

VICAR'S NOTES

A few days ago I heard that the special attraction which we were looking forward to having at our Fête in July would not now be available on the day required. This seemed rather hard on us, as we had been negotiating with the sponsors concerned for over three months, with every hope of success. We had envisaged a great crowd-drawing display as the centre-piece of a Fête on a grander scale than ever before. Now it seemed we should have to start all over again, with time running against us. Yes, it was a disappointment—but the jolt made me think. I thought of the inordinate amount of time and energy that a few people already heavily committed in the service of the Church, have to give to the planning and organizing of such events—and the frustrations, of which this was typical, which make their work so much harder. I thought of the endless committees between now and July, and I blanched a little. Yes—we shall have to carry the Fête through now, in the best way we can. But can we make it in future years much more of a happy 'optional extra,' rather than something from which we must raise £300 this year, or we shall be in the soup'?

Securing the Base

If we agree that the Church is worth keeping going, do we think it should depend for a good portion of its income on such precarious things as these? Just before this disappointment burst upon us, I heard of a church not far from here, every member of which who is in full employment is expected to give five shillings a week to provide it with the necessities for its work. And I remember reading some remarks of that live-wire, the Bishop of Stepney (did you read his articles in "The Window"?). He believes that the churches of England have become bazaar-mad, and he commends those which have found better ways. In certain parishes it has become a custom for members of the congregation and other well-wishers to give the equivalent in money of one hour's work per week to the support of the church, in others, those whose names are on the electoral roll give the equi-

valent in cash of ten cigarettes week by week, or something of that kind. This is responsible giving, and is not at the mercy of wind or weather. The minimum amount the Church in this parish needs each year to function efficiently and to discharge its obligations is £1000. This is the amount we need to be sure of, to secure our base in an adequate way. And we could secure it, if 200 individuals or families would undertake to give half-a-crown a week. This would give us a certain income of £1300 a year, and our main financial problem would be solved, unless inflation proceeds apace. We should need no collections in church, except the obligatory one at the Holy Communion, which could then be restored to its lawful purpose, and be made "alms"—for good causes and needy persons both within the parish and outside. It is entirely wrong and unlawful that they should be for "Church Expenses," which are dues, not alms, but Church Councils have often thought it necessary to commandeer them in this way. The magazine could be delivered free—perhaps to the whole parish—and many social events could be held without charge for admission (at least to those in the scheme!). IF 200 . . . IF . . . IF. Yes—some would say—it is a big IF—an impossibly idealistic IF which in a parish like Hampton Hill, affected by what has been called T.V.A. (Thames Valley Apathy), could never be achieved. But I am an optimist, and would not give up the idea without a fight. If the scheme proves acceptable, ways and means of implementing it could be worked out later. It might be carried out as an extension of the present Free-Will Offering, with provision made for a weekly collection from those who do not regularly attend church; or it might evolve into something else. All I want to do now is to put the bare outline before you, for prayerful thought and consideration during Lent. And as soon as anyone feels certain in his own mind about it—e.g. to the point of being willing to commit himself to give a fixed sum weekly, say from Trinity Sunday, May 27th onwards—I should like to know.

Sales of Work

I think it should be clear that the Bishop of Stepney, though dead-set against bazaars, says that there is a world of difference between the highly-publicized bazaar and the private sale of work, at which Church people give the skill of their hands to the support of their church. It is along the sound lines of this second way that our newly-formed Working Party is beginning to act. Already many pounds of marmalade have been made and sold privately, and plans are now being made for the teaching and practising of various handicrafts. Profits so far made have been given to the Renovation Fund, which is, of course, a big extra, apart from the normal yearly £1000 mentioned above, and for which special gifts will be needed for some years to come . . . unless the 200 could become 300! My optimism doesn't as yet quite stretch this far!

A Presentation

The Church Council unanimously and with acclamation agreed at its meeting in December that it would

be a pleasure and a privilege to subscribe to a Presentation Fund for Mr. Stephen Forrow, who was for many years its conscientious and hard-working Secretary.

