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## Spurgeon's Homes

ONE of the outstanding contributions to civilisation in the Victorian age, according to Sir G. M. Trevelyan, was a new sympathy for children. During that era there emerged in the person of Lord Shaftesbury, a bold, determined champion of the children who, in the field of legislation, won victories on their behalf. Through the medium of literature, notable contributions to their cause were made by Charles Kingsley and Charles Dickens, as *The Water Babies* and *Oliver Twist* still bear witness. Other lovers of children rose up in that age to plead their cause, to stab awake the slumbering conscience of the nation and to befriend the child who was the helpless, innocent and ill-used victim of social conditions, family misfortune or parental sin.

Among these was the spectacularly successful preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. During the course of one of his Monday evening prayer meetings at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon declared: "We are a huge church, and should be doing more for the Lord. Let us ask God to give us some new work to do, and the money to do it with." That prayer was soon answered. The August, 1866 issue of his magazine *The Sword and the Trowel* contained an article by Spurgeon entitled, "The Holy War of the Present Hour," which strongly deplored the growing influence of the Puseyite faction in the Church of England.

"It is on my heart very heavily to stir up our friends to rescue some of the scholastic influence of our adversaries out of their hands," he wrote, and added. "A great effort should be made to multiply our day schools, and to render them distinctly religious, by teaching the Gospel in them, and by labouring to bring the children as children to the Lord Jesus."

This issue of the magazine fell into the hands of a Mrs. Anne Hillyard, a clergyman's widow living in Islington, London, who having consulted with a Congregational minister, Rev. D. Herschell, wrote to Spurgeon telling him of her desire to found a Home for orphans, requesting him to undertake this project and offering for the purpose the sum of £20,000.

"That which the Lord has laid upon my heart at present," she wrote, "is the great need there is of an Orphan house, requiring neither votes nor patronage and, especially, one conducted upon simple gospel principles. I doubt not that many dear

Christians would like to help you in a work of this kind, under your direction and control, and should such an Institution grow to any large extent, I feel sure there would be no cause to fear the want of means to meet the needs of the dear orphans."

Here was the "new work to do and the money to do it with" for which Spurgeon had prayed, and it was of a nature to appeal to his large, generous heart. But he did not rush without caution into the project. First of all he and one of the Tabernacle deacons, Mr. William Higgs, a Stockwell builder, called upon Mrs. Hillyard. "We have called, madam, about the £200 mentioned in your letter," Spurgeon said.

"£200 did I write?" she exclaimed, "I meant £20,000!"

"Oh, yes!" replied Spurgeon, "You did put £20,000, but I was not sure whether a nought or two had slipped in by mistake, and thought I would be on the safe side." Furthermore, before agreeing to receive this sum Spurgeon sought an assurance that the needs of none of her near relations had been overlooked by the widow and that she had given consideration to the wants of already existing institutions.

In *The Sword and the Trowel*, October, 1866, Spurgeon wrote:

"A sister in Christ has requested me to take care of £20,000, which she desires to consecrate to the Lord's service, by putting it in trust for the maintenance of orphan boys with a special view to their godly education, in the hope that by divine grace they may be converted and become ministers and missionaries in future years. Being weighed down with cares, we still hesitate in the business, but dare not do other than follow the intimations of the divine hand."

Spurgeon's hesitations were overcome and arrangements were made for the transfer of securities which, owing to prevailing commercial conditions were not realised but left undisturbed, and on 18th March, 1867 a Trust Deed was drawn up. The trustees were named,<sup>1</sup> provision was made for the expenditure of up to £10,000 for the purchase of land and the erection of buildings; the institution was to be named "The Stockwell Orphanage," its purpose was described as for "the free, gratuitous residence, maintenance, clothing, instruction and education of destitute, fatherless children," and it was laid down that trustees should be "members of Evangelical Churches dissenting from the Church of

<sup>1</sup> Charles Blackshaw, Private Secretary; Thomas Cook, Scourer; William Bealby Hackett, Gentleman; William Higgs, Builder; William Charles Murrell, Coal Merchant; Thomas Olney, Gentleman; William Potter Olney, Fellmonger; Joseph Passmore, Printer and Publisher; Thomas Rouse Phillips, Wine Merchant; Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Dissenting Minister; James Archer Spurgeon, Dissenting Minister; Anne Hillyard, Widow.

