

The Link.

The Official Journal of the Humberstone Garden Suburb.

"NOT GREATER WEALTH, BUT SIMPLER PLEASURES."

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OUR WINTER ACTIVITIES.

When this issue is in the hands of readers our Winter's educational and social activities will be more than half advanced, and a few reflections regarding the same may be both opportune and helpful. Never again, we hope, will the opening outlook be so dark and depressing. With the black realities of war ever present in our thoughts, it required a good deal of effort to settle down to the ordinary affairs of life; but nevertheless we very wisely refused to be cast down, and the Estate Council held their customary meeting of residents in the Autumn with the object of getting the work going. A good audience endorsed the provisional arrangements which had been made by the Council, and fruitful suggestions were offered and accepted in the way of providing new attractions. Hence it came about that, with the advent of October, we embarked upon a more ambitious winter programme than ever before—that is, having regard to the number of things attempted.

In taking a retrospective survey of the past four months it is impossible to deny a feeling of disappointment, and to escape the impression that—in our ardour to provide for the varied needs of our people—we have bitten off "rather more than we can chew." Very regretfully, owing to the meagre support extended, the Estate Council have been compelled to abandon their Gymnastic Class for Girls and also the Singing Class for older children; and likewise our Choral Society failed to command that measure of support which it deserved, and so gave up the ghost. In all three cases we were able to command the voluntary services of friends who were well able to fulfil the duties demanded of them, a fact which adds still further to our regrets on failure. Then, further, our week-end social events, although in the main of a high order, have not been so uniformly

well patronised as in the past; while the Literary and Debating Society which meets in the Institute on Friday nights can only be described as partially successful in point of numbers attending, even though it is filling a decided need in an educational and literary sense. So far, also, the proposed Book Exchange has failed to materialise.

The moral for the future appears to be that we must "gang warily," and, before we seek to multiply our activities, consider well what are likely to be the effects on those already established and doing useful work.

So much for the future—but we must look also to the present. There still remain to us many useful organisations, whose members are doing their utmost to soften the asperities of a rather dismal winter; and for all of these we would bespeak renewed support on the part of residents. We pride ourselves on the facilities which we have been able to create for supplying the social needs of our community, and it would indeed be a misfortune were the "come together" spirit which has up to now been so happily manifest, to weaken. Let us, therefore, use every endeavour during the remaining few weeks to bring success to the social events still to take place, and to further the interests of our educational and recreational organisations generally.

Owing to inability to secure a quorum, the Estate Monthly Meeting had to be abandoned on Thursday, January 21st. Oddly enough, a similar state of things prevailed the previous month. As, we understand, this has never before happened in the history of the Society, we can only attribute same to the unsettling effects of war and the quite remarkable number of cases of sickness which the past month has brought. We hope tenant members will make a note of the February meeting, and so prevent a triple failure.

WEDDING.—On December 26th, at St. Michael's Church, Miss Rose Ethel Hextall (of "Dunoon," Fern Rise), was married to Mr. Ernest J. Hutchins. On the same evening a party took place in the Institute to celebrate the happy event.

BIRTH.—On January 25th, to Mr. and Mrs. Stanion (Beeby House), a daughter.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

By the death of the Vicar of Humberstone a familiar and interesting figure is removed from our midst. We beg to tender to his family our fullest sympathy.

* * *

Residents generally will extend their deepest and most sincere sympathy to Mr. John T. Taylor in his trying illness, and join in the hope for a complete and speedy recovery. We have heard much kindly comment on the touching little tribute paid to his work in connection with the Church of Christ by the scholars of the Kindergarten School, who on Sunday afternoon, January 17th, assembled outside his house in Keyham Lane and rendered favourite hymns.

* * *

In connection with the visit of the Co-operative Congress to Leicester during Whit-week (May 22nd to 26th) we are pleased to hear that on the Wednesday afternoon a visit has been arranged to our Estate. Tea will be provided for the visitors in a large marquee, after which it is hoped there will be sufficient time available for games, &c., and inspection of the houses. About 1,500 people are expected to take part, so the occasion will be one to remember and should help to spread the knowledge of our movement.

