea tables with lying vomits fill'd. (fol. 17r- v)²¹

Religion and the needs of the poor are, as a result, driven out of their heads, although the tea-drinkers are still said to attend Meeting for Worship ('A miracle for them two hours to sitt / In Meeting and their kettle to forgett', fol. 17v). This long third section of the poem ends with a prayer to God that they may see the evil of their ways.

Part 4, in contrast, sees the author applying 'sweet healing balsame' (fol. 18r) to the wounds caused by his lancing sharp satire, although he does not fail to enumerate the possible punishments awaiting those who will not repent. It is the most overtly religious section of the poem (and the most difficult), in which we hear as much about God as about humankind. The author begins by urging the body of the faithful to stand fast in the face of the deluge of potential vice and set an example of plainness and frugality—a heavenly reward will be theirs even if they do not succeed. God, after all, has his own ways of bringing the errant back into the fold, which are now described at length. First come the 'gentler methods' of the exhortations of preachers and the 'silent doctrine' by which Quakers are examples to the world (fols 19v-20r). But few, he exclaims, have such a heart as to take notice, even though one would think that tea drinkers, not being inebriated, would be more amenable to change than 'your common tavern's debauch[e]s' (fol. 20v).

Next come visitations of life-threatening illness, which may bring about conscience-stricken repentance and lead terrified girls to dispense with 'all the needless gewgaws' of their tea (fol. 21r). Others who have gone astray may be brought back to plainness and simplicity by being reduced to a state of penury. But if these particular afflictions fail, God may attempt to bring all members of a Quaker meeting into peace and unity with one another by sending a 'general suffering', namely by taking the apparently paradoxical course of allowing Quakers to be persecuted, so as to strengthen Meetings in their devotion to truth:

The devill's a fooll, cannot fore-apprehend
 How persecution should the church amend,
 Or if he can, yet being bent on ill,
 On spoill and plunder having sett his will,
 Lett loose again that way his chain's full length
 He'll run and muster up his utmost strength.
 But still when he and wicked men contrive
 To blast God's people, most of all they thrive.
 Those very measures by which they propose
 The churche's downfall God sometimes has chose
 To make his Sion prosperous thereby,²²
 Her members flourish, numbers multiply. (fols 21v-22r)

But this more optimistic warning (and the author particularly reassures steadfast Quakers that God will always shield them 'with the hollow of his hand', fol. 22v) is followed by a final assertion that, if mild and general methods fail, God always has wars, plagues, and famines in reserve as a last resort, not to mention the possibility of miracles.

The poem ends, unexpectedly, with the author making clear to Quakers that the notional 'seven thousand...who do not bow / To the tea table' (and are therefore assured of salvation) are dispersed throughout the various sects of the Christian Church,²³ and that those 'who stand for plainness and simplicity' 'may be many more than you suppose' (fol. 23r). God is not concerned only with those 'within the pale / That's visible'. 'He has a larger pale than you can see' (fol. 23v), which will swell the numbers of the elect if Quakers continue to bow 'to their belly God'. But the final message is one of hope for the future, including a promise that God has 'Liquors as far transcending finest tea / As heaven's higher than the earth and sea' (fol. 24r). With careful attention to the fence around their vineyard, Quakers will remain God's chosen people, and it may be that the pale will one day extend to encompass all humankind.

II

The broad Quaker background to the poem is the increased eighteenth-century emphasis on plainness and avoidance of worldly pleasures, more and more insisted on as the Discipline became established. Minutes and Advices issued by London Yearly Meeting (the central Quaker body in Britain) are full of the topic throughout the first half of the century, both in a generally applicable way and with particular, repeated, concern for the bringing up of children and young people.²⁴

Thus in 1708 we find that parents should 'be exemplary to their children in keeping out off the vain fashions, customs and pride of the world', and in 1709 that parents should not provide costly and gaudy attire for their children, 'nor let them have money to gratifie themselves therein'. In 1715 there is an expression of grief that some young Quaker men 'have cut off good heads of hair, and put on long extravagant and gay wiggs', and similarly that young women are wearing their hair high, and wearing gowns 'like the proud fashion mongers of the world'.²⁵ A more general Advice from 1718, close to the date of the poem, essentially blames parental pride:²⁶

Advised That Parents, in the Tender Years of their Children, would not Adorn them with Gaudy Apparel, which Practice cannot Come from the Spirit that Leads out of the Vain Customs of the World, but must proceed from Pride in the Parents; And Children being led into such Vanities and Fineries, Come gradually to be in Love with them; which is Apt to Increase with their Years, to that Degree, until it may be found very Difficult to Reclaim them.

A little later we find an Advice from 1729 that children should avoid bad company ('Evil communications corrupt good manners'), and in 1731 that Meetings should visit parents who expose their children to contamination.²⁷ General

strictures against backbiting and tale-bearing were issued in 1733 and 1738.²⁸ The author of 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned' was thus far from exceptional in his concern for Quaker youth.

Warnings against tea drinking and tea parties, however, are noticeably missing from these collected exhortations. In the early eighteenth century tea was still an expensive luxury and its use by the middle classes was in its infancy. Writing about this period, the food historian C. Anne Wilson describes the development of tea parties in terms that provide a clear context for the girl in the poem's behaviour:²⁹

Early in the eighteenth century tea tables came into fashion, on which the equipage could be assembled... The hostess could thus brew and serve tea herself in the presence of her guests, a ceremony which had great appeal. The wives of the nobility and gentry eagerly acquired the new possessions, and served tea to their friends, who reciprocated. The very costliness of the tea itself gave an extra cachet to the person who offered it at her entertainments.

