

News Letter from Baha'is of the British Isles.

September, 1930.

"Consort with all the people with love and fragrance. Fellowship is the cause of unity, and unity is the source of order in the world. Blessed are they who are kind, and serve with love."

Words of Baha'u'llah,

"The candle of thine heart is lit with the hand of My power ; quench it not with the adverse winds of self and passion. The healer of all thy ills is thy remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My Love thy all-precious treasure, and cherish it even as thine own sight and life."—BAHA'U'LLAH.

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we read the following letters from the different centres, we cannot but thank God for the wonderful way in which doors of service have opened to us during the last three months. Prayer has indeed been answered, and the mighty power of the Holy Spirit manifested in many places. Seed has been sown in new ground, and again that which was sown a year ago, when dear Mrs. Ford was with us before,—has been nurtured and is beginning to grow. All these things give much cause for joy and thankfulness. But fresh opportunities bring fresh responsibilities, and every single Baha'i must take a share in these if the Cause is to spread, and deepen. The candle has been lit in many hearts, and we must do our part to keep the lights burning. Self must be conquered, and the passion of Love must fill our hearts, and be radiated in our lives. Only so can we nurture the young believers, and build on the work that has been started. Only so can we show to the world the splendour of the Baha'i revelation.

London.

For the 4th successive summer Mrs. Hanford Ford has visited England and taught and worked for the Baha'i Movement. During her visit she spoke at the Wednesday Meetings and was often in the room at Walmar House to meet enquirers and to give further teachings. Mr. Larter's group in Plaistow welcomed her for the fourth time, and secured the promise of a Meeting next year. Mrs. Ford spoke in three Unitarian churches and occupied the pulpit in Mr. Sharpe's church in Croydon at both the morning and evening services one Sunday.

The New Thought Conference, with Mr. Dimsdale Stocker as chairman, gave the Baha'i Message an unusually cordial welcome, and there was a warm response to Mrs. Ford's presentation of it.

At a large meeting arranged by the Fellowship of Faiths in the City Temple, Mrs. Ford repeated the Message of Baha'u'llah from the pulpit from which Abdu'l Baha once spoke.

An enthusiastic group of young people listened most attentively at Whitfield's Tabernacle, and the work begun in this splendidly broad-minded and active centre will be followed up.

The Wednesday evening meetings have grown steadily in size during the summer, and the farewell to Mrs. Ford on July 30th,

was a most inspiring and enthusiastic evidence of the power of the Spirit. Two Persian visitors were present at this meeting, Mirza Nadim Bashi, who has now gone to Turkey, and Mr. Abdul Ali Dehkan from American University, who will continue his education here.

A number of the Friends attended the Esperanto Congress at Oxford and on Monday, August 4th, a Baha'i Meeting was held at Christchurch at which the chair was taken by Professor Christaller of Stuttgart, the speakers being Miss Zamenhof, daughter of Mr. Zamenhof to whom the Esperantists owe their language, Mrs. Hanford Ford and Miss Grossmann of Hamburg. That week, when thousands of Esperantists from all countries met in fellowship, united by this bond of a universal language, was a wonderful demonstration to the world of the comradeship that is fostered by a common means of expression.

On July 5th, advantage was taken of the presence of members from other groups who had come to London to attend a meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly, to hold a special meeting which was much appreciated by all who were able to be present. On Wednesday, August 13th, Miss Zamenhof with Miss Baxter as interpreter spoke to the Friends in Esperanto and Miss Grossmann from Hamburg, who was present, also spoke.

Miss Zamenhof is the first Polish Baha'i, and she has begun her work for the Cause by translating Dr. Esslemont's book into Esperanto. Other visitors from abroad have been Miss Drake Wright, who is with us again after travelling through Germany and spending some time in Geneva. Mr. Spendlove, of Washington, D.C., Mrs. Collins of California, and Miss Allen of Baltimore.

"The passing" of Louis Bourgeois, the architect of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, which occurred some weeks ago, brings before the mind's eye of some of the friends in London, a very vivid picture of his visit to us a few years ago, to explain that most wonderful Model of the Bahai Temple which he had just finished.

His life was such an example of what the Power of the Spirit can do, and such an inspiration to us all, that a tiny appreciation of it must, we feel, go out with our News Letter.

