

News Letter from Baha'is of the British Isles.

"The Principle of Faith is to lessen words and to increase deeds. He whose words exceed his acts, know verily, that his non-being is better than his being and death better than his life."

(BAHA'U'LLAH)

"These days are the days of faith and deeds—not the days of words and lip service."

(ABDUL-BAHA)

June, 1935.

ANNUAL CONVENTION.

The Convention was held on April 28th, at the Bahai Centre, London. Mr. Alfred Sugar was elected chairman and Mr. Coles and Miss Goldman appointed to act as tellers. Reports were read and after helpful discussions approved. The Treasurer's report indicated that publicity and teaching expenditures in the past year had been chiefly sustained by receipts from the sale of literature. This situation does certainly demand the urgent attention of the friends. National funds need their immediate support.

Mr. Alfred Sugar submitted a proposal for the formation of a National Teaching Committee. This motion was warmly accepted for recommendation to the National Assembly.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

The following were declared elected at the Convention: Mr. Z. Asgarzadeh, Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Miss E. Baxter, Miss G. Challis, Mrs. F. George, Mrs. Basil Hall, Mr. J. Lee, Mrs. I. Slade, and Mr. F. St. G. Spendlove.

At the first meeting of the Assembly the following were appointed for executive work:—Miss Challis (chairman), Mr. Spendlove (vice-chairman), Mrs. Slade (secretary and treasurer), Miss Baxter (assistant-secretary), Mrs. George and Mr. Balyuzi (editors of the News Letter).

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

The Committee appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly is composed of the following members:—Mr. H. M. Balyuzi (representing the N.S.A.), Sister Challis (representing the Bournemouth Spiritual Assembly), Mrs. Isabel Slade (representing the London S.A.), Mr. F. St. G. Spendlove (temporary chairman and secretary), Mr. Alfred Sugar (representing the Manchester S.A.).

The Committee has been formed to act as consultants to the N.S.A. in matters of national teaching, to arrange the visits of Baha'i teachers to various centres, draw up study outlines, recommend books and meetings suitable for teaching, and keep in touch with isolated believers and interested people. Friends are urged to inform the committee of any projected visits to England of overseas Baha'i teachers or speakers. Consultation on teaching problems is invited. The secretary's address is Yarne, Hatchford, Nr. Cobham, Surrey.

COMMITTEES.

The following Committees have been appointed by the Spiritual Assembly, to function for the current year: Finance Committee (chairman, Mr. Alizade), Hospitality Committee, Meetings Committee (chairman, Mrs. Basil Hall), Publicity Committee, Room Committee (chairman, Mrs. Tovey), Teaching Committee (chairman, Mrs. George).

WOMEN'S SERVICE COMMITTEE.

As announced in the last issue of the News Letter, this Committee was formed to carry out charitable and humanitarian projects. Mrs. Tovey is a new member of this Committee, and the officers remain unchanged.

On the evening of May 13th, the Committee held a "Concert and Dance Recital," in aid of its funds. Thanks to the efforts of Miss Molly Brown, who had arranged the programme and secured the assistance and kind help of able and excellent performers, the entertainment was very successful. Nearly a hundred were present.

FEASTS AND ANNIVERSARIES.

The first day of the Rizvan (April 21st) was celebrated at the Centre. Though it was Easter Sunday, attendance was beyond expectation. On the twelfth day (May 2nd), Lady Blomfield held a beautiful feast at her home. Lady Blomfield told her guests of the noble and inspiring life of the Master, which left everyone deeply impressed. The Declaration of the Bab (May 23rd) was celebrated at the Centre. Miss Florence Pinchon gave a vivid description of that memorable night in 1844, when the Light first broke upon a darkened world.

The anniversary of the ascension of Baha'u'llah (May 28th), was solemnly observed at the Centre.

EXHIBITION.

An Exhibition of Baha'i books, pictures and objects of interest, was opened at the Centre on April 29th, and continued for a fortnight. Lady Blomfield kindly lent the exhibition some of her invaluable books, pictures and garments associated with the memory of Abdul-Baha. Many people visited the exhibition.

MEETINGS.

Sunday evening meetings have been continued with success. Lack of space prevents mentioning speakers and subjects. Visiting speakers have been Mr. Judd of the League of Nations Union

Education Committee, and Mr. Goddard of the New Commonwealth. Miss Goldman gave a very instructive talk in April, during her stay in London.

A special Jubilee Thanksgiving Meeting was held on Sunday, May 5th. Lady Blomfield, who was the speaker, dwelt upon Baha'u'llah's Tablet to Queen Victoria, and the qualities of citizenship enjoined by Him. Praise was rendered for the "Just Monarch" of this realm.