By 1717 the eighteenth-century 'tea debate'—views for and against the beverage—was getting under way. Tea was initially regarded as highly beneficial, and its virtues are praised in two lightly mock-heroic poems from the turn of the century, Nahum Tate's *Panacea: A Poem upon Tea* (1700), and—more famously—Pierre Motteux's *A Poem in Praise of Tea* (c. 1701):

Tea, Heav'n's Delight, and Nature's truest Wealth,
That pleasing Physic, and sure Pledge of Health,
The Statesman's Councillor, the Virgin's Love,
The Muse's Nectar, and the Drink of Jove. (p. 11)³⁰

Both poets represent tea as the new drink of the gods, with Motteux arguing that the way to ensure its popularity is to persuade society girls to try it:

To spread its Pow'r, and Wine's Excess supply,
Let ev'ry British Fair its Virtues try.
Like them, the Drink is charming, clear and chaste;
To make 'em love, perswade 'em but to taste.
Then all Mankind its wholesome Sweets will share;
For all are proud to imitate the Fair. (p. 15)

But despite its attractions as a non-intoxicant, there was soon opposition to over-indulgence in tea and similar hot drinks (partly on medical grounds but also for social reasons), and a long treatise on their dangers appeared in 1706, Daniel Duncan's *Wholesome Advice against the Abuse of Hot Liquors*.³¹

To return to Quaker attitudes, even though strictures against tea are not found among the collected Advices emanating from Yearly Meeting, occasional references do appear in minutes elsewhere. W.C. Braithwaite draws attention to what he calls 'a delightful Minute against display of china and waste of time in tea-drinking', drawn up by Yorkshire Women's Quarterly Meeting in September 1714:³²

It is the Judgment of Friends that we should...refrain from having fine Tea Tables sett with fine Chenae being it is more for Sight then Service, & that Friends keep Cleare of the superfluous part in Drinking Tea, we thinking that some of the Time & Mony that's spent thus might be made Better Use of. It's Advised that Friends should not have so much Chenae or Earthenware on there Mantle Pieces or on there Chest of Drawers but Rather sett them in there Clossitts untill they have Occation to Use them.

But the warnings here do not extend to the moral dangers of tea parties. An earlier Quaker historian, Robert Barclay, writing in 1876, is potentially more helpful when citing examples of the sort of pleasures disapproved of by Friends in the early eighteenth century. In 1715, he writes, the 'fashionable using of tea' was ordered to be 'avoided', and tea-tables were 'to be laid aside as formerly advised'.³³ Frustratingly, however, although he appears to be drawing generally on Irish and Scottish sources at this point, he does not give references for these quotations.

His source may in fact have been Irish Quaker records, because a minute about the harmful effects of tea parties written on 27 July 1724 by the Men's Meeting at Cork was printed in 1916 to fill up a page in the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*:³⁴

It is observed that the custome of Tea in the present use of it in the families of some Freinds by invitations and vissitations is too much a Worldly custome, by which our young people & children make vissitts also one to another tending to thereire hurt & loosing the sence & simplicity of truth, by giveing way to unnecessary discourses & talk when they are together; which thing the Elders of our halfe years meeting some years past, became so sencible of, that with grieve of minde, they represented it to the three provinces as a hurtfull thing creeping into Friends familys and Earnestly recomend it to the care of concerned Friends to put a stop to it.

These concerns closely resemble those that underlie 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned', and it may be that the Half Year's Meeting minute 'some years past' is even more explicit.³⁵ However, even though it is tempting to adduce the poet's choice of 'pale' to denote the fence metaphorically enclosing Quakers as evidence for an Irish origin for the poem,³⁶ there is no reason to doubt the strong written evidence for northern English authorship, now to be discussed.

III

There is first the question of whether the author was himself a Quaker. As stated earlier, the manuscript's title-page attributes the poem to 'A Lover of the Ancient plainness & Simplicity of that People', suggesting that he may not have been. His detailed knowledge of what was involved in hosting a tea party (implying even a fascination with the phenomenon) might possibly point in the same direction. On the other hand the poem contains ample evidence that the author was thoroughly acquainted with Quaker procedures, manner of worship, high moral standards, and history. There are also occasional indications that his own involvement has

been a close one. When reminding parents that they, when young, were zealous about strict propriety in matters of dress (partly at their mothers' instigation), he includes himself:

Oh! how great zeal in you did then appear
 About a pleight or coat? How great a fear³⁷
 In me a youth lest I should get a check
 If my coat was not button'd to the neck. (fol. 12r)

And when, towards the end of the poem, he advances the consolation that God may send persecution in order to strengthen Quaker meetings, he uses the pronouns 'we' and 'us' when alluding to an instance of this 'not long ago':

We something of this kind not long ago
 Had cause to fear or rather hope you know.
 We reason have to think our gracious God
 Offended was tho he but shook the rod.
 A tender father loth to make us smart
 Did warn us, so let all them lay't to heart. (fol. 22r)

But shortly after this the author warns his readers that God will take steps to make up the number of the elect—those certain of heavenly salvation—if Quakers fall short. His reference to the elect comprising no more than seven thousand (see above) is no doubt poetic, given that he ends with a liberal vision of the numbers in the pale eventually being limitless, but his use of language implying that salvation is not available to all is inherently unQuakerly if taken at face value. Given that he appears to distance himself from Quakers at this point, addressing them as if from outside, it might be thought that he is writing from a different theological position, such as non-Calvinist Puritan.

