

October, 1963

MICHAELMAS



THE MAGAZINE OF —
St. Nicholas Church, Marston

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH — OLD MARSTON

Vicar : Rev. Paul N. Rimmer, M.A., 11 Elsfield Road, Old Marston.
Tel. : 47034.

Parish Worker : Miss O. J. Lodge, The Flat, 15 Mill Lane, Old Marston.

Churchwardens : Dr. C. W. Carter, Eaglesfield, Jack Straws Lane, Oxford.
Tel. : Oxford 41167.

Mr. B. G. Oliver, 13 Jack Straw's Lane, Oxford.
Tel. : Oxford 47997.

Organist : Mrs. E. A. Garner, "Barn Gates," 31 Oxford Rd., Old Marston.
Tel. : 41888.

SERVICES :

Sundays : Holy Communion 8.0 a.m.

Also on First Sunday of the month, 12 noon.

PARISH COMMUNION : 9.30 a.m. on 3rd Sunday of month.

Matins : 11 a.m.

Evensong : 6.30 p.m.

Saints' Days : Holy Communion — 7.15 a.m.

Holy Baptism : Second and Fourth Sundays of the month at 3 p.m. unless otherwise announced. Notice must be given.

Holy Matrimony : Banns to be given in at the Vicarage.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AND MEETINGS :

(As the covers are printed in advance you are advised to consult the

Notice Board in the Church Porch, in case of alteration of times).

Children's Instruction : Senior Catechism : Sundays 10 a.m. in Church Hall.

Kindergarten and Junior : Sundays 11 a.m. in Church Hall.

Nursery : Sundays 11 a.m. in the Village Hall.

Mothers' Union : Every fourth Wednesday of the month at 2.45 p.m. in the Church Hall.

Men's Forum : As announced.

Youth Fellowship : First Sunday : Holy Communion and Breakfast .

Third Sunday : After Evensong.

Friday : 7.30 p.m. in Church Hall.

Brownies : Wednesdays at 5.30 p.m. in Church Hall.

Girl Guides : Tuesdays at 7.00 p.m. in Church Hall.

Cubs : Mondays at 6.15 p.m. in Church Hall.

Scouts : Thursdays at 7.15 p.m. in Church Hall.

CHURCH PARADE : Once each quarter.

WEEKDAY SERVICES :

Matins — 7.15 a.m. (Daily except Saturdays)

Evensong — 5.30 p.m. (Daily except Saturdays)

Holy Communion — Wednesdays and Saints Days at 7.15 a.m. (in place of Matins).

Holy Communion — 10.30 a.m. every second Friday in the month (with Service of "Laying on of hands.").

THE COVER PICTURE depicts the Marston Chalice, reflecting on its bowl the spires of the University, the factory chimneys of Cowley, and homes with T.V. Masts—all symbolic of the life of our parish. The design is by Mr. Brian Cairns.

My Dear Friends,

It was a great shock to all of us to hear of Mrs. Oliver's sudden and severe illness, and she has been in our thoughts and prayers every day. The kindness of friends, with their letters, enquiries, and gifts, Mr. Oliver tells us has been quite overwhelming. He has also asked me to thank everyone and to apologise for not being able to write to everyone individually. We shall continue to pray for Mrs. Oliver, that she may be strengthened with God's grace, and ever conscious of His presence. She has been wonderfully cheerful and courageous and to her we send the love and affection of the parish.

A rather small and insignificant piece of paper from the Church Commissioners was the formal indication that a most important step in the life of the church in Marston has taken place: the formation of the new parish of St. Michael and All Angels, New Marston. The piece of paper gave the news that Her Majesty the Queen had signed the necessary Orders in Council to bring this into effect from August 30th, 1963.

We shall pray especially for Dr. and Mrs. Hope, the Parochial Church Council and members of the new parish. May God bless and unite them all as they dedicate themselves afresh at this juncture to the extension of His Kingdom in New Marston and in the world at large.

There are a number of important news items and fixtures in this month's magazine of which I would like you to take special note.

May God bless you all,

Your sincere friend and Vicar,



REMINDER OF NEW SERVICE TIME :

Beginning on October 6th, and subsequently on every 1st Sunday of the month, there will be Parish Communion at 11 a.m. Matins will be said at 10.30 a.m., and the Noon Communion Service will be discontinued. The 11 o'clock service will be of a simple nature with hymns and address, and parents are invited to bring their small children with them to kneel at the communion rails when they receive communion.

"CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH."

This will be the theme of our two special preachers on Sunday, 6th October, and also at the special parish meeting on Wednesday, 9th October at 7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall. Fathers and Mothers and all who have the religious education of their children at heart should make a special effort to attend. The preachers on October 6th will be:—

11.0 a.m. Parish Communion: Rev. John Moore, Christ Church, Abingdon.
6.30 p.m. Evensong: Rev. Canon A. J. Watts, Diocesan Director of Religious Education.

Speaker at the Parish Meeting on Wednesday, October 9th at 7.45 p.m.:—
Miss Mabel Bostock, Secretary of the C. of E. Children's Council.

PARISH PARTY :

7.45 p.m. St. Nicholas' Primary School. Tickets 2/6. An excellent way of meeting new people. Everyone welcome!

PARISH PROGRAMMES :

You should have received one with this magazine, and if you didn't and would like one, please ask for one in Church when you come. This year fixtures for the M.U., Men's Forum, etc., are printed separately, and only the dates which concern us all are given in the Programme.

MOTHERS' UNION :

Because many of our members cannot manage to come in the afternoons the meetings in future will be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.45 p.m. in the Parish Hall, starting in November. On every second Wednesday of the month there will be a Quiet Half Hour at 2.45 p.m. for Prayer and Study at the house of the members. The first one will be at "Lanadron," 13 Elsfeld Road on November 13th and it is hoped that several members will be able to take this opportunity. P.F.B.

"WE ARE FROM THE CHURCH"

I was a little surprised to be told this by two charming and attractive young ladies who. I expect were equally surprised, when I answered the door at a home I was visiting today!

