

J. A. A. Ralph

Hailey Vicarage,
Witney,
Oxon.

4th March, 1952.

1920
Dear Warden,

As you have marked the circular to me with a Red Cross -- to an old soldier a good omen! --- I had better turn from parochial correspondence for a few moments to give you the knowledge for which you describe yourself as being 'anxious.'

First, of all, however, if I have not sent subscriptions for previous numbers of Floreat, it was due to my being so often busy -- I thought I had sent a postal order and wondered why I had not received magazines.

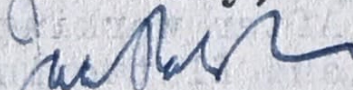
After working in London and other towns, and flattering myself what a successful semi-slum priest I am, I now find myself perpetual curate (whatever that may mean) of two village churches and am unable to flatter myself on any very obvious success. I find much to enjoy, and am as busy as I wish to be now that I am getting ancient -- usually I am active from 7.30 a.m. until about 9 or 10 p.m. ---but my activities seem to be concerned with anything except priestly work. Much of my time is taken up ^{with} things which I used to leave to enthusiastic layfolk; this has the advantage that I now realize more than ever how much we owe to our lay helpers, though I do not think I was ever unappreciative. I spend much time, also, cycling from church to church and village to village, farm to farm etc. As a result, I keep quite fit, physically at any rate.

I have learned to swing a scythe without cutting my limbs shorter than Nature intended. With a sickle, I am on terms of close friendship. During the 20 months since I arrived here, I have removed about two million weeds from the

garden -- they were above my shoulder and so plentiful that I could not see where bushes grew! I have also grown potatoes from peelings and failed to grow them from seed-potatoes. In short, I have leanned what a very versatile man a farmer must be.

Enough for this -- let me conclude with every good wish for 'Slums' as we used to call the Hall in the early twenties. May it long continue in a sound condition! I wish I lived near enough to pay an occasional visit but my frequent attempts to get back to the Chester Diocese have failed and I have now decided to stay here at least for a time, unless an opportunity for a suitable move presents itself.

Yours faithfully,



(J.A.A. Ralph.)