

is selected for peculiar treatment because he is the *élite* of his class—the largest, handsomest, most fleshy and corpulent, in all respects the aristocrat of the herring tribe—the only real specimen, in fact, of the “bloated aristocrat” to be found in the whole domain of natural history. Look at him as he lies in the dish tempting your morning appetite; mark his rich colouring, rivalling that of an ancient master—the deep olive tones on the back, the metallic brilliancy of the sides softening into a creamy hue in his under parts. Then what a fragrance he exhales as you lay him open, and hasten, at the instigation of your salivary glands, to pay him the posthumous honour to which he is so richly entitled.

We need say no more. The reader will understand that the fine qualities of the bloater are due in the first instance to his superior personal merit, and in the second to the prompt and delicate treatment he receives at the hand of man. So prompt, indeed, is the treatment, that upon occasion, when the demand is urgent, the whole of the several processes are completed in the space of ten or twelve hours, so that the herring who is joyously disporting himself to-day in his native sea shall figure to-morrow as the choicest viand of the breakfast table.

As an article of commerce, the bloaters are not crammed into barrels and sent across the seas. Rather are they laid loosely together in osier baskets containing a dozen or two each, and despatched by the quickest conveyance to the happy recipients. We must not forget to add, that to be enjoyed in their finest perfection they should be eaten at Yarmouth, while yet reeking from the smoke-house.

MY FIRST CURACY.*

CHAPTER I.—SEARCH AFTER A CURACY.

A FIRST curacy, I have always held, is the most important step that can be taken in a clergyman's career. The stamp of his first curacy generally remains upon him during the whole of his ministry, and his after administrations are certainly much influenced by the circumstances of his earlier ones; indeed, his whole tone is tinged through life by the associations he forms in the first years of his ministerial office. Hence, then, the great importance of a careful choice in the matter.

Sometimes a sphere of labour opens naturally; at other times it is a source of great difficulty to know which branch in the ministerial office to choose, or for what particular field of pastoral work the candidate for orders is most suited. Of course there is a certain amount of risk to be gone through, for a man can never know positively that he is qualified for any particular post until he has attempted to fulfil its duties. Having, however, some general idea of what post is most likely to suit his peculiar individual temperament, the next thing to ascertain is also a very important one, namely, the disposition and character of the rector or vicar under whom the young minister will have to work. Much of the success or failure of many a man's subsequent ministry depends upon the direction and bent given him at first starting. Men are generally totally inexperienced when they enter the ranks, and therefore, unless they have a fit and judicious officer, they are liable to commit many serious errors of judgment, to say and do inexpedient things.

But above all other considerations, should unison in matter of doctrine be carefully ascertained before a

compact is concluded between the intended vicar and curate. If diversity of opinion in vital points is afterwards found to exist, how painful to the feelings of both will be the discovery! The usefulness of both will be greatly impaired, their influence will be nullified, and the parishioners suffer, in consequence of this lamentable dead lock in doctrinal matters. It is perfectly necessary for the well-being of a parish, that not only should its clergy pull together, but in the same direction; if they do not, disagreeables are sure to arise which must end in unpleasantness on both sides, and in injury to the people. A personal interview is, in my opinion, the easiest and readiest way of obviating such a difficulty, for in half an hour's conversation, more mutual agreement, or the contrary, will be found, than can be discovered by a dozen lengthy letters.

In my own particular case, I did not wish to work with what is called “an extreme man” of any kind. If the Church of England were to be divided into several distinct sections, it might be necessary to make a distinct choice; but I cannot approve of every particular detail in any of the so-called “parties,” and I wished in my first curacy to have some liberty to act upon my own conscientious views, within the limits of what I believed to be according to the word of God and the standards of the Church.

I felt myself also obliged to be rather careful concerning the size and population of the parish in which I was to work; for while, on the one hand, I did not desire a very restricted field for what energies I possessed, on the other, my health not being strong, I did not wish to be completely overwhelmed with the amount of duty required from me all at once. Some of my readers may fancy that I am somewhat fastidious when I go on to say, that I was rather particular as to the locality of my future scene of labours: I objected to the extreme north or south, nor did I wish to be whelmed in by coalpits on every side, or to bury myself in complete rural retirement.

Yet in the end, one of these conditions was my lot for the first seven eventful years of my ministerial life.

Having then settled in my mind what I considered I wanted, and for what post I thought I was fitted, I inquired among my friends, and stated my wants to my few clerical neighbours. These all kindly promised to look out for me. Now this “looking out” generally ends in no satisfactory result—at least I found it so in my own case, and I do not think mine was a peculiar one. It is the usual way of getting rid of a troublesome consultation about any situation or office, to say, “Oh, I will look out for you.” At the moment, the intention may honestly be to “look out,” but in the multitude of other concerns the promise is forgotten, and the applicant is left to look out for himself. So at last, being tired of waiting for answers from my friends which never came, I began to take in the clerical papers. I pored over the advertisements in the “Record” and the “Guardian,” and the “Ecclesiastical Gazette.” I answered numbers of advertisements in these and other clerical papers, but they all came to nothing.