* * *

In connection with the foregoing, we are asked to state that a register of those willing to provide hospitality to Congress delegates is now open. Residents are invited to communicate with Mr. Stock, 4, Union Street, stating accommodation available and terms on which they are prepared to provide bed and breakfast.

* * *

The Literary and Debating Society report having held two meetings since our last issue. On January 15th, Mr. Dalby, of Leicester, took as his subject "Can man keep the peace of the world intact?" and the week following Mr. F. C. Clarke spoke on "Some suggested Reforms of our Educational system." On both occasions a good discussion followed on thought-provoking addresses—even though the attendances were somewhat disappointing. The meetings take place on Friday night at eight o'clock, and others of our residents interested will be cordially welcomed "round the fire" in the Institute.

The late Mr. E. Simpson.

AN APPRECIATION BY AMOS MANN.

It is only about six months since I was able to say, at the end of twenty-one years of the Anchor's history, that all its original Committee were in the land of the living. Now I have to record the fact that one of this committee has passed away, in the person of Mr. Ernest Simpson. The subject of our appreciation was not a man who appeared in the limelight, but his influence upon any work he was connected with was none the less apparent. His association with the Anchor Boot Works dates from the very beginning of that society's history. For several years he gave his services on the Management Committee and helped to mould its policy—a policy that has led up to present success; but his greatest work was done in the educational domain. For years he was its Educational secretary. During the time he held that position some of the most successful class work was carried on. Classes were organised in Co-operation, Citizenship, and Industrial History, and the work accomplished will long be remembered by these early Anchor workers.

He was a worker inside the works. At the funeral service one of his shop-mates spoke a few words concerning his workshop life. Among other things he said, "During the ten years I have worked by his side I never heard a word drop from his lips that would bring a blush to a maiden's cheek, but all his conversation was of an informing and elevating character." He was also one of the number who helped to form the Anchor Tenants Society, and lived for a time upon the Estate.

For a working man, he was well-read. There were few subjects he could not intelligently discuss. He was a member of the Executive of the Leicester Branch of the Workers' Educational Association. For many years he suffered from feeble health, often being obliged to stay at home from work; but whenever he was able he was always ready to engage in the work of helping to educate his fellows. When a lecture was announced, Mr. Simpson was invariably one of the audience. His was a life that influenced the circle in which he moved, and the influence was always in the right direction.

CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES.

The following extracts have been taken from letters sent home by our friend Private J. A. Parker, and which have been forwarded to us for publication:—

"We are still in the trenches, up to our knees in mud and water. It is agony at present—always wet through. We do look beautiful. At night we lie in our dug-outs, with the water dripping in, and in the morning find our blankets wet through. We have had no bread for a fortnight; biscuits are the staple diet, with meat and vegetables. Still we must not grumble but look forward to better days in the future.

"Christmas Day was a historic day. It was a sight well worth remembering to see English and German soldiers sitting together drinking tea and smoking, and exchanging cigars, cigarettes and souvenirs. As if by common consent, firing ceased about four p.m. on Christmas Eve. First one combatant popped his head above the trenches and then another; then the men got on the parapets and went to meet each other half way. There was very little firing on Christmas Day. Unfortunately we had the Prussian Guards in front of us, and they took the opportunity of firing a round or two off. The North Staffs. had the Saxons in front of them, and they were visiting each other's trenches; several of my company also paid the Saxons a visit.

"The North Staffs. and the Saxons made it up between them not to fire from Christmas Eve until ordered, and they have just started again (the 28th). The Saxons are 'fed up,' and they asked the North Staffs. not to fire for a fortnight; but if they had to fire to do so in the air and they would do the same. That was not consented to. On Christmas Eve and Christmas night they were sitting on each other's parapets, with lighted candles, &c. It was a sight worth seeing—at the same time, I would sooner have been at home."