The Wednesday Evening Study Class is regularly held, and the discussions have proved to be valuable. This class is under the supervision of the Teaching Committee.

VISITORS.

Miss Julia Goldman stayed in London for a while in April and May. Mrs. Matteson and Dr. and Mrs. Fozdar, who were with us for nearly six months, left for their homelands in April. We wish them all good luck and success in their efforts, and are thankful for the valuable help they gave us during their sojourn in this metropolis.

THE LONDON BAHAI YOUTH GROUP.

DISCUSSION MEETINGS.

March 1st.—"International Tribunal."

April 5th.—"The Solution of the Economic Problem."

ADDRESSES.

February 15th.—"Mount Carmel and the Rebirth of Palestine." Speaker: Mr. F. St. G. Spendlove.

March 15th.—"The Light of India." Speaker: Mrs. Shirin Fozdar.

SOCIALS.

Social meetings held on second Saturdays have been successful. Henceforth, instead of the monthly discussion meetings, an informal meeting will be held on the third Sunday of the month in the afternoon, when tea will be served. Good fellowship is essential to everlasting amity.

COMMITTEE.

This year's General Committee consists of: Mr. Victor Audigier (chairman), Mr. L. Alizade, Miss Molly Brown (treasurer), Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Miss Daphne Waterman (secretary).

Mr. B. Javedani is assistant secretary. Miss Molly Brown and Miss Dorothy Cansdale form the Hospitality Committee.

JOHN O'GROAT'S JOURNAL.

We are grateful to Mr. R. J. G. Millar, the Editor of "John O'Groat's Journal," for the publicity that he gives to our beloved cause in the columns of his paper. He reviews regularly the contents of the American Baha'i magazine. Mr. Millar, it will be remembered, has written an appreciation of the Baha'i Cause that has since been published in the Baha'i World, Vol. IV. He delivered, some time ago, an address to the Wick Brotherhood, on the Faith of Baha'u'llah, which was well received by the audience. It must be noted that Mr. Millar's Journal is read by Scotsmen in many parts of the world. Mr. E. T. Hall, of Manchester, writes every now and then short articles related to the Cause, which appear in "John O'Groat's Journal," through Mr. Millar's kindness.

LITERATURE.

The following communication has been received from Mr. Walter Wilkins, who is in charge of the sale of Baha'i literature.

"I am writing to call attention to the reduction to half price of the leather and cloth bound editions of the Hidden Words. This book being the constant companion of so many friends, the opportunity of securing a well-bound durable copy at a cheap price, should not be missed."

"I feel the friends do not appreciate the value of some of the bargains in the price list. Miss Pinchon's "Coming of the Glory" is now offered for 1/-. This well-bound little book gives a clear and comprehensive introduction to the Baha'i principles, and is recommended for its conciseness. Miss Herrick's "Unity Triumphant," offered for 2/6, although somewhat out-of-date, is too valuable to be kept out of the friends' libraries."

London.

TWO GREAT LOSSES.

Mr. Harry H. Romer and Miss Elsie Lea passed into Eternal Life on April 13th and June 10th respectively. We have sustained great losses in the departure of these faithful souls. They served the Cause of Baha'u'llah with courage and self-effacement. Theirs is the abiding satisfaction that on this earth they were given the opportunity and the vision to uphold firmly the sacred principles of world unity and world Brotherhood.

Mrs. Isabel Slade, the Secretary of the National Assembly writes of Mr. Romer—"With the exception of a few months in Berlin he and his wife have been in London for nearly nine years, and the Cause has benefitted by their valuable services. His loveable

nature, his simple faith and his clear vision gave him a unique place in our midst. He was always reluctant to take a prominent place or to speak in public, but whenever he could be prevailed upon, his words carried the great weight of sincerity. His outstanding characteristic was his utter straightforwardness. He never compromised with Truth as he saw it, and his singlemindedness made his vision clear."

"The friends gathered in the chapel at the Hampstead Cemetery for a Baha'i service on April 17th. While his earthly form was being laid to rest, passages from the Hidden Words were recited."

"His passing has deprived us also of the services of Mrs. Romer whose health forbids her to take up active work for the present. The hearts of the friends go out in love for the grief that she bears at the severing of the earthly ties, though the true and beautiful spiritual union that was theirs will be strengthened in service to Baha'u'llah."

Miss Florence Pinchon, writing of Miss Lea, says:—"The courage and fortitude our dear Sister showed during the many months of her painful illness, bore witness to her quiet resignation to the will of God, and her simple faith in His all-knowing wisdom. For well she knew that, 'My calamity is my providence. In appearance it is fire and vengeance; yet, in reality it is Light and Mercy.'"