At last I resolved myself to advertise, and having procured the services of a friend who was considered a capital hand at such things, he wrote my advertisement as follows:—

“Wanted a Curacy, with title to Orders for the September Ordination. The advertiser possessing small private means, stipend required £60 a-year. Views in strict accordance with the Prayer-book. Experienced in Sunday Schools, Evening Adult Classes, &c.”

This advertisement brought me no less than thirty-

* The writer, now senior curate in a large London parish, thinks that his early experience may be useful to some of his younger brethren, as well as interesting to general readers.

three replies! I was perfectly bewildered with them. But the variety of work required, the curious questions asked, such as "Is your health good?" "Are you a gentleman?" "Do you sing?" "Are you married?" "Are you active?" "What 'private property' have you?" The replies demanded by return of post, with lists of references, completely overwhelmed me.

Now, I had only four clerical references, so I could not, of course, give them to all the thirty-three incumbents desiring them. My friends were good natured, no doubt, but I could scarcely expect them to write and post thirty-three testimonials in my favour; so the plan I fixed upon was this: I picked out six of what I considered the most likely curacies to suit me, and wrote polite answers to the remaining incumbents, thanking them for their replies to my advertisement, and stating that I was already in treaty, but that if I failed I would immediately open a correspondence with themselves. I took this trouble mainly because I think it is only due as a matter of courtesy from one gentleman to another. Now some of these answers to my advertisement were, as I have already hinted, extremely amusing. I will therefore transcribe a specimen of some of them, for I have kept the originals still by me, though it is now a good many years since I received them.

One incumbent wrote: "I require a curate to take the entire charge of two small parishes: there are two churches, they are two miles apart; there will be four schools for the curate to look after, and all the sick and poor will have to be visited. I regret to say that, owing to my living being small, and myself in indifferent health, I cannot come up to the terms required in your advertisement, but I should be happy to offer you £30 a-year!" This incumbent added in a postscript, "In bad weather in the winter season, I generally lend my curate my pony to ride between the two churches on the Sunday."

Another vicar wrote from the wild districts of Northumberland, "You are just the man I want. I think we shall get on well together. I reside in the parish and do half the work (population 2,300); but I shall want you to go over every Sunday afternoon to a distant hamlet, and take a service in a school church I have erected there: the distance is a little more than four and a-half miles. I may as well mention that I cannot give you £60 a-year, but I dare say you would accept £45."

I did not accept the £45, nor did I relish the idea of a walk of nine miles, winter and summer, in the afternoon, after taking my full share in the morning duty, and being expected, I suppose, to do the same in the evening, in the parish church, upon my return.

I have previously stated that I had reserved six of those answers to my advertisements most likely to suit me; these, from circumstances over which I had no control, dwindled down to four. I may as well mention that at this time I was residing in the south of England, and this fact decided me to write to an incumbent in Somersetshire, saying that I would come and look at his parish, it being the nearest in point of distance to my temporary home.

Having received a cordial assent to my request, I started the following morning by an early train, and in due time arrived at the indicated station. On the platform I met a farmer-like looking fellow, with high yellow skin gaiters, dressed in a rough shooting coat, carrying a stout walking-stick in his hand. "Are you Mr. C—," he shouted to me, as I got out of a second-class carriage. I replied that I was. "Well," said he, "I am the incumbent you want to see;" and then, giving me a hearty and rather heavy slap on the back, he added, "Those shoes won't do for this

country, you must get thicker ones." We soon started in a sort of dogcart of ancient build, and, after a pleasant ride through rather a flat country, we pulled up at a small but prettily situated house; at least the number and variety of the clusters of climbing roses on all sides could not fail to make it look pretty and cheerful in the summer season. This was the Parsonage; into which I was duly ushered, and soon introduced to two elderly grim-looking ladies.

"My sisters," said the vicar. I do not hastily judge persons by appearances, as the reader will allow, when I say that the non-clerical costume and manner of the incumbent had made no unfavourable first impression, but rather the reverse. The look and manner of the ladies, however, could not be mistaken. I confess my heart sank within me.

"I hope you do not care for society," said my host, as soon as he had assisted every one most bountifully at dinner. "I mention this because there is positively none for miles round." I replied, "I certainly did like a little, as I thought society enlarged one's ideas, which were very liable to grow contracted if left to feed upon themselves. The mind requires change and exercise for its health, as well as the body."

At this remark, the two old ladies looked at each other, then muttered something which sounded very ominously to my ears, and turned not the most pleasant countenances in the world upon your humble servant.

After our early dinner, to which the vicar did ample justice, he took me out to see his church, schools, and parish generally. The former was a really fine specimen of the perpendicular style of architecture; it was also in good repair, and what restorations had been done had been carefully performed. I tried my voice and found it suited the edifice.

We next went to the schools, which, being in the state of rebuilding, I could not say much about; but with the parish I was very much disappointed: it was perfectly flat, and half of the entire area, the incumbent told me, was under water nearly half the year. He also informed me, as another drawback, that Dissenters formed the majority of the inhabitants. In the evening the vicar was gaiety itself; but the conversation soon ended, and he proposed a game at long whist! My reply, I have no doubt, settled my unsuitableness with the ladies. Next morning, while thanking him for his hospitality, I declined the curacy; the water, the whist, and the ancient ladies, decided me in the negative.