"Christmas Day to us was not a day of feasting, I can assure you. We had biscuits and bacon for breakfast; biscuits, bully beef and Christmas 'duff' for dinner (thanks to Sir Maurice Levy for the latter); and for tea I made a biscuit-and-jam 'duff'—so you can see how well we enjoyed Christmas Day."

"To-day is the first day of the New Year. What the coming year holds in store for us God alone knows. I shall be pleased when peace is proclaimed, as I have had enough of this. We have been in these trenches twenty-two days. It has been raining the majority of the time, and we cannot get a change when we get wet through. But I am pleased to say my brother and I are still as well as we can expect to be under the circumstances."

One letter concludes:—"They say the Germans are short of ammunition. I hope it is true, as I should like a decent wash, change of clothes, and cake." A postscript adds:—"Will you please send a few fever powders?"

On a postcard received January 16th, Private Parker acknowledges a parcel from the Humberstone and District people containing some very useful articles, for which he tenders his sincere thanks.

Women's Social Guild.

During the month two meetings have been held. On January 7th the afternoon was spent in a social manner, recitations being given by Mrs. Hewitt and Mrs. Vass, a song by Nan Elliot, and selections on the Vass gramophone. Tea, served by Mrs. Jays and Mrs. Barraclough, brought a pleasant afternoon to a close.

On January 21st an address was given by Mrs. Crook, of Iris Cottage, entitled, "My Trip to British Columbia; town life, and life on a ranch in the Rockies." Mrs. Crook described the voyage—taken in June, 1912—across the Atlantic and through the beautiful scenery of the St. Lawrence River; thrilling encounters with icebergs which brought constant reminders of the tragic fate of the "Titanic" so shortly before; and the long railway journey through the wonderful Rocky Mountains to Golden, their destination, where a month was spent; after which she pictured life on a ranch in that vast solitude, and spoke of the social conditions prevailing throughout the country, and how she was impressed by the lack of class distinction among the people there. Mrs. Crook also described life in a city of Southern Columbia; and answered a few questions which were asked at the close. She also kindly promised at some future time to give an account of the return journey through the United States.

ESTATE COUNCIL EVENTS.

The holiday programme arranged for by the Estate Council was thoroughly successful in every way.

The Xmas Eve Dance was well attended, most of those present being in fancy dress. Mr. Winterton was M.C., and Miss Langley, assisted by Mr. Langley, provided the music.

Monday, December 28th, was styled the "Children's Day." A merry party of the younger ones filled the Assembly Room during the afternoon, after which the bigger children adjourned to the Institute for tea. The tiny tots under four years were presented with toys. The room was again completely thronged in the evening by another lively party of young folks.

Tuesday, December 29th, was reserved for the Estate Council's "At Home." The first part of the programme was taken up by an admirable concert arranged by Mr. G. Riley. After an interval, during which refreshments were handed round by the members of the Council, a sketch entitled "Done on Both Sides," performed by the Dramatic Society, was presented. This was very well rendered, and again proved the aptitude of some of our residents for stage work. The cast was as follows:—Mr. Brownjohn, Mr. Backus; Mr. Whiffles, Mr. Chapman; Mr. Pygmalion Phibbs, Mr. E. Peberdy; Mrs. Whiffles, Mrs. Witt; Lydia, Miss Edith Parker.

On Wednesday, December 30th, we had a return visit from Mr. Hardy, whose recitals, as usual, were of a high order of merit and most thoroughly enjoyed.

The customary New Year's Eve Dance attracted a fair number, who gaily danced the New Year in.

On January 16th, Mr. Golland's Party visited the Assembly Room, and provided a very good concert. There was a good attendance to appreciate the artists' efforts.