In fact we have a name, and it is a Quaker one. 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned' is mentioned in the diary for 1725 of the Quaker John Kelsall of Dolobran, near Welshpool, who records that the author is a Yorkshireman and fellow-Quaker, John Sutcliffe.³⁸ Kelsall describes encountering the poem at the home of a Cheshire Quaker, Thomas Rutter, and then copying it out, despite not having a very high opinion of it:

27.4 [June].1725 After meeting Cousin J. Merrick, Ed. Davies & self, as also Rd. Wildman dined at Thos. Rutters here we met with Jno. Sutcliff's manuscript entitled | the Quakers Tea Table overthrown | the Tea spilled | and the china ware broke a Satyrical Poem writt in 1717 read most of it which is very close & home though the wise but low and the style fictitious.³⁹

21.5 [July].1725 Went to see Thos. Rutter & Peter Leadbetter received the Book called 'the Quakers Tea Table overturned' in order to copy it over.

21.7 [September].1725 Was busy transcribing the Poem called the Quakers Tea Table overturned &c wrote by a friend of Yorkshire one Jno. Sutcliffe a school fellow of mine at Penketh.

The information that John Sutcliffe was a Yorkshire Quaker, if correct, enables us to close in on him with some certainty.⁴⁰ Seeing that he attended the Friends school at Penketh, near Warrington, it seems a safe assumption that he was born into a Quaker family, and there is only one John Sutcliffe entered in the surviving Quaker birth registers who could have been a suitable age to have written 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned' in 1717. This is the son born on 1 June 1677 to Richard Sutcliffe of Mankinholes Meeting in Yorkshire.⁴¹ His father is evidently the Richard Sutcliffe of Rodwellhead in Stansfield (or Swallowshey in Stansfield) who married Mary Fielden of Hartley-Royd on 18 January 1671.⁴² Rodwell Head is in Calderdale, showing on a modern Ordnance Survey map as a farm on the north side of the River Calder, two miles north-east of Todmorden (modern 'Swallowshaw' is slightly to the north-west of Rodwell Head). It is a mile and a third north-north-west of Mankinholes, south of the river, from which the local Quaker meeting took its name. Richard Sutcliffe had three other children, William (19 February 1672), Mary (7 May 1674), and Richard (4 February 1680). The elder Richard Sutcliffe, of 'Swallowshey', died on 20 April 1685 and was buried at Mankinholes.

The Sutcliffes, with others of the same name, were prominent local Quakers, and their names appear frequently in the records. Richard Sutcliffe himself was a lessee of Mankinholes Friends Burial Ground in 1667.⁴³ His eldest son William, born in 1672, was the William Sutcliffe who with his wife Grace (their marriage is not recorded) had seven children, of whom the youngest was Abraham Sutcliffe, born on 20 December 1721. This Abraham, who became a well-known surgeon, midwife, and apothecary in Settle,⁴⁴ provides an indirect link with Penketh School, in that from 1761 to 1766 one of his apprentices was John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1815), later FRS and founder of the Medical Society of London. Lettsom, from a Quaker family, had been educated at Penketh—and placed with Abraham Sutcliffe—on the advice of his guardian, Samuel Fothergill of Warrington (1715–72), who became a leading Quaker minister.⁴⁵

Thomas Pettigrew's memoir of John Lettsom, published in 1817, provides biographical information about Abraham Sutcliffe, revealing that he initially received only twelve months' instruction 'to spell and read a little English' before being 'appointed to the loom', and that after having to give up weaving for reasons of health he was set on his way to becoming an excellent classicist, as well as a successful and wealthy medical practitioner, with the help of a distant relation in Kendal, 'an eminent surgeon' called Ecroyd.⁴⁶ In contrast, his uncle John Sutcliffe is said, as above, to have attended Penketh School (founded in 1687 by the Quaker Gilbert Thompson), which is where he presumably received his evidently good education.⁴⁷ His attendance there is not, however, without problems, in that John Kelsall (1683–1743), who records that Sutcliffe was his school fellow, was there for a year in 1700–1701:⁴⁸ late enough in his case, but Sutcliffe, born in 1677, would already have been twenty-three at that time. But it may be that Sutcliffe had stayed on as a pupil-teacher, or that Kelsall was using the term 'school fellow' loosely, meaning merely 'someone who went to the same school'.⁴⁹

John Sutcliffe cannot certainly be identified in any Yorkshire Quaker document other than that recording his birth, except that he is very likely the man of that name who was a Mankinholes representative at Brighouse Monthly Meeting held in Leeds in June 1700. Less definitely, he may be the John Sutcliffe who witnessed the will of one Jonathan Parkinson in November 1703, but the document in question is associated with Knaresborough Monthly Meeting.⁵⁰ When the name reappears in Brighouse minute books, from 1730 onwards (when it becomes frequent), it very likely refers to Abraham Sutcliffe's oldest brother John, born on 18 November 1706. This John does not appear to have left the Mankinholes area, and it is probably he whose death is recorded there on 2 July 1748.⁵¹

In Lancashire records, however, it is a different matter. The original marriage registers of Marsden Monthly Meeting include an entry for 1708, as follows:⁵²

John Sutcliff of Clitheroe in the County of Lancaster Apothecary and Elizabeth Colborn of the same millener took each other in marriage in a publick Assembly of the people called Quakers mett together in their publick Meeting house at Newby in Yorkshire upon the 28 day of the 10th month in the year 1708 in the presence of William Sutcliff, Richard Sutcliff, David Davis, Edward Walbank, Henry Standen, Thomas Cutler, Thomas Whittaker, Thomas Slater, John Ecroyd, Thomas Peacock, William Baldwin, John Tipping, Isabel Dawson, Margery Walmsley, Mary Corbisley, with many others.