Five years before he attended the Bahai Convention in 1920 he had a vision of a very beautiful and wonderful building, and at that Convention he knew that it was the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar that he had seen, and he set to work at once to build the Model ; he resigned his work in the City, and he and his wife retired to the country, and for three years he worked on the Model, during which time having no income, he and his wife sold roses from the garden to buy material for it. He told us that his wife was really the "Temple builder" for had it not been for her sympathy and cheerful sacrifice, he could not have carried to completion the gigantic task.

Louis Bourgeois's health was bad, and he had much opposition to overcome but he conquered it all. Lately he knew that he would not be with us much longer, so he worked night and day to get the plan of the interior of the Bahai Temple finished. Now that part of his work is accomplished and he has passed on to the Fuller Life we pray that from there he "will see of the travail of his soul" and be satisfied. He has given all he could—his life—and it should inspire us all to help forward with our utmost effort, this glorious work.

Manchester.

We find inspiration in these words of Baha'u'llah, "Association (intercourse) is always conducive to union and harmony; and union and harmony are the cause of the order of the world and the life of nations."

The Manchester friends live scattered over a wide area. Our leisure is limited and the cost of travelling is an item, but, in spite of these handicaps we meet at least once a month with occasionally a meeting in between. Our meetings foster 'union and harmony'; we strive also to gain a clearer and deeper insight into the Mind of the Divine Source of these sublime qualities. We meet so that in communion we may "thank the Lord on His earth so that He may thank us in His Heaven," realising that in the world of Oneness, Heaven is identical with His earth.

Since our last report we have had the joy of meeting and hearing Mrs. Slade at the joint meeting with the Altrincham friends. Towards the end of July we had the happiness to welcome Mrs. Mary Hanford Ford amongst us. In Manchester Mrs. Ford addressed two meetings arranged by our local Spiritual Assembly, and one in the Friend's Meeting House under the auspices of the No More War Movement in co-operation with the Esperantist Societies. The Manchester Assembly had also the great privilege of assisting to arrange meetings in Yorkshire for Mrs. Ford. These were at Keighley, Bradford and Baildon under the auspices of the local branches of the No More War Movement with the Esperantist Societies co-operating; at Eccleshill for the United Methodist Church, and at Bradford for the Society of Friends. At these places the Baha'i Message was delivered for the first time. We pray that God's Blessing may rest on the work Mrs. Ford has been able to do and that in due time there will be found those who having heard have also accepted and are eager to carry to others the Glorious Message of Baha.

Altrincham.

Altrincham friends were able to arrange a most interesting meeting for Mrs. Mary Hanford Ford on July 18th, when she addressed the local branch of Toc H. on World Peace, Mrs. Ford being the first lady to address its members. The evening was very wet

and stormy, but it did not prevent every chair being occupied and a very interested assembly listened to Mrs. Ford for nearly two hours. On the following Sunday Mrs. Ford spoke at the young ladies' Sunday school class at Dunham Road, where again in the evening she addressed the congregation upon the Spiritual Economics of the Baha'i Revelation. Much interest was shown at each of these gatherings, but attendance was affected by the very wet and stormy weather which prevailed throughout Mrs. Ford's visit.

From York comes the cheering news that happy little meetings continue to be held at the house of Mrs. Pegg. Mrs. Ford visited the city in July, and addressed two meetings which were fairly well attended, and the friends have good reason to hope that the outcome of her visit will be the expansion of the group of believers in the near future.

Bournemouth.

The most interesting and important item of news since we last reported is, like that of most other centres, the visit of Mrs. Hanford Ford. Her stay with us was very brief, but friends gathered from far and near on Sunday, June 22nd, to hear her wonderful discourse on the subject of World Peace. They listened with rapt attention, and went away so impressed with the Baha'i message, that they made a firm resolve to form a study class in Bournemouth in the autumn.

