

Home-making

The Story of
"Wayside"
&
"The Ark"

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"Where the safe ways end,
known and unknown divide,
God's great uncharted passes
upward tend,
and the spirit of man undaunted
is undenied ;
for beyond the last camp-fire
man has Faith for friend,
and beyond all guidance
the courage of God for guide."

H.S.

May, 1948

H. Douglas

“ . . . And is Kind ”

The word, as St. Paul uses it in his wonderful analysis of the nature of love, comes to us rich with the undertones of its age-old meanings. Kin, Kind : “ gentle of heart ”, “ to do good to others, to make them happy ”—the definitions pile up, but behind them all lies that fundamental idea of the one family, the ties of our common kinship. The history of the human race is written in such words.

It is that dynamic kindness which lies behind the story of “ Wayside ” and “ The Ark. ” It is that motive which accounts for all that happens in this fascinating piece of social service, which is not social service in the cold academic sense of committees and reports and statistics, but human service ; personal, individual, *kind*. Until we realise that we have not the clue to the story which Laura Stead tells in these pages.

I am one of those for whom this booklet was written. Hitherto I have had to read this story backwards, for I first met the work in its present phase : a jolly family of eight or ten happy youngsters of all ages living a vivid community life in a pleasant house and garden in a lovely Buckinghamshire village with Laura Stead and Elsie Ormerod looking after them. A year or more earlier I had fleetingly contacted Florence Feek at the wedding of a mutual friend. If I had any other link it was that once a poem of mine had been quoted in an Annual Report to express one aspect of the idealism of this experiment in well-doing.

By 1942, however, this was past history. The tragedy of Florence Feek's passing stood between ; the last links with “ Wayside ” were broken ; one had to reconstruct it all from this hither side of those events.

Gradually as the present-day significance of the work made itself clear ; as we watched that “ technique of the heart ” which had at times to exercise the long suffering, the patience of Paul's ideal charity, and always the kindness, we realised

that this work was something special. A deepening friendship made us sometimes the confidants of particular difficulties so that we watched the method more nearly from within, in its spiritual operation.

Out of the present the past was gradually evoked : an incident of to-day would recall something which had happened years ago ; a visitor happy in her job or in marriage and motherhood would turn out to have been once a problem child ; a birthday party would lead back to others far off in " the dark backward and abysm of time," when the family celebrated. Then from scraps and flashes of chance conversation with Laura Stead we got to know much more of the dynamic and lovable personality of Florence Feek who had started all this with her. Thus we began to see " Wayside " and all that led up to the fascinating experiment in living and salvation which lay before our eyes at " The Ark."

There must be many like us who, knowing " The Ark " as it is, want to hear the whole story. There are others who, knowing this work from the beginning, have long been anxious that it should be recorded. There may be many more who unacquainted with this particular work but having a concern about the whole problem of the ' deprived ' child and being anxious to do something, will be glad to have before them this working model of the way such things can be done.

Certainly the story of " Wayside " and " The Ark " needed to be written. Therefore one welcomes the opportunity of saying " Thank you " for this booklet.

Horace Shipp.

Florence Feek.



*Laura Stead and
some of the family
at "Wayside."*

"WAYSIDE"

*"The House by the
side of the road"
at Plaistow.*



"THE ARK"

*A recent
photograph
showing the
latest addition.*

Introduction

In 1947 it was fifty years since the West Ham Shelter for women and girls was inaugurated, so Miss Stead's account of its change and growth is by way of being a Jubilee offering.

I first knew of the work when I joined the Wayside Committee in 1917. Wayside, a haven of peace and orderliness in the midst of rush and turmoil. The house had been built when Plaistow was a residential neighbourhood—I suppose the last remaining house of that type. It stood for something, with *sure foundations* amongst the poorer buildings surrounding it and pressing it close. To me, at the time and later in remembrance, both those foundations and the interior working seemed symbolic—the brightness of the polished floor and furniture, the orderliness of all the arrangements, the beauty of flowers or foliage on the table (always present whatever the season), and the happiness in the faces of those two devoted women who spent their lives in the service of the less fortunately placed in this world. And indeed many a sad story had they to tell of girls who came under their care for long or for short periods.