There can be little doubt that this is the John Sutcliffe born near Mankinholes in 1677. The two Sutcliffe witnesses bear the names of his brothers, William and Richard, and another witness is John Ecroyd, clearly related to the distant relative in Kendal who assisted Abraham Sutcliffe, probably in the 1730s. There were several generations of Ecroyds with this name: John Ecroyd of Briercliffe, near Burnley (1649–1721), the Quaker preacher and schoolteacher, and associate of George Fox; his son Dr John Ecroyd, also of Briercliffe (1679–1755), a well-known local doctor; and his son John Ecroyd, surgeon and apothecary of Kendal.⁵³ The witness to the marriage could have been either of the first two.

John Sutcliffe, therefore, also moved out of the West Riding towards the north-west and also entered the medical profession, very likely as the result of contact with other Quakers involved in medicine. He and Elizabeth are recorded as having had five children between 1712 and 1721, including a daughter, Mary, born in 1716, not long before the poem was written.⁵⁴ He was not long-lived, as the burial registers show that John Sutcliffe 'of Cliderow' died on 28 January 1726, when he would have been forty-eight.⁵⁵ He was buried three days later at Sawley, where Newby Quaker Meeting evidently maintained a burial ground.⁵⁶ There is no doubt that he remained an active Quaker throughout his life. The surviving minute books for Marsden Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and its superior body, Lancashire Quarterly Meeting, contain frequent references to him, often recording his appointment as representative of his local Meeting, Newby, to attend Monthly Meeting, or as representative of the Monthly Meeting to attend Quarterly Meeting.⁵⁷ (Records of Newby Meeting itself do not survive for the period in question.)⁵⁸ The Women's Quarterly Meeting minutes

contain numerous warnings about children being tempted by the ‘superfluous fashions’ of the world, but all the attention is to dress and appearance. None of the minutes for 1717 or the years preceding contain any mention of tea drinking. In Lancashire John Sutcliffe’s crusade would thus appear to have been a personal one.⁵⁹

The details of his having been an apothecary in Clitheroe are, however, significant for the poem. First, it makes it highly likely that Sutcliffe drew on the distinctive topography of the town, with its central hill-top castle, when imagining the high point to which Lucifer flies before looking out across the pale. What is more, devils feature prominently in Clitheroe folklore.⁶⁰ Sutcliffe writes (with ironic allusion to his provincial location):

Till hasting to the world’s utmost bound
An eminence to perch upon he found,
The glittering turret of a noble seat,
The family as moraliz’d as great.
Hence a short prospect o’er a fenny vale
His eye trajected to the sacred pale. (fol. 4r)

Francis Grose, writing in the later eighteenth century, described the position of Clitheroe Castle in words that partly recall Sutcliffe’s: ‘The castle is situated on the summit of a conical insulated crag, or rugged limestone rock, which suddenly rises from a fine vale’.⁶¹ The noble family in question was, in 1717, that of the dukes of Montagu, to whom the ancient Honor of Clitheroe had descended from George Monck, first Duke of Albemarle, who had been rewarded with the dignity by Charles II.⁶² The Montagues were indeed ‘moralised’—held up as examples—in the ironic sense that Sutcliffe no doubt intended, being themselves the subject of satire.⁶³ But despite this conclusive specificity, the pale into which Lucifer then descends clearly has (as above) to be interpreted metaphorically as the local Quaker community, not as the town.

Secondly, Sutcliffe’s occupation as an apothecary—and very likely also as a surgeon, as the two professions frequently went hand in hand—helps to explain the use of medical imagery in connection with the satire of ‘The Quakers Tea Table Overturned’. The metaphorical application of surgical terminology to the cure of moral failings is hardly original, but here it is a recurrent theme. To quote from the beginning of Part 3 in more detail:

Stay, do not start, evade or mince the matter,
Nor think to scape the launces of my satyr.
She [*i.e. the satire*] has undertook the sore, she’ll rip it up,
That to the gangrene she may put a stop.
She doubts not in the least to make a cure
If you’l the opperation but endure. (fol. 10v)

A little later, as the author prepares for a new attack, we find:

Your malady is in a tender part;
It lyes between the belly and the heart.
I’le it through all its dark meanders trace

And give a dexterous touch at every place,
 Then bear me patiently, for now I must
 Come to the quick and give a pungent thrust.
 You shall no needless pain have from my lance;
 I'll have regard to every circumstance. (fol. 13r)

Eventually comes the healing, when the doctor lays down his instruments:

