

Vicar's Notes

The shame and horror of what is happening in South Africa weigh heavily upon us all. But what must it be like to live in this atmosphere? Our two friends, Father Paul Singleton and Miss Hannah Stanton, have now been in the thick of it since last September, and their letters tell us something of what they think and feel. Miss Stanton is now doing mission work on a location near Pretoria, living under much the same conditions as the Africans all round. Both the white and black peoples, she says, are gay and happy folk fundamentally, but the misunderstanding and fear which poison relations between them are quite incredible. Father Paul, now working in the famous parish of Christ the King, Sophiatown, has had to get accustomed to grim and heart-rending sights almost from the moment of his arrival. He speaks of dismal crocodiles of Africans, handcuffed together, being hustled down the street to the police station; of decent families, whose standard of living approached too nearly to that of the white man, being forcibly evicted from their well-built houses in the name of "slum clearance"; of men who are treated as lower than the animals, and compelled to live in concentration-camp conditions, because of the colour of their skins.

There are, of course, some gleams of light in the darkness, and many human and amusing incidents. One knows that life in a Vicarage in England can be full of disturbances, but it is nothing to the round-the-clock calls for help and succour that besiege an African Priory. Father Paul seems to come through it all with admirable humour and fortitude. Some detailed extracts from his

first letter are given on a later page.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

There may seem little we can do in our pleasant parish of Hampton Hill about the deep problems of South Africa — but there is. Father Huddleston is convinced that these can be solved only on the spiritual plane. Prayer in fact, is the highest and most effective form of Christian action. Here a group of the "over-seventies" are showing us the way. Realising that they have more time for prayer than others more fully involved in public life, they have bound themselves, for a period of at least six months, to devote 15 minutes daily to prayer for the salvation of this unhappy and divided land. Can we think this over, and see if we cannot give five minutes every day in Lent to such costly prayer?

LENTEN ARRANGEMENTS

In past years, when we have arranged special study-groups or Services for mid-week in Lent, few, sometimes none, have come. This year, therefore, there will be little 'extra,' but the small senior Confirmation group will be open to all who would value a short refresher-course on Christian fundamentals, illustrated by filmstrips. This group meets at the Vicarage on Wednesdays, 7.0 — 7.50 p.m. On Ash Wednesday it will be followed by Compline in church at 8.0 p.m., and on March 20th by the Annual Parochial Meeting in the hall. We hope that this year it will be really well supported, and that the vacant places on the Church Council will be filled without the usual difficulty by people willing to serve in this responsible way. If your name is not on the Electoral Roll, there may be just time if you act immediately on receipt of this magazine. Many names have been removed during this year's revision, as the new regulations make it much easier to erase the names of those who have long since ceased to have any connection with the church. Now there is need to replace the dead wood with living branches.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

On Wednesday evening, January 30th, we had a visit from the Rev. F. Holmes, Clerical Organising Secretary, who spoke to us of the work of Dr. Barnardo's Homes. The talk was illustrated by three short films, one of which was "shot" at Dr. Barnardo's Home at Kingston, and therefore was of particular interest to us. The films of children of all ages were much enjoyed and members asked many questions about the Homes. We all appreciated the film showing many charming pictures of very young babies, including one attractive coloured baby: there is no colour bar in the Homes.

On Friday evening, February 8th, Mrs. Withers kindly lent her house for a Pie Supper to raise funds for the opening of the Nursery School. Pies of all kinds were served, both sweet and savoury, washed down with suitable liquid accompaniment. Everyone enjoyed the fun and company, especially a few stalwart husbands, and a most enjoyable evening was had by all.

The only slight contretemps was the serving of Egg and Bacon Pie, suitably adorned with a large dollop of cream intended for the fruit pies, to one of the V.I.P.'s present.

THE MOTHERS' UNION

The next meeting will be held at Wayside on March 6th at 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss I. Swinford Edwards. Subject: "The Family grows up: Confirmation." Miss Edwards will also be the speaker on April 3rd, when her subject will be "The Heart of the Family."