Members of the Council also felt that many others who appreciated the sterling worth and outstanding service of Mr. Forrow would like to join them in this. It was originally intended to keep this a secret from the prospective recipient, but it has been found difficult to make it known to the many people who would be interested without his hearing of it. So we have now decided to come right out into the open, and publicize it as widely as possible. I accordingly invite all those who appreciate the wise and faithful work of one who has never been known to say "No" to any call of service he has felt able to discharge, and who in so doing has shouldered the burden of five ordinary men, to send a donation to me or either of the Churchwardens. It is hoped to make the actual presentation at the Annual Church Meeting on Wednesday, March 14th.

AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about
people, activities & organisations

THE WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

(International and Interdenominational)

For some 30 years now this has been kept on the first Friday in Lent but, as far as I know, this year is the first in which it is to be kept by women of Hampton Hill, and we of St. James's are pleased to have been asked to co-operate with the other churches to keep the Service at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, February 17th, at the Congregational Church.

For those of you who have not met it before here are some notes about its history.

It all began in the 18th and 19th centuries when many women in North America especially among the new settlers, were living in extreme hardship. As they prayed in their own difficulties they thought of others in like condition and prayed for them also. From about 1800 local groups were praying for the needy of their own country. With the passing years

the concerns of women in other lands were added to their prayers.

By the middle of the 19th century a definite trend towards united prayer was evident. In 1887 leading women of different denominations each sent a Call to Prayer to the women of their Churches asking them to set aside one Day for special prayer for all home and foreign missionary work. It was at this time that the first Friday in Lent was chosen.

1920 saw women in Canada and U.S.A. united in this Day. Together they dedicated the first Friday in Lent as an annual Day of Prayer and the strong and health growth of the Day developed steadily. In 1927 during the International Missionary Council meetings in Europe, some women had a yet greater vision. They saw not only these two countries united in prayer for all missionary work but women of all the world praying for all the concerns of the Kingdom. The Women's World Day of Prayer as we now know it then came into being.

World Headquarters of the Movement are in New York. It is sponsored by the Department of United Church Women who each year ask women of a different country to choose the theme and prepare the Order of Service. The same basic service is then used throughout the world.

This year the basic service has been prepared by staff of the Cook Training School for Indian American Christian leaders in Arizona, and will be used by women in 134 countries; its title is "One Flock . . . one Shepherd."

C.H.B.

PARISH WORKING PARTY

Since the appeal in the last magazine for helpers for a working party we have had a promising set of offers.

Miss Melville knows how to turn the best of your last year's Christmas cards into profit (not, I understand as calendars, so any size will do). If you have not yet parted with yours please keep them for her, but don't take them to her just now because, unfortunately, she has since been unwell and in hospital, but hopes to be home again soon.

The marmalade campaign is in full swing. We hope that by the time this appears in print there will be nothing to do but ask you to buy and even then you may have to hurry as all the first batch is already sold out and satisfied customers are ordering more.

And now for the serious business of a permanent Working Party.

Mesdames Bougourd, Bird, and Prentice will organise the work connected with embroidery, plain sewing, basket-work and knitting, on **Thursday afternoons** at 2.30 p.m. at Wayside. Instruction can be given and everyone will be welcome. Orders for work can be carried out and "customers' own material" made up as far as workers permit.

Roll up and enjoy a pleasant afternoon and make both the Working Party and the Summer Fête stall a huge success!

E.B. & C.B.

MOTHERS' UNION AND YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

For nearly two years now we have been considering the possi-

bility of having some evening meetings on M.U. lines particularly for those mothers of young children who are unable to attend afternoon meetings. Now at last we have got around to it and on Ash Wednesday, February 15th, there will be a joint meeting of M.U. and Y.W. Group at Wayside at 8.15 p.m., preceded by the Ash Wednesday Service at 7.45 in church.

The first meeting will be about the purpose and working of the M.U. We had intended to follow up with a meeting in March but have given up that booking to the Parochial Church Council because there just was not any other day on which the Annual Church Meeting could be held.