The American accent confirmed my suspicions that they were Mormon missionaries from what they call: "The Church of the Latter Day Saints." We chatted without acrimony, and as they left, I couldn't help thinking that here were two young people from a heretical sect who were prepared to travel 3,000 miles (paying their way from money that they had saved themselves), to go all out to convert England to a sub-Christian sect. I couldn't help but admire them, and wish that many more from our own parish had a faith that had "caught fire" and impelled them to give of their time and their talents in such a sacrificial way for the Church into which they have been baptized, and whose Gospel is their Christian heritage.

N.B. For those interested the Rev. Kenneth Ross has written a 6d. pamphlet on Mormonism entitled—"The Mormons are Wrong." It can be obtained from the Church Bookstall.

FILM STRIP PROJECTOR :

As I have forgotten to whom I loaned my film transparency projector a few months ago, I would be grateful if whoever has it would return it in the near future!

CHRISTENING PREPARATION TALK :

Everyone wants the best for their children and one is always thankful to see the way that parents appreciate our help in explaining what is a most difficult service: the service of Holy Baptism. To help them further we are now holding monthly Christening Preparation Talks (the first is on Wednesday, 20th November at 8 p.m. in the Church Hall). We invite parents and godparents of children to be baptized in the near future, together with those whose babies may have been baptized in the past and who may like a "recap" as to what it was all about—or who may like to ask questions. Anyone can come along — friends, prospective godparents, but especially we'd like to see Fathers and Mothers. So if **you** can sit in to make it possible for them **both** to come along, please offer your services.

EVENSONG BIBLE STUDY :

Beginning on October 20th, we shall begin a five week Bible Study in place of the usual sermon. Those present will be invited to adjourn to the Church Hall afterwards for further comments and an opportunity for questions (and a cup of tea!). It is hoped to hold these studies periodically during the year for a number of weeks.

LEE ABBEY REUNION :

Those who would like to share in an experience of dynamic Christianity are invited to join us at the Annual Lee Abbey Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, followed by the Reunion at the Central Hall, Westminster, on October 26th (Saturday). The bus will leave St. Nicholas' Church at 10 a.m. and the fare will be approx. 7/6 depending on the number who go. Please sign the list in the Church porch.

OXFAM AND FREEDOM FROM HUNGER :

Between now and October 15th we shall be holding a House-to-House collection in Marston for the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. Any who are willing to collect are asked to contact Mrs. Aherne, 59 Crotch Crescent. (Phone 42826).

OLD MARSTON YOUTH CLUB :

By the time this magazine is published Old Marston Youth Club will be in full swing under the sound leadership of Mr. David Reynolds, a keen Christian and a capable youth leader. Mr. Reynolds has already made his name in the running of the Headway Youth Club, and it is hoped that all teenagers will make their acquaintance with what we hope and pray will be a most active and worthwhile club.

COMEDY OF ERRORS :

What an amazingly good production this was ! A Parish Party who went to Stratford on September 7th enjoyed every minute of it, and those younger members who had not made their acquaintance with Shakespeare were delighted to find that they enjoyed it quite as much—in fact more than Z Cars, Laramie, and the Benny Hill Show !

All of us voted to put Stratford on the Annual Fixture list for Parish Outings.

SCOUTS :

Koa-Tiki came to Youlbury, and Stephen Furber, Keith Hosmer, Tony Balsdon and Stephen Carter are to be congratulated on coming second in the Raft Building competition for Scouts. As the winning team brought their raft already made, and only needing to be bolted (no doubt an instance of "being prepared") we feel that we'd rather be shipwrecked with our own Scouts on a desert island !

TORONTO 1963 :

The Archdeacon of Oxford, the Ven. C. Witton Davies, who has recently returned from the Toronto Anglican Congress will be coming to speak to a special Parish Meeting on October 30th at 7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall. As the Archdeacon opened our discussions on the theme of the Toronto Congress last Lent, it will be wonderful to hear his report on what must have been one of the most worthwhile Pan-Anglican Congresses. Please note the date !

NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL :

This Term we welcome four new members of Staff to the Primary School : **Miss Jansis Baldock** : hails from Ramsgate. Main interests are mountaineering, music, and art. She herself likes to paint but admits you cant fill a small flat with large oil-paintings !

Mr. David Gregory : was brought up in a Lincolnshire village most people think they've heard of, but haven't ; he is keen on rugby and football, especially playing the former ; likes theatre-going ; and is engaged to a fiancée who comes from Oxford.

Mrs. June Hulme from Stoke on Trent ; married a few days before term began to a scientist studying in Oxford. She plays golf, enjoys "any kind of sport"—especially football matches.

Miss Patricia Wood has been teaching for two years already in Oxford. Has a multitude of interests but would make special mention of car rallies, the theatre, and ski-ing, when she has the opportunity.

We all join in wishing them every happiness in their teaching career at Marston and hope that they will make many new friends in our community.

ALTA FLOWER ROTA :

6th October—Mrs. Yates. 13th October—Mrs. Starmer-Smith.

20th October—Mrs. Gunn. 27th October—Mrs. Spray & Mrs. Jenkins.

