

Newton Mearns Church Supplement

JANUARY, 1954

THE REGISTER.

Baptisms.

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

Blair Bostock Murray, c/o Rhumore, St. Vigeans Avenue.
Norman Keith Tandy, Sydney, Australia.

Marriage.

"Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Douglas Gordon Watson and Jean M. Stubbs.

Deaths.

"Christ, the first fruits of them that are asleep."

Miss Mary Hamilton, Knowes, Larchfield Avenue.
Mr. Alexander J. McIver, The Schoolhouse.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stubbs to 14 Dunbeath Avenue.
Mrs. Cormack to 4 Townhead Road.
Mrs. D. Blue to 15 Townhead Road.

THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE.

I cut this out of a religious newspaper. It is part of the story of life in a prisoner of war camp. Here is the passage:—

"The hardest thing of all for the P.O.W. to bear was Christmas Day. However I have been very much moved by some phrases from my mother's last letter, phrases which as far as I can, I pass on to my friends. At Christmas all that is difficult in our lives must become not harder but easier: for now we know Him, from Whom all things come and to Whom all things lead, and Who is with us to the end of our days. Without Christmas everything would be unbearably hard; but at Christmas the heart of the man who hears about Christ becomes not heavier but lighter."

Because we had no hymn books, we followed our custom as for every ordinary service, and wrote out plenty of copies of the Carols: not one of them sounded as triumphant as the one by Paul Gerbord, 'Come let us worship Christ... We who welcome our salvation, all our sorrows cast away.'"

There, then, you have wise words to those who are finding Christmas hard this year. We know of many such families in our own congregation, and our hearts go out to them in sympathy. In one sense it cannot be otherwise. Christmas and New Year are times when there is a certain amount of gaiety. Those who have passed through sorrow and are in the midst of suffering cannot enter into it easily for their heart is sad. We simply shut our eyes to the facts if we do not realise that Christmas as we know it is a time of giving and receiving presents, of social gatherings, etc. It has been so since our earliest childhood and it will remain so to the end of time. It is reasonable that at a time when we remember the supreme gift of divine love there should be giving and receiving of presents amongst our kinsmen and friends, and the giving of alms to the poor. From all this it is natural that such should exclude themselves.

Yet there is another side to Christmas, and it is the real message of this season. It is the time that we remember the wondrous gift of God to the human race. The message of the angel was "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord." Notice that it is a Saviour who is offered to us, not just an example,

or a leader. It is to people in distress that the announcement is made. Here we have the real message of the Advent, so often obscured in the festive manner in which we celebrate the occasion. We have good news here, the greatest news in the world that we have a Saviour from sin and from death.

Such a message covers not only the Christmastide but the New Year into which we go. In such a faith and trust may we live and die.

OBITUARY.

Miss Mary Hamilton.

Miss Mary Hamilton of Knowes, Larchfield Avenue, died at her residence on Thursday, 29th October. The Misses Hamilton came to our neighbourhood not long after I was ordained and inducted to this charge, and throughout these years they have all been most devoted members of the Church. They came from the district of Airdrie where their father was the owner and editor of a local paper, and also worked in close association and part ownership of other papers as the *Hamilton Advertiser*. Miss Mary Hamilton was a woman of a most gentle and unselfish nature. It would be difficult to find one who devoted her life more to others. Those who knew her could not fail to love her. We know how much her sisters will miss her and we extend to them at this time and to all her kith and kin our deepest sympathy in the great loss.

Mr. Alexander J. McIver.

Mr. Alexander J. McIver, headmaster of Mearns Public School, died in an Infirmary on Wednesday, 16th December, in his 63rd year. Born in Rhu, Dunbartonshire, he grew up with a deep interest in flowers, inherited from and nourished by his father who was a head gardener on an estate in that beautiful district. On completing his training, he went to the East School and later to Abercorn School in Paisley. Later he was appointed Second Master in Bridge of Weir School and hence became Headmaster at Uplawmoor where he remained for fifteen years. In 1945 he was appointed Headmaster of Mearns School in succession to Mr. C. J. Thom, who had been transferred to the South School, Paisley. Retiring by disposition, and desirous at all times of being out of the public eye, he was a faithful and diligent headmaster. He had a deep love of youth, and a keen understanding of the attitude of the child. He was tolerant to a fault, and yet rigorous in pointing out the road the child should take. Yet the methods that he adopted were always those of persuasion. A year ago he had a serious illness and few realised the difficulties under which he carried on his responsibilities. A man of deep religious faith and a fervent disciple of Jesus Christ, we mourn his passing to-day. He was a good man and one of nature's gentlemen.

To his wife and daughter whom he rejoiced to see graduate to the medical profession, and his sister and brothers, and all his kith and kin we extend our deepest sympathy.

A WELCOME HOME.

It was a happy suggestion that the Session should hold a special meeting on Wednesday, 4th November, and officially welcome home Mr. and Mrs. Thom after a year's absence and on their safe return from Australia. The members of Session foregathered with their ladies as arranged and Mr. Mackay presided and some sixty persons sat down to High tea.

The Committee in charge of the arrangements had made the hall very comfortable. This was favourably commented upon and appreciated. Mr. John Russell had provided his part with a beautiful display of flowers for the platform and the table decorations were charming in their daintiness.

The Toast to the Queen having been honoured, "The Church" was proposed by Mr. Gilbert McVean, and the way he dealt with it put every one into a good humour—a humour which characterised the whole evening—and, as was appropriate, Mr. Mackay responded.