There will, however, be a meeting on April 11th, and if we think there is sufficient demand there will also be one in May.

The Lent Bible study and discussion meetings will begin on Wednesday, February 22nd, instead of February 15th as stated in the last notices, and will continue on all the Wednesdays in Lent at 3.0 p.m. either in Wayside or in church, except on March 7th, when we shall welcome our old friend Mrs. Jennings as our speaker at Wayside.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

- Feb. 15.—Ash Wednesday. 7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.45 p.m. Evening Service. 8.15 p.m. Mothers' Union and Young Wives' Group (Wayside).
- Feb. 16.—8.0 p.m. Properties' Committee (Wayside).
- Feb. 17. 8.0 p.m. Women's World Day of Prayer Service, Congregational Church.
- Feb. 20.—7.30 p.m. R.D. Conference.
- Feb. 22.—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union Bible Study (Wayside).
- Feb. 23.—No Service at 10.30 a.m.
- Feb. 24.—St. Matthias. Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m. only.
- Feb. 29.—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group (Wayside).
- Mar. 2.—7.30 p.m. Magazines ready: Distributors' Meeting (Vicarage).
- Mar. 6.—8.15 p.m. Church Council (Wayside).
- Mar. 14.—8.0 p.m. Annual Church Meeting (Wayside).

BURIALS AND CREMATIONS

Dec. 22.—David Thomas Lewis, 50, St. James's Road, aged 51 yrs. (at S.W. Middx. Crematorium) (correction). (Ashes interred in St. James's Church-

yard on January 19).

Jan. 23.—Phyllis Ethel Emily Roxburgh, 5, Seymour Rd., aged 77 years.

Feb. 1.—Susan Ann Bowpitt, 66, Windmill Road, aged 90 years.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

THE CHURCH OVERSEAS

Indian Missionaries — And You?

"The 'power house' of our Hospital Christian Union," writes a C.M.S. missionary doctor in India, "is the Missionary Group. The members of this group are so fully consecrated to the service of the Lord that they are a growing source of strength to others. Some of them have finished their training and have left us; some are working in India and others are scattered abroad; we have just heard of one who feels that the Lord is calling her to work in Uganda . . ."

Is the Lord calling you to missionary service? The C.M.S. needs dedicated and qualified men and women for work overseas. The C.M.S. Recruiting Secretary, Church Missionary Society, 6, Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4, will be glad to supply particulars of vacant posts.

Joyful Faith

"One day," writes a missionary Bishop in East Africa, "I visited a village where I confirmed an old man. He told me that he and his wife lived ten miles away with their son and his family. 'Does that arrangement work well?' I asked him. 'Oh, yes,' he replied; and he looked at me with a smile which lit up his whole face; 'we are all very happy; you see, we are all Christians. It makes all the difference.' It is no light matter when you find a family like that—uneducated and poor in this world's goods, living in desert country, yet all living in joyful faith. It confirms one's own faith."

Will You?

From India a C.M.S. missionary writes: "I am at present teaching a Hindu student. His first contact with Christian things was when he wandered into a church in the garden where he used to study. He knows very little, but is learning eagerly, and asks all sorts of searching questions. It is a great joy to teach him; but I long for the time when he will come to more than a head knowledge, when he will know for himself, by experience, what being a Christian means."

Here is someone for whom you can pray. Will you?

And from Pakistan, another request for prayers: "There is a young girl here who has been terribly persecuted by her family for her interest in Christianity. It will need very great faith on her part to hold out in the face of such open cruelty. Daily I pray with others for her that she may hold on to the little she knows, and grow in grace, that her family may not hinder her, and that their hearts may be softened. I would ask you to join in prayer for this girl. Behind it all I am certain that God is preparing something for her which we cannot see as yet. This is not the end of the story. But in the meanwhile will you join us in upholding her in prayer?" Will you?

Did You Know?

. . . that in England and Wales there is one doctor for every 1,200 people, while in Nigeria there is one for every 58,000?