

## The National Association of Almshouses.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ALMSHOUSES service of commemoration and thanksgiving was held in Westminster Abbey on October 20th, 1954, when Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, was present and was met at the West Door of the Church by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and conducted to her seat.

Of those taking part in the procession there were representatives of almshouses, in order of seniority.

Order of the Hospital of St. Cross, Winchester (1136), Brother Ernest Wadman; Order of the Almshouse of Noble Poverty (1447), Brother Frank Bastick; Sackville College, East Grinstead (1609), Mrs. Katherine Jaques; Miss Jane Page; Hospital of the Holy Trinity, Castle Rising (1614), Mrs. Emma Riches, Mrs. Eliza Geering, Miss Emily Cory (Governess); Hospital of the Blessed Trinity, Guildford (1619), Brother James Glaysher, Brother Leonard Whitear; Allnutt and Baker Almshouses, Goring Heath (1724), Mr. Thomas Luker, Mr. Frederick Potter.

As the procession entered to the singing of "O Happy Band of Pilgrims," the Almshouses representatives, in period costume, was an elegant and moving reminder of the need of the aged over the centuries.

When all were in their places, the National Anthem was sung and then—The Dean addressed the people.

**W**E are met together to render thanks to God Almighty that He, in His infinite compassion, has led men of good intent from times immemorial to provide shelter, help and maintenance for those who suffer from want, sickness and infirmity. The hazards of life and the burdens of old age have been relieved by the beneficence of those who, from the days of King Athelstan to the time of our present gracious Sovereign, have obeyed the divine behest to love their neighbours as themselves. . . .

We are here to recall how great was the service to soul and body rendered by the early hospitals in periods of

social disquiet and uncertainty. The devoted brothers and sisters who served in them command our grateful remembrance. They have handed down to us a tradition of unselfish devotion to duty which is nobly maintained by their successors today.

We are here also to give thanks for those who have planted in every corner of the realm Harbours of Refuge from the misfortunes and accidents of life, Houses of Rest for the evening of men's days. The founders, inspired by God to efforts towards the public weal, have expended freely of their substance. The builders fashioned the sheltered courts and pleasant groups of dwellings with a pious zeal. And through good and evil days, those upon whom these trusts have fallen, to administer and maintain them, have worked single-mindedly to carry out the true intent of their founders' beneficence. And today, when the stress of life, its anxieties and uncertainties, are more than ever with us, we are here to ask a blessing on those who are resolved to keep alive a noble tradition and to see that in this great sphere of service the present generation shall not fail.

This was followed by the Hymn, "All People that on Earth do Dwell."

The collection, on behalf of the National Association of Almshouses, was taken during the singing of "Now thank we all our God."

Then came the concluding Prayer by the Dean:—

**O** LORD, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work done. Then, Lord, in thy mercy grant us safe lodging, an holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Her Royal Highness Princess Alice was then conducted by the Dean to the West Door of the Church.

So ended a beautiful and impressive service. **A.S.B.**



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