England and not holding Unitarian or Socinian opinions." A freehold site in Clapham Road, Stockwell, London, was obtained. Resolving that there should be nothing barrack-like about the orphanage, Spurgeon envisaged four separate houses with a matron in charge of each, so that the children should be reared in a family atmosphere. This is the principle which has now been generally adopted for the housing of deprived children.

Spurgeon declared :

"Children need something more than a roof and four walls to shelter them; they want a home where the virtues of a Christian character shall be fostered and developed. To ignore social instincts and filial reverence by massing hundreds of children together in one huge building is to incur a grave responsibility, fraught with most lamentable consequences. On the other hand, when an Institution is adapted as far as possible to compensate the loss of parental influence and control, one of the essential elements of success is assured."

To carry out this plan a substantial amount would obviously be required. Retaining the Hillyard securities proved to be an advantage, for it ensured a larger endowment fund than Spurgeon had projected and, moreover, called forth from generous hearts the money required to put the plan into operation. "We need no less than £10,000 to erect the buildings," Spurgeon wrote in June, 1867, "*and it will come!*" His faith was soon vindicated. During the month of August, £1,705 was received. An offer of £500 was made to pay for building one of the houses, to be called "The Silver Wedding House" because this sum represented the gift made to the donor by her husband to mark this anniversary in their wedded life. A sealed envelope, found to contain £600 to erect another ("Merchant's House") was left behind by one of Spurgeon's callers. William Higgs and his workmen offered to build a third, known as "Workmen's House." Thomas Olney and his sons promised to pay for another in memory of Mrs. Unity Olney. Accordingly, on 9th September, 1867, the foundation stones of the first three houses were laid by Spurgeon, Mrs. Hillyard and William Higgs in the presence of three thousand people. Later Spurgeon announced amid cheers that he had received in donations about £5,500. But the money continued to stream in. The following January £1,000 to pay for two more houses was anonymously given. A few weeks later the same donor gave a further £1,000. Other large sums were contributed, among them £1,765 subscribed as a token of affection and esteem for the prince of preachers by ministers and members of Baptist churches throughout the country. On 1st June Thomas Olney, Snr. laid the foundation stone of the dining-hall; Rev. John Aldis and A. B. Goodall laid those of two houses to be erected as a result of this

nation-wide testimonial. Thomas Olney, Jr. and Mrs. Spurgeon laid the stones of two more houses on Spurgeon's birthday, 19th June. By the end of 1869 the buildings—seven houses, dining-hall and play-hall—were completed, at a cost of £10,200 and, as Spurgeon joyfully reported, entirely free of debt. Other buildings were later added, the endowments were valued at £30,000, and Spurgeon declared, "The remarkable circumstances attending the founding and growth of this Institution prove it to be the Lord's own work."

### *The Stockwell Era*

Early in 1869 the first twelve boys, in charge of their matron, were transferred from temporary accommodation to the new buildings at Stockwell, followed soon after by seventeen more. The urgent need now was for a Master to take charge of the House. Present in its play-hall when the discouraging news that the Master and Matron who had been appointed had decided to withdraw was V. J. Charlesworth, assistant minister at Surrey Chapel to Newman Hall. "What shall we do now, brethren?" asked Spurgeon of his deacons. Then, catching William Olney's meaningful look at Charlesworth, he turned to the latter. "You are the man," he said, "will you come?" Charlesworth demurred. "I am not a Baptist," he said, to receive Spurgeon's prompt rejoinder, "And I am not a bigot." In due course Charlesworth accepted the post, within two months he had taken up his duties and there he remained for the next forty-six years.