The object of my second search lay in a beautiful part of the west of England. Having to remain at Gloucester for two hours, the trains not suiting, I resolved to go and see the cathedral. While looking over the splendour, I asked the attendant verger some questions about the village to which I was going, when suddenly he exclaimed, "You are not going to *that* place, surely?" These words were addressed with marked emphasis. I had scarcely time left to say that I intended doing so, when the chimes assured me I should have to run to catch my train, which I just managed to do. As I journeyed along, I ruminated upon the verger's words, and not in a very hopeful frame of mind reached the station nearest to my destination.

Here I had to wait some time, whilst a gig was being prepared to take me to the parish I was in search of, as I did not feel inclined for a very wet walk of five or six miles through unknown country roads. I was very wet and cold when I reached the parish, but the genial welcome of the rector and his wife, and a well warmed and brilliantly lighted room, soon made me feel at home and comfortable.

The rector was a true and perfect gentleman. His church was very pretty, and in perfect order, as was also the churchyard. I do not say that these outward things are proofs of similar care in regard to the living church and the spiritual vineyard; but I have found that where a church is dirty, and a churchyard in disorder, there is likelihood of carelessness or indolence in higher matters. I found that the schools were very badly attended, and though the parish itself was charmingly situated, yet, when its moral aspect was looked upon, it was most vile and depressing to one's feelings. During the course of our conversation I drew from the rector this significant fact, that, as soon as I was firmly located, he intended leaving the parish and myself to our fate.

Nearly the whole of the inhabitants had been drawn thither by some chartist, or other strange society, the idea being that everybody should possess his own acre of ground, his pig, his cow, and his cottage rent free, and that he should enjoy a life of rural contentment. Now the practical result of this scheme was not quite what its sanguine promoters anticipated, and finding it the fixed determination of the rector to leave me to fight my own battles, I declined the curacy.

I was now growing a little disheartened at this double failure in my search, but resolved to persevere. Accordingly, having received an invitation to visit the incumbent of a parish situated in one of the busiest parts of Lancashire, I went northward. I liked what I saw of the church, clergy, and schools, and was not prejudiced against what I saw of the people themselves. I had very nearly accepted the curacy, though a little distracted with the noise proceeding from no less than seven lines of railway running through the parish (indeed, the principal station was at the bottom of the parsonage garden), when I turned and asked the incumbent the extremely natural question, where I was to lodge. "Ah," answered he, "that is the difficulty: unless we can get the millowner to knock two of that row of workmen's houses into one, you will not be able to get lodgings nearer than N—," mentioning a large manufacturing town about three and a-half miles off, the only road to which was over cinder heaps, and along the side of blast furnaces.

I felt at once that I was not suited for this work. I remarked to the incumbent that it would have been but an act of justice if he had just mentioned this little fact about the difficulty of obtaining lodgings, as it would have prevented my taking a useless journey to the north, and saved me between £5 and £6, no small matter to a poor man.

I returned to my temporary home wearied in mind and body, and with my small means much straitened. I began to fear that I should not succeed in obtaining a curacy at all, in spite of the numerous answers to my advertisement in the first instance.

Growing rather reckless as to the position of my next search, I resolved to take any one that offered. Accordingly, I wrote to one of the remaining answers I possessed, when, in reply, I received an answer by return of post, saying that the whole of the references were personally known to the gentleman with whom I was in correspondence, and that he should be happy to close with me at once, as he was in immediate want of a curate.

I accepted his offer, though I rather objected to live in the parsonage with himself and wife. There was no family; but finding that there existed no alternative, as no lodgings could at the time be obtained, I had to assent, and accepted the curacy.

Varieties.

DOUBLE STARS.—In connection with our remarks on binary systems in last number, the following diagram exhibits a selected list of double stars, as seen in an inverting astronomical telescope. Some of them are, probably, only optically double, their apparent juxtaposition being the result of the two stars being seen from the surface of the earth in the same line of direction, or, if they be binary systems, their time of revolution must extend over a lengthened period. Castor, Epsilon Hydræ, Gamma Leonis, and 61 Cygni, have been proved to belong to the latter class of objects. Gamma Andromedæ is triple, the companion being easily resolvable into two components when viewed through a good defining telescope, especially when the star is at high altitude about sunrise or sunset. The list of known binaries exceeds a hundred, without including several double stars suspected to belong to a common gravitational system.