On Monday, June 23rd, Mrs. Ford addressed a very appreciative audience in St. Peter's Hall, Bournemouth. The proceedings opened with a little social gathering, tea, coffee, and light refreshments being served, in the course of which new friends received a cordial welcome. The chair was taken at 8 o'clock by the Rev. Cooper Hunt, who, after prayer, prefaced his introduction of Mrs. Ford by reading from the 'Hidden Words' of Baha'u'llah. Then Mrs. Ford's wonderful address followed, her subject being "The Mystery of True Brotherhood." She dealt with the economic problems which are causing so much distress in the world today, from the Baha'i standpoint, and unfolded the plans of Baha'u'llah for co-operation in industry of capital and labour, showing that the capitalist is not to be utterly divested of his capital, or the worker exploited. It was a masterly handling of a very difficult subject, delivered without a single note, with a wealth of detail, and with the utmost clarity, points on which many members of the audience remarked afterwards with great admiration. Several questions were asked, which Mrs. Ford answered briefly, and to the point. The meeting closed with prayer, but for some time afterwards little groups of people eagerly discussed and enquired into the teachings, giving us courage to hope that a definite move forward will be the result of Mrs. Ford's work in Bournemouth.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

(Written by one of the friends.)

"O Son of Man! Many a day hath passed over thee whilst thou hast busied thyself with thy fancies and idle imaginings. How long art thou to slumber on thy bed? Lift up thy head from slumber, for the Sun hath risen to the zenith haply it may shine upon thee with the light of beauty."—BAHA'U'LLAH.

Day succeeds day. Men busy themselves with their affairs indifferent to the fact that history is being made in their day and that they each contribute to the making of such history. The historian does not concern himself with the present. His eyes are on the past. Standing away from it at that distance which affords the due perspective, he sees the past as a whole. Because of his distance from the object of his vision he may fail to see some details and ascribe to others more prominence than is their due, but nevertheless, he succeeds in "capturing" the spirit of the age which he has under observation.

The thoughtful man pauses at times to contemplate and reflect upon the events of the day as they come under his observation. He may regard each separate event, each particular happening as standing alone, detached from other happenings. Or experience may have taught him the wiser course of seeking the connection between events seemingly unconnected. He knows that every event is an effect; that antecedent to it is a cause, and should he be given to observation and reflection, he may succeed in constructing a hypothetical system which shall explain the actions of men and the events which such actions give rise to. But his success will be only partial. The vision of man is of limited range. He is too close to the happenings of his day to have the right perspective. If we would know the spirit of the age we live in we must call to our aid one who is specially gifted. We must contemplate the Age as it appears to the vision of the Seer.

Abdu'l Baha said of the age we now live in, "This is the day in which the inhabitants of the world shall enter under the tent of the Word of God. This is the day when the east and the west shall embrace each other like unto two lovers; war and contention shall be forgotten; nations and governments shall enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation." If we look merely on the surface of what is happening today, we shall see much which appears to contradict these words. Nations are still armed; in one country civil war threatens; in another despotism rules by force. The East, in India, is suspicious of and hostile to the West, in Britain. Industry is in conflict the world over. Peace is yet to be accomplished. But below the surface of events, and, to those who have

the vision, above and surmounting these temporary conflicts, the Divine Force is ever active. We see It working through human agency. Enlightened men and women of every race in every country are striving for toleration, for understanding, for co-operation, for love. And that which stimulates and supports them in their efforts is the Divine Spirit. We read of Jewish Rabbis addressing congregations in Christian churches; of Methodist congregations holding their garden parties in the grounds of Anglican bishops. Statesmen advocate federation and co-operation of States. Their motive may be those of self-preservation; a generation ago such principles would have been unthinkable. Ministers of religion may deplore half-empty churches, but the younger generation of today reject the materialism which satisfied so many of the last generation. They seek something noble and creative. By the Divine Guidance they will find it. We who are privileged to see the Light, we who look to Its rays for guidance, we are called upon so to live and so to work, so to influence our fellows that it may be truly said of our day that the Love of God expressed in service to mankind is the Spirit of our Age.

Information concerning the Movement can be obtained from the Secretaries,

MRS. ROMER, at Walmar House, 288, Upper Regent Street, W.1.

MR. A. SUGAR, 16, Lily Street, Hr. Crumpsall, Manchester.

MISS CHALLIS, "Rizwan," Broadstone, Dorset.

We wish to notify all friends here and abroad that Messrs. Burnside, Ltd., are no longer stocking Baha'i literature. All books can now be obtained from the Librarian, Walmar House, 288, Upper Regent Street, W.1.

The Baha'i Reading Room at Walmar House is open daily (except Saturdays) from 1 to 6. Sundays 6 to 8.

The registered cable address is—for cables, Bahalonsa, London. Telegrams, Bahalonsa, Wesdo, London.

For the National Spiritual Assembly, cables—National, care Bahalonsa, Wesdo, London.