

Parish Notes (March, 1954).  
Loders, Dottery and Askerswell.

"To keep a true Lent". Ash Wednesday falls on March 3rd. Robert Herrick, the Devonshire poet, asks, and answers, certain questions about Lent in the following poem:- "Is this a fast to keep the larder lean and clean from fat of veals and sheep? Is it to quit the dish of flesh yet still to fill the platter high with fish? No, 'tis a fast to dole thy sheaf of wheat and meat unto the hungry soul. It is to fast from strife, from old debate and hate - to circumcise thy life. To show a heart grief-rent, to starve thy sin, not bin, and that's to keep thy Lent". Our Ash Wednesday services will follow the pattern of previous years. At Lodders there will be children's service at 9 a.m., and Ante-Communion and Communion at 10 a.m.; at Askerswell a service for school children and adults at 11 a.m., and at Dottery the Communion at 7.30 p.m. We used to have a Thursday afternoon service in Lent, but this tended to be a discipline for the parson only; for, with a few exceptions, the congregation made Thursday attendance at church a substitute for Sunday. Which meant that the parson had an extra sermon to prepare in Lent, but the congregation still listened to one only. The present programme of Sunday services offers plenty of scope for Lenten effort. How fine it would be to have every parishioner attending service each Sunday in Lent. So evil are the times that if the parish did this, it would hit the headlines of the Daily Mirror. And yet it would be doing no more than keeping the Fourth Commandment. Note Herrick's line about the Lenten duty of doling "thy sheaf of wheat and meat unto the hungry soul". Social security systems may cater for hungry bodies, but they cannot satisfy hungry souls. We can do something to minister to hungry souls by taking home from church a Lent savings box. Heaven forbid that these boxes should add to our ever-increasing burden of expenses. The idea of them is that in Lent we should deny ourselves something like a visit to the cinema, or a packet of sweets, or a glass of beer, and put the money thus saved in the box. By such acts of self discipline we may assist the missionary work of the church without adding to our expenses.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Fry, of Askerswell, on the birth of a daughter, Jane Hazel. Mr. Fry's sister, Mrs. Foot, brought her baby son to her home church of Askerswell to be christened. He was given the names of Christopher Henry.

The late Mr. George Miller, of Askerswell, was a reminiscence of the heroic proportions of 19th century families. He was one of twenty-one children. In those days of high infant mortality it was considered no mean achievement for their mother to have got eighteen of them to the font. Until his sudden fatal illness, Mr. Miller had been very robust, and much in demand for odd jobs. For some years he had also been captain of the ringers.

Dottery Invalids. Mrs. Wensley is now out of Bridport Hospital, and convalescing with her daughter in Weymouth. She had been sharing a ward with Miss Hayward, who is making progress, but not quite enough to take her home.

Mrs. Ford, of Lodders, has passed to rest after long spells of illness in Port Bredy and Bridport hospitals. She was not a native of Lodders, but had spent much of her early life at Boarsbarrow. In her late years, when she was unable to get about, she liked to sit on the doorstep of her cottage near the school on summer afternoons, and have a word with passers by. It was usually a cheery word, in spite of her suffering.

A Bring and Buy Stall at the February meeting of the Lodders Mothers' Union produced the satisfactory sum of £8, which will help defray the cost of the curtains made by the members for the church.

Miss Alison Rudd, of Corfe Farm, was among the pupils of Sunny Hill School, Bruton who were recently confirmed by the assistant Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr. Fisher Jackson.

The Spirit of Jane Austin visits Askerswell on Tuesday afternoons at Miss Edwards' thatched cottage beside the stream. There, such of the ladies of the parish as can ply a needle and, or, engage in pleasant conversation, come together to make saleable articles for the bell fund. The setting is perfect, and so is their handiwork. As one appraises the embroidery of a choice tablecloth, one feels the approving eye of Jane already on it. Her eye for certain other articles may be quizzical, and puzzled even. "And what might be those bags, so large in their Joseph coat of many colours?" "O, those, dear Miss Austen - those are bags for the beach". "And what might these huge gloves be? They look like garden gloves, and yet they are so richly caparisoned that it would be a sin to cull dandelions in them."



I feel that they should handle something that is precious, costly, worth its weight in gold". "Dear Muss Austen - how clever of you to guess. They are gloves for handling coals when you put them on the fire".

M.U. and W.I., why both? Speaking last month to the Mothers' Union, Mrs. Willmott, who is a member both of that and of the Women's Institute, said: "An veritable husband might ask: Why don't you add the Mothers' Union to the Women's Institute, call it the Women's Meeting, and save expense, gadding about, and endless cups of tea? The answer is to be found in the prospectuses of the two societies. The W.I. rules say that the main purpose of the Institute is to improve and develop conditions of rural life by providing a centre for educational and social intercourse and activities. It was a happy day for Loders when Miss Holmes and Miss Butterworth revived the W.I. We members of the Institute have learnt to do many practical things, and seen demonstrations which we now put in practice. It has helped us to improve our cooking, sewing, handicrafts, and the interior decorations of our houses. In short, the Institute deals mainly with the material well being of the home. "But human beings have souls as well as bodies, and that is where the M.U. comes in. It is out to foster the spiritual side of home life; for a home cannot truly be a home unless it is spiritual. The rules of the M.U. say it is a society of Christian women in all parts of the world, pledged to help one another in performing faithfully the duties they owe to their husbands, their children and their God. When we do the daily treadmill of household chores, our ideals are apt to fade. We cannot see the home in its ideal beauty for the multitude of household duties. We come to the monthly meeting of the M.U. to refresh our ideals, and to reaffirm the mother's motto, which is 'I serve'."

