

THE JOURNAL
OF THE
FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Communications should be addressed to the Editor at
Friends House.

Presidential Address

The presidential address for 1951 has been arranged for Thursday, 4th October, at Friends House. That evening our President, Isabel Ross, author of *Margaret Fell, Mother of Quakerism*, will speak on "Some Byways of Quaker Research."

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THERE is a danger that historical reconstruction may be accepted by the reader for more than it is worth, for it is commonly the construction put by one writer upon surviving records of a past age. Reconstructions need to be reviewed from time to time to permit the reshaping which fuller knowledge perhaps calls for, and also, by some change of presentation, in order to bring out points of interest to a new generation, interest which their fathers would not have felt. Reconstructions very rarely give just weight to all the portions of evidence which have survived concerning certain events or movements, and more rarely still has all the necessary evidence come down to us from which to produce a complete view of an historical occasion.

It is best for present students and future readers to produce the evidence itself when such a course is possible so that we can make our own reconstructions and see for ourselves how our forebears faced their problems, so different and yet in some respects so like our own. It is for this

reason that we welcome an opportunity to reproduce contemporary records from the early period of the Society of Friends when such records are in a form lending themselves to reproduction.

The value of correspondence and personal records has long been recognized by historians, and the number of volumes published of records in such a form is clear sign of the value and acceptability of this form of historical evidence.

This evidence has value for the specialist which need not be emphasized, but the general reader too will find many things to interest him in the religious, social, political and personal situations which are brought to light by collections of letters. It is therefore with some satisfaction that we are able to continue publication of fairly full extracts from the collection of manuscripts known as the A. R. Barclay Manuscripts, publication of which was first mooted by the late Norman Penney sometime early in the first World War, when he proposed issuing a full transcript as supplements to this *Journal*. This did not prove possible, and publication was commenced in the *Journal* in 1930 and continued in the following years.¹ After the break due to the Second World War we are glad to resume publication, and hope to continue the series at about this rate till we have completed the 250 letters in the collection.

¹ See *Journal*, vols. xxvii, xxviii, xxxi-xxxiii, xxxv, xxxvii.