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Editorial

IN this issue we print the Presidential Address by Irene L. Edwards, based on her study of the records of the Box and Women's Meetings interpreted in the light of her extensive knowledge of the history of London.

A second local study with more than local interest is presented jointly by Hubert Lidbetter and Margaret Simpson. Margaret Simpson, clerk of Bristol and Frenchay Monthly Meeting, deals with the historical side of Bristol Friends' connection with the Friars premises, now about to be ended after three centuries. Hubert Lidbetter, the architect for the new central meeting house to be erected in Queen Square, Bristol, writes on the architecture of the 200-year old Friars Meeting House. The site is one which has Quaker associations dating right back to the missions sent out by Friends from the North of England in 1654 and the coming of John Camm and John Audland to Bristol. In this place many Friends taking ship for the New World attended their last meetings for worship in the old country before setting out on the great adventure westwards. As the name "Friars" implies, the religious associations of the site date back much further, in fact right back to the thirteenth century when a Dominican Priory was established there. The street named Quakers' Friars will still record the association with the members of two religious communities stretching back for six hundred years, after both are represented there by no more than bones in the burial ground.

These papers are illustrated by a photograph of the interior of the present meeting house, which was opened in 1749, and a reproduction (by courtesy of the City Museum, Bristol) of a portion of Jacobus Millerd's Plan of Bristol, 1673. Millerd not only shows the situation of the meeting house in relation to the old walled city and the castle, but also gives a representation of the original building (built 1670) which agrees, right up to the turret to be seen at the top, with what is known of that structure from written and printed sources.

Lydia L. Rickman presents some new and little known information about Esther Biddle, stemming from a find in the Public Record Office.

A meeting of the Society was held on 3rd March at Friends House with Geoffrey F. Nuttall in the chair. Muriel Hicks reported on the year's work, and members were urged to make every effort to secure new members to bring the membership up to 500 in two years; at present it is about 380.

Some short addresses on topics of current historical interest followed. David Butler spoke of a guide to the history of meeting houses, on which he is engaged, and appealed to Friends who have access to local records to send him information on the history of their meeting houses. Edward Milligan described his work on a concise guide to the constitutional changes in the various Quarterly and Monthly Meetings since the seventeenth century. When completed this will indicate the steps by which 37 Quarterly Meetings and 151 Monthly Meetings in 1691 have become 17 and 67 respectively today. Hubert Lidbetter urged upon Friends the desirability of preserving old meeting houses, many of which have architectural interest, and of getting them used where possible.

George W. Edwards gave a brief history of the Bull and Mouth, London's first Friends Meeting House.

The Baptist Quarterly, vol. 15, no. 8 (October, 1954) includes a note by A. Gordon Hamlin on the Pithay chapel, Bristol (pp. 378-379) which, after being used by Baptists for over two centuries, passed into the possession of J. S. Fry and Sons and was demolished early this century in the course of business premises extensions. Friends in business thus followed the Baptists in the Pithay, just as they had followed the Baptists in the Friars—for the Baptists met in the Friars before moving to the Pithay.