The Cost of Dying. Time was when the death of a relative gave you only one shock - an acute sense of loss of somebody near to you. Nowadays the initial shock is followed by a second when you get the undertaker's bill. If, under stress of emotion, you fell to the persuasions of a traveller in tombstones, and put over the grave a marble curb with green chippings and headstone, you get a third shock, for sooner or later the bill comes in. The average price of a simple funeral is now little short of £40, and the latest price of a marble headstone and curb is £87.12. The Undertakers and the monumental masons are quite capable of defending themselves and of shewing how these prices are arrived at. But the Church's part needs explaining; for wrong notions as to this are current. For instance, a letter recently appeared in a popular weekly asking why parsons are so hard-up, and churchyards so ill-kept, while the cost of funerals and tombstones is so high. The answer is easy: the church's share is very small. Cemeteries may be roughly divided into two sorts, (a) cemeteries owned by public authorities or private companies, (b) parish churchyards. The finances of a public or a private cemetery are nothing to do with the parson. He is paid 10/- for conducting a burial in one of these, and no more. In a parish churchyard he received a like amount, 10/-, for a burial; and, when a headstone and curb are put over a grave, he gets £2.2., and the sexton 10/-. The churchyard fees are not "extra" to the parson's stipend, but part of it. The vergers usually get 5/-, and, if there is music, the organist 10/-. So out of a £40 funeral, church officials account for 15/-, or 25/-, and out of an £87.12. monument, they account for £2.12. If the gravedigger charges £4, he gets that, and not the church. Funerals in a parish churchyard are the cheapest because there is no charge for the ground as in a public cemetery. Neither is the upkeep of the churchyard a burden on the rates, as a public cemetery usually is. The churchyard is maintained by the alms of the faithful.

#### Services for March.

##### Loders.

7th. H.C.8, & 11.45 Matins 11. Children 2.  
14th. H.C. 8, Matins 11, Children 2, Evensong 6.30.  
21st. H.C. 8, Matins 11, Children 2.  
28th. H.C. 8, Matins 11, Children 2.

##### Askerswell.

7th. Evensong 7.  
14th. Matins 10.  
21st. Evensong 7.  
28th. H.C. 9.30, Evensong 7.

##### Dottery.

7th. H.C. 9.30.  
14th. Evensong 3.  
21st. Evensong 3.  
28th. Evensong 3.



An Inspired Answer. The Vicar was taking Scripture lesson in one of our two village schools. He asked which was the greatest festival in the Church's year. The class looked at each other dubiously, and there was no answer. Then the face of a small boy lighted up, his arm shot up, and he said "Please, sir, the Cup Final". One swallow does not make a summer, and "Abide with me" sung at the Cup Final does not make a religious festival of it. The class knew this, and laughed. Then one child got what he thought was the right answer. A whisper went round, hands beat the air, and from a dozen small throats came the chorus, "Harvest Festival". Most adults in a country parish would endorse the children's opinion that Harvest is the greatest festival, but those who are familiar with the calendar know that Harvest does not as much as appear on it. Easter, of course, is the greatest festival, the "Queen of Seasons". Without the Resurrection there would have been no Christianity. The Apostles called themselves "witnesses of the Resurrection", and the Resurrection was the corner stone of all their preaching. So the Prayer Book is on sure biblical ground when it names Easter as the occasion above all others when loyal churchmen shall join in the Lord's own service of Holy Communion. A glance at the list of Easter Day services will show that there are times to suit all tastes.

The children in our two schools are now clear as to which is the greatest festival. They also know that Good Friday is not a holiday, but a holy day on which we lament what the world did to the only true Man. It is to be hoped that parents will not confuse the children by making a gala day of Good Friday, but will rather set them a good example by joining one of the devotional services at Church.

Mrs. Jones, wife of Dr. Maxwell Jones, has given Lodors Church a fine lace super-frontal, which belonged to her late mother, who liked worshipping in Lodors when she stayed in these parts. The super-frontal looks well on the very ancient chest which serves the Ladye Chapel as an altar, and hides the lock, which proclaimed rather too loudly that the chest was not an altar.