SPANISH CHARACTER.—The people of Spain, the so-called "lower orders," are superior to those who arrogate to themselves the title of being their betters. This may have arisen in this land of anomalies, from the peculiar policy of Government in Church and State, where the possessor of religious and civil monopolies, who dreaded knowledge as power, pressed heavily on the noble and rich, dwarfing down their bodies by intermarriages, and all but extinguishing their minds by inquisitions, while "the people," overlooked in their poverty, were allowed to grow out to their full growth, like weeds of a rich soil. They in fact have long enjoyed, under despotisms of Church and State, a practical and personal independence, the good results of which are evident in their stalwart frames and manly bearing. On the masses, the edifice of Spain's greatness is, if ever, to be reconstructed.—*Ford's "Spain."*

TREES OF MISSOURI.—Professor Swallow, of the Missouri Geological Survey, gives the following actual measurements of large trees in South-east Missouri:—The largest is a sycamore in Mississippi County, 65 ft. high, which, two feet above the ground, measures 43 ft. in circumference. Another sycamore, in Howard County, is 38½ ft. in diameter. A cypress in Cape Girardeau County, at a distance of one foot above the ground, measures 29 ft. in circumference. A cottonwood in Mississippi County measures 30 ft. round, at a distance of six feet above the ground. A pecan in the same county is 18 ft. in circumference. A black walnut in Benton County measures 22 ft. in circumference. A white oak in Howard County is 26 ft. in circumference. A tulip tree (poplar) in Cape Girardeau County is 30 ft. in circumference. There is a tupelo in Stoddard County 30 ft. in circumference. There is a hackberry in Howard County 11 ft. in circumference. A Spanish oak in New Madrid County 26 ft. in circumference. A white ash in Mississippi County is 16 ft. in circumference. A honey locust in Howard County is 13 ft. round. There is a willow in Pemiscot County that has grown to the size of 24 ft. in circumference and 100 ft. in height. Mississippi County boasts of a sassafras that must be king of that tribe; it measures 9 ft. in circumference. There is a persimmon in the same county 9 ft. in circumference. In Pemiscot County there is a dogwood 6 ft. in circumference. In Mississippi County papaws grow to a circumference of 3 ft., and grape-vines and trumpet creepers to a circumference of 18 in. to 22 in.

are capable of some improvement, as might be expected where reason is added to instinct. But we hold that the theory of man having raised himself, by spontaneous and progressive development, from a primitive savage state, and from yet lower forms of organic life, is not supported by proof. The theory of Divine interposition is the true scientific explanation, inasmuch as it alone meets all the facts of the case.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER II.—MY FIRST CURACY.

WHAT a fund of lively conversation has a first curacy formed in the circle of clerical friends; how very vivid, even after a lapse of years, are the incidents of a first curacy! It seems to me that the trials, successes, failures, and cares of a first curacy, are as much and as deeply stamped upon the mind of a young clergyman, as are the lessons of early childhood themselves. How ardent are the desires, how fervent the wishes, of a young minister, who, fresh from taking the Ordination vow, enters upon his solemn engagement to work for God in his first curacy!

And who among us of the clergy, as he looks back upon that memorable day when he ascended the pulpits to deliver his first sermon, does not heave a sigh, as he thinks of the crust of worldliness which has encircled all those holy aspirations with which he was then filled, how the promises of self-devotion and single-heartedness towards God have become too much a thing of the past and of memory only? I do not say that there is no devotion remaining, no desire to do one's duty as a clergyman; but there is no longer that freshness, that heartiness, that oneness of purpose which there was when we first entered into "the Holy Order of Deacons." Happy, yea, thrice blessed, are they who, by God's grace, have been enabled to retain all the zeal and devotedness of their first love!

I will pass over the preliminary preparation, the signing of the necessary papers, the ordeal of the Bishop's examination, which, in my case, was rather below the average in scholarship questions, but with perhaps more practical parochial ones than generally falls to the lot of candidates to be examined upon. And I cannot help thinking that if a man has passed the University tests in matters of scholarship, that the Bishop's examination questions should mainly be directed to that special sphere of work in which we were about to engage—and concerning which many of us knew very little.

The final day of examination was of course an anxious one, especially when, during the morning, we saw one candidate for deacons' orders, and two for priests', called out singly and never return to finish their paper they were engaged upon. When summoned from the room, we began to look one another in the face, and our hearts beat fast, as, after a considerable pause, the verger opened the door to call out another martyr, as we supposed. However, this gentleman soon returned with a beaming countenance, and upon a second re-entering the room in like manner, we, the remaining ones, began to breathe more freely, and congratulate each other with the hope that all the rest of us had passed; and so it proved, happily, to be the case.

I shall not describe the ordination scene; it has been so often witnessed, and so frequently written upon, for who, as a simple spectator, has ever seen that solemn rite performed unmoved! But how much more solemn, how

much deeper an impression must it make upon the candidate who is about to take upon himself vows, and to receive an office which can only be shaken off by death—and after death, what a stewardship to have to render account of!

On the following morning, having received our licences and letters of orders, we were scattered to our different spheres of labour. Up to the present time I have only twice met with any of those with whom I was ordained, either deacon or priest.

My introduction to my first incumbent took place as I descended from the top of a coach on which I had been riding for the last five hours, through some of the beautiful scenery of Devonshire, among whose "Tors" my curacy lay. It was a very retired and secluded spot, far removed from any town, and with very little society, the one great event of the day being the stoppage of the coach at a little roadside inn on the extreme verge of the parish.