No mention of Wayside would be complete without reference to the garden and its outstanding feature—the old mulberry tree, a valued relic of old Plaistow. Beneath that tree many a picnic—I nearly wrote country picnic—has taken place; many a committee meeting, children's games, old girls' reunions, Sunday afternoon talks or rest. The mulberry tree was a focal point, besides being a joy to look at and a provider of luscious fruit as an addition to the household larder.

Laura Stead has written of the work of reforming character, of help over difficult periods, carried on for years at Wayside until in 1940 the house was laid flat during the September air raid over London. Not only was the building destroyed, but to our great grief Florence Feek lost her life. Florence was "of those immortal souls who live again in minds made better

by their presence." Her undaunted courage and her humour backed by sure judgment, her selflessness and love of humanity, and her deep trust and belief in the all pervading goodness of God made her a light in the darkness of her surroundings. Her death was indeed a loss.

Wayside's daughter, The Ark, was built amidst the beautiful countryside at Jordans in Bucks., to be a home for children during holiday time and a place of rest and refreshment for older people. The Ark was now to become the main seat of the work, removed perforce from East London. Its locality and its restricted space prevent it from being a hostel for working girls, as Wayside was in part, but it is a real home where care and good upbringing are given to children who have been deprived of these advantages by adverse circumstances. A tribute was paid recently by one of the Home Office Inspectors when she said "We want scores of these small homes up and down the country."

Numbers are of necessity smaller than in the old times. Most of our children remain during their school years and until placed in some calling so that the family of ten does not vary greatly, but an attempt is always made to have room to give a holiday to those of the former regime who have kept in touch—our earlier friends whom we still call "old girls."

And what of those on whom the responsibility falls? From the grief of Miss Feek's death and separation after long companionship, Miss Stead's spirit rose phoenix-like. To her own well-known qualities of loving care and good guidance, she added administrative ability. In this work she has the invaluable co-operation of her sister Mrs. Ormerod who has acted as mother to the many little people.

Twice during the Ark's history have slight additions been made to the building in order to make a little more space and to enable us to increase our numbers. It is, we consider, the most fitting memorial to the life and work of Florence Feek who followed the teaching of her Master in care for the little ones.

J. C. Cramphorn, (*Chairman of Committee*)

Home-making

The Story of "Wayside" and "The Ark."

There has had to be some justification in one's own mind for the adding of one more to the countless pamphlets of all kinds that are constantly flooding into our homes from every quarter. It seems as though there should be some great story to tell, some wise philosophy to offer, some contribution, however small, to make to humanity's urgent call for more wisdom, more truth, more gaiety, when one ventures to add even a few sentences to the mass of printed matter in the world ; and this little record cannot pretend to do any of these things.

But it is an attempt to supply something which has been asked for by many friends and lovers of "Wayside" and "The Ark." Especially our newer friends who have come to know "The Ark" in these later years ask to be told of its origin. So this, like any other record, is an attempt to link what has happened in the past, with what goes on now, in the hope and belief that this concerns something which has enough vitality to carry it on into the unknown future.

There is another reason too. The life of Florence Feek was so closely bound up with "Wayside" and all that went into the making of "The Ark" that this is, in some small measure, a belated tribute to her ; an endeavour to recall, if at all possible, the impact of her personality, vivid and urgent upon all who knew her. For it was that atmosphere of faith and courage and hope, so largely created by her, which was responsible for the carrying on of "Wayside" for so many years, and for the building of its country home at Jordans.

Happily her inspiration is with us still, for it is needed as urgently today as ever, if "The Ark" is to fulfil the purpose for which it was intended. That purpose was stated in the words used to describe the brave venture on Barking Road,

Canning Town, which was our forerunner ; that little refuge of three or four rooms giving shelter and a new hope in life to girls and women in sore distress. This little "shelter" was started by Miss Bantock in 1897 as the outcome of her work as police court missionary at West Ham Police Court. She realized keenly the urgent need for such a place and with great enthusiasm, raised funds to equip and establish, what was called "The South West Ham Women's Shelter" in part of a house on Barking Road—the aim being "to befriend homeless girls and provide shelter for those in need."

For a year or two Miss Bantock carried on this work with energy and devotion, until her marriage, when it was taken over by Miss Mead. A move was made into larger premises and the purpose for which the little home was established, continued to be filled under her loving guidance for many years.