Nothing Doing! A writer in last December's number of the Salisbury Diocesan Gazette described the church of Askerswell as married to the church of Lodors and living happily together under the same parson. Some optimist has been thinking that the State could also aspire to the blissful union achieved by the Church. Lodors parish meeting was asked whether it was agreeable to union with the parish of Askerwell under a joint parish council. And the answer was an emphatic negative. When Askerswell debates this monstrous proposal the answer will be more negative still. This is another example of bureaucratic pre-occupation with the means rather than the end. If democracy is "government of the people by the people for the people", then parish councils and even parliaments are necessary evils, only justified when it is physically impossible for all the people to assemble and debate their affairs and they must therefore depend on representatives to do this for them. But in a small community like Askerswell all the people interested in Askerswell affairs can and do meet and discuss them in their parish assembly, and this is the true democracy for which parish councils and parliaments are only an imperfect substitute. Askerswell would have much to lose and nothing to gain by exchanging its parish assembly for two or three parish councillors. Why did this suggestion arise? Mr. Gale, chairman of Lodors Parish Council, thinks that somebody wants Askerswell water for Uploders; Sir Edward Le Breton, chairman of Bridport R.D.C., thinks that the suggestion emanated from the Parish Councils' Association, which dislikes having small villages outside its sphere of influence.

A Delayed Wedding. The usual causes of a delayed wedding are a forgotten banns certificate, an absent minded parson, or a temperamental bride, but none of these caused the postponement of the wedding of Mr. Michael Rudd, of Corfe Farm, and Miss Maureen Rowe, of Bridport. The bridegroom had the misfortune to contract a mysterious form of fever which defied diagnosis, and the efforts of the doctor to get him well by the wedding day failed. The wedding was to have been on the brides' birthday, in mid March, but it was not till 29th. March that it could take place. And even then the Fates were unkind. Canon Clare, who was to have officiated, died the day previous. The flag on Bridport Church hung at half mast, and the wedding bells could not be rung. Yet in spite of all the set-backs the wedding was lovely and triumphant, and the church was full of well-wishers.



May we remind the bridegroom and his charming bride of the old song which says "The dullest morn often heralds in the fairest day".

Easter Vestries, will be held at Askerswell on the Tuesday in Easter week, and at Loders on the Wednesday in Easter week, both in the school, and both at 7.30 p.m. Every parishioner is entitled to attend, and it is hoped that every parishioner will. This is the meeting at which account is rendered of church finances, and at which officers are appointed for the ensuing year. The Easter vestry is far and away the oldest parish assembly. Its origin is lost in the oft-invoked mists of antiquity. Time was when the Vestry had the job of relieving the poor, levying rates, repairing roads, paths and bridges, and of being the local executive of the royal will. Fortunately the Vestry has been relieved of its secular duties: the running of the parish church is of itself business enough.

The Tower Roof at Askerswell is now in process of renovation. The decayed lead covering and its worm eaten timber supports have been removed. A new wooden roof, treated against worm, is already on, and a London firm is about to overlay it with a covering of bitumen. One of the many advantages of these modern roofs - universally recommended by church architects - is that they are so light. Some of the old timbers have been on view in the churchyard, and people have been able to confirm with their own eyes what the contractors allege, that if it had not been taken down, the old roof would soon have fallen down. The wet and the worm had done their worst. The weather vane at Askerswell is not a cockbird but an arrow. It has been so cobbled in the course of centuries that little of the original metal remains. When it was taken to Mr. Charlie Gale to be fitted with a new pivot, he was able to explain the three small holes in the tail. If memory serves him right, they are bullet holes. Mr. Gale recollects a day when one of the Bryans just missed a rabbit with a .303 rifle, and fired it at the church weather vane to prove to his pals that that rabbit had been amazingly lucky.

The cloistered calm of Loders Church is now restored after a fortnight of hammering and chiselling. The two south windows of the Ladye Chapel have had their old crown glass re-set in new lead; the plain glass of the east window has been replaced by leaded lights of new crown glass to match the south windows, the panels of medieval glass have been made safe, and enriched by a few panels of the best modern coloured glass. The job was a tricky one. The mullions of the Ladye Chapel windows are the originals, dating from the 15th. century. They are patched, and fragile, and they were holding glass which had been wrongly affixed with pure Portland cement. The problem was to detach the glass without breaking the mullions. Luckily for the church, the contractors were able to coax an old mason out of retirement who could manage such delicate work. The modern mason is not equal to it. It is being said of this old mason's work that you cannot see where he has done it. Which compliments him.

Mothering Sunday in Loders Church drew the biggest gathering of mothers and children that we have had. Mothers from Matravers, Uploders and Gribb were out in force. Mrs. Willmott gave the address, and after service the children delivered bunches of flowers through the village.

#### Services for April.

Loders. 4th. H.C. 8 & 11.45, Matins 11, Children 2.  
11th. H.C. 8, Matins 11, Children 2.  
Good Friday. Litany 9, Devotional 11.  
Easter Day. H.C. 7, 8, & 11.45, Matins 11, Children 2.  
25th. H.C. 8, Matins 11, Children 2, Evensong 6.30.

Askerswell 4th. Evensong 7. Easter Day. H.C. 10, Evensong 7.  
11th. Matins 10. 25th. Matins 10.  
Good Friday, Litany 10.

Dottery. 4th. H.C. 9.30.  
11th. Evensong 6.30.  
Good Friday. Devotional 6.30.  
Easter Day. H.C. 9, Evensong 3.  
25th. Evensong 3.