This want of society, however, was, as I found by experience, amply compensated by the very agreeable and cheerful disposition and manners of my vicar and his amiable wife. He possessed a great fund of anecdote and useful information, and had a great talent for describing scenery and actions which he had witnessed in his travels abroad; indeed, himself and wife had spent the greater part of seventeen years in various parts of Europe, and their conversation was most interesting and instructive. Most likely it was from the fact of his having travelled so much, that he was, if I may so speak, wider-minded than the majority of country clergy generally are found to be. He had lately been inducted into the living, and was anxious to obtain the services of a curate with whom he could be on the most intimate terms. I think we mutually agreed in this respect, for during the time that I resided with him, we never had the least disagreement. We worked most harmoniously together, and I shall always look back with the greatest pleasure to the happy years I spent in that secluded rustic-thatched Devonshire parsonage.

I believe that in sentiment and in taste, we could not have been more in unison; and further than this, with regard to my own personal comfort, my vicar and his wife both treated me as a younger brother, and not as if I belonged to a different race or of a distinct order, as alas! some curates of my acquaintance have been treated by rectors and their wives.

We both were fully employed, and had plenty of work cut out for us in the geographical position of the parish, consisting as it did in an area of eight miles in diameter, and with a population of two thousand collected into five or six separate little hamlets. One of these hamlets was much larger than the rest, and was allotted to me as my special charge. It was situated at some distance from the parish church, which by some strange freak of its founder, had been built away from the majority of the inhabitants, in order, so it was said, to try the faith of the people. I certainly wish that he had tried their faith in another way, for the natural consequence was that on wet days (and we have our full share among the Tors of Devon, where, if it is no pouring rain, it is nearly always drizzling) our faith was severely tried by seeing frequently a more than half empty church.

The occupation of the inhabitants was purely and simply agricultural. They were excessively ignorant, and consequently very superstitious; indeed, I have always found that the two go naturally together; and I may add that the inhabitants of highland districts

are invariably more so than those dwelling in the low lands. In fact, the parish had been much neglected during the last few years, as the late incumbent, a very old man, had entirely given up pastoral visitation, through his infirmities, and he was also in such needy circumstances himself, that he could not afford to procure the services of a curate.

The living was a very small one, the great tithes being swallowed up by a non-resident landlord, as is too often the case with country livings in the West of England. The roads through the parish were of course, from their locality, very hilly and uneven; they were also narrow, with high banks on either side, but the "waywardens" had kept them in much better repair than were those of the majority of Devonshire parishes. The narrowness of these roads or Devonshire lanes may be understood from a curious and useful custom existing among the farmers and their carters. Sometimes for nearly a quarter of a mile two vehicles could not pass. Waggon laden with corn, or going to market, always wore loud-sounding bells, in order that another waggon coming in a contrary direction might pull into one of the recesses made in the side of the bank in order to allow of the other passing. There were, however, frequent altercations between the drivers of the different waggons as to whose duty it was to wait for the other, and when returning from market not quite sober, these disputes often ended in blows and fights, and frequently produced ill-feeling among their respective employers.

CHAPTER III.—THE PARISHIONERS.

STRANGE as it may appear, and nearly an incredible fact to many, yet it is perfectly true that there was not a family bearing the name of Smith, Brown, or Jones, and only one Robinson, in all the two thousand people which composed the population of my first curacy.

The squire was non-resident, a most fortunate circumstance for both parson and people. The residence of a good squire is as great a blessing in a rural parish as that of a bad squire is a curse. About once a year he came to visit some of his tenants, a time of disgraceful lawlessness and of dissipation. I cannot refer to his doings without severe censure, yet of himself I must speak in sorrow rather than anger. There were good points in his character, though overborne by evil influences and evil companionship. I will dismiss him with the mention of some things to be recorded to his praise, or to the encouragement of those who, in dependence on the great Overruler of men's wills, try to influence unlikely agents to do unlikely things. He gave a new and expensive organ to the church, and handsomely restored the chancel, and beautified it by the introduction of some good stained glass, adding also a very good altar-cloth and some richly-carved communion rails: One special act of generosity I ought not to forget, especially as it was performed towards a poor curate. In the neighbouring parish lived a married curate and his wife and family, so poor that they could not afford to keep a servant of any description, and frequently were a whole week together without tasting animal food. One Christmas morning this married curate received from our squire the handsome and unexpected present of a cheque for one hundred pounds, and a nomination for his eldest son's entrance into Christ's Hospital.

The farmers of the parish were a well-to-do set of men, and, taken as a whole, were rather superior and intellectual, and the majority of them well affected towards the church. But singularly enough, while they

professed a love for literature, and those from the greatest distance came regularly at least once a day to service, they were totally indifferent as to whether their servants or their children came, and they were most vehemently opposed to any system of education. Of course there were discontented, self-opinionated men who made themselves disagreeable, but they formed, happily, but a small minority of the parishioners.

I have much more to say about our poor, the mass of our parishioners. As a whole they were extremely poor, but generally speaking contented: railways had not penetrated that part of Devonshire, and from the want of communication with the outer world, they knew nothing of the larger wages to be obtained in more thickly populated localities. And upon how little they had to be contented; a man's full wages for agricultural labour being seven shillings a week, with the exception of hay and harvest time, when they were a little higher! It is true sometimes milk was found for the family, and cider for the labourer, but this was not universally the case.