"Elsie Lea passed on Whit-Monday, and was laid to rest on the following Friday in the Old Highgate Cemetery. Nine representatives of the Baha'i Cause attended the funeral ceremonies, and a Memorial Service was held at the Centre, Grosvenor Place, on Sunday, June 23rd.

"It was in London that Elsie Lea had the great privilege of meeting Abdul-Baha, during his visit to England in 1911. The spiritual results of that wonderful contact remained with her through all the ensuing years, ultimately leading to a steadfast devotion to the Cause, and to the development of a character distinguished by its generous and unselfish deeds."

THE LONDON SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

The newly-elected Assembly consists of the following members: Mr. L. Alizade, Mr. H. M. Balyuzi (vice-chairman), Mrs. K. V. Brown (corresponding secretary and treasurer), Mrs. Florence George, Miss Beatrice Irwin (recording secretary), Mrs. Isabel Slade, Mr. F. St. G. Spendlove (chairman), Mrs. Tovey, and Mr. W. Wilkins (assistant treasurer).

NAURUZ FEAST.

The Youth Group provided both the programme and refreshments for the Nauruz Feast. We had talks and recitations. The atmosphere was very happy, and the attendance record breaking.

Bournemouth.

Visits from Miss Beatrice Irwin and Miss Julia Goldman have been very helpful and gratifying.

Miss Irwin addressed a meeting on March 26th at the home of Mr. and Mrs. King. Few were present, but the spirit was overwhelming. On April 4th, Miss Irwin delivered a talk at the weekly gathering of Toc H. About thirty-five people listened with great interest to her instructive exposition of the Baha'i teachings. Questions and discussion followed. Later Miss Irwin presented the Toc H Library with a copy of "The Promise of All Ages," on behalf of the London Spiritual Assembly. The gift was much appreciated.

Miss Julia Goldman's visit was very short, but none the less inspiring. Miss Goldman met the friends at a small gathering on May 8th. Her earnest and sincere message will not soon be forgotten.

Bradford.

The Bradford Group sends loving greetings to the Baha'is of every land.

Monthly meetings are held at the homes of Mrs. Wilkinson, Mrs. Tempest and Mr. and Mrs. Norton. Mr. Alfred Sugar's sincere and able guidance is of great help. A Study Class has recently been formed, which meets every fortnight.

In March, Sister Challis paid a visit to Bradford. Her devotion to the Cause of Baha'u'llah, and her profound knowledge gave fresh impetus and inspiration to the friends.

To Miss Goldman, the Bradford group owes much. Her stay of fourteen days was crowded with activity. Many meetings were held and friends rallied to every meeting with interest and eagerness, to learn more of the message of Baha'u'llah. New enquiries were attracted, to whom Miss Goldman gave a splendid start on their quest after Truth.

Mr. Husein of Egypt, who lives in Leeds for the present, visited Bradford, and ably addressed one of the monthly meetings. It was of great interest to hear one whose family shared exile with Baha'u'llah.

Manchester.

The newly-elected Spiritual Assembly consists of the following friends : Mr. J. Chessel (treasurer), Miss M. Chessel, Mr. J. Craven (chairman), Mr. A. Joseph, Mr. J. Lee (secretary) Mr. Roberts, Mrs. Sugar, Mr. A. Sugar, Miss A. Williams (Foreign Correspondent).

Public Meetings are held fortnightly at the Houldsworth Hall. The Study Group continues to meet every fortnight.

On March 19th, Manchester was visited by Sister Challis. A meeting was arranged at the home of Miss Williams to welcome her. Friends were very grateful for the spirit of love and service that Sister Challis brought to them.

Miss Julia Goldman came to Manchester on April 14th, and Mr. and Mrs. Chessel accorded her true Baha'i hospitality. At their home Miss Goldman addressed a gathering of the friends, who felt very thankful for her delightful words of encouragement.

The Rizvan feast was celebrated at the Houldsworth Hall on April 29th. The gathering was happier than usual because of the presence of Mr. Husein who talked of the early days of our beloved Faith.

Altrincham.

Mr. Craven arranged a meeting at the Y.M.C.A. rooms, on May 12th. Mr. Sugar gave an instructive talk to a group of interested people. It is hoped to hold another meeting as soon as circumstances permit.

Cambridge.

Mr. H. M. Balyuzi held two meetings in Cambridge on March 10th and May 25th respectively. The audiences were small, but attentive and interested.

Doncaster.

Mrs. Romer addressed a meeting of the Theosophical Society of Doncaster in March. Her audience had never heard before of the glorious Message of Baha'u'llah.