That all the wants of the Home would be divinely supplied was Spurgeon's characteristic, unshakeable conviction. "If we get to the bottom of the barrel of meal," he once in typical style declared, "the Lord will hear the scraping and then he will fill it up again!" To the soundness of this belief numerous remarkable instances of liberal giving strikingly testified. Smitten by an attack of smallpox Spurgeon earnestly prayed that none of his work, especially the College and the Orphanage, should suffer. Within a few hours a friend called with £500 for the latter. A day or two later there arrived a letter containing £1,000. Charlesworth was one day given six dozen bunches of turnips by a greengrocer. "You may have them for the orphans if you like," he said, "and I hope somebody else will send the mutton." Shortly after Charlesworth's return a whole sheep, fattened and killed specially for the Home, was delivered by a farmer. At a meeting of the trustees one Friday evening Spurgeon announced: "Well, we're cleared out; we must go to the great Chancellor of the Exchequer," and the matter was laid before God in prayer. The following Sunday morning he reported to the deacons that £850 had come in. In

1874 when funds were nearly exhausted and the flow of income had subsided to a mere trickle, the need of the Home was again made a matter of special prayer. Within six months enough had been received to maintain the work and, what was more, Spurgeon was handed a gift of £10,000 for his work, half of which was for the Orphanage. Year by year gifts, legacies and church-offerings continued to provide for all the needs.

The Home and the spirit in which it was maintained had by now become widely known, while the association with it of the great name of Spurgeon contributed to its reputation. A family spirit was known to prevail there. To avoid branding the boys with any kind of stigma uniforms were barred and no two boys were dressed exactly alike. For admission no voting or canvassing was permitted; every case was treated on its merits. No questions of religious belief or denominational affiliation were raised. Having steadily increased, applications for entry grew to such an extent that they greatly exceeded the number of vacancies. Only the most necessitous were chosen. Spurgeon's injunction was: "Always let the greatest need have the loudest voice."

As time went on Spurgeon and the managers gradually became convinced that the Home should be extended in order to admit girls as well as boys. In the middle of 1897 the original benefactress, Mrs. Hillyard, gave £50 toward building a house for girls. Other contributions quickly followed, the land was purchased and on 22nd June, 1880, foundation stones of four new houses were laid, the respective gifts of Spurgeon and his publishers, W. R. Rickett, Samuel Barrow and the Orphanage trustees. In October of the same year, largely as the result of collecting done in Liverpool and Reading, foundation stones of two more houses were laid. Following the completion of this terrace of six houses, with schoolrooms above them, a girls' play-room and swimming-bath were erected. Further building took place during the next few years to provide a board-room, residences for the headmaster and secretary, a laundry and infirmary. There was now accommodation for 500 boys and girls, with a house-mother and assistant for every thirty children.

To the large-hearted Spurgeon no work was dearer than the Stockwell Orphanage. Every day he dealt with correspondence relating to it. Most of the plans connected with its maintenance and growth were formulated in his study. Once a week he breakfasted with the trustees. He was a frequent visitor there and often conducted distinguished persons (like his friend Lord Shaftesbury) over the buildings, and for many years he spent Christmas day with the children. From Mentone, to which he repaired in 1891 in quest of health, he wrote Christmas messages

to the boys and girls and in his letters home urged the claims of the Orphanage. The death of the great man in 1892 was, therefore, a tremendous blow to the institution. It had been his wish to be buried in the grounds at Stockwell, but this proved impracticable. When his body was borne out of the Tabernacle on its last journey it was to the pathetic strains of a hymn sung by the sad voices of the Stockwell children. In 1893 a memorial to Spurgeon was erected at the Orphanage and in recognition of his pre-eminence in its affairs the managers agreed to allowing it to be known henceforth as "Spurgeon's Orphanage." His brother James succeeded him in the presidency. Subsequently his sons, Thomas and Charles, filled this position. In the same way sons of the original managers filled up the places of their fathers.

As so many of the children admitted to the Orphanage were of poor health and physique (numbers of them were the children of consumptives) the need was felt for a permanent sea-side home. On 8th June, 1899, a large house in Northdown Road, Cliftonville, Margate, was opened for this purpose by Mrs. James Spurgeon. It was used as a primary school for younger boys and also as a place to which children recovering from illness as well as delicate boys and girls could be sent for a beneficial holiday. For many of them even a brief stay here worked wonders, making thin, pallid little faces chubby and rosy-cheeked and bringing into weak, frail bodies a new health and vigour.

A quarterly magazine was started in 1894. It was given the name *Within our Gates*, and its stated aim and purpose was "To unite those who love with those who need." Containing news of the Home and, in its earlier days, articles, stories, verse, with considerable space devoted to the Spurgeon family and the affairs of the Tabernacle and its various auxiliaries, this journal, though now naturally different in many ways, has continued publication to the present day.

