

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## GLEANED FROM PRIVATE LETTERS.

A young Friend from near Plainfield, N. J., writes: "Our quarterly meeting was held last Fifth-day and Sixth-day. Elizabeth Plummer and companions, from Newtown, Penn., Robert and Esther Barnes, from Purchase, N. Y., and a few others outside the limits of our quarterly meeting were with us, and their company and counsel was very acceptable. Our meeting house in Plainfield bears the date 1788, consequently has reached its centennial anniversary this year. Friends propose to celebrate it some time during the coming summer. There is a saying: 'The very walls have ears.' If those walls were possessed of a tongue as well, what wonderful stories they could tell? It was one of the first buildings here, and now Plainfield is a handsome, flourishing city of 10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants."

The "YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW" increases in interest every month! The subjects in this month's issue are particularly instructive, and furnish food for thought for "we younger members of our Society." M. C. C.

## BIRTHRIGHT MEMBERSHIP.

The very interesting subject of retaining our younger members in the Society has been discussed to some extent in the columns of the Review and has afforded me much pleasure in its perusal. The subject of Birthright Membership is so intimately connected therewith, that I am induced to offer these few remarks, more as amendment than as a separate topic.

Birthright Membership as called and understood by us, seems to me to be the great stumbling block in the progress of our Society to-day, both numerically and spiritually. I think it

is the direct cause of a decrease in our members. By it we take from our children that liberty in spiritual things which is essential to true religion and compel them to become members of the Society, and they deeming that to be of little importance which they have obtained without effort, stray away and are lost to us forever.

It is an indirect cause in that it keeps many who are kindly disposed toward our Society from joining with us. For it makes them feel that they have no right to be among us unless asked and we with our dislike of proselyting do not care voluntarily to invite them to unite with the meeting.

I believe that the many extinct meetings throughout the country owe their extinction to the influence of Birthright Membership thus explained.

Were Birthright Membership done away with, we might lose some of our children from the Society, but surely not more than we are now losing from other reasons. The chaff and the stubble would be blown away but the pure grains would remain. We would then know what our belief is, as our parents would take more care in instructing us religiously if they themselves believed in the principles of the Society.

The very means that our fathers took to keep the Society alive, will inevitably result in its destruction in the outward.

But though I say we may at some future time no longer exist as the Society of Friends, I can not conceive it possible that the principles we cherish or the truths we profess can ever be lost to man.

On account of Birthright Membership we have grown proud. We offer no inducement for others either rich or poor to accept of our principles. Is the bread of life upon which we feed too holy for distribution? George Fox sought out the servants of God from among the people, and do we, their descendants, hold ourselves aloof from the people now?