But increasing frailty of health made it impossible for her to keep on and in August, 1914, Florence Feek and I became jointly responsible, under a committee for the well-being of the house at 435, Barking Road, Plaistow.

We had both long been interested in the work going on at 435 and knew it well. Always before us has been the aim stated in the earliest days : "to befriend and help girls in need," to make a home for the homeless ; and though with the years the need has changed in character, yet it is still there. "Homelessness" meant once literally without shelter, but in the wider interpretation, it has come to mean to some of us, that sadly increasing number of children and young folk for whom the security of home life as we knew it in past generations, no longer exists.

Those days after August, 1914, saw many big changes in many outlooks on life. Of course these changes were reflected within the walls of our little home. Old methods were no longer adequate in dealing with these young difficult victims of the injustice and cruelties of our social conditions, which resulted so often in warped and twisted personalities.

It no longer seemed the solution to the problem, after removing a girl from the dirt and poverty of her former environment and giving her a glimpse of another manner of life, to send her off, after a few weeks with us, to some place in domestic service where she might or might not find the right aid to the development of the best side of her character. We felt that if she could stay longer with the friends she had grown to trust and love and go out to daily work, there might be more chance for her to develop into a useful citizen.

In 1916, the idea of hostels for working girls was new, though now there are many in all our towns. But to carry out our plan we needed a larger house. After much searching (and heart searching!) we discovered in Plaistow High Street, a roomy old house—its title deeds date back to 1754—with the big rooms and cupboards known to more spacious days than these, and better still, a long garden with an old mulberry tree.

Many members of our Committee were not quite so enthusiastic as we were, but with the warm support of our Chairman, Miss Cheetham, and our Treasurer, Mrs. Milne, the move was made in April, 1917, and instead of being known as "South West Ham Women's Shelter," we became "West Ham Home and Hostel for Girls."

It was indeed a venture of faith, for we had no money beyond requirements for everyday needs and the house of 14 rooms had to be furnished and equipped; but almost miraculously gifts of all kinds came along, and when we moved in, the garden welcomed us with a marvellous show of bluebells. We named the house "Wayside" for its front was only separated by two or three feet from the street and we had lately come across the little American poem beginning "Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man" and the words seemed to express our aim.

Very soon there was a family of girls(!) varying in number between 13 and 15 and in age between 8 and 80! This is literally true for sometimes old ladies well over 70 were part of our household, frequently for a stay of only a few days, but in one

case for nearly a year when "Aunt Jenny", who was getting on for 80, and for whom we all had great affection made her home with us.

Most members of the family were under 25. There were two or three school girls and usually four or five girls from 14 upwards who had just left school, difficult and uncontrollable and often unwanted and uncared for, or perhaps just victims of extreme poverty and undernourishment. The state of utter uncleanness in which some girls came to us would be incredible had one not seen it. There were also the older girls, our "lodgers" who went out to daily work in factory workshop, teashop, etc.

It was a busy, lively household; old photographs of jolly parties in the garden or of "outings" to the country recall many happy memories. Life was very full; in addition to our permanent (more or less) family, we had stray guests. What had been the wine-cellar in the old house was converted in 1918 into an attractive though bare little bed room as a memorial to our old friend Miss Mead. Here we received those, who, for various reasons, it was impossible to lodge in the rooms with other members of the family. They generally came late at night, and were always admitted and attended to by Florence Feek who made it her responsibility to answer any ring that came after we had all gone to bed.

These visitors were often brought by a kindly policeman and were very varied: sometimes simply stranded girls who had missed a last train or bus; often women who had run away from drunken or abusive husbands; girls turned out by angry fathers; distressed women from the provinces in search of erring husbands, for our house was not far from the docks and the wives knew what snares awaited the men as they came ashore off the ships.

Now and then our friends, especially the older ladies, were a little the worse for drink, and a kindly policeman would explain "I didn't want to lock the old girl up, miss, and I knew you would take her in"! One such old soul spent her night in loud

lamentations, for in her girlhood she had been the proud recipient of a "blue ribbon badge" of total abstinence from some member of the Royal family and she murmured, between regrets and self-reproach because of her lack of control, a low refrain of "What *would* the Princess say if she saw me now!"