What kind of impression the Orphanage made on those who from time to time and for various reasons visited the place may be gathered from an account contributed to the pages of *The Philanthropist*:—

"The Stockwell Orphanage consists of picturesque blocks of buildings with handsome entrance gates. The boys' houses are on one side of the square—that is laid out as a lawn—and the girls' on the other. There is a pretty summer-house in the centre, and the grounds boast two fountains, which were presented by friends. The grounds run along the upper storeys of the buildings for the sake of good ventilation and also because they are more out of the way. Both boys and girls have an open and covered playground . . . The Orphanage has its honorary consulting physicians and surgeons . . . and the services of a qualified dentist are retained . . . In fact nothing seems forgotten in this Orphanage, and one can tell it is a place where

love and kindness are the guiding stars, for the light is reflected in the happy faces of the children and echoed in their merry laughter."

So the Home continued through the years ministering to the needs of hundreds of children in the spirit in which it had been founded, as expressed in the words of Spurgeon :

"The objects of our care are not far to seek. They are at our gates; widows worn down with labour, often pale, emaciated, delicate, and even consumptive; children half-famished, growing up neglected, surrounded with temptation! Can you look at them without pity? We cannot!"

The Orphanage was not greatly affected by the 1914-1918 war, except that one bomb fell on the premises, though no one was hurt. Except for the air-raids the children were hardly aware of what was taking place in the turbulent world outside. On 24th May, 1917, a public meeting was held in the Queen's Hall, London, to celebrate the jubilee of the Home, with Sir William Archibald as chairman and Sir Alfred Pearce Gould and Rev. Dr. J. D. Jones as speakers. It was decided to commemorate the jubilee by establishing a new sea-side home at Birchington, in place of the one at the rapidly-developing Cliftonville. Through the generosity of many friends a large house, standing in about forty acres of its own ground, was purchased, altered and extended. At a Garden Fête held on 21st July, 1923, to celebrate the opening it was announced that the entire cost of £19,773 had been met. From time to time gifts from other well-wishers added to its amenities.

At the completion of V. J. Charlesworth's fortieth year at Stockwell more than 3,000 fatherless children had been received. Approximately one-third of these were children of workmen in the building and printing trades, labourers, porters and car-men, eighty were children of ministers and missionaries and, under the classification "Gentleman," one! More than 1,200 were of Anglican parentage, nearly 800 Baptist, 278 Congregationalist, while amongst the remainder all denominations were represented. Income for that year amounted to more than £17,000, half of it from the endowment fund, while expenditure totalled £15,000. Of the boys leaving Stockwell for whom places were found by the management, a considerable number became clerks and the others were put to apprenticeship in all kinds of trades. By far the largest proportion of girls went into domestic service, a number became clerks and typists, others going into drapery and dress-making. Five old boys had become pastors of churches, two had gone overseas as missionaries, three were training for the ministry, many were local preachers and deacons and one had become a Science Professor. On leaving, every boy and girl was presented with a complete outfit of clothing, a Bible and five shillings. Thus



equipped and with a training which sought by education and discipline to make them useful citizens and God-fearing men and women, they passed out of the gates to make their way in the world. One of those who had occupied a foremost place in this care and training was, of course, V. J. Charlesworth, who had spent forty-six years at the Home: a wonderful record of devoted Christian service which could not have failed to leave its impress upon the Home itself and the more than three thousand children who had come under his care. He was succeeded by Mr. F. G. Ladds who had been Secretary from 1879 and from 1915 to 1931 was both Secretary and Head Master (or Superintendent, as this office came to be called).

From 1867 until September, 1939, the children were continuously in residence at Stockwell. The passing years wrought numerous changes. From 1918 the trustees were no longer confined to members of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The Trust was varied in 1937 to include motherless as well as fatherless children in order to facilitate the absorption of the 100 girls from the Brixton Orphanage which closed down in that year. In January, 1939, the Twynholm Orphanage, founded by the father of the late R. Wilson Black, also closed and twenty-eight boys and girls were transferred to Spurgeon's. In 1932 Mr. Ladds had been succeeded as Superintendent by Mr. J. McLaren. From 1917 until 1939 the Head Master of the school (control of which passed in 1922 from the Trustees to the London County Council) was Dr. J. E. Green who, in 1943, was invited to become Superintendent. In that office he was succeeded in 1947 by the present occupant, Mr. T. P. Adderson, whose wife is now the Matron. Having assisted Mr. Ladds in the secretaryship for sixteen years, Mr. B. Rodwell became Secretary in 1931 and held this post until his retirement in 1953 when Mr. Percy Hide, who had been his assistant since 1941, succeeded him. It is interesting to note that the secretaries have all been old boys of the Home. With the ever-outward movement of the restless London population the district surrounding the Home had deteriorated. The premises themselves were rapidly becoming out-of-date. Under the pressure of events bigger changes were, therefore, soon to take place.