PARISH CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER

- Oct. 1. Tuesday. 7.45 p.m. P.C.C. Meeting in Church Hall.
- " 6. Sunday.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Parish Communion : Rev. John Moore, Abingdon.
6.30 p.m. Evensong : Rev. Canon A. J. Watts, Diocesan Insp. of Religious Education.
- " 9. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
"The Children of the Church"—7.45 p.m. in the Church Hall.
Parish Meeting to be addressed by Miss Mable Bostock, Sec. of the C. of E. Children's Council.
- " 11. Friday. 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion (Laying on of Hands).
7.45 p.m. Parish Party at County Primary School. 2/6.
- " 13. TRINITY XVIII.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
3.00 p.m. Holy Baptism.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- " 16. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
8 p.m. Preparation for Christening : Special Talk for Parents, Friends and Godparents in Church Hall.
- " 18. Friday. Festival of St. Luke the Evangelist.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
- " 20. TRINITY XIX.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
9.30 a.m. Parish Communion.
6.30 p.m. Evensong and 1st of Bible Studies.
(Adjourn to Church Hall after Evensong).
- " 23. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
7.45 p.m. in Church Hall : M.U. Meeting. "Presenting the Mothers Union"—Speaker : Mrs. Buxton.
- " 26. Saturday. Lee Abbey Thanksgiving Service and Reunion.
Bus leaves St. Nicholas' Church at 10 a.m. Bring Sandwiches !
- " 27. TRINITY XX.
8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
11.0 a.m. Matins.
6.30 p.m. Evensong.
- " 28. S. Simon and S. Jude, A.A. and M.M.
7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
7.45 p.m. C.M.S. Rally in Town Hall. Speaker : Mr. Ray Bowers. Tickets : Price 1/-.
- " 30. Wednesday. 7.15 a.m. Holy Communion.
7.45 p.m. In the Church Hall : PARISH MEETING.
Report on the Toronto Congress by the Archdeacon of Oxford, The Ven. C. Witton Davies: (Slides).

HOLY BAPTISM

"We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's Flock."
Tina Helen Kibble and Michael Kibble, 41 St. Nicholas' Park, Old Marston.
Mandy Stone, 50 Arlington Drive, Old Marston.

HOLY MATRIMONY

- Aug. 31. Maurice William Scraggs and Wendy Anne Hudson.
- " 31. Robin Alec John Clanfield and Patricia Ann Gardiner.
- Sept. 7. Robert Alan Bakewell and Mary Elizabeth Vokes.
- " 7. Graham Arthur Heath and Wendy Ann Strange.
- " 14. Michael Victor Moffatt and Kathleen Margaret Mason.



Facts and comments from and about some of the 60 dioceses in Asia and Africa served by C.M.S.

- ★ In Britain a new name is added to the register of blind persons every 43 minutes.
- ★ In Kenya there are between 60,000 and 65,000 blind people. At least 15,000 are children or young people capable of receiving training.
- ★ In India, Pakistan and Ceylon there are nearly 2½ million blind people. It is estimated that about two-thirds of this blindness arises from causes which could be cured by known surgical treatment or which could have been prevented by a proper care of the eyes.
- ★ Only 1% of India's blind children and 1½% of her deaf children are educated (in the U.K. the figure is 99.99%).
- ★ Out of 19 Commonwealth countries 12 have no schools, institutions or help for the deaf, and 7 countries have no more than a single school or institution.
- ★ If only 25% of Indian deaf children are to be given educational facilities, an extra 5,213 teachers will be needed.
- ★ If only 25% of Indian blind children were to go to school, an extra 10,703 teachers would be needed.
- ★ Such figures as these are staggering in themselves, but only deal with a quarter of the task facing the government of India.
- ★ The task is colossal, the need great, the workers few. Ten C.M.S. missionaries only, are working among the blind and deaf in different centres in Africa and Asia. More trained workers are urgently needed.