Rents were, however, cheap, one shilling and one shilling-and-sixpence a week being the usual rate, and I have positively known them as low as sixpence a week, but this was for a mere hovel. These cheap houses were not built of brick or of stone, but of "cob," a mixture of mud, stones, straw, and small-coal, and were generally thatched and white-washed. The floors were often of rough round stones, and where tiles or quarry had been laid down instead of these rough uneven stones, it was no uncommon custom for the indwellers to attempt to stain one half of the square tile to a greenish colour, with potato tops or other vegetables.

My readers may know that peat is the article commonly burnt as fuel in many parts of Devon, as coal is excessively dear on account of the expense of cartage; indeed, in the part in which I resided, we paid thirty-seven shillings a ton for it, so that it was quite beyond the reach of the poor; but in consequence of the constant burning peat in their fireplaces (grates they had none), it is a fact that the whole of their clothes, food, houses, and the people themselves, and even the air, was tainted and strongly impregnated with the smell of burning peat. This odour produces a very disagreeable effect upon strangers; and reading aloud in a cottage which is heated with a peat-fire causes great irritation to the throat, and produces a smarting pain in the eyes. The cutting of the turf, in order to make it ready for fuel, is attended by little labour or fatigue, as it lies compact and in great quantities on the moors. It is mostly prepared by the women alone, needing little help from the men.

Of drainage there was little or none in any of the hamlets; and the whole of the population were dependent upon watercourses and springs for their supply of this great necessary of life and cleanliness. The only pump in the parish was at the Vicarage, so that during the summer season not only were there great inroads made upon our supply, but there was generally a great scarcity of water throughout the parish, and much inconvenience experienced by the necessity of fetching it from a distance. Indeed, if a fire had broken out, what with the thatched roofs and want of water, the consequences must have been most fearful, and such is actually often the case in villages similarly situated.

During the declining years of the late vicar a school of rather a superior class had attempted to establish itself in the larger hamlet which fell into my share of the parish to look after. All I could ever see about the school was that an old man used to walk about and

thrash the boys, but I never found out that they really learnt anything. Over this school we had no substantial control for some few years, though I was permitted on sufferance to visit occasionally. When I went unexpectedly I found the old man in his shirt-sleeves blacking his boots, or in some equally unscholastic employment, the boys sticking pins into each other, or up to other mischief. Of course there was no order or method of teaching, except when the master, stung into rage by some more than usually flagrant misconduct, rushed up and down the school, hitting right and left innocent and guilty alike. I once caught him in the midst of such a scene; I hope I may never witness such another.

Eventually we got matters on rather a better footing, for the master falling ill, we got the permission of the persons to whom the school virtually belonged, to procure the assistance of a man from the training-school of the diocese, and he managed, in the few months in which he stayed, to impart a little knowledge, and to produce a little order and discipline.

We found that it was utterly impossible to set up a rival school to this wretched burlesque of one; the vicar's income did not allow of his paying an efficient master, and as I have already stated, the farmers, from their being opposed to all education, were only too pleased to let matters continue as they were.

I ought to say that there were three or four little dame schools in the parish, at one of which I saw the old horn primer still in use. At this little school, for the purpose of astonishing the new vicar upon his first visit, the very small children were called up by the woman in charge, to repeat the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, which the little things lisped out as well as they could. What mistakes they made in pronouncing the names I shall never know, for I was completely convulsed with laughter at the supposed correction of the names by the old dame herself.

I found out subsequently that this exhibition was frequently repeated, particularly when any stranger called. I tried to take this school in hand, but failed to make much progress, for in spite of my expostulations, this dame schoolmistress would continue to teach the children solely to read the Revelation of St. John for New Testament reading; and Leviticus was the only book they were ever allowed to read in the Old Testament. Time after time, I altered the chapters, plainly pointing out to her what was most proper for them to read; but all to no purpose, for no sooner was my back turned, than Leviticus and Revelation were resumed; and if I dropped in accidentally at a later period of the day, I should be sure to see the children hard at work spelling out the ceremonial law, or else bewildered among the prophetic mysteries of the seals and vials.

Soon after my arrival among the people of my first curacy, I was much struck with the various and strange greetings with which I was welcomed. When I entered the house of one of the poorer parishioners, I was invariably politely asked, "Will you perch?" meaning would I be seated. In the farm-houses the customary form of offering hospitality was, "Will you take something to make use of?" A poor man or woman would not let you set back your chair against the wall when you rose to leave, having finished your visit, it being a sure sign that you never intended to visit him again; and for the same reason I found that in the houses of the richer parishioners you were never allowed to fold up your dinner-napkin. I thought when I often heard the expression, "Rampant with pain," that it was expressive; as also, "I did not think he would turn over so soon," meaning die so suddenly.

Varieties.

GOLD PRODUCT IN VICTORIA.—The yield of gold from the mines of Victoria for the year 1867 was 1,493,831 ounces. The average number of miners employed was 65,857, and the average earnings 35s. per week. The gold-mining companies in the colony paid in the year 1867 dividends amounting to more than £820,000, being a much larger number of pounds sterling than the number of the entire population—men, women, and children. The amount would be very largely increased if there were added the profits of private mining undertakings, and of companies who do not make public their yields and dividends.