Probes, launces, and incision knives aside,
 Emollient unguents satyr now provide,
 That whilst the sore is fresh and clean within
 Sweet healing balsame may be poured in,
 And that the body may restored be
 To pristine health, to perfect sanity. (fol. 18r)⁶⁴

Even more to the point, his being an apothecary would mean that Sutcliffe had a professional knowledge of tea and quite possibly of its effects, as it is very likely that his own apothecary's shop would have sold the commodity (as was usual at the time), despite his personal concerns about fashionable tea parties. From the degree of detail in the poem it seems that he himself must have witnessed at least one such party, and there is even the possibility that his composition was provoked by an actual incident affecting a Clitheroe Quaker girl, though unrecorded in the surviving minute books. As has been shown, however, his satirical tone is in some places condemnatory, at other times more lighthearted and supportive. We have to bear in mind that 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturned' is a poem, a product of the imagination, not a treatise. While there is no doubt that Sutcliffe, as a Quaker, was seriously opposed to tea parties, he has fashioned a work of literature. One wonders what else he may have written.

NOTES

* An early version of this essay formed a talk entitled 'The Quakers Tea Table Overturn'd: Moral Dangers of the Eighteenth-Century Tea Party', given jointly with Elizabeth Stainforth in December 2010 in the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds. I am grateful to Professor David Fairer and other readers for many helpful suggestions.

1. The manuscript is bound in very worn and now barely attached boards, 8.5" high × 6.5" wide. The Brotherton Collection acquired it in 1981, following its appearance in Sotheby's sale catalogue of 27–28 October that year, where it is briefly described (Lot 255; no provenance given). The manuscript can be consulted in digitised facsimile via the online subscription-based *Literary Manuscripts: 17th and 18th Century Poetry from the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds* (Adam Matthew Publications). A facsimile of the first page of the poem (fol. 2r) is freely available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/library/spcoll/bcmsv/samples/bcmsv85.htm>.

2. Written on the inside front cover is 'B.D. Book', in a hand similar to, but not certainly the same as, John Bigland's.

3. Partly because the extant copy of the poem is non-authorial and contains numerous errors, I have applied modern punctuation and capitalisation when quoting from it, to bring out the sense.

4. Cf. Gen. 16:12: 'And he will be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him'.

5. Ellwood, T., *Rogero-Mastix: A Rod for William Rogers, in Return for his Riming Scourge, etc.* London, 1685, and Nehemiah chapters 2–6. Ellwood is more explicit than the prophet about how the gentiles ‘no longer could, as heretofore, / Go in and out at pleasure, and prophane, / With unclean Mixtures, *Jacob's* Seed again; / Bring in mixt Marriages, and thereby make / God's People him offend, him them forsake’ (p. 4, ll. 52–56).

6. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), *finical* adj., ‘Over-nice or particular, affectedly fastidious’.

7. The author refers to the adversaries, informers, and false brothers as Apollyon's ‘agents’ (fol. 3r), the whole passage possibly reflecting ll. 126–33 of Ellwood's poem: ‘By these Examples, plainly it appears, / How Satan plaid his Pranks in former years, / What Arts he us'd, how craftily he wrought, / What Instruments, whereby to work, he sought; / One while, professed Enemies, and then / Another while he chose false Brethren. / And though those Agents now are dead and gone, / Satan remains the same, the Evil One’ (p. 6).

8. ‘babby’, i.e. doll. See OED, *baby* n. and adj., where forms like ‘babby’ are described as English regional, chiefly northern.

9. ‘Friends’ in the fourth line is without a capital in the manuscript, but there seems no doubt that Quakers (officially the Religious Society of Friends) are intended.

10. An analysis of this passage, and of related lines elsewhere in the poem, will be found in a separate article in preparation by Elizabeth Stainforth and C. Anne Wilson.

11. In the first line of this passage the transcriber wrote ‘mud’, which in the margin has been corrected to ‘wood’.

12. Cf. the accumulation of nouns in a line quoted above (‘Shows, plays, balls, gaming, musick, recreation’, fol. 2v) and in another on fol. 6v concerning recipes (‘Froths, fools & bawbles, trifles & conceits’). The technique again suggests knowledge of *The Rape of the Lock* (cf. famously ‘Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux’, l.138), as does the attention to closely observed particulars; thus when the girls drink from their tea dishes, ‘Under the nether edge her thumb is fix'd, / The upper by the finger that's betwixt, / Two on each side is press'd the back o'th hand, / Upwards the little fingers distant stand’ (fol. 9r). We may note too that on fol. 5v Lucifer's tea table is characterised as an ‘engine’—a contrivance to accomplish a plot—like the scissors in Pope's poem (III:132, 149).

13. OED, *snaffle* v.¹, 1, to snaffle (bridle) a horse. For the sense ‘speak through the nose’, see *snaffle* v.³, b., where a quotation from 1826 (from William Hone's *Every-day Book*) makes out it is a dialectal usage: ‘A hare-lip...caused him to speak through the nose, or to *snaffle*, as they term it in Yorkshire’.

14. OED, *flee* v.

15. OED, *nab* v.¹.

16. OED, *curry* v.¹.

17. L'Estrange, R., *The Visions of Dom Francisco de Quevedo Villegas, Knight of the Order of St. James*, London, 1667, p. 165. The sentence is quoted in part in OED, *nab* v.¹, 1b.

