

and who influenced the mind of his youthful disciple in the classical bent in the creed of the Friends auspicious to the fine arts; consequently when West returned to Springfield at the age of 16 the question of his future vocation was solemnly weighed in family council, and a meeting of the Society of Friends was called to discuss publicly the destiny of the boy. It was an extraordinary gathering which convened in the Meeting house near Springfield. West's biographer, in describing the scene, speaks of much debate, approaching to altercation, following which a man, John Williamson by name, rose and delivered a remarkable speech which convinced the assembly that the youth should be an artist.

A private meeting of Friends was appointed, which was held at his father's house. Benjamin was present to receive in form the assent and blessing of the Society. Several were moved by the spirit to address the meeting. John Williamson spoke again. Then the women arose, kissed the young artist, and the men, one by one, laid their hands on his head and prayed that "the Lord might verify in his life the value of the gift which had induced them, in despite of their religious tenets, to allow him to cultivate the faculties of his genius."

So that at 18 years of age we find West established in Philadelphia as a portrait painter and receiving "five guineas a head." About two years later he removed to New York in the hope of painting portraits intended to be sent to relatives and friends across the ocean. At 22, by a combination of favorable circumstances, he was enabled to go abroad to follow the bent of his inclination. He went to Rome, where he excited great interest as the pioneer American art student. His reception was most flattering. In pages of his biography we are treated to descriptions of a "procession of upwards of thirty of the most magnificent

equipages in the capital of Christendom, filled with some of the most erudite characters in Europe," conducting the young Quaker to view the masterpiece of art in the Eternal City.

West spent about three years traveling through Italy, everywhere meeting with distinguished attention. Florence, Bologna and Parma electing him an academician. His continental studies completed, he settled permanently in London in 1763.

(To be continued.)

THE FRIENDS.

The generally conceived idea, by those who are not informed, that the Society of Friends, sometimes called Quakers, are fast declining in numbers, and likely in the very near future to belong only to history, is not in accordance with the facts. Both in England and America the Society has made slow but substantial gains in the past twenty-five years. Good authorities in the matter state that there are more hearing the name to-day than at any time since the rise of the Society, some 250 years ago. The energies of the Society, however, have not been so largely spent in adding to their numbers, as in the spread of their principles among other people. The pith of these principles may be summed up in the three words—Love, Peace, Truth. Their influence in moulding the religious and moral life in both England and America has been great, and in comparison to numbers, perhaps greater than that of any other Christian sect. How much of the religious liberty and equality, the growing spirit for peace, the ever spreading desire for temperance, and the equality of the sexes, which we now enjoy, is due to the persistent efforts of this people, even in face of severest persecution, can scarcely be realized.

A very active and intelligent body of this Christian sect may be found at Coldstream, in the County of Middle-