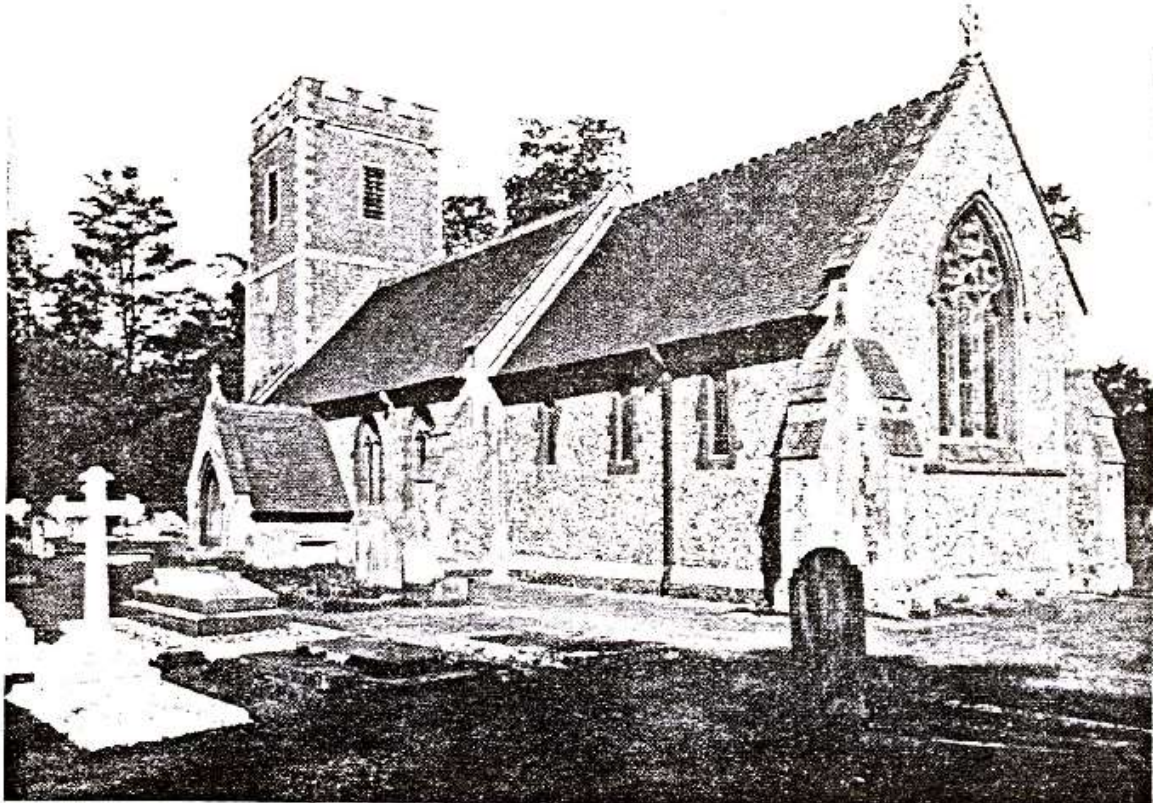


The Church Magazine of
St. Mary the Virgin,

Durley :: :: Berks



Church Services.

Holy Communion.—Each Sunday at 8 a.m., also at 12.15 p.m. on 1st Sundays, and on Saints' Days and Thursdays at 8 a.m.

Mattins.—11 a.m.

Evensong.—6.30 p.m. (6 p.m. October to March).

Rector: Rev. E. E. SKUSE.

Churchwardens.—MR. C. E. HODGKIN, MR. H. A. TIDBURY.

JANUARY, 1935.

RETROSPECT.

The record of the past year so far as it is written in our Parish Registers is a meagre one. Only three baptisms—one of them a small visitor—compared with eight in 1933, nine in 1932 and eleven in 1931, though if one goes so far back as 1930, only four christenings occurred in that year. Of weddings, Purley for a long time has not contrived to manage more than three annually, which is scarcely a large percentage considering our rising numbers. Perhaps the paucity of marriages, however, makes us prouder of our brides and bridegrooms, and all the world, it is said, loves a wedding. We venture nevertheless to express the hope that there may be a better average set up this year in respect of the solemnization of Holy Matrimony. When we come to burials we reach, of course, a deeper and more solemn note. And this year it would only be too sadly true to say that death has been busy in our midst. In 1933, when a wave of influenza swept like a mist over the parish and two of our people passed away in one week, our Register has no less than five entries, compared with but two in the year before. But in the first three months of 1934 three persons had passed to their rest to be followed by a fourth in October last, and there the list of burials ends for the time being. What, however, is the purpose of such a record as this, brief though it is? We mark perhaps too easily the passage of time, or we almost fear to give it too close thought lest we should become depressed. There is, however, a better way, and it is this:

From the comings and goings, the chance and the change
Flickerings, vanishings, swift and strange
I turn to my glorious rest in Thee
Who art the great Reality.

