



# Edward Wigglesworth, merchant and professor

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staffe's.<sup>87</sup> On the whole, therefore, it seems likely that the memoir in the *Miscellaneous Works* is independent of the *Life of Abel* and that the evidence of the latter supports that of the former.

A second contemporary witness for Wagstaffe's authorship of *A Comment upon the History of Tom Thumb* was reported by James Crossley. Writing in reply to Dilke's first article, Crossley called attention to an extensive collection of octavo tracts published in London from 1711 to 1718 then in his possession. The unknown collector of the pamphlets, Crossley reported, 'appears to have purchased them as they came out, and where the date was wanting, has supplied it, where erroneous, corrected it, and in the body of each tract has filled up the blanks, marked the allusions in the margin, and, when he knew it, has written on the title-page of each

<sup>87</sup> In the British Museum Catalogue, however, all are ascribed to Wagstaffe.

anonymous tract the name of the author.'<sup>88</sup> The attributions were accurate, in so far as Crossley was able to check them. On the title-page of the first edition of *A Comment upon the History of Tom Thumb* the collector wrote 'By Mr Wagstaffe.'

The researches of Sir Norman Moore and the rediscovery of Wagstaffe's signed works have confirmed the essential accuracy of the memoir prefixed to the *Miscellaneous Works* so far as Wagstaffe's life is concerned. There is, in addition, good contemporary evidence in support of the accuracy of the memoir with respect to Wagstaffe's works. There is, on the other hand, no good evidence, contemporary or otherwise, that Swift or Arbuthnot wrote any of them. The only logical course, therefore, is to accept the contents of the *Miscellaneous Works* as being indeed the literary creations of Dr William Wagstaffe.

VINTON A. DEARING

<sup>88</sup> *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Ser., II, 132.

## Edward Wigglesworth, Merchant and Professor

THE Baker Library has recently received from members of the Wigglesworth family two eighteenth-century account books and several for the early nineteenth century which have been handed down in the family. The earlier volumes, a matching ledger and daybook, are of particular interest, for it appears that they belonged to Edward Wigglesworth, Harvard's second Hollis Professor of Divinity (1765-91) and Acting President (1780-81). The daybook extends from 28 August 1758 to 1 Au-

gust 1760, with occasional entries to September 1765; the ledger, beginning likewise in August 1758, has an entry or two as late as February 1771. Neither of these volumes bears Edward Wigglesworth's name, but from the evidence of a few papers tucked in the ledger, and from outside sources, we can be sure that they were his. Wigglesworth graduated from Harvard in 1749, but he did not return as Tutor until 1764, and the accounts of his life are silent as to the intervening years. It is now possible to show that he was

engaged in the import-export business in Boston during at least a part of this time. The later account books, belonging to Edward's son, Thomas, who was a merchant in Boston throughout his career, are also of interest. But it is the account books of Edward which will occupy our attention here.

Young Edward must have been somewhat overshadowed by his illustrious father (who was also Edward), educator, theologian, and first Hollis Professor of Divinity (1721-65). Edward, Jr, who was born in 1732, was only seventeen upon his graduation from Harvard, and it is likely that he continued on as Resident Scholar, at least for the three years necessary to obtain the master's degree. He received an equivalent degree from Yale the same year (1752), which was not an unusual practice. His health seems not to have been very good, and he probably continued to live at home, in the house at the head of Holyoke Street, about where a portion of Wigglesworth Hall now is. He took an active part in raising funds for the new meeting house of the First Parish in Cambridge in 1756, contributing sixteen pounds of his own.<sup>1</sup> Sometime before 1758 he evidently decided to try his hand at a business career. Allowing for a period of apprenticeship, and for the fact that the partnership of Townsend & Wigglesworth had been well established by the time the surviving account books start, it is probable that young Edward was engaging in business even while getting his master's degree.

Edward, Jr, was fortunate in finding a slightly older person, William Blair

<sup>1</sup> Lucius R. Paige, *History of Cambridge, Mass., 1630-1877* (Boston, 1877), p. 292.

Townsend, who graduated from Harvard in 1741, with whom to go into business. By 1758 Townsend & Wigglesworth, importers of British and India goods, had set up shop at the Sign of the Three Doves, on Marlboro Street (now part of Washington Street).<sup>2</sup> As such, they were one of a number of similar firms, probably among the lesser half in point of size. Even as the larger firms, such as Thomas Hancock and Nephew, John, Townsend & Wigglesworth were faced with the many difficulties of doing business in pre-Revolutionary Boston: shortage of cash, poor communications, sluggish debtors, and a general low standard of efficiency.<sup>3</sup> They obtained their supplies from such English firms as Champion & Hayley (a bill from this firm, made out to Edward Wigglesworth, is inserted in the ledger) and Jarvis & Co., and such local firms as Green & Boyleston.<sup>4</sup> The greater part of their stock in trade consisted of dry goods, the familiar India line. The daybook is full of entries for such kinds of cloth as 'Tammy, serge, taffety, cambrick, garlix, thicksett, shaloon, buckrum, poplin, and ozen-

<sup>2</sup> Samuel G. Drake, *History and Antiquities of Boston* (Boston, 1856), p. 642.