VALUE OF HIGHLAND PROPERTIES.—Sir Thomas M. Riddell, Bart., has supplied the *Inverness Courier* with the following memorandum, which is extremely interesting as showing the great advance in the value of land in some of the most inaccessible parts of the West Highlands within a hundred years. Guisachan, the property in question, is situated on the southern or Sunart side of the head of Lochshiel:—"Guisachan: Rent in 1767, £10 10s. Sheep rent in 1867, £175; game rent in 1867, £30; rent in 1867, £205. Sold lately by Sir Thomas Riddell to Mr. Howard, of Stanley, near Perth, for £8,120, being twenty years' purchase of the game rent, and fifty years' purchase of the sheep rent."

PESTILENTIAL LITERATURE.—Seldom is a precocious offender brought into the dock but evidence is given that, on searching him or his dwelling-place, a heap of foul fictions is found. The kind of work in question is not likely to come under the eye—or nose—of many who read this journal; nor is it necessary to annoy their senses by more than a general reference to the character of the poison. But it is well that the educated classes, and those who exert themselves to educate others, and find with dismay that their efforts are baffled by some undercurrent, should know that to the boys of the humbler class there are sold, in enormous quantities, penny stories of the most atrocious kind. These hell-broths are spiced to please the taste of the demoralised lads. The hero is a boy "of spirit," who scorns honest trade and the making "a few dull shillings" a week, and who takes to robbery, either by fraud or force. He is bold and prosperous. He has his reward in all the pleasures he can understand, his "jovial glass," and in the means of other profligacy. The combined attraction of an exciting story and of foul morals is irresistible. The reformatories are full to overflowing, and our cities swarm with young reprobates. Now, we make—and properly—a great fuss about the sale of physical poisons, and the druggist is compelled to label his bottles with the word of warning. But, for one dose of physical, a thousand doses of moral poison are sold. We cannot even trust our theatrical audiences, though they are juries from each class, to decide what is good for them, and we have a censorship. But, unless a book is so brutally coarse as to come under Lord Campbell's Act, there is no check upon the vendor of garbage.—*Illustrated London News.*

BISHOP SELWYN ON BAZAARS.—Some time ago, Bishop Selwyn attended at the village of Curbar to consecrate a new church. In responding to his health, at a luncheon which subsequently took place, his lordship, referring to the work that had called them together that day, expressed a hope that they would not cease in their endeavours in connection with this church until school-rooms and a parsonage had been also erected. Let them on no account have a bazaar. He thought that was a very unmanly way of raising money. The meanest thing men could do was to throw work on the women. He said that advisedly, because having lived twenty-five years among savages, he recognised that their distinguishing mark was to make women do the work of men. That was the system on which bazaars were held. He hoped they would complete their endeavours by direct taxation, not indirect. When he returned from New Zealand, he hoped he should find the remainder of the money necessary for the schools and parsonage had been raised. But his last words were, "Don't have a bazaar." [Ladies are better judges than the Bishop as to the duties, drudgeries, or delights of thus taking their share in good work.]

THE ABYSSINIAN CAMPAIGN.—The despatch of Lord Stanley declaring war against Abyssinia was sent on the 16th of April, 1867, and on the 13th of April, 1868, Magdala was taken and the Emperor Theodore was no more. Sir R. Napier landed at Zoulla on the 3rd January, 1868, and in exactly 100 days the campaign was over.

case which the mother has to teach, as how to feel about it when clearly seen. Discrimination of cases belongs especially to the head; and, although both head and heart should be included in the great work of education as it moves on, the business to be done in early life is chiefly to work upon the heart, so that it shall love truth and justice, and hate their opposites. A desire will thus be established to follow after, and hold fast by, that which is beloved and approved, and to reject the other with dislike and contempt. According to this mode of educating, a child may be brought to love and admire justice, long before it can have attained any great amount of power in judging correctly for itself as to what is just or unjust in the general transactions of mankind.

For this reason—that a child can really be no judge in transactions of business, or in worldly matters generally—the great mistake is made of leaving all considerations about justice, as well as many other moral questions, until the mind is mature, and the character to a great extent established. This fearful and often fatal mistake is chiefly attributable to the almost universal notion that little or nothing can be done in such matters except by the education of the head, that all these things will come right if the child is sent to what is called a good school, and that if properly taught, according to the accustomed routine of scholastic teaching, that the character of the future man or woman will be as good as human instrumentality can make it.

Does the mother ever think, when she consigns her child to this method of preparing it for after life, that even if the thing was stipulated for, which it seldom is, there could be neither time nor opportunity for educating the heart of her child as she could have done that work at home? That the head will be constantly practised at school in the lessons it is learning, the learner sent back again, perhaps a hundred times, until he is thoroughly grounded in his lesson, and so on, from step to step, each lesson made the groundwork for another, but all impressed, and made as sure as incessant labour, stimulated by competition, can make them? While the heart all the while is only *told* a few uninteresting truisms, and not practised at all, or with any method in its education?