It was not easy to give more than temporary help to many of these visitors. Always Florence supplied them with hot water, cocoa and bread and butter before going back to her own bed. Usually in the morning we talked over the difficulties that had overwhelmed them; often it seemed that there was little we could do but pass them on to some agency more able to cope with the special problem. But now and then it was possible for one of these 'casuals' to enter our family as a more permanent resident. Such was a girl of 20 who had been turned out by her father when she returned home from the hospital in which her illegitimate child had been born. The respectable father, shocked because the child was the result of his daughter's infatuation for a man who, too late, she discovered was already married, refused to have her in the house, though he let the baby stay. Nellie wandered about and knocked at our door in despair, and when it was opened said "I don't suppose you can take me because I'm not respectable: I've got a baby." She stayed with us, visiting her mother who looked after the baby when her father was out, until, after two years, he relented and allowed her to go home to live. She said that if we had not taken her in on that night she was going to throw herself into the river.

On several occasions we had a mother with two or three children in the little room with its one narrow bed. One could tell many stories about these guests of ours and of the mixed feelings they inspired; sometimes of anger and annoyance, when after the departure we found the little room in an indescribable state of uncleanness and had to spend several hours in restoring it to its normal spick and span condition. Frequently the anger and irritation were with the

circumstances which had brought our visitor to that pitiful state.

But it is always profitable to enter, as far as one can, into the experiences of others and many were the lessons we learned ; one being an overwhelming admiration for the brave endurance with which so many of these poor folk faced life and all that it brought. " God is good, I know, and He will help me," said one middle-aged woman as she left us in the morning. She had come from Scotland to find her sailor husband and had discovered the day before, that he had gone off with another woman. Life *must* be good ultimately for those who can face it with that fortitude.

Our little guest room was only part of our work and our chief business was with the family of school girls, home girls and " lodger " girls. The conditions from which so many came to us pressed heavily on one's imagination ; over-crowding was a nightmare and dreadful instances of the result of this and of the ill-lighted back streets in which the children played were constantly brought before us—little girls interfered with by boys and men, sometimes their own relatives. Then, too, factory and workshop conditions were often far from being what was required by legislation. We were frequently up against problems of injustice and underpayment which seemed impossible to deal with.

In spite of this background of sadness and wrong there was much fun in our house, and during the summer the old garden, with its mulberry tree, planted at the time when the Huguenots fled to England, was a great joy to us all. There had been many mulberry trees planted in Plaistow for the fostering of the silk industry and ours was one of the few remaining. There were frequent requests during the summer from the children of near-by schools " please may we have some mulberry leaves to feed our silk worms ! "

The years slipped by : longings to take our girls for holidays to the country were gratified by the loan on several occasions of houses by friends at Brentwood and Golders Green for a week or two in the summer, and once or twice of Miss Evelyn

Brooke's gardener's cottage at Ewhurst for a few days. These holidays were a tremendous joy and eye-opener, for most of our girls knew little of the country. In 1925 Florence Feak built a much longed for cottage at Jordans so that now and again she and I might get away from the noise and dust into the peace of the country. We loved it so much and longed to share it with our girls, so that very soon the little house at Jordans became sadly over-crowded at each holiday season, and the idea grew in our minds that we must have a house for the family to have holidays at Jordans—a Country Cousin. We had a brilliant inspiration, that a derelict fowl house, which stood on the ground adjoining ours, might easily be converted into a camping place for holiday purposes. But alas—this idea was turned down as not feasible. We could not have the fowl house, so our scheme fell through.

Yet the root of the matter was still in our minds. A holiday home at Jordans was a very desirable thing, and when a friend offered to lend us £200 free of interest for as long as we liked, and following quickly on hers, came further offers of other sums on the same terms, until we had £1,000 promised, we felt that we could approach our architect. In May, 1931, the foundation stone of "The Ark" was laid, and by September it was ready for use. We had a wonderful joyous opening ceremony in October, 1931. "The Ark" floated off on a wave of love and friendship and that same love and friendship have kept it afloat ever since.