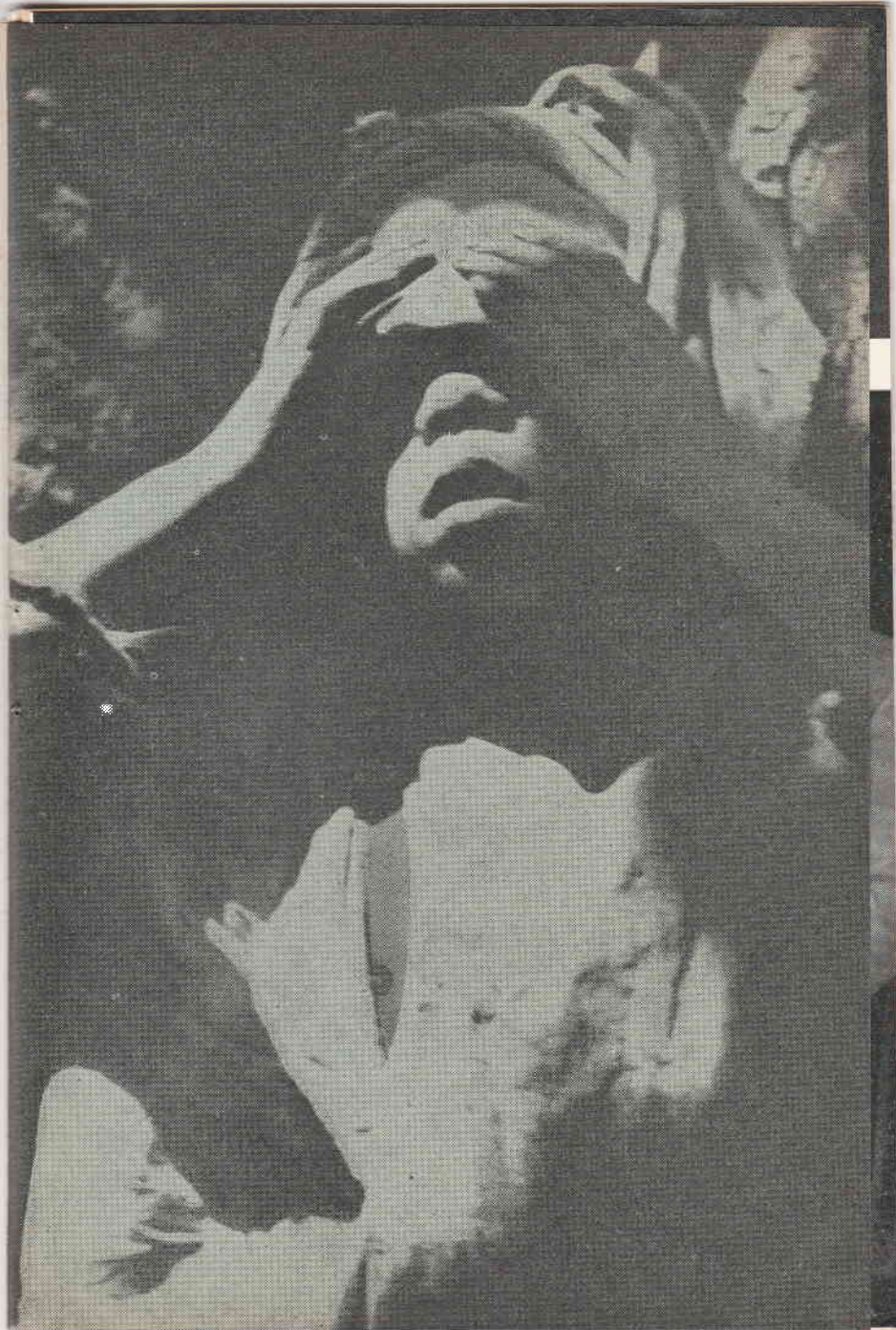
Little boy lost

At some distance from a village the doctor, the leader of a team fighting insect-born diseases in Iran, met a small boy, not older than five. "He was walking slowly, apparently without direction," the doctor reports, "and crying forlornly. A dirty bandage covered his forehead down to the eyes and he was keeping his hands pressed to his brow as if to relieve a tormenting pain."

"The boy had trachoma in a severe form. The inside of his eyelids was packed with swollen granulations and a number of tiny red blood vessels formed a sort of repulsive curtain down the upper half of his eyeballs. I don't think he even saw where he was walking."

"A young boy crying for a real sorrow is always touching, but in this case the solitude of his surroundings and, even more, the solitude of his pain was tragic. When I visited the village I understood why the boy had to carry his pain alone: 60% of the inhabitants had trachoma . . ."

*(Extract and photograph by kind permission
of the World Health Organization)*



“ Little girl found

Wonaira had come to us nearly four months ago, scarcely seeing anything. Now we were returning to her home to ask her father to sign a form agreeing to an operation on her eyelids. Wonaira, of course, came with us. The village chief whom we saw on our arrival could hardly believe his eyes, 'I am afraid' he exclaimed, seeing before him a blind ageless waif now transformed into an alert nine-year-old school girl. The chief gave us a guide to her home, and we drove on along a steadily deteriorating track until we stopped in sight of her father's banana gardens. Wonaira had taken her knitting, ostensibly to do it if she had to sit waiting, but the real reason soon emerged, for as we walked along through the green shade of the banana trees, she pulled it out of her bag and began to knit at the great risk of either dropping a stitch or tripping over a tree stump. Neither her father or her mother were at home, but her old grandparents were there, and they were plainly the ones who had given her all the love and care she had ever had.

“ When at last the time came for us to start back, we suggested to Wonaira that she should sing them one of the hymns she had learnt, and so she sat and sang three verses in Luganda of 'Jesus loves me', her old pagan grandfather listening intently with such a tender look on his face. It was very moving, and perhaps some hint of the love of God reached the old man, that love which had planned to give his little granddaughter a new life. ”

Kasiru

It's the same word in Luganda both for fool and for a deaf-and-dumb person. This perhaps is some indication of the terrible prejudice which the teacher has to break down in trying to help handicapped children to live a normal life in many parts of the world today. The C.M.S. Popular Report *Missionaries are our Business* (2s. 10d. by post) tells the exciting story of some of those who have gone out into the dark and silent places of the world to proclaim the fact that Christ is Lord there also.

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C.M.S. will be pleased to suggest aids to prayer study and giving. Write in the first instance to the Home Secretary, Church Missionary Society, 6 Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4.



F. J. Wymer

Unexpected Harvest

FROM time to time rumours emerge from the scientific world to the effect that a quiet revolution is taking place regarding man's knowledge of the sea. It is said, for instance, that the oceans of the world could provide in the future an almost unlimited source of food. For centuries, it seems, man's use of this vast element for that purpose has been as casual as his knowledge of it has been insufficient. The traditional methods of fishing, it seems, represent only the tiniest scratching of the surface.

But now it begins to look as though the future may hold a possibility of fish being herded and nurtured like flocks

and herds on land. It now begins to look, indeed, as if the very floor of the sea, for so long hidden from man's knowledge as it has been from his sight, may become a new kind of field where, figuratively speaking, he will be able to sow and reap.

A Problem of Distribution

Such things are not realities at the moment. But they are possibilities for the future. And as such they are of dramatic significance in view of the hard facts of the world's ever-increasing population. How that population, how these teeming millions of humanity are, in the years to come, to be fed

is a major problem, none the less real for being at the moment hidden from the day-to-day concerns of most of us. And therefore that science should come to the rescue once again, discovering in this way an answer to a problem of ever-increasing gravity, is indeed a matter for rejoicing and gratitude.

Yet meanwhile, and in the future, as now, there is one aspect of this whole matter to which science cannot be expected to find an answer. A high proportion—far too high a proportion—of the world's population is at this moment living below starvation limit, not because there is not enough food but because the means to buy it are so unevenly distributed.

We here in the West are immensely well fed by comparison, say, with millions of Asiatics. We are immensely well fed, indeed, by comparison with our forebears. In fact, we have never been so well fed. It is therefore all the

Continued on page 156

THE SIGN

*Not ashamed to confess the faith
of Christ crucified*

OCTOBER 1963

No. 706

- Tu. 1 Remigius, B., c. 530.
 F. 4 Francis of Assisi, 1226.
 S. 6 **Seventeenth after Trinity.**
 Faith, V.M., c. 304.
 W. 9 Denys, B.M.
 S. 13 **Eighteenth after Trinity.**
 Translation of King Edward
 the Confessor.
 Th. 17 Etheldreda, Qu. Abbess, 679.
 F. 18 **St. Luke, E.**
 S. 20 **Nineteenth after Trinity.**
 F. 25 Crispin and Crispinian, MM.,
 303.
 S. 26 Alfred, K., 899.
 S. 27 **Twentieth after Trinity.**
 M. 28 **St. Simon and St. Jude,**
AA.MM.