Meanwhile, however, life went on within the Home, and the tree-lined grounds continued to ring with children's voices. Founder's Day was still annually celebrated with an ever more ambitious programme each year. The 1934 festival, during the Spurgeon Centenary celebrations, was honoured by the smiling presence of H.R.H. the Duchess of York, now the Queen-Mother. Christmas Day was enjoyed as exuberantly as ever, with its long, laden tables, and for each child a box of dates, an orange and a

Christmas card, with a shilling for everyone from Father Christmas and watches presented to the most popular boy and girl. The 5th November saw effigies of the villain of the time burned on a huge bonfire to the accompaniment of colourful flares and violent reports from the fireworks. Every year there was an excursion to the sea-side. Once a week the children walked to the Metropolitan Tabernacle and formed the choir for the morning service. Rain on Sunday morning was always welcomed, as this meant a ride by tram or Underground. In addition to these the day-to-day life was varied by visits from distinguished people, the Sports, Old Scholars' events and all those other happenings both glad and sorrowful which make up the existence of a family of children small or large.

*Within New Gates*

Few if any of the children could have realised that when night fell over London on 31st August, 1939, it was bringing to a close an epoch in the history of the Home. The following day Spurgeon's Orphanage children marched down Clapham Road for the last time. Under the London County Council evacuation scheme they were being transferred under the threat of war to an unknown destination. This proved to be Godalming in Surrey, where they were placed in separate billets. Property in Wray Park Road adjacent to Wray Common in Reigate, in the same county, had previously been purchased by the Trustees. To this new home the girls were moved in November, and in June of the following year the boys also came here. During that month the fall of France, with the dangers this fateful event threatened to the coast, compelled the removal from Birchington of the younger children, who were accommodated in a large house near to the older boys and girls. Here they remained for the next six years.

Meanwhile, soon after the removal of the children from Stockwell the R.A.F. took possession of the premises, established a barrage-balloon site in the grounds and remained there almost throughout the war. By their transfer the children were saved from the worst terrors of aerial warfare, for one morning toward the end of September, 1940, a bomb fell in the grounds, causing considerable damage. Further havoc was later caused by high explosive. But for the strenuous efforts of the occupying airmen the buildings would probably have been totally destroyed by the dread showers of incendiary bombs which from time to time fell from the lurid sky. Part of the premises were requisitioned for the Londoners' Meals Service. Later on the remainder of the buildings, with the exception of the office, were taken over as a storage of school equipment by the Education Dept. of the London

County Council. Eventually there will be erected on the site, by the L.C.C., a new comprehensive High School.

It was realised by the Trustees that the Reigate arrangements could not be regarded as permanent. The Stockwell buildings were now obviously unsuitable and no return to these premises, however hallowed by memory and association, could be contemplated. On the other hand the buildings at Reigate were already old. To renovate them in accordance with the standards of modern ideas and principles relating to institutions of this kind would entail the expenditure of large sums of money and, in any case, the site was unsuitable for development. Clearly, with the end of the war, other plans would have to be made. The eyes of the Trustees turned to Birchington, where they already owned nearly forty acres of land. It was, therefore, finally resolved to rebuild the entire Home on that estate. Plans were drawn up, obstacles were overcome, contracts were placed and the work of building began. The following is an extract from *The Architects' Journal*, 23rd March, 1950 :

“Spurgeon's Orphan Homes for 300 children, the first private children's home to be approved by the Home Office since the Children Act, 1948, is to be built on a 37 acre site at Birchington. It will consist of five domestic buildings, each with four self-contained houses for 15 children each. In the connecting wing between the houses there will be dining rooms and a kitchen for 60 children and staff. It is proposed to develop the estate with further buildings, including a chapel, assembly hall, library, sports pavilion and gymnasium . . . The architects are Messrs. Woodroffe, Buchanan and Coulter. The general contractors are Messrs. Rice and Son, Ltd., of Margate.”