At first there was usually a family of 4 or 5 under the care of Mrs. Ormerod, who has been an ideal house mother ever since the beginning, making "The Ark" into a real home for very many. At holiday seasons, Christmas and so on, it was filled to overflowing with our London family as well. Very often during the summer there were other visitors: delicate children and girls, and older women needing rest and refreshment. The peace and beauty of Jordans and happy atmosphere at "The Ark" have brought health and life back to many weary folk.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 and the evacuation of all London children, it was decided to close "Wayside" and bring all younger members of the family to Jordans. "The Ark" was filled to capacity and beds were lent to us by kindly neighbours for those whom we could not house. As months went by and there was no further development in the war and many evacuated children drifted back to London, many of the relatives of ours wanted theirs back, so that by June, 1940, though all available space was filled and we had two or three sleeping out, the family was a manageable affair. But the war crept nearer—one can never forget the despair that possessed so many as Germany became more menacing and with the fall of France the air attacks on England began.

In September, 1940, began the terrible "Battle of Britain" and on Sunday the 15th, "Wayside" sharing the fate of so many smaller houses round it, was struck by a bomb and damaged so badly that it had to be demolished later.

Far more tragic than the loss of the house was the passing of Florence Feek, who had gone from Jordans as she usually did once a week and was there when the house was hit.

She was hurt so severely that she died on the way to hospital. There are no words to express what this overwhelming blow meant to those of us who loved her. One has wondered often how the strength needed to carry on, came. But support and strength *did* come and there has been continual awareness that the burden was, as it had always been, a shared one: from that other world were coming the courage and endurance which were such a big part of the personality of Florence Feek.

She was a born leader, as enthusiastic and devoted to the cause of women and girls in need, as she had been in the days when she went to prison as a suffragist; an inspiration and never failing source of strength and stimulus when some of us less stalwart, faltered by the way.

There were many awkward situations—dealings with difficult girls and sometimes angry parents who accused us of enticing girls away from home. There were difficulties

about money, times when our bank balance was dangerously low (for it was often almost a hand to mouth existence) but Florence's commonsense, her love of humanity, her great consciousness of the guiding hand of God, and her unfailing sense of humour were very rarely baffled. Her gaiety of spirit combined with a deep seriousness made up a personality which can never be forgotten. Aldous Huxley in his book "Grey Eminence" uses some words to describe a woman of the 16th century which seem so exact a description of Florence Feek that one cannot refrain from quoting them. "She was one of those who know that the Kingdom is within, that God can be progressively experienced, that it is the duty of human beings to begin here and now, the unimaginable task of becoming perfect as their Father in heaven." There is reason for great thankfulness for the dear comradeship we shared from 1914 to 1940.

But little could have been done without the faithful co-operation of many friends. We had behind us in our Committee a group of sympathetic men and women. Miss Cheetham, that valiant soul, to whom West Ham owes so much for her pioneer work in Social Service at the Women's Settlement, was our Chairman. Until her death in 1939, her interest and care for "Wayside" never flagged. She took intense personal interest in each girl and loved to come and share our family tea on Sundays. Miss Honor Brooke was our dear President from 1917 to July, 1940, when she too passed on, to what she called "the great adventure" just a few weeks before Florence herself took that same path. She strengthened our hands in every way. How she and Miss Cheetham shared our joy when "The Ark" became a reality and not just a dream! It is not easy to express one's gratitude for the support and friendship of these two women.

There is only one name still on our list of Committee members which was on the list of 1914 and that is our President Mrs. Milne, whose sympathy and generosity have come to us so unfailingly through all these years and to whom we owe so much. We are thankful indeed that her love and friendship

come as warmly to "The Ark" as they did to "Wayside." To Miss Sinclair, too, we owe a great debt, not only as a member of Committee since 1917 but for her noble shouldering of the duties of Hon. Treasurer in those days just after Florence Feek had left us, which duty she has fulfilled most efficiently until now.

There are other names, too, on those old lists of Committee members which one recalls with thanksgiving, for they represent those who did so much to help build up our tradition—Will Reason, Mr. and Mrs. Britton, Miss Hammer, Mr. and Miss Varney, Edith Lister, Edith Crosby (a great mind and heart in a frail body), and others too numerous to name, who gave not only of worldly wealth but of personal service. Our matron, Lily Finch, with us from 1914 to 1926, who loves to recall those days when together we laid linoleum, painted and distempered walls, wrestled with the neglected garden and did those innumerable things which must be done by home makers who have little money to spend. And Alice Moot who came to us in 1926 and was our loyal helper at "Wayside" until 1939 and has again and again come to our rescue at "The Ark." And there are many others, who in their own way gave nobly to the work at "Wayside."