The postponed visit of the Hopeities took place on January 23rd. It is almost unnecessary to enlarge on the meritorious performances of this troupe—suffice it to say that their latest effort completely reached the high standard they had set themselves on previous visits. Their "Potted Pantomime," entitled "Jack and the Beanstalk," was a real treat. Not only are the children most admirably trained in their dances, action songs, &c., but the bewildering variety of dress displayed, together with the exquisite

taste shown in staging, roused the audience to a high pitch of interest. The young people very evidently enjoy their frequent visits to our Suburb, and the large audiences which always assemble to greet them prove that the pleasure is mutual.

HINTS FOR BULB GROWERS.

I have been wondering, dear girls and boys, how those snowdrops and crocuses are getting on. I should dearly like to have a peep at them; but that would not be fair—I must wait until the day of the Show, which will not be long now. You will soon be seeing the date which has been fixed displayed in the notice boards. I suggest the end of February as a likely time.

I want to try and help you to get the bulbs in good condition for the Show, so here are a few hints. If you find they are a little behind, take the pots inside and place them in a suitable window, and give a little soft water when necessary. If, on the other hand, they are too forward, leave them outside in a shaded position *protected from birds*, as the feathered tribe are very fond of crocus flowers. You must also try and keep your plant pots clean, as this helps a Show very much, and has helped to win many a prize. In conclusion, I hope you will all try to make the Show a thorough success, and then I am sure the results will be satisfactory to the Estate Council, who are trying to do their best for all.

As to the adult hyacinth growers there is little to be said. For the Show I would suggest the second week in March. Window positions will do much to assist the blooms to open together. A little old soot liquid or any of the well-known artificial stimulants would help to improve them, as such often add to the life and colour of a plant if given judiciously.

J. ROWLETT.

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GARDEN NOTES.

The heavy downfall of rain during the past month has made gardening almost impossible, therefore every favourable opportunity should be made the best of, and plots prepared first for onions, leeks and parsnips, shallots and broad beans. The two last-named may be planted at once.

Anyone wishing to have an early supply of radishes may do so by making up a hot-bed of stable manure—that which has a fair amount of straw amongst it preferred. A pit eighteen inches deep should be made first to receive the manure, which should be made up to about one foot thick. Give a sprinkle of water as the work proceeds to aid fermentation. Tread firmly, adding six inches of

fine soil to the top. Sow seeds thinly of such sorts as Harrison's White Icicle or French Breakfast. Place a frame with a glass light over the whole surface, giving air on all fine days.

With a little trouble rhubarb may be forced several weeks earlier than the ordinary crop. Fork over the soil around it and give a dressing of straw manure and cover over with old barrels or boxes.

Wall trees not already nailed up and pruned should be attended to at once; also any old ties that are too tight should be loosened, because once they begin to show their new buds there is the probability of knocking them off. Leather straps should be given preference to metal hooks for this purpose, the latter having a tendency to bruise the bark.

T. R.

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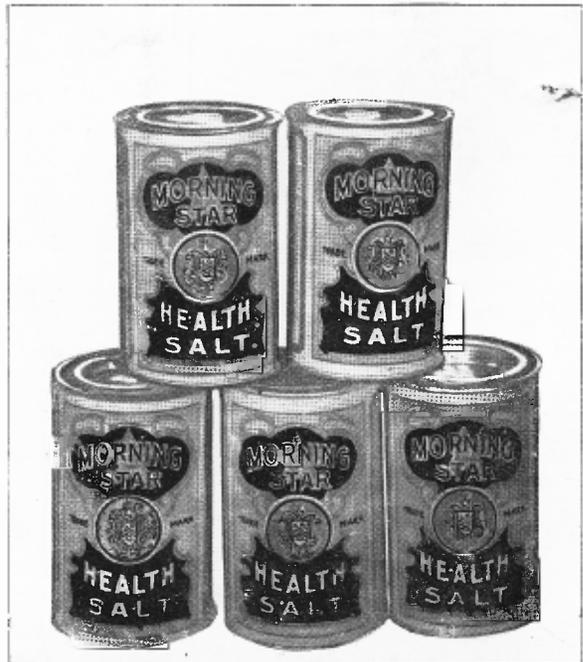


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