By September, 1951, one block of four houses was ready for occupation. At Easter of 1953 the remainder of the splendid new premises in their park-like surroundings were occupied by the children, the Reigate home was closed and the office was transferred from Stockwell. The entire “Spurgeon's” family was all together on one site again in an attractive new home. This was honoured on 11th June, 1954 by a visit from H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester.

Naturally the affairs of the Home and its family had been influenced by the development of ideas regarding the care and education of children. The publication of the Curtis Report in 1946 and the subsequent legislation inspired by its findings affected the upbringing and welfare of all “deprived children,” to use the modern term. Before this the Education Act of 1944 had ensured far-reaching changes and new opportunities where the schooling of all British children was concerned. Consequently boys and girls over eleven years of age resident at Spurgeon's Homes were transferred to local Secondary schools. In 1951 the children of junior



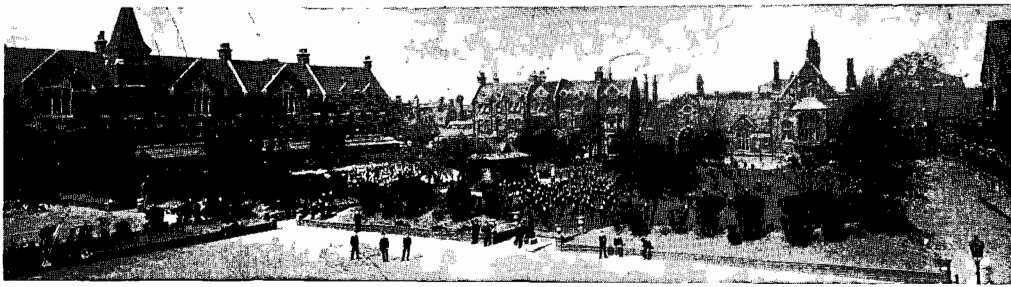
LEAVING REIGATE, 1952.