All our hopes for "The Ark" are that its fortunes may continue to be guided, and its course steered by a succession of friends and lovers inspired by the same ideals which influenced us all in those earlier days.

All this has been a chronicle of the past, but it is this 'present' that is of supreme importance, and our record is of little use if it does not give some account of how "The Ark" is fulfilling those duties laid down 50 years ago. For all these years the object has been the same—to provide a home for those in need—and here we are, still at this business of "home-making", surely one of the most important industries in the world!

Those who come to us now are still "in need," but not always from the same causes as were the girls who formed our household in West Ham. There is very rarely the extreme poverty.

In many ways the material standard of living has improved enormously, though overcrowding with its inevitable lowering of spiritual, moral and physical values is a problem which destruction caused by war has rendered more pressing than ever. Other problems too have been created and emphasized by war conditions. The serious one of what we call 'broken homes' shows itself very definitely in those "maladjusted children"—children for whom that background of security which means real home-life has gone—or perhaps never existed. It is these children who form a large part of our family now. There are, too, the unwanted "illegitimate" children—it is not always realized what it means to a child to come into the world thus styled, not what the reaction is when it is old enough to know of the stigma that this means, even in these days of 'advanced' thinking. There are others, too, needing temporary care, perhaps because the loss of a parent in one way or another has meant the break-up of a home.

So this 'home life' we have to build up at 'The Ark,' while it has a secure foundation, has not the most promising of material with which to work. All of those who come to us share our common need of a background of security and affection. There can be no real home life unless there is that goodwill and fellowship, that fun and friendliness which should be the setting for all normal human life.

From those of us who are older is required a sympathetic understanding and imagination which can help to bridge gulfs. Contact must be made through everyday things. Some of our children, even the youngest, have passed through experiences which have warped and twisted the sensitive child nature; the older girls are often suspicious and defiant, resenting any criticism; each can only be met on her own ground. Very often a girl has reason for her resentment and knows she has not had a "fair deal." It is a comparatively easy task to feed and clothe a starved underfed body, but dealing with the ill-nourished or wrongly nourished soul is a different matter, and always a slow, and often disheartening business. We

have to realize frequently that our efforts to unravel the tangled skeins in some young lives appear to be fruitless. Yet patient effort does have results and it is cheering when response comes—the wall of resistance gives way and there comes a request “ May I put the little ones to bed ? ” or “ May I help in the wash-house ? ” or “ May I have a bit of garden for my own ? ” All indications that the kink is being smoothed out and the girl realizes she is a member of a family. We hail with joy the moment, even if it is fleeting, when the touchiness and tantrums give way to a desire to help and serve. Sometimes this may not happen completely until the girl has left us. Here is an extract from a letter received a few months ago from a girl of 16. She had been at “ The Ark ” for 8 months on probation for stealing. She was a refined sensitive child, with a bad home background and a mother and grandmother who had both had convictions for shop-lifting. “ When I was at ‘ The Ark,’ half of me loved it there, and half hated it because I was there against my will and I knew I could not grumble because it was entirely my own fault. When I left you, I was a mixture, and being at home going about doing the things I hadn’t been able to do when I was at ‘ The Ark,’ I was inclined to look at it just as a place where I couldn’t do those things, and to forget all the days I had just loved being there. I just have to tell you this because now I have changed from the sulky, self-centred girl you knew and have become understanding, and I see ‘ The Ark ’ in its right proportions and I am very sorry if I hurt you after all you did to make me so happy there. I would love it if you would just forget it and take me back as one of your old girls.”

“ I come in the little things,” saith the Lord, and surely the prayer for us all should be that our spiritual senses may be alive to apprehend that coming in the unexpected way in which it does so often happen. Life is for us all a journey on which we travel together from lowly conceptions and powers to a finer state of being and we can only help anyone along by ourselves moving forward with unremitting purpose along the difficult road.

Again and again we are cheered by letters and visits from our old girls (many are happily married), recalling old days with a warmth of affection and gratitude which give us much encouragement. This contact with our 'old girls' is a great help, when, as does happen, there is disappointment and difficulty with some member of the family and the temptation comes to say, "Is it all worth while?" At such moments in particular the remembrance of what some of these 'old girls' were when we first knew them as little girls and the knowledge of the useful places they are filling now, help to that renewal of faith and effort without which present day problems could not be tackled. And there are problems!