The Toast, "Our Guests," was in Mr. Davidson's name and he, too, was really happy in his task, especially when recalling experiences during the time he acted as Clerk to the Session, and dealing with those about to be married and seeking advice regarding the proclamation of Banns. This Toast was well received.

Mr. Thom, responding, spoke of Mr. Davidson's "felicitous, facetious and fulsomely flattering remarks, knowing how far short I come of all the generous remarks. After the kind invitation to this social gathering and also the cordial response to the Toast, I have come to the conclusion that it was worthwhile going away for my wife and I have been almost overwhelmed by the warmth of the welcome on our return."

Mr. Thom also seemed to have enjoyed the visits of those about to be married, especially in the cases "where the lady did all the talking and then ordered the man to sign, which he meekly did thus giving away the second last shred of his liberty—the last one goes later." In Australia the Session-Clerk has nothing to do with Banns. The Minister does all. The couple chooses the Church, interviews Minister, who completes the form, carries through the ceremony, then signs the form and sends it to the Registrar and collects the fee, £5 5/-.

Musical items during the evening were rendered by Mrs. Ferns and Mrs. Andrew M. McCance and Mr. Alec Moreland. "The Cotters' Saturday Night" was recited by Mr. Moreland who surprised every one by doing it without hesitation and not needing any prompting.

Mrs. McCance's last solo was "Art Thou Troubled," which immediately preceded the vote of thanks in the name of Mr. W. A. Menzies, but he discharged the duty very satisfactorily and didn't seem troubled in any way.

JAMAICAN SCENES.

On Sunday, 8th November, the Y.P.U. entertained a contingent of the Orchardhill Youth Fellowship, and the Rev. James Munn—Minister of Newlands South Church—gave a very interesting talk on his visit to Jamaica (carried out on instruction of the General Assembly), which he illustrated with films.

First he told of his arrival at Kingston and the enquiry about accommodation and found that the best hotel was seven guineas a day. He then enquired about the hotel at Montago Bay, and learned that the charge was ten guineas a day, and, said Mr. Munn, "There are people in Jamaica who can afford to live at that rate." This led to the information that Jamaica is a country of contrasts. The great majority of the people are very poor.

Wanting to see how the ordinary people lived, Mr. Munn was taken to visit a little old lady (a real black mammy) who lived alone in a one-roomed house on the hillside. She stood in the doorway, quite hiding the interior. Mr. Munn's missionary colleague asked that Mr. Munn might see her fire. This consisted of a little charcoal in a small tin in which a few holes had been made. The doorway was no more than four feet high and when Mr. Munn got inside he found an old basket chair and this was the old lady's bed. She just sat and slept there. The only other thing was a small box which comprised her pantry, store and wardrobe. This was not an isolated case.

Mr. Munn reminded his hearers that most of the coloured people were descended from slaves, and the mentality still persisted in their belief in charms and witchcraft and their fear of the medicine man. This is what the missionaries are up against making, as it does, their work very difficult. Nevertheless progress is being made and the young people are being brought into the Sunday School.

In 1946, ground was bought high in the healthy centre of the island and there the Knox College has been built, and it was interesting to see the students trooping in as revealed by the film. Adult education for the neighbourhood is to develop; cottage industries and hand-crafts will grow; and summer schools are arranged for youth leaders in business and public life; and courses for church office-bearers and evangelists are offered.

REFLECTIONS.

Remembrance Day was observed on Sunday, 8th November, and the congregation assembled early. The Newton Mearns section of the British Legion were present along with the uniformed companies in association with the Church. The Colour Party presented their flags to the Rev. W. Murray Mackay, who placed them in the Chancel, and the Last Post was sounded. The congregation stood in silence until the Reveille was sounded. At the close of the Service the colours were restored and the companies re-formed outside the Church and moved off. The Service was impressive as the occasion demanded.

The Dramatic Section are to be congratulated on their interpretation of the Comedy Drama "Candied Peel," which they performed with acceptance. The team worked together splendidly and they were well supported by the willing helpers behind the scenes. In thanking all who had taken part Mr. Mackay put a good finish to the days of hard work done by all. Miss Margaret Hunter received a special ovation for her share in producing the Play.

An Interlude

It was most interesting to observe how Mr. Gilbert MacVean and the youngsters sitting on the front seat enjoyed the intervals during the play "Candied Peel." All laughed heartily, so the stories Mr. MacVean told had humour—but then humour bubbles up with him.

Christmas Celebrations

The Children's Parties provided a great treat. The Beginners had their party from 2 to 4.30 and the older children from 5 to 9.30 p.m. There was the visit of Santa Claus, always a great attraction, who distributed gifts; and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all—even the older folk present. Mr. Telfer was in charge of the Film Show.

On Sunday morning the Children's Gift Service was held and there was no doubt about the attention given whilst Mr. Mackay spoke to the children about Santa Claus. He had to do some quick thinking when he did not get from them the answer he expected. All added to the brightness of the service. The children sang very nicely their Christmas hymns.

It must be noted that a large number of gifts were brought which were later sent to Mearnskirch Hospital to gladden the hearts of the boys and girls there. For this goodness the parents are thanked.

A Praise Service was rendered in the evening and all the music had a Christmas flavour. Solos were sung by the Misses Hunter and Mr. David McCance. The music selected by Mr. Cuthill was appropriate as were the Scripture readings by Mr. Mackay.

Intimations for which pulpit announcement is desired should be presented at the Vestry not later than 11.15 on Sunday mornings.