THE FIRST SIX BOYS  
RECEIVED INTO THE HOMES  
IN 1867



BOYS AT BIRCHINGTON



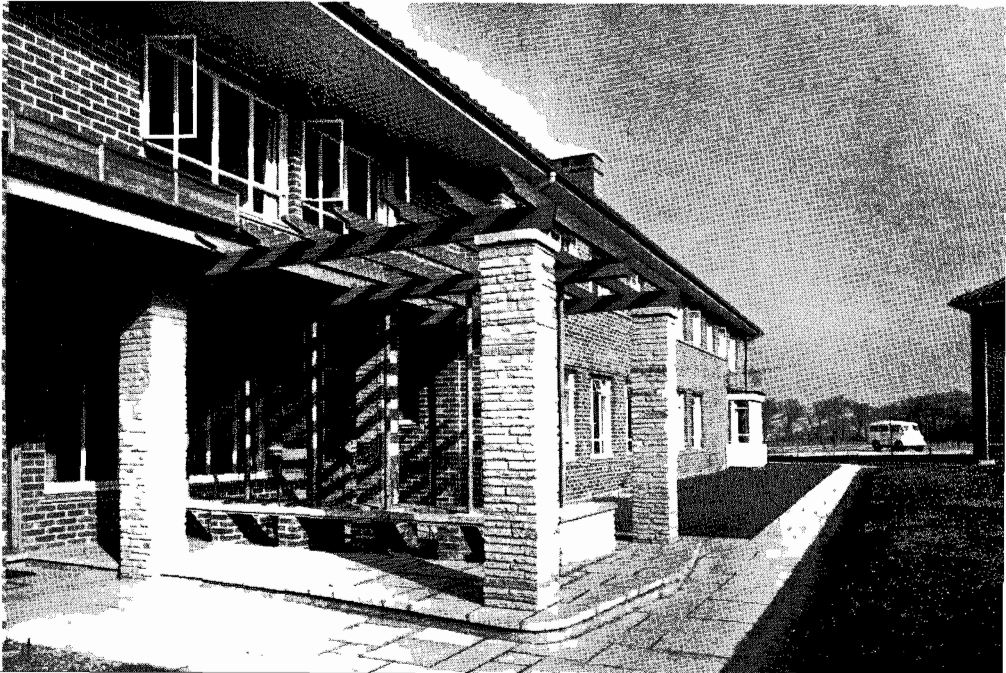


THE HOMES AT STOCKWELL



"ST. DAVID'S," REIGATE

PERGOLA ENTRANCE TO ONE OF THE HOUSES AT BIRCHINGTON



age were also sent to the nearby County Primary school. The following year a similar decision was taken with regard to the younger children, and the Home's own independent school which—apart from the war period—had been maintained at Birchington for so many years was closed down and the children began to attend the local County school. All the boys and girls in the Home were now on the same basis and, moreover, they were like all other children in going out from their homes every day to school. In the Home itself the children live in families of fifteen with two House mothers to each family, except in the senior boys' block where they have a House master and a House mother. Each family has its own play room, hobbies room, quiet room and dining room. Upstairs large bedrooms hold from four to six children. The children are encouraged to help in keeping the house clean and tidy and they usually assist in bed-making, dusting, polishing, etc. In the evenings they spend their time more or less as they wish, at reading, music, games and other pastimes, in addition, of course, to homework. Some attend Scouts, Guides, Christian Endeavour societies and similar organisations in the locality. On Sundays they attend church services. They take their part in the life of the schools they attend and many of them distinguish themselves there both in school work and sport. When the Home left Reigate the Head Master of the Reigate Grammar School wrote: "I should like to say how sorry I am that we shall be seeing the last of your boys at the end of this term. I believe most, and I hope all, of them have made an active contribution to the life of the school, whilst some of them have been outstanding." Each child is given an opportunity to sit for the Grammar School entrance examination. Of those who succeed a number stay on to take the General and Advanced level examinations for the Certificate of Education. Recently one of the boys gained distinction in two subjects out of three at the Advanced level and was awarded a State Scholarship and hoped to enter Oxford or Cambridge prior to offering for the Baptist ministry. It will be seen, therefore, that the children are given every encouragement to avail themselves of the present-day educational advantages. While, of course, no pressure is ever put on the boys and girls to make a profession of faith, it is always the prayer of those who care for them at "Spurgeon's" that every one of them will, before leaving, come to know Christ as a living reality and personal Saviour. From time to time, therefore, one is glad to read in the reports such items as this: "At their own request and on confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, three girls and four boys, all of whom were seniors in the Home, were baptized in the School Chapel."

The following are a few of the typical cases which come before the Trustees with a view to admittance to the Home : A child of 8½ years without father or mother, the elderly guardian being in poor health : two little girls of 8 and 6, deserted by the father, the mother dead, with only an aged grandmother to look after them : two fatherless boys of 5 and 3 with a mother in ill-health : a boy of 7, one of three children left to a mother deserted by her husband, described as " out of control and needing discipline, care and sympathetic understanding " : two girls aged 8 and 5, their sickly mother having lost her husband and living in two rooms : a boy of 7 whose widowed mother found it impossible to secure resident domestic employment with her son : two girls and a boy aged 8, 6 and 4, whose parents were divorced ; three girls whose mother was in a mental home : three children whose mother was divorced and had been living with a man then in prison, the children being unwanted. To watch the newcomers develop physically and morally and adapt themselves to regular hours for meals and sleep, to new playmates, ample playing space and unfailing care is a constant source of satisfaction and encouragement to those who have charge of them. It is, of course, realised that an institution of this kind is no adequate substitute for a good home, but there is no doubt that for these children Spurgeon's Homes provide better opportunities of personal happiness, moral and physical development and educational progress than would have been open to them in the conditions from which they came.