Days of fasting, or abstinence:

Fridays, 4, 11, 18, 25;
 Saturday, 26; Thursday, 31.

ON CONFIRMATION DAY

*Confirm your faith, my son. And if one day
 That faith should falter—as it surely will—
 Know this: that though you lose your faith in him,
 The loving strength of God is with you still.*

*Confirm your faith, my son. Though some may sneer,
 Take up the cross and bear it in your hand.
 Remember there is strength in gentleness,
 And gentleness is always his command.*

*Confirm your faith, my son. Be not afraid
 To love and trust, though others call you fool.
 Though you may feel abandoned and betrayed—
 Love on, that God may use you for his tool.*

*Confirm your faith, my son. That faith will be
 A shield and guide, though all the world you roam,
 Until that day when all Life's journeying done,
 Your loving Father calls you safely home.*

Jane Knight



Radio Times

The CHURCH and the Sick

by the Bishop of Lichfield

IN trying to give some assessment of the Church's Ministry of Healing to-day, there are, I believe, three factors which have to be taken into account. These are as follows:

1. Incredible though it seems, in this scientific age we are beset by a great wave of superstition. I am afraid that it has to be admitted that this shows that real faith has seriously declined; but in the sphere of healing it is obvious that this superstition is often to be seen in the pathetic manner in which crowds of people will turn for help to so-called 'faith healers.'

2. There is an increasing awareness amongst members of the medical profession of the fact that the spirit

reacts on the body, and a growing realization that in consequence many bodily ills flow from a spiritual malaise, and that these bodily symptoms will never be really cured unless the deeply-rooted spiritual cause also receives attention.

3. There is a much greater understanding in the Church to-day that it has a mission to heal as well as to preach. It is obvious that this duty was stressed by our Lord to his disciples, and many of us are asking ourselves what this means for us in the situation in which we have to do our work to-day.

These three factors underlie most of the work of the Churches' Council of

Healing. It seeks to try and protect people against the extravagant claims which are sometimes made by 'faith healers'—claims which the Council believe are often followed by disappointment and disillusionment—and it therefore discourages mass healing campaigns which it believes can often be dangerous. The Council is definitely of the opinion that this is not the way in which the Church's healing work should be done.

As regards the second factor, one of the chief objects of the Council is to encourage by every possible means co-operation between the Churches and the medical and nursing professions. This is one of the foremost reasons for the Council's existence, and it has representatives of all Christian Communion which are associated with the British Council of Churches, and also of the leading medical and nursing institutions and organizations. To further this co-operation the Council normally arranges a meeting of doctors and clergy at each annual conference of the British Medical Association, and it is also most anxious to foster the formation of groups of doctors and clergy at what might be described as the local level.

A Lively Faith

In connection with the third factor, the work of the Church is really best done in two ways. In the first place we ought to be as punctilious as possible in our visitation of the sick, both at home and in hospital, in order that we may try and lead them to a lively faith in the fact of God's existence and of his providential care for his children. As we regard the doctor and nurse as being his agents in the work of healing, this faith in God should serve to increase the patient's faith in the doctors and nurses who have the care of him. That this can be

of the greatest possible assistance to the work of the medical profession is indisputable; and if, for instance, the hospital chaplain can visit and talk and pray with patients who are shortly going to undergo an operation, he can often do much to encourage a quiet and trusting frame of mind in the people concerned.

In this connection I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of the work of the hospital chaplain. He often has a unique opportunity of making contact with people at an impressionable moment in their lives.

First Things First

In the second place it must not be forgotten that the Church has its own direct ministry of healing, and this it normally exercises through the sacrament of Holy Unction and the laying on of hands, both of which must always be accompanied by a sincere desire on the part of the sick person concerned that he should repent of his sins and thus be at peace with God. The aim of the Church in this is the same as that of our Lord; namely, that the person concerned should become 'whole' and thus be freely able to serve God without let or hindrance. In my view, the healing of a man's soul must always be the prime object of the Church, with bodily healing secondary to this; but that this quiet, intensely personal ministry may also be used by God our heavenly Father for bodily healing is what we also hope and pray.

The sick and suffering are, of course, very frequently mentioned in prayer and public worship. In addition to this, however, there now exist in a number of parishes prayer groups which meet regularly for the purpose of intercession for the sick and those who minister to them, and without this lifting up of the hands in prayer the Church in my opinion is powerless in this sphere of healing.

Question Page

God or Son of God?

I cannot understand why we sometimes refer to Jesus as God, while at others we call him Son of God. What is the explanation?

Your difficulty arises because it is only possible for the Bible, and for us, to speak of God in human terms, and such terms are totally inadequate. The relationship between Jesus and the Father is perhaps best expressed in the opening words of the Gospel according to St. John, as they are translated in the New English Bible: 'When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was.' St. John continues in verse 14: 'So the Word became flesh; he came to dwell among us, and we saw his glory, such glory as befits the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.'

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Guilty or Not Guilty?

If people do not believe in Christianity, will they be damned?

We read in St. Matthew 25, 31-46 of the manner in which the righteous will be separated from the unrighteous at the last day. The study of this passage will show that there is no reason to suppose that Christians will automatically be accounted righteous and those brought up in other religions as unrighteous. As Article 11 at the end of the Prayer Book puts it, 'We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.' But St. Matthew makes it clear that many

may find Christ without having known that they have done so.

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Not Men Only

I am fifteen years old, and thinking about a career. For a year now, I have felt that I have the vocation to become a missionary. If I were a boy this would be all right, but are there such people as women missionaries? What training must they have, and how do you become one?

There are, indeed, women missionaries, and there is need for many more. Among the greater needs are those for trained teachers in mission schools and training colleges, and for trained nurses and doctors in mission hospitals. Thus you are at about the right age to train as a teacher or a nurse as a first step. We would, however, suggest that you get in touch now with one of the missionary societies such as the S.P.G. of 15 Tufton Street, London, S.W.1, or the Church Missionary Society of Salisbury Square, London, E.C.4.