<sup>3</sup> William T. Baxter, *The House of Hancock* (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), presents an excellent picture of business in Boston, 1724-75. Chapter XI is entitled 'Everyday Business Life in Colonial Boston.'

<sup>4</sup> Information in this and the next paragraph comes from the daybook and the ledger; the former is especially detailed through July 1760; thereafter less so. Sums of money are entered twice in the daybook, in accordance with the old and the new values of currency (Old Tenor and New Tenor). The ledger entries are of a summary sort only, but items are entered under a variety of headings, such as 'Cash,' 'Expences,' 'Stock,' 'Shop,' and 'Goods Unsold.'

brig.<sup>6</sup> Also in the dry goods line were hose, gloves, caps, ribbon, fringe, thread, and buttons. There seems to have been a slow but steady demand for gloves to be distributed at funerals. The firm dealt in stationery, too, and an occasional textbook. Finally, one is not surprised to find tea, chocolate, and sugar mentioned, for these were among the most popular imports.

Townsend & Wigglesworth's customers, except for the local Cambridge and Boston ones, seem to have come largely from south and west of Boston. In a good many cases they were probably local shopkeepers; at least the goods purchased were often more than the average customer would use. The ledger account of Thomas Sims bears the notation, 'shopkeeper.' Several ministers were numbered among their customers, such as the Reverend Jeremiah Condy and the Reverend Isaiah Lewis, and members of the Wigglesworth family, including Edward, Sr. and Samuel, often appear. The entry for Professor Wigglesworth for 15 September 1758 is perhaps typical:

Doctor Edward Wigglesworth			
dr. to Shop		£	s d
2 linen handk.		1.	15
1 lb Tea		2.	7. 6
2¾ yds check	9/	1.	4. 9
¼ oz silk	28/	.	7.
		<hr/>	
		5.	14. 3
			(15.2¾)

And in May 1765 there is an entry, 'Estate of Dr. Wigglesworth dr. to goods unsold o. s. o.' An indication of profit from the business is an entry for 31 March 1759: 'To profit on Goods sold since 1st September last 81.15.1¼.'

<sup>6</sup> Garlix was a kind of sailcloth, ozenbrig a kind of muslin.

A side venture in pork was made in 1762 and 1763, and occasionally land was acquired, probably in payment of debts.

The firm of Townsend & Wigglesworth seems to have had sufficient business to justify an apprentice, one Winslow Lewis. At least there are charges for his board in the daybook, and a receipt has survived, from Onesiphorus Tileston to Wigglesworth, for £5 6s. 'in behalf of his Apprentice Mr Winslow Lewis, towards Hiring men in my Company for the present Expedition.'<sup>6</sup> There is in the Harvard Archives a letter from Samuel Locke, President of Harvard 1770-73, dated 11 February 1760, addressed to 'Edward Wigglesworth, Merchant, Boston,' congratulating him on his approaching marriage.<sup>7</sup> The congratulations were premature, for Edward did not marry until October 1765. It may have been ill health which caused the postponement, for on 24 January 1762 Wigglesworth issued a printed circular in which he states his intention of withdrawing from business. The circular is worth quoting as an example of a business form of the time; furthermore, the signature, although only the upper half is visible, compares exactly with signatures of Wigglesworth preserved in the Harvard Archives.

BOSTON, Jan. 24, 1762.

SIR,

The general and great Negligence of my Customers in making Payment, since I have been taken off from Business by long Sickness, has so embarrassed my

<sup>6</sup> 9 April 1759; Edes Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. The expedition was probably that against Quebec.

<sup>7</sup> Presidents' Papers, Samuel Locke, Harvard University Archives.

Affairs, that I have been obliged to throw up Business till I can settle my Accompts and recover more Health than I enjoy at present. I have empowered Deacon THOMAS HILL OF BOSTON and his Son Mr. HENRY HILL to settle my Accompts, and receive the Ballances due to me; to whom, I desire, you would *speedily* apply for the Settlement of your Account with me.

The importunity of my Creditors, as well as Justice to them, will oblige me to *sue* to APRIL COURT the Accompts of all Persons whose Debts are *now payable* by Agreement, who shall neglect to pay them in such Season as to prevent it.

I expect those of my Customers, who have been delinquent in discharging, will allow Interest after their Debts ought to have been paid: For thro' their Negligence I have been, and still am, obliged to pay Interest.

I desire my other Customers, whose Debts are not yet due, that they would be careful to discharge them as soon as they become payable by Agreement.