So much for those who enter. What happens nowadays to those who leave? It is interesting to compare the list of careers with that of fifty years ago given above. Many boys have gone in for farming under the Y.M.C.A. Farm Training Scheme. Others have become shop assistants in various trades. A number have entered the offices of solicitors, surveyors, estate agents and architects. Others have become apprentices to joiners, mechanical engineers and tool-makers or have become boy entrants in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Merchant Navy. The greatest contrast between fifty years ago and today, illustrative of social change, relates to the girls, for today very rarely indeed do they choose to enter domestic service. An office career is now far more popular. Banking and the Civil Service claim many of them, while others take up millinery, nursing, etc. Every boy or girl who has satisfactorily completed residence at the Home receives on leaving an outfit of clothes and a grant of money. There is no available list of old scholars who have made something of a mark in their various careers. Were it possible to draw one up, however, it would show that the success achieved by former scholars of the Home would most favourably compare with the record of most Grammar

Schools in the country. It would include a number of ministers and missionaries, a well-known M.P., a director of a famous London furnishing business, a popular broadcaster, many who have become partners or proprietors in commercial and professional firms and a number who were decorated for bravery in the two world wars; altogether a most impressive record.

Birchington houses over 200 children and the number who have been received since the foundation of the Home totals more than 6,000. Presiding over its affairs with devoted ability, the present Trustees are Mr. Arnold S. Clark, J.P. (Chairman), Mr. Allan H. Calder, F.C.A., and Mr. Cyril S. Wilmshurst (Joint Hon. Treasurers), Mr. Albert W. Mills, F.C.A., Mr. James A. Spurgeon, Mr. William L. Cook, Mr. Cyril M. Cook, Mr. Raymond C. Lyon, LL.B., Mr. John Wilmshurst, F.R.I.C.S., Dr. J. E. Green, F.R.S.A., Mr. W. Smith Callander and Mr. Edward Vinson, J.P. Boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven without fathers or mothers are received from all parts of the British Isles, irrespective of their denominational connections. To maintain the Home costs about £50,000 a year. Fifty years ago to maintain one child cost £20 per annum; today the figure is nearer £200. Additional to these amounts is the expense of office administration, advertising and those items which insist so often upon appearing in the best-conducted budgets, "Extraordinary expenditure." While most parents contribute according to means toward the maintenance of their children and some £18,000 comes from the endowment fund, the greater part of the income today, as throughout the years, is derived from donations, subscriptions, legacies, collections by church congregations, Sunday Schools, and similar bodies, and offerings taken in private homes around the dinner table on Christmas Day. Nor should there be overlooked the help given by old scholars who, grateful for all that Spurgeon's Homes have done for them, contribute according to their ability. While the majority of gifts from this source are naturally not large, now and again instances of substantial giving do occur. An old scholar now in Canada recently contributed within the space of a year a total of £1,300. Another has created a trust to the value of several thousand pounds for training boys in the provision trade and starting them off in business. Others have remembered the Homes in their wills. The need for financial help is a continuing one. All year round there are 200 mouths to feed, 200 growing bodies to be clothed, 200 pairs of feet to be shod. Every week 126 gallons of milk, 280 quartern and 70 lb. loaves 130 lbs. of butter and margarine, 164 lbs. sugar, 30 lbs. cheese are, among other items of food, consumed. In a year the children eat 23 tons potatoes! To clothe them costs nearly £5,000 per annum.



Bills for coal, coke, gas, electricity and water also amount to about £5,000 a year. As it goes forward toward its centenary the Home looks to Christians of all denominations for their practical interest and aid, for while methods may differ from those of eighty-five years ago the aims are the same as in the days of Charles Haddon Spurgeon; to help troubled parents, to give love and care to children deprived of the security of a normal home life, to minister to their physical, mental and moral needs that they may become good citizens and, above all, in the spirit of the Founder to lead their feet into the path of Christian discipleship.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

## Baptist Historical Society Annual Meeting

With the best attendance for many years the Society held its 46th annual meeting in the lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church on Monday, 3rd May (the first day of the Annual Assembly) under the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price. The Secretary reported that during the year the Society's useful, unpublicised service in assisting and encouraging research and replying to inquiries from many parts of the world had continued. The *Baptist Quarterly*, growing in prestige, had been regularly issued and further contacts had been made with other societies. New members were still urgently needed. There was a total deficit of £54. The meeting was pleased to receive greetings from the Society's opposite number in N. Zealand. Officers and committee were re-elected. Members then listened to an address by Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson of New York on "Who were the Baptists?" which set out to prove that to identify the Baptists with the Anabaptists did violence to historical fact. An interesting discussion followed, in which it was evident that members did not go as far as the speaker in dissociating the two groups. Dr. Hudson's address will be published in this journal later. The thanks of the meeting were cordially expressed to the speaker by Rev. B. Grey Griffith.