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Editorial

THIS number of the *Journal* is mainly occupied with a substantial study of the "Puritanism-Science debate" in its Quaker context by Dr Peter Elmer, whose doctoral dissertation "Medicine, Medical Reform and the Puritan Revolution" was presented at Swansea University in 1980.

Quaker historians have tended to concentrate on the practical aspects of Quaker contributions to scientific development, and to dwell on the substantial contributions to economic progress in Britain during and after the Industrial Revolution which the chemists and industrial technologists of a later generation made possible. It is good therefore to have an aspect of scientific speculation of the earliest Quaker period studied in some detail, and to look at the channels of thought in a time when alchemy was moving forward to the experimental chemistry we know today.

The place which F. M. van Helmont and the Ragley group holds in this picture has been studied before. Marjorie Hope Nicolson's edition of the *Conway Letters* (1930) is still an indispensable work of reference, but we are fortunate to have here a paper which takes in the studies of Henry Cadbury, Geoffrey Nuttall, and the more recent historians of science. Indeed, each generation needs to find anew its history. Narratives and reconstructions of material pass out of date with the passage of the years. New documents are found, fresh material is made generally available through publication, and fresh aspects of old problems demand examination.

We would again encourage Friends in their historical research. Surveys of literature show that articles on Quaker history are more generally finding their way into historical periodicals, but there is still a place for this *Journal* to continue presenting up to date studies on aspects of Quaker history which may be of too specialised a nature to appeal to the editors and the readership of more general historical magazines.

It is unnecessary to stress to Friends embarking on some historical study, the value of the resources and the service available from the staff of Friends House Library in London. Knowledge of what work has already been done, advice on source material and the possible presentation of results, all is there for the asking. The local student particularly can benefit from the general view which knowledge of the documents in London can give him—whether his study in his locality brings forward variations of development, changes in relative strengths of social classes, different emphases on Friends' religious and social testimonies, striking examples of industrial or political influence—or whether his study is one of the even tenor of the meeting's ways—the student's horizon will have been immeasurably widened.

Friends will have noted with regret the death on 22 March 1982 of William H. Marwick, a former president (1969). William Marwick received the honour of a *Festschrift* entitled *Essays in Scottish labour history* (1978), which is noticed briefly in the Notes & Queries section in this issue.