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How are the Dead Raised?

Does belief in the resurrection of the body mean that we shall recognize each other in our earthly forms such as mother, father, son or daughter? Where in the Bible is this explained?

The New Testament tells us very little about the life of the world to come. No doubt it is impossible to describe such a life in terms of this earthbound life we know. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is that in the world to come we shall not be 'disembodied spirits,' as some of the Greek philosophers taught, but that we shall have the means of recognizing one another and of expressing ourselves. Beyond this it is not possible to go except in 'picture language.' St. Paul gives a memorable answer to this question in 1 Corinthians 15, 35-57.

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Readers' letters regarding the faith and practice of the Church of England reach Question Page from all parts of the country. Only a few of the questions can be printed, but all are answered by post when a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

Our address is: Question Page, THE SIGN, 28 Margaret Street, London, W.1.

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The voice of the prophets

by William Neil

10 MALACHI: A WORD FOR THE DISILLUSIONED

OVER the last three months we have seen the Old Testament prophets mainly in the role of moulders of history. In the case of these down-and-out Jewish exiles by the canals of Mesopotamia nothing less than clarion calls like those of Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, with their enthusiasm and high hopes for the future, could have shaken them out of their despondency and even despair. Later it required the tonic effect of Haggai and Zechariah to stimulate those who had returned from exile to rebuild the shattered Temple as the heart and symbol of the community's life.

This month's study, the book of Malachi, reminds us among other things that the ups and downs of the life of the Christian Church are no different from the experience of the people of God in Old Testament times. A period when organized religion is apparently on the crest of the wave is followed by a trough of apathy and indifference. Great spokesmen are lacking and people are not prepared to listen even to lesser leaders who are doing their best. The contrast between the Victorian success and the present-day failure of the Church is no new phenomenon.

A Too Familiar Picture

The word Malachi means 'my messenger,' i.e. God's messenger, and we may call the writer by that name although his real identity is unknown. He comes on the scene less than a century after the rebuilding of the

Temple had given a fillip to religious observance and encouraged many, no doubt, to think that crowded services would last for ever. But it is a sad and sombre picture that Malachi paints, just a generation or two after Second Isaiah had been dreaming of the throngs of worshippers who would once again celebrate the glory of God on Mount Zion.

Disillusionment and scepticism were rife. People couldn't care less. Moral standards had gone to pieces. Even the priesthood had lost heart. No longer was it enough for a prophet to utter the magic words 'Thus saith the Lord' to command attention and respect. The spokesmen of God themselves had to argue their case and were met with cynicism and incredulity.

Wanted—an Amos

It was a situation that called for a bigger man than Malachi, who was a lightweight among the prophets. When he was challenged to show evidence of the buoyant prosperity and general wellbeing that his predecessors had in their enthusiasm foretold as the inevitable result of carrying out the will of God, the best he could say was that other nations were in an even worse plight, and he offered the too-easy solution that the Lord would soon bring this sorry state of affairs to an end.

The Lord did indeed just that but not by bringing the world to an end at the same time as Malachi predicted. Instead he sent Nehemiah and Ezra—a statesman and a priest—to infuse new

life into the people, fan the embers of a dying faith and usher in another great chapter in the long story of the Church from Abraham to the present day.

The Passing of the Prophets

It was left to them and not to a prophet to speak to their day and age on behalf of God. It was Nehemiah the statesman with his call to action, sword in one hand and spade in the other, who roused Israel from her torpor and set her to restoring the ruined walls of her ancient capital, giving her a sense of unity and purpose and security. And it was Ezra the priest who completed the work of Nehemiah by pledging the people to be servants of the Law of God, so that thenceforth the whole life of the community, political, social and religious, was governed by the tradition of Moses.

So the prophets had said their say and had had their day. The great voices of Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were silenced. Lesser men succeeded them and much lesser ones than those included in the Bible brought the office into such disrepute that an honest prophet was ashamed to claim the name and denied kinship with the famous spokesmen of the past (*Zech.* 13. 4-6).

On the face of it, then, Malachi did not count for much, yet it is no accident that his book is included in the

Bible. Very surprisingly we find here a splendid passage about the high office and responsibility of the priest as the 'messenger of the Lord of Hosts' (2. 4-7) and of the sanctity of the marriage bond and the companionship of husband and wife (2. 14-16). Even more surprising is this prophet's assertion that for all their religious ignorance the pagans have a deeper respect for God than his instructed but indifferent people (1. 11).

Malachi's Contribution

So this ancient spokesman has some profound things to say to us to-day, but, of course, he ties up most closely with the gospel in that the New Testament writers found in his words in 3. 1 a prophecy of the mission of John the Baptist: 'Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me' (*St. Mark* 1. 2). Jesus likewise identified the work of the Baptist with that of Elijah, alluding to Malachi's expression of the popular belief that before the coming of the Messiah Elijah would return as his forerunner (4. 4-6; *St. Mark* 9. 11-13). The last words of the Old Testament thus lead on quite naturally into the prelude to the ministry of Jesus when John described his own role as that of the herald of the Messianic King (*St. Mark* 1. 7).

FROM THE BOOK OF MALACHI

- ¹⁰ Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down
¹¹ for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3

THE PILLAR OF FIRE

10

THERE was one sombre fact which Moses, in his communings with God upon the sacred mountain, had overlooked. And that fact was that the people whom he had led out of Egypt, and who were now waiting uneasily for him at the foot of the mountain, were afraid of him. He was a man touched by the hand of God, and as such he was for the time being a man withdrawn from the common concerns of every day. What is more, there was about him a fierce intensity, of the very fire of the prophet, which was quite enough in itself to make him a figure of fear to people who, out there in that wilderness, in the littleness of their hearts, needed, like children, reassurance.