In one sense the work is different from what it was at "Way-side." Owing to limitation of space and for other reasons, we are no longer able to have older girls living with us and going out to work. We have tended to become more and more a home for children and younger girls and this indeed is the urgent need of these days.

What is the use and aim of it all? Why this effort to make a home life here for those who for various reasons have been deprived of so much that is a child's rightful inheritance?

We want these children to be equipped to face life, to be able to take, as they grow older, some share of responsibility in the community's well-being. We want for them that development of health of body, soul and spirit which makes up "personality".

Above all we want for them as for ourselves, a deeper understanding of the truth that Jesus spoke when He said, "The kingdom of God is within you"; some of us feel that it is only in the realization of this tremendous truth that the problems which create the need for homes such as ours can be solved.

It is with deep thankfulness that we remember the blessings that have been ours throughout these years; old friends, many of them once colleagues of Florence, who, loving "Way-side" have now given their affection and support to "The Ark," and the newer friends round us now. We need as we have always needed, that creative prayer which so many have

given in the past ; and we have faith that because of this " those things which are requisite as well for the body as the soul " will continue to come that " The Ark " may be kept afloat. It may be that before long these problems which disturb us now may cease to exist, or that other and better ways of solving them may be found, but at the present time, some of us are convinced that the most helpful and hopeful way of helping the " deprived " child is that of " the little house."

All our work has been, and is, an adventure of faith—Faith in the value of human personality, the conviction that each life is infinitely important, that it is spiritual as God is, so near and dear to Him that He stands or falls with it, suffers with its humiliation and is exalted by all that it wins of Purity and Truth.

Laura C. Stead.

" Then life is to wake, not sleep,
Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level where blindly creep
Things perfected, more or less,
To the heaven's height, far and steep.
Where amid what strifes and storms
May await the adventurous quest,
Power is Love—transports, transforms,
Who aspired from worst to best
Sought the soul's world, spurned the worm's.
I have faith such end shall be :
From the first, Power was—I knew.
Life has made clear to me,
That, strive but for closer view,
Love were as plain to see.
When see ? When there dawns a day
If not on the homely earth,
Then yonder, worlds away,
Where the strange and new have birth
And Power comes full in play."

" Fancies and Facts." Robert Browning.



Elsie Ormerod and the Girls.

*The little ones at play
on the Village Green.*

Three of the Seniors.





*A picnic at Hodgemoor.
August, 1940.*

*Picnics in the nearby
country are part of the
fun of the Ark family life.*

"WAYSIDE"

I remember the house by the side of the road
With the tramcars clanging by,
And the surge of the human tide, that flowed
That way with a song—or a sigh.

I remember the quiet within the house,
A rest from the din outside ;
And the friendly smile ever ready to greet
But one of the flowing tide.

I remember the stately old Grandfather clock,
And the hearth rug worn by feet.
The polished fire irons, the books on the walls
Of the room overlooking the street.

I remember the garden, a grass grown plot
(Though the bluebells I did not see)
With space for the children to romp and to rest
'Neath the wide spreading mulberry tree.

In the house by the side of the road there dwelt
The love for all human kind,
That lightens the way and brings peace to the heart
Of the weary and saddened in mind.

And many a traveller passing that way
With life but a weary load,
Found solace and strength and a helping hand
In the house by the side of the road.

N. Pope.

*Written by a girl who came often
to "Wayside," but who never lived
there.*

September, 1940.

How is "The Ark" Maintained?

The Ark, Jordans, is a venture of private individuals concerned for the welfare of children specially in need of care and affection. It is dependent for its support in the main on a comparatively small group of faithful givers, but with rising costs of living (and some increase in the number of children in recent years), the total received is now barely adequate to meet minimum expenditure and additional gifts would be very welcome.

Total expenditure is about £900 per annum.

Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Bernard G. Lawson, St. Davids, Jordans, Bucks. or to the Hon. Secretary, Laura C. Stead, Travellers Joy, Jordans, Bucks. and will be acknowledged.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Ark," Jordans. Please send Treasury notes by registered post.

Income tax can be recovered on gifts promised annually for 7 years, thus increasing the value of regular contributions by (at present) some 80%. The arrangement is legal and simple. Full particulars on application to the Hon. Secretary.

Bernard G. Lawson.