18. For example, ‘Let this for an apology then go / When e'er I err in a punctilio, / While I the most essential parts so handle / As not to care a straw who holds the candle. / Nor wou'd I have it be thought strange at all / That I a science the tea table call, / For I am fully of opinion / One of the liberals may be learn't as soon’ (fols 7v–8r), and ‘Meanwhile my courteous readers I must leave / Their sounds by strength of fancy to conceive. / A treat d'ye call't, what gossips can be worse / Condemned to the Babylonian curse’ (fol. 10r).

19. He criticises them generally for using ‘Language half Jewish, half Ashdod's caresses’ (fol. 15v), evidently a reference to Neh. 13:24, where the prophet condemns the inability of the children of Jewish mixed marriages to speak Hebrew. A similar reference occurs in Thomas Ellwood's *Rogero-Mastix*: ‘and introduce a Mungrel Breed, / Which half the Language should of Ashdod speak’ (p. 26, ll. 834–35), suggesting the further influence of this poem. The author of ‘The Quakers Tea Table Overturned’ specifically criticises the girls' inconsistency in the way they refer to months and days of the week (Quaker practice was to use numbers, e.g. 5th

month, rather than what were regarded as pagan names) and their not always refusing to use flattering titles when addressing their social superiors.

20. See *OED*, *burdet* n., 'Some kind of cotton fabric' (quotations from 1710 to 1783), and (better-known) *paduasoy* n., 'A strong, rich, silk fabric, usually slightly corded or embossed'.

21. Isa. 28:8, 'For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean'. But the poem's extreme language seems again partly indebted to Thomas Ellwood's attacks on William Rogers. Cf. 'Which in base Terms, and for the basest Ends, / Thou belchest forth against those worthy Friends, /.../ Besides, they are more able far, I know, / Thy Vomit back upon thy face to throw', and 'Yet all the Filth that Thou, and Others Spaul, / On honourable Friends, in course will fall / Upon your Selves; On them it ne'er can stick: / Your selves your Vomit up again must lick' (*Rogero-Mastix*, p. 8, ll. 206-207, 212-13, and p. 29, ll. 955-58).

22. The use here of 'Sion' as a term for the Religious Society of Friends solves a difficulty on fol. 21v where the transcriber has written, 'So that there many may enamor'd be / With the sons beauty and prosperity'. The line makes sense if 'the sons' is replaced by 'Sions', which is what the author presumably intended.

23. The 'seven thousand' alludes to St Paul (Rom. 11:4): 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal' (cf. also 1 Kgs 19:18). Seven thousand was therefore traditionally interpreted as the number of God's elect.

24. For examples of modern comment on eighteenth-century Quaker attitudes to fashion and extravagance, drawing on these sources, see Lloyd, A., *Quaker Social History, 1669-1738*, London: Longmans, 1950, p. 166; Burnet, G.B., *The Story of Quakerism in Scotland, 1650-1850*, London: Clarke, 1952, pp. 144-46; and Walvin, J., *The Quakers: Money and Morals*, London: Murray, 1997, p. 52.

25. These three examples are quoted from the section on Plainness in the manuscript copy of the widely circulated 'Christian and Brotherly Advices from Yearly Meeting' preserved as item C 23 in the Carlton Hill Quaker archives held in Leeds University Library. See pp. 232 (1708 and 1709) and 234 (1715).

26. 'Christian and Brotherly Advices', p. 236. The same Advice is in the printed *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in London, from its First Institution*, London, 1783, pp. 186-87, under Plainness.

27. See the section on Children in 'Christian and Brotherly Advices' (pp. 48-49), passages taken from the Yearly Meeting epistles for these years, later printed in *Epistles from the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in London, to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in Great Britain, Ireland, and Elsewhere, from 1681 to 1857*, London: Marsh, 1858, pp. 185 and 191-92.

28. *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices*, pp. 55-56, under Defamation and Detraction.

29. Wilson, C.A., *Food and Drink in Britain from the Stone Age to Recent Times*, London: Constable, 1973, p. 413.

30. I quote from an edition of 1712, as the first edition wrongly reads 'Statesman Councillor's'.

31. London, 1706. See, for example, p. 12, 'Coffee, Chocolate and Tea were at first us'd only as Medicines while they continued unpleasant, but since they were made delicious with Sugar, they are become Poison'.

32. Braithwaite, W.C., *The Second Period of Quakerism*, ed. H.J. Cadbury, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1961, p. 511. I quote here directly from the original minute preserved in Leeds University Library, Clifford Street Quaker archives, III 2.1, p. 121.

33. Barclay, R., *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth: considered principally with reference to the influence of church organization on the spread of Christianity*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876, p. 498. The quotations are repeated in Gummere, A.M., *The Quaker: A Study in Costume*, Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1901, pp. 23-24, but she is dependent on Barclay and does not seek to identify the source.

34. *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* 13 (1916), p. 19. I owe this reference (and much other help) to Josef Keith of the Library of the Religious Society of Friends, London (hereafter

LSF). Aberdeen Quaker records, on which Barclay explicitly draws shortly before his references to tea, do not appear relevant. Local meeting minutes for the years 1706–91 are now held in the National Archives of Scotland (CH10/3/3), and I am grateful to Kirsteen Mulhern for consulting those for 1711–15 on my behalf, with a negative result. (Quarterly and Yearly Meeting minutes for 1697–1773, held as CH10/3/4, are damaged and deemed unfit for consultation.) Burnet, *Story of Quakerism in Scotland*, pp. 144–46, quotes some details about disciplinary codes from Aberdeen records, but makes no mention of tea.