I am,  
Your humble Servant,  
/s/ Edward Wigglesworth

This printed sheet becomes the cover of a fold which Wigglesworth calls his 'Ballance Book.' Subsequent entries in the ledger and daybook are concerned mainly with payments to the Hills, who were prominent Boston merchants. Wigglesworth married, as the first of his three wives, Deacon Hill's daughter, Margaret; he was thus turning over his business to his future father- and brother-in-law. Although he did not profit greatly from his business venture, Wigglesworth seems also not to have lost anything. Townsend continued on in business alone. These were difficult times, not only because of the troubles with England, but because of the smallpox, which was espe-

cially heavy in 1764. Townsend advertised that 'no person in his house would have smallpox,' and that he would 'be careful of going where it was.'<sup>8</sup> Thus the public could patronize his shop with safety.

In 1764 Wigglesworth accepted appointment as a Tutor at Harvard, and the following year his father died. He succeeded to his father's position as Hollis Professor of Divinity, being both inaugurated as Professor and married in October of that year. He became a Fellow in 1779, and was Acting President in 1780-81, between the terms of Presidents Langdon and Willard. He is addressed, in a letter dated 23 May 1781, as Vice-President.<sup>9</sup> He was elected an original member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Harvard University in 1786. Ill health forced him to retire in 1791; his death came three years later, on 17 June 1794.

Wigglesworth's business training, his interest in figures, and his practical nature showed themselves on many occasions. He was appointed temporarily Instructor in Mathematics on 9 March 1780, and he observed the total eclipse of the sun on 27 October 1780.<sup>10</sup> In 1775 he published a pamphlet, *Calculations on American Population*, which aroused considerable attention. It was his theory that the number of 'British Americans' would double every twenty-five years, because of simple living and early marriage, and consequently would reach nearly one and a half billion at the end of the

<sup>8</sup> Drake, *History of Boston*, p. 677.

<sup>9</sup> College Papers, II, 75, Harvard University Archives.

<sup>10</sup> *The Memorial History of Boston*, ed. Justin Winsor (Boston, 1881), IV, 497.

twentieth century. His interest in such matters led him to prepare material on the provision of annuities for the widows of ministers and professors, and a 'Table showing the Probability of the Duration, the Decrement, and the Expectation of Life in the States of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.'<sup>11</sup> It is pleasant to report that he himself received an annuity from the University when ill health forced him to retire in 1791. His business ability enabled him also to help pull the College finances through the difficult days of the Revolution, thus correcting the effects of John Hancock's neglect.<sup>12</sup> In Janu-

<sup>11</sup> *Memorial History*, IV, 191. The date is here given as 1782; on p. 497 it is given as 1791. The writer has not found a copy of the 'Table.'

<sup>12</sup> See Josiah Quincy, *The History of Harvard University* (Cambridge, 1840), II, 261, where Professor Eliphalet Pearson, Hancock Professor of Hebrew, is quoted as attributing to Wigglesworth 'in addition to eminent skill in theology, native quickness of apprehension, cultivated understanding, correct judgment, skill in mathematics, as well as financial talents; and these last were very eminently displayed in the security of the funds of the College, when endangered

ary 1775 he was chosen one of a committee of the Corporation to inquire into the state of the College expenses for Commons, and in July 1779 he was granted twelve pounds for examining the steward's accounts.<sup>13</sup>

The sketch of Wigglesworth in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, by Edward H. Dewey, states that he 'lacked the versatility of knowledge that his father and grandfather possessed, but his service as an educator and citizen make him worthy of memory.' His son, Thomas, became the prominent merchant he himself may once have hoped to become. But the practical training he received through his apprenticeship to business was not wholly lost; he was the better professor and administrator for it.

ROBERT W. LOVETT

by the ferment and innovating spirit of the American Revolution, and well nigh ruined by the depreciation of our paper medium.'

<sup>13</sup> Faculty Records, IV, 1 (27 January 1775); Corporation Records, III, 47 (21 July 1779) — both in Harvard University Archives.

## B. W. Procter and the Genesis of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*

**A**N unpublished letter of B. W. Procter ('Barry Cornwall'), now in the Harvard College Library,<sup>1</sup> had very interesting consequences in the life of its recipient, Thomas Carlyle. It was written near the end of November, 1831, a few months after Carlyle had arrived in

<sup>1</sup> Received in 1874 as part of the collection of autographs contained in the bequest of Charles Sumner.

London in search of literary work. He was unable to find a publisher for *Sartor Resartus*, which he had brought with him, or to secure employment for his pen. He wrote of his prospects as looking 'into Vacuity, into Nothingness.'<sup>2</sup> Aware of Carlyle's difficult circumstances, Procter, who had introduced him to the editor of the *Edin-*

<sup>2</sup> *Letters of Thomas Carlyle 1826-1836*, ed. C. E. Norton (London, 1888), I, 374.

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