So long as Moses was among them these feelings of theirs were stilled. Or if not stilled, they were at any rate kept under control. But when, as now, he went up into the mountain and stayed there, leaving the people among their tents to their own thoughts, their disquiet grew. What was happening up there on the mountain? Where were the comforts or at least the securities which they felt they had deserved after the long hardships of their escape from Egypt and journey into the wilderness? And they were troubled, too, by the Covenant which Moses had told them had been made in their name with God. For the God whom he had, in the terms of that Covenant, revealed to them was no easy deity to be placated with easy sacrifices. He was no God who promised pleasant things. He was high, mighty, invisible, and righteous. He was a stern God: not

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*The story of Moses
retold by John Lastingham*

an easy God to serve. Thus the people murmured among themselves.

Like many people before and since, the Hebrews in their fear sought an easy way out. And it seemed to them that one of the most attractive ways in which to find the security they yearned for was to make for themselves one of the kind of gods of which they had heard even during the days of their captivity—the kind of god which the people of that Canaan to which they were moving had for ages worshipped: a visible image, an ever-present symbol. So they turned to Aaron and said to him, 'Up, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him.'

So Aaron took the ear-rings of the women and the armlets of the men and melted them down and made out of the piece of metal which emerged the image of a golden calf. Triumphantly then he said to the people gathered around after he had fashioned it: 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'

Meanwhile, high up in the silent solitude of the sacred mountain, it



A golden calf from ancient Egypt

British Museum

seemed to Moses that God spoke to him. And God was angry—angry as he warned Moses that the people had got out of hand and that he, the Lord, would have to destroy them. Tremblingly, Moses begged mercy for his people, interceding with the mighty presence all about him that they should be spared even in their folly. His prayer was answered: God spared the people. But it was clearly high time that Moses went down to be among them again.

Return from the Summit

And so he went down, leaving behind him the high places where for so many days and nights he had been alone with God. He felt exhausted, curiously empty within himself. It was true that he had not eaten for many days. But this inner emptiness was also of a spiritual nature, as though the very springs of his energy had been consumed by the intensity of the experience through which he had been passing. So it was as an exhausted man, stumbling

as he went, that he made his way zig-zag down through the defiles of the mountain until he was among the foothills. There, waiting for him, he found Joshua, his faithful lieutenant.

As Moses approached, Joshua saw that he was carrying with him two tablets, upon which writing was strangely engraved. Silently from that point the two descended towards the tents spread out on the plain below. When they did thus come within hearing distance Joshua turned and looked inquiringly at Moses. There was a murmur coming up from the camp, intermingled with shouting. To Joshua the soldier it seemed that there could be but one explanation—that the people were involved in some fight, that perhaps they had been attacked by nomads.

But Moses felt otherwise. 'It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery,' he said, 'neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.' He frowned as he spoke,

feeling deeply uneasy. And then, without another word, he strode forward, the weariness which a moment before had been gripping him now vanishing away at this new call upon his energies.

Bitter Anger

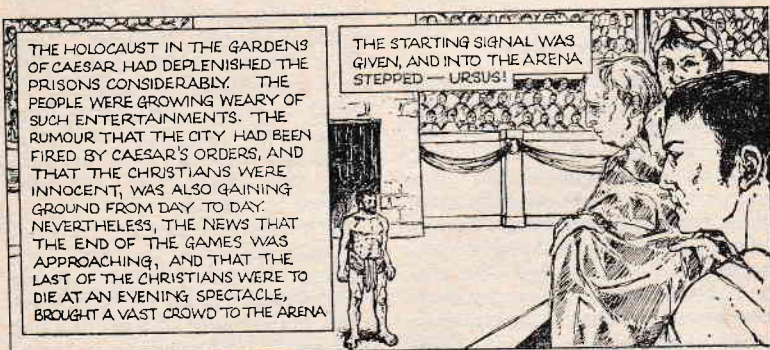
And so Moses entered the camp. As he strode among the tents those who among the people had time for a sight of him were terrified at what they saw. For the face of Moses had darkened and set. And then, when he came to the very centre of the camp, there before him he saw the image staring idiotically from its carved face. He saw the people dancing about it, some drunken, others indulging in some of the beastly orgies which commonly went with such worship. And now, when he saw all this going on a terrible anger seized him. First, he took the tablets which he was carrying with him—tablets upon which, as he felt, the very hand of God himself had written, and dashed them to the ground so that they were broken to pieces. It was not worthy, he felt bitterly, that the testimony of so

spiritual a God should be prostituted by being brought into contact with such carnal-minded cattle as these people of his, given up in their bottomless folly to the worship of their idol. And in the midst of his anger there burnt a dreadful sense of disappointment. Was it for such people as this that he had suffered so much?

Now, as the people stood and looked at him, terrified at the sudden eruption of his presence, Moses sprang forward. Exerting his great strength, he picked up the paltry image they had made and, as he had broken the tablets, so now broke it upon the ground. That done, he turned upon the trembling Aaron and, in a voice of thunder, asked him: 'What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought a great sin upon them?' Lamely, because he was a very frightened man, Aaron described what had happened, telling Moses of how the people, despairing of the return of Moses, had persuaded him to make this god for them. Moses looked upon him with contempt and sadness. He knew now that the time had come for stronger measures.

To be continued

Quo Vadis?—a story of ancient Rome



Have you read . . . ?

By Canon H. G. G. Herklots

IT is a pleasure to welcome a book from another section of the Anglican Communion—one which may be an enrichment to all. Dr. Fitzsimons Allison teaches Church History at the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tennessee, which is maintained by twenty-one dioceses of the American Episcopal Church. His book, *Fear, Love and Worship*, has been issued by the S.P.C.K. as a paper-back at 6s. 'This book is about our common malady, fear; the solution, love; and worship, the means by which love destroys fear. Its effectiveness will depend, in large part, upon our taking a deep and thorough look into ourselves, our worship, and our willingness to be confronted in new ways by God.' This is a serious enough open-

ing for what is indeed a serious book; though it is one lightened by many illustrations, taken from pastoral experience and from modern drama.