35. Cork and Half-Year's Meeting records are now held in the Friends Historical Library, Dublin. Wigham, M., *The Irish Quakers: A Short History of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland*, Dublin: Historical Committee of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, 1992, p. 43, goes so far as to say that some Irish Quakers may have 'used tea without real occasion', but, like Barclay, does not provide a reference. For the general zeal for plainness among Irish Quakers, and their influence on the rest of the Society (particularly in the North of England and Scotland), see Braithwaite, *Second Period of Quakerism*, pp. 506–14.

36. The word 'pale' was historically used for the area of English jurisdiction in Ireland, particularly the area around Dublin, and has continued to be associated with Ireland, but it was also used for areas of jurisdiction elsewhere and has long had the figurative meaning of a sphere of activity or influence. However, it may be noted that the only instance in *OED* of the word being applied in this way to a religious sect (*pale* n.¹, 5) is from the Irish freethinker and religious polemicist John Toland, who had links to Quakers: 'If a man's not found within the pale of some certain Sect, he's look'd upon by all as an outlying deer, which it's lawful for every one to kill' (c. 1722).

37. 'pleight', i.e. plait (see *OED*, *plait* n. for evidence of this spelling). The syntax of these lines is somewhat unclear. In quoting I have removed an apparently erroneous question mark from the end of the second line.

38. For Kelsall (1683–1743), who spent most of his life in Wales and who at this time lived in Dolobran, see the article by Richard C. Allen in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*ODNB*). Dr Allen is currently editing the diaries for publication, along with Kelsall's other writings. The surviving volumes of the original diaries are held in LSF as MSS VOLS 193/1–3, along with nineteenth-century transcripts covering a wider span of years (MSS VOLS S185–92). For the year 1725 only a transcript survives: S187 for the first extract here (p. 193), S188 for the second two (pp. 2, 24). For first alerting me to the entries in question I am greatly indebted to Michael Ashby of the University of Cambridge, as I am to Dr Allen for his generous help.

39. 'close & home': cf. *OED*, *close* adj. and adv., A.I.11a ('rigorous', 'severe'), and A.II.19a ('strict', 'minute', 'searching'), and *home* n.¹ and adj., B 3a ('direct', 'to the point'). 'wise', i.e. manner, way of proceeding (*OED*, *wise* n.¹, I.1.a, though not attested there beyond the sixteenth century). It may be noted that although the diary entry is dated 27.4.1725, June is meant, as Quaker dating practice before 1752 consistently regarded March as the first month of the year.

40. For instances of northern vocabulary in the poem, see nn. 7 and 13 above.

41. John's surname is given as Suttcliff, other versions of the family name being Suttlife, Suttcliff, Sutcliff, Sutcliffe, and Suttcliff(e), here all regularised to Sutcliffe. As elsewhere in this essay I have silently converted Old Style Quaker dates (here 1677.4.1) to New Style. The genealogical information in this paragraph and below is taken from the digest registers of Quaker births, marriages, and burials, compiled in 1840–42 on the basis of original registers now held in the National Archives under class RG6. These digests were organised geographically, one for each of the so-called Quarterly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends then existing in England and Wales. In the case of Mankinholes Meeting the relevant entries are to be found in both the Yorkshire and the Lancashire Quarterly Meeting digest registers; Mankinholes was officially part of Brighouse Monthly Meeting in Yorkshire, but it traditionally had very close ties with Marsden Monthly Meeting across the Lancashire border (the nearby town

of Todmorden was historically split between Yorkshire and Lancashire). The original digest registers are preserved in LSF, with a second set for Yorkshire held in the Special Collections department of Leeds University Library. Digitised pages from the original RG6 registers can now be consulted via the online Non-Parochial Registers service (<http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/>). A search of this website shows no Quaker birth of a John Sutcliffe before 1677 and no subsequent one until 1706.

42. Richard Sutcliffe's marriage is recorded three times in the Yorkshire QM digest register, with varying detail.

43. Thistlethwaite, W.P., 'The Quaker Meeting of Mankinholes/Todmorden (1653–1987)', p. 13 (typescript; copy in the library of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds).

44. For the transfer of his Quaker membership from Mankinholes to Settle in 1747, see Brighouse Monthly Meeting minute book, 1747–67 (Carlton Hill archives, Q5, pp. 5–8).

45. Samuel Fothergill was the brother of another celebrated Quaker doctor and FRS, John Fothergill (1712–80), who fostered Lettsom's career in London. For all three, see *ODNB*. Lettsom later attended the University of Leiden, where in 1769 he chose to write a dissertation on the pathological effects of tea drinking, dedicated to Samuel and John Fothergill and to Abraham Sutcliffe. He subsequently published *The Natural History of the Tea-Tree, with Observations on the Medical Qualities of Tea, and Effects of Tea-Drinking*, London, 1772.

46. Pettigrew, T.J., *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Late John Coakley Lettsom, with a Selection from his Correspondence*, 3 vols., London: Longman, 1817, I, pp. 12–16. The memoirs also record that Sutcliffe made a very advantageous marriage. For similar information, see Abraham, J.J., *Lettsom: His Life, Times, Friends and Descendants*, London: Heinemann, 1933, pp. 21, 26–29. For Ecroyd, see further n. 53 below.