March 5th: Deanery Committee Meeting at St. Michael and St. George's Hall at 2.30 p.m.

March 25th: Deanery Festival Service at All Hallows' Church, Chertsey Road, Twickenham, 3 p.m. (Banner Bearers 2.15 p.m.).

Also Day of World-Wide Corporate Communion. Services in St. James's at 7.15 and 10.30 a.m.

Prayer for the month:

Let me come closer to Thee, Jesus;
Oh, closer day by day;
Let me lean harder on Thee, Jesus
Yes, harder all the way.
In all my heart and will, O Jesus
Be altogether King,
Make me a loyal subject, Jesus,
To Thee in everything.

M.J.B.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Women of 143 different countries using the same basic Service join each year on the first Friday in Lent to keep this Day of Prayer. In the Hamptons all the churches of the local Council of Churches will be taking part and we are most fortunate to be having the address given by the Rev. Elsie Chamberlain.

The thought behind the Service this year springs fresh from the experience of Christians living in countries where there is not full religious freedom. We are assured that in spite of acute difficulty and distress the presence of the Holy Spirit has become for them a living reality. In many of these countries He is leading the Church into vivid apprehension of new truths. The Bible has ceased to be an ancient book. It has become the practical guide of daily existence.

The theme is based on Romans 8, 35: "Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?"

The Service will be at 8.0 p.m. in the Congregational Church, Hampton Hill, on Friday, March 8th.

C.H.B.

THE BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

We start a new year with the July quarter. That sounds a long way ahead but any alteration in numbers has to be sent in during this quarter if possible.

So please will you let me know if you no longer wish to take your notes or if you would like to be added to the list.

As a reminder: The adult notes are in two series, A to be used with a Bible and in which July's notes will be on Prayer in the Old

Testament, August's "Looking at Jesus," Meditations from the Fourth Gospel, September, The Life and Teachings of St. Peter.

Series B is for adults requiring simpler notes with actual Bible text printed.

Series Y for Youth.

Series C for children, or those wanting short, very simple notes.

By ordering through the church group we get all of these at a reduced price. A, B and Y 2s. a year; and C, 1s. 6d. a year; both including postage, and pay for the year in July. C.H.B.

THE SCOUT GROUP

BADEN-POWELL CENTENARY

As I am writing these notes I feel sure every reader of this magazine has realized that a very important event has taken place this week in the life of the Scout Movement.

On February 22nd, just one hundred years after the birth of our Founder, a great National Service of Thanksgiving for his life and his work was held in Westminster Abbey, and this Sunday following all over the world in cathedrals, churches and chapels similar Services will be held.

Our Group will be attending a Service at St. Mary's Hampton.

The Scout Movement is a World-wide Brotherhood, incorporating boys of every nationality and colour and so working for that peace which the World so sadly needs. This great spirit of brotherhood was brought home to me this week, when reading a letter from Father Paul Singleton, C.R., who you will remember preached at our Cub Service last July just before going to Africa. He stated that one of his boys of the Church of Christ-the-King, Sophiatown, had been chosen to

attend the Jamboree to be held here in August and was busy doing some decorating for the Mission in order to earn some money towards his fare to England.

Dates to Note:

Jumble Sale: Sat., 16th March.

"Our Show": Sat., 4th May.

SOME DATES TO NOTE

March 6—Ash Wednesday.

7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union (W). 8.0 p.m. Compline and Address.

March 8—Women's World Day of Prayer. 8.0 p.m. Service in Congregational Church.

March 12—8.0 p.m. Prayer Group (W).

March 16—2.30 p.m. Scout Group Jumble Sale (H).

March 20—8.0 p.m. Annual Parochial Meeting (H).

March 25—The Annunciation.

7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 3.0 p.m. M.U. Deanery Service at All Hallows', Twickenham.

March 27—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group (W).

March 28—8.0 p.m. Fête Committee (L.D.).

April 3—3.0 p.m. Mothers' Union (W).

April 5—7.30 p.m. Magazine Distributors (V).