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

To do justice to any account of the Festival this year would require more than the usual allowance of space, because there seemed ampler observance than the previous year and certainly there was a more numerous attendance at the Morning Service. There was, first, a delightful preface to the Festival at 4 p.m. on the last Sunday in Advent, when Miss Mary Lister held a Carol Service, the climax of which was an impressive little tableau, in the Schoolroom which, incidentally, well deserved to have had a larger audience. The Waifs and Strays Society benefited by a more generous collection this year than heretofore, and in regard to the decoration of the Church, the font, the pulpit, the walls, all had put on their due festal garb; but it was generally agreed that the flowers upon the altar had seldom been seen to such perfection at Christmas. And this fact will perhaps gratify those kind donors who on the previous Sunday had responded to the appeal for contributions towards the cost of decorating the Church.

MORE NEEDS.

To have the privilege of looking back upon a past year of benefits received—and a minor one, the gift of a new piece of carpet by Mrs. Farrer, must not be overlooked in our volume of gratitude to her, is much to a small parish. But there are other pressing needs. The lighting, for example, is not satisfactory. The best of oil lamps cannot always command good behaviour, at least to judge by repeated instances, and particularly the great service on the last Sunday afternoon of 1934, something more to be depended upon is necessary, and might

well be taken in hand this year. Then the organ needs cleaning very badly. One stop for a long time has been out of action through the accumulated dust of really ages. It is a very considerable time indeed since the instrument was rid of dust, and something must be done. Finally—not to make our demands too many—we do need a choir-desk for the boy-choristers. At present they are kneeling in the best way they can—which is conducive neither to devotion or personal comfort. If therefore anyone inspired by the great and wonderful example set in 1934 will help us in any of these needs, they will assist not only our arrangements for the services but will add to the practical side of worship in making it both more devout and whole-hearted.

THE SERVICE OF UNVEILING AND DEDICATION.

The above title will serve to indicate what now has become history, namely, that on the 30th of December last a service which must be almost unique in our annals took place in the Church. A book-case, given in memory of Mr. William Telfer, to contain service-books for our worshippers was first dedicated, and then after the prayers of Evensong had been said by Mr. Lister, the Tablet which we have erected to Alderman Farrer's memory was unveiled by Miss Sutton, an old friend and colleague in the municipal affairs of Reading. The inscription on the Tablet, which is fixed to the South wall, reads

“ IN EVER-ABIDING MEMORY OF
EDWARD OLIVER FARRER,
Mayor of Reading, 1931-1932,
who fell asleep on 20th of February, 1934.
As a memorial new heating was installed
in this Church by his widow.”

There was a crowded congregation, including colleagues of the late Mr. William Telfer from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Office, one of whom, Mr. Phillips, a former Churchwarden of this parish, read the Second Lesson. The inscription, we ought to add, on the memorial book-case is as follows:—

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM TELFER
(1878-1934)
SCHOLAR. SAINT.
Thy Word is Truth.

We close this brief notice with gratitude from all our hearts to Mrs. Farrer, though she cannot but know that one of the purposes of the great service was to enable us as a parish—and a family—to show our public acknowledgment of her great goodness.

MOTHERS' UNION.

A meeting of the Mothers' Union will be held in the Schoolroom at 3 p.m. on Friday, the 25th inst. The name of the speaker has yet to be announced. As usual tea will follow the meeting.

MEDICAL MISSIONS.

The following has been received from the Medical Missions Department of the S.P.G. :—

We are so grateful for the contribution to Medical Missions which the Treasurers received from you this morning from the parish of Purley ; I am now enclosing their official receipt with our warmest thanks for this very welcome help.

A nice story about an old African woman and her cat, Xokwa, reached us from a leper settlement in South Africa last week. Sarah is the oldest inhabitant of the settlement, and in spite of having been grievously crippled for many years as the result of the disease, she has set many an excellent example of public service to her fellows. Four years ago, when the new church in the settlement had been finished and dedicated, it was Sarah who proposed that the women should take it in turns to scrub it out each week in readiness for Sunday, and until she was seriously ill last year she took her share in this work. Last Christmas Day (1933, I mean) she lay in a semi-conscious condition, but she managed to drag herself to the surface once to ask whether Xokwa had been fed. When she was better again she told the sister that now she was old and feeble and toothless she did not need her full ration of meat, and asked that she might be allowed to share this with Xokwa who, being a large cat, needed much meat. Further, to avoid any difficulty in the future, could this division be made officially at the depôt ? The sister gave her permission, and now when the oxen-wagon arrives with the weekly supplies, there is a small parcel labelled "Meat for Xokwa," and, judging by his photograph, Xokwa is thriving on his increased ration.

PARISH NOTES.

The customary Thursday Celebration of the Holy Communion will be resumed on the 10th inst. at 8 a.m.

PARISH REGISTER.

HOLY BAPTISM.

Dec. 23, 1934. Michael John, son of William and Elizabeth Wilkinson.