47. For some brief notes on Penketh School, for which no pre-nineteenth-century archives apparently survive, see *Chain of Friendship: Selected Letters of Dr John Fothergill of London, 1735–1780*, ed. B.C. Corner and C.C. Booth, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1971, p. 150 n. 2 and p. 274 n. 3. More extensively, see Muschamp, R., *The Story of Quakers: Early Happenings in Warrington and District*, Warrington, 1931, pp. 6–7—the publication is an 8-page pamphlet reprinted from articles in *The Warrington Examiner*—and an unpublished information sheet held in the LSF Schools file.

48. *ODNB*, 'Kelsall, John (1683–1743)'.

49. *OED*, however, restricts the meaning to 'One who is or formerly was at the same school at the same time with another'.

50. Brighouse Monthly Meeting minute book, 1688–1704 (Carlton Hill archives, Q1, p. 106), and p. iii (one of a number of leaves bearing earlier dates) at the front of Knaresborough Monthly Meeting minute book, 1721–53 (Carlton Hill archives, A1).

51. His place of residence is given as Rodwelend in Stansfield.

52. National Archives, RG6/0970, p. 28. There is no earlier John Sutcliffe marriage listed in the Lancashire and Yorkshire digest registers or at <http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/>, and no subsequent one until 1743.

53. Frost, R., *A Lancashire Township: The History of Briercliffe-with-Extwistle*, Burnley: Rieve Edge Press, 1982, pp. 105–106. John Ecroyd of Kendal's year of birth cannot be certainly ascertained, but he would have been too young to be the Ecroyd who assisted Abraham Sutcliffe. It seems likely that the memoir of Lettsom is confused, and that it was the eminent Dr John Ecroyd of Briercliffe who helped Sutcliffe.

54. The children are John in 1712, William in 1714, Mary in 1715/6, Elizabeth in 1719, and Thomas in 1721. Elizabeth Sutcliffe, their mother, was born on 10 February 1684, the daughter of Richard Colburn (Coulburne, Colbourn), Quaker of Clitheroe.

55. The Lancashire and Yorkshire digest registers and <http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/> record no other John Sutcliffe death until 1748 (that of John born in 1706, as above). The John Sutcliffe who died in Brighouse MM in 1685/6 is described as 'son of Thomas'.

56. Sawley is some four miles north-east of Clitheroe and some three miles west of Newby. Both villages were historically in the West Riding of Yorkshire, but Newby Meeting was nevertheless part of Marsden Monthly Meeting and therefore Lancashire Quarterly Meeting. According to Butler, D.M., *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, 2 vols., London: Friends Historical Society, 1999, Newby Quakers moved to Sawley in 1742 when they built a meeting house there, but the register entry for John Sutcliffe's death shows that they must have maintained a burial ground there from an earlier date. His widow Elizabeth died on 11 June 1726.

57. Preston, Lancashire Record Office, FRL 1/1/1/3 (Lancashire Quarterly Meeting minute book, 1711–1776), FRL 1/2/1/1 (Lancashire Women's Quarterly Meeting minute book, 1675–1777), FRM 1/1 (Marsden Monthly Meeting minute book, 1678–1723), and FRM 1/24 (Marsden Women's Monthly Meeting minute book, 1678–1738).

58. Cf. Roberts, H.E., *Researching Yorkshire Quaker History: A Guide to Sources*, Hull: University of Hull Brynmor Jones Library, 2003, p. 61.

59. However, his poem evidently achieved some circulation among Quakers. John Kelsall came upon it at Thomas Rutter's house in Chester, and the Leeds manuscript, as noted earlier, bears the names of two owners, Joseph Wilkinson and John Bigland, who can be traced (via the index to the Quaker registers at <http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/>) to Holme Monthly Meeting, which covered the area in Cumberland south-west of Carlisle.

60. See, for example, Weeks, W.S., 'Some Legendary Stories and Folk-Lore of the Clitheroe District', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 34 (1916), pp. 77–110. For this reference, and other assistance, I am indebted to Susan Holden of Clitheroe Library.

61. Grose, F., *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, 8 vols., London, new edn, 1785?, III, p. 121.

62. The Honor of Clitheroe came into the possession of the Montagu family in 1692, when the widow of the second Duke of Albemarle (Elizabeth Cavendish) married Ralph Montagu, Earl of Montagu; he was created duke in 1705. Following his death in 1709 the Honor passed to John Montagu, his surviving son from his first marriage (*ODNB*).

63. Cf. *OED*, *moralize*, v., 2. *OED*'s separate entry for *moralized*, adj., does not supply the required range of meanings. Ralph Montagu, ambitious and already very wealthy, was particularly satirised for his courtship of and marriage to the enormously rich Elizabeth Cavendish (the heir to Clitheroe), who was widely believed to be mad. See Metzger, E.C., *Ralph, First Duke of Montagu, 1638–1709*, Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1987, pp. 304–308, 342, 350, and, for satirical verses on Montagu's elevation to a dukedom ('The queen like heaven shines equally on all'), p. 339.

64. Cf. also 'Purge out bad ferments, purify the blood, / The body's constitution render good', fol. 21v). For Sutcliffe's use of the term 'lance' rather than the commoner 'lancet' for his main surgical instrument, cf. *OED*, *lance* n.¹, 3, which cross-refers to *lancet* n., 2.

AUTHOR DETAILS

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