BAPTISMS

Feb. 24—Sandra Clair Mant, 4, Westbank Road.

Feb. 24—Timothy Peter Scott, 32, Longford Close.

Feb. 24—Wendy Jane Delve, 85, Stanley Road.

BURIALS

Feb. 8—Ada Kate Savill, 8, Uxbridge Road, aged 74 years.

Feb. 25—Emily Dolby, 14, School Road, aged 86 years.

FROM BEYOND THE SPIRE

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

We are pleased to print some extracts from a newsletter sent out by Father Paul Singleton, C.R., soon after his arrival at the Priory of Christ the King, Sophiatown. He landed at Cape Town just before lunch on September 13th. "A few days later I was

taken to see an emergency location that has been formed by the Government about nine miles outside Cape Town. This was a vast area of sandy waste with one or two made-up roads crossing it, and to this spot are being brought all the Africans living in this part of the Cape peninsular. Most of them are really poverty-stricken

and they are dumped here and told to build their own dwellings. On the site is a barbed-wire enclosure in which stocks of old timber, the sides of tea-chests, new and rusty corrugated iron are stored, and the people are permitted to buy these for the building of their little huts and shacks that must serve them for a home in this howling wilderness. Until I reached this parish I had never seen so heart-rending and shameful a sight. The people are being treated in a way that no self-respecting white man would treat an animal. Many of the people had only been able to afford enough timber and tin to build half a room, and there would be anything up to eight or ten people living, if the word can be used, in it.

"The Dean of Cape Town told me that his wife had led an inspection party to this camp and found that there were no lavatories provided and many had to go as far as two miles to get water. When she protested to the authorities she was suavely told she must have overlooked the sanitary provisions and if she would bring her party out again in a week's time she would be shown that they really were there. Mrs. Savage went again in a week's time and it was evident that her protest had borne fruit, for now for every dozen or so houses a latrine rather like a telephone booth had been erected. But still, as on the day I saw the camp, the bitter winds blew the sand coldly across the waste and the tin and wood shanties looked dismal in the extreme, with the women sitting in the lea of the shelters, huddled on the sand with blankets round their shoulders for some sort of protection and warmth. These are the victims of an ideology that flies in the face of God and, indeed, of reason and common sense.

Sophiatown Welcome

"I arrived in Sophiatown on the following Wednesday, and before I had been here an hour I knew that Fr. Trevor Huddleston had failed to capture even a half of the charm of the place in his book. As soon as the car drew up at the door of the Priory out came the children, from all direc-

tions—grubby little urchins most of them, with sticky hands and curly black heads and great white-toothed smiles, crying 'Hellooo Fudder, hellooo Seester.' Behind them came the boys from the Hostel next door where we train young Africans who we hope may one day be priests and even Religious.

Africans at Worship

"The rest of the day there were many introductions and handshakings as members of the congregation came in to greet me. But for me, as for all who have ever come to Sophiatown, the highlight of my first week was the High Mass on Sundays morning. The church was packed with people, though as most of the aisles had no crowds of children sitting on the floor and one of the side chapels was unoccupied, I was told that there were not so many as there used to be in 'the good old days' before the removals to Meadowlands began. Anyway to me the congregation looked a sea of black and brown faces, with a dozen or so white ones of Europeans who frequently come out from Johannesburg to worship with us."

Truth will Triumph

Fr. Singleton goes on to say that the forcible removals to Meadowlands are going on all the time and that this is causing great bitterness. On his first Sunday evening the two Churchwardens came to supper at the Priory and one of them ended his speech of welcome with these words: "Father, you are very welcome here among us, but if you find that we sometimes hate the white man you must forgive us; we are being ground down and down, and we are now so trodden down that we do not know what to do or where to go, and now we sit down and cry—and when the African sits down and cries that is very bad indeed." "The only true happiness here, and there is much of it," continues Fr. Singleton, "comes from the altar.

"Sophiatown is far from being a place of unrelieved gloom, and our people know that, although there is much bitter suffering to face, yet in the end Truth will triumph."