There is much talk nowadays of 'spiritual values'; talk which sometimes covers woolly thinking. Those who wish to ask what this language really means should read *Personal Values in the Modern World* which is 'a Pelican Original' by Professor M. V. C. Jeffreys, Professor of Education at Birmingham (Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.). 'The quest for an effectively coherent view of life involves two things. One is an understanding of the relations between the different departments of thought and knowledge. . . . The second is a governing principle, or master idea, about which our thought and knowledge can cohere, and which gives them meaning and purpose. . . .' Professor Jeffreys finds this governing principle in the sacredness of human personality. But why should personality be sacred? In the final chapter he outlines four claims for the Christian interpretation of life in relationship to all that has gone before.



These are: 1. The Christian faith is realistic in its assessment of the human predicament and at the same time finally optimistic. 2. Christian theology gives added meaning to personal relations and to the morality that proceeds from respect of person for person. 3. The Christian faith is a source of power for coping with the practical problems of life. 4. Christian faith and practice provide a framework of common shared experience which can bind together in fellowship people who are separated from one another in other ways. Many will be helped in reading this book by sharing with a Christian thinker as he looks at the confused world of to-day.

That the World May Believe by Hans Küng (Sheed & Ward, 7s.) is a simpler book. Dr. Küng writes letters to young people troubled about problems of faith. He speaks with charity and understanding about the relations of Catholics with Protestants. 'First of all, never forget that Protestants are Christians too.' He enables his young Roman Catholic readers to understand developments which bring them closer to others.

Here are three thought-provoking books:

Fear, Love and Worship by C. Fitzsimons Allison (S.P.C.K., 6s.).

Personal Values in the Modern World by M. V. C. Jeffreys (Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.).

That the World May Believe by Hans Küng (Sheed & Ward, 7s.).

Unexpected Harvest from page 146 more tragic that—and this is a moral, not a scientific problem—some means cannot be found of spreading this blessing more evenly about the whole world of humanity.

The duty of Christians here is clear: it is to stir the conscience of the age they live in on this issue. It is to declare, in their own consciences, a war on want. For out of the aroused consciences of many action may well follow. Lacking that, in years to come the consequences may well be most grave, since injustice can never be left to affront the righteousness of God indefinitely. Certainly, we do not want that as the unexpected harvest of to-day's indifference.

SIGNET



My Garden in October

BY W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER

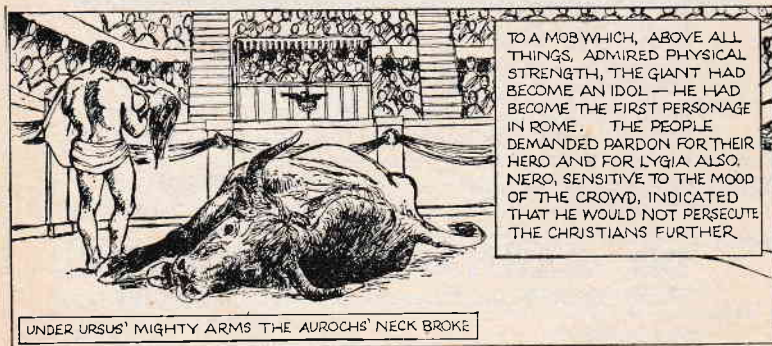
OCTOBER is a tremendously important month for the collecting together of leaves and, in fact, any other vegetable waste that may be rotted down on the compost heap. I believe in gardening God's way and that's why I've written a leaflet, *The Soil and God's Plan*, which any reader can have, price 6d., if they send a stamped addressed envelope as well. Any little leaf, yes, the tea leaves, as well as the tops of the peas and beans, the lawn mowings, the old damp copies of THE SIGN, all go on the compost heap—nothing is wasted. Humber fish manure is used at the rate of 3 ounces to the square yard to every 6-inch layer of waste collected,

and as a result wonderful compost is produced.

If you cannot make your own compost, either because of age or infirmity, then you will be glad to know that you can use Pompost instead which is made from apple waste. This is inexpensive, clean and pleasant to handle and is a wonderful tonic for tired gardens, and for the window boxes too for that matter. If you cannot get this locally let me know. The third organic produce you can use is sedge peat which can be applied on the surface of the ground to act as a mulch and so smother the weeds. I use it under the roses, under the heathers, in the herbaceous border, under the flowering shrubs and so on.

Michaelmas Daisies

This is the month when the Michaelmas Daisy borders look at their best. Visitors to Arkley Manor are always surprised to see such a wealth of colour at this time of the year. If you'd like to have a wonderful show next October, why not plant quite soon Crimson Brocade; King's College, a glowing purple; Mistress Quickly, a



true blue; Peerless, a soft heliotrope; Sandford's Purple, a clear rich purple; Tosca, a rose pink; and Winston Churchill, a deep wine red.

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and so on, and you will find them particularly delicious. I can tell you where these Pillar trees can be bought. A good hedge to prevent wind and yet provide colour is Blaze. This looks most attractive.

The square glass cloches or ganwicks as they should be called are very easy to manage and use. They are invaluable at this time of the year for growing lettuces at Christmas. We grow the variety *Attractie*, and it's delicious. Spring cabbages can also be planted out under ganwicks at this time of the year and you get good results next late February and March.



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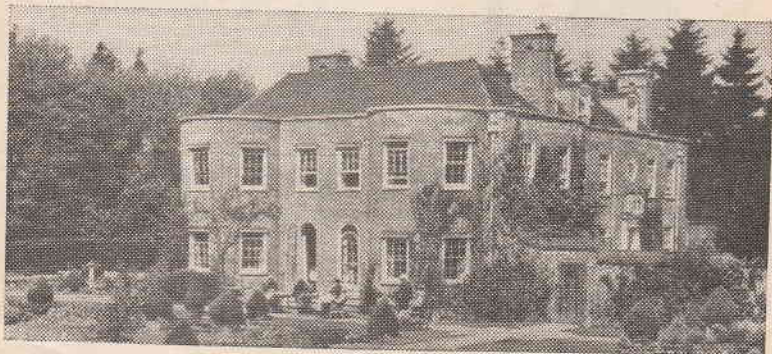
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