

THE JOURNAL
OF THE
FRIENDS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Announcements

THIS year the Society hopes to publish a Tercentenary Supplement to the *Journal* on the evening of 13th August at Lancaster, the occasion of Frederick B. Tolles' presidential address to the Society on *The Atlantic Community of Friends*. The Supplement will include the text of the address. It will be on sale at Lancaster after the address has been delivered, and will be posted to members in the normal way. A third number (the usual Autumn issue) will follow in due course at the end of the year. The expedient of producing a special issue available at the Tercentenary commemoration has been adopted to accommodate Friends, not members of this Society, who may wish to have the presidential address in print immediately after its delivery without waiting for its appearance in a later *Journal*.

Supplement no. 23 to this *Journal*, issued jointly with the American Friends Historical Association: *Slavery and "the Woman Question"* is an edition of the diary of Lucretia Mott on her visit to Britain for the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840. Lucretia Mott was a "bonny fighter" and her diary describes the scenes she saw, the people she met, and her struggles to gain admission of women as delegates to the Convention on equal footing with men. The Supplement is edited by Frederick B. Tolles, and should be in members' hands before this appears in print. Additional copies are available at the published price, 7s. 6d.

We hope as many members as are able to go to the Tercentenary commemoration in the North-West during August, will go with their memories refreshed on the story of Friends' early growth, so that they may themselves be ready to appreciate the, perhaps unfamiliar, scenes of the early labours of George Fox and the others, and also fit themselves to interest in our history and development the many Friends who are expected from across the seas.

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We print in this number an article by Mr. W. R. Powell on Quakerism in Wiltshire. The substance of his account was circulated among contributors to the Victoria History of the County of Wilts, and it provides the skeleton on which any historian of Wiltshire must put the flesh. The facts which Mr. Powell has produced trace clearly the decline of the Wiltshire meetings, and the confused succession of monthly meetings is directly the result of the frequent changes in the structure of the meetings for business made by Friends in an attempt to provide for the welfare of a declining membership widely scattered through the county.

In the seventeenth century, Friends' main strength in Wiltshire was concentrated in the high agricultural and clothing districts north of Salisbury Plain—in the Kennet valley and in villages and market towns stretched along the Bath roads through Chippenham and Devizes. When, about 1680, the Wilkinson-Story controversy split Friends in the county, Quakerism in Wiltshire was dealt a blow from which it never recovered. In neighbouring counties, and in centres of population like Reading and Bristol, Friends were able to ride the storm and, where differences were not fully composed (as at Reading), the Friends adhering to the accepted discipline of London Yearly Meeting were strong enough to build their own meetings and continue growth. In Wiltshire, with its wide rural areas, Friends did not recover from the weakening effect of their divisions, and the decay which hit many country meetings in the eighteenth century can be seen in operation in Wiltshire very soon after the dawn of toleration.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Edward H. Milligan of Southampton is preparing a transcript of the minutes of Second-day's Morning Meeting of Ministers in London, 1673-1700.