Does the mother ever think, when she walks in her garden on a fine spring morning, and watches the fair blossoms unfolding on the boughs, and calculates upon her autumn and winter fruit, that the most critical time of all the year as regards the produce of the garden is just when those blossoms are beginning to *set*, as the gardeners call it? With blossoms a thousand times more beautiful, with the promise of fruit a thousand times more precious, she has the setting-time, as it were, in her own hands. It may be long before the casual observer will see what she has done. The blossoms of the fruit-tree fade and fall, and the small germ of promise makes no show for some time after this critical period; but amongst the many secrets hid in the bosom of nature, there is none more sure than this, that unless the fruit has set, there will be none upon the tree.

So, deep within the mother's bosom may lie this precious, this soul-sustaining truth, that her young blossoms have been cared for, nourished, and guarded in their setting-time; that nothing has been wanting on her part to secure a rich supply of after fruit; and that amidst her toil—toil sweetened by her love—she has constantly prayed for that blessing on her work without which she could have no hope of its success. The care, the watchfulness have been hers, and hers, too, the

skillful turning to account of those ever-changing circumstances of nature which belong to shade and sunshine, storm and calm. Beyond this, there must be the breathing of the breath of life, the inspiration of God's own spirit, to complete the work, for which she can only wait, and trusting in his promises, still work, and pray.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER IV.—SUPERSTITIONS.

Now death was rather a rare visitor in these districts, for people, notwithstanding the want of drainage, and the scarcity of water, if they managed to escape death in childhood, generally lived to extreme old age. It is a positive fact that I heard one old farmer of the age of eighty-nine, speaking to my vicar and telling him that he was busily engaged in breaking in a colt for his own riding. And he did break in and ride this horse, till within a few weeks of his death, when he had attained the ripe age of ninety-six. I remember, too, another case of an old woman, Sally Camp by name. When she was ninety-two years of age she used to continue to filch sticks from the hedgerows, and would even pull up the stout stakes put round a rick to protect it; and these she would often carry away in as great a load as would be heavy for a stout strong lad. In her earlier years she had been a poacher, and a most successful one too, but now she confined her abilities to the carrying away of any firewood she could lay her hands upon. Imprisonment produced no effect upon this old dame, nor did remonstrance either, for even if she was caught in the act, and let off, she would return as soon as the owner of the property had disappeared, quite oblivious of her promise, extorted a few minutes before, not to repeat her depredations. These were of so daring a character, and so often repeated, that the farmers were accustomed, when they had lost anything, to go and search this old woman's outhouse for the missing article. I never found such an indefatigable old woman: if she ever set her mind on any particular stake, she would be sure to persevere in her efforts until she obtained it, however firmly it might be planted in the ground or otherwise fastened.

Her younger sister, upwards of eighty years of age, lived with her; I am grieved to add that neither of them possessed any mark of religion, and I am equally sorry to add that I never succeeded in impressing any. The younger sister always stopped me when she saw me about to make some observation upon what I had read to them, by this constantly-repeated observation—"How nicely you read, do have a pinch of snuff!"

As soon as I was about to recommence after this mutual snuff-taking business was accomplished, "Do have another!" stopped me effectually. I persevered a long time, but perhaps not so long as her sister did at her sticks, and consequently I failed.

This snuff-taking old dame was very superstitious. She used to tell me that she frequently heard the "pixies" or fairies dancing on the moor; indeed, pixy-worship seems really carried on still in Devonshire. I myself have seen bullocks' hearts hung up in the chimney in order to keep away the evil influence of the fairies. Concerning another superstition, I remember asking a poor woman who was attending to her sick child, as it was suffering severely from measles. "Oh," she replied, "It will soon be all right, for I have had it 'crossed.'"

Upon further inquiry, I found that it was the common belief among the lower orders, that a seventh

son or daughter in succession, was possessed of certain miraculous powers; that if he, or she (for it was quite immaterial of what sex the operator was, so that it was the seventh in direct succession), laid a certain number of knives crossways on various portions of the patient's body, the person would certainly recover; this had been done in the case of the child in question, and I am obliged, in common fairness, to add that the child recovered, thereby confirming the mother's belief in the efficacy of the remedy.

One day, as I was walking up the village—and this short story will illustrate another superstition of the hilly part of Devon—I met a woman, named Mary Gray, with her hair all disordered, and bleeding from scratches on her face, and followed by a small mob of people hooting and jeering. Upon inquiring the cause of this uproar, I found that Mary and her neighbour had had a quarrel, and that Mary, to spite the other woman, had run down her neighbour's garden and stared fixedly at the pigs in the sty. Now, it was a firmly-rooted local superstition, that if an enemy stares at any animal of yours, unless you can manage to draw blood from that enemy before a certain time, the animal which was stared at will sicken and die. Accordingly, Mary's neighbour, not liking to have her pigs stared at maliciously, ran down the garden and interrupted the charm by drawing her nails rapidly down Mary's face, in order, as she imagined, to save the lives of her pigs. Hence the cause of the uproar I witnessed.

Another superstition of the higher class came to light thus. On Christmas eve, we at the Vicarage were all alarmed and astonished by the firing of guns and the shoutings of men and women. On going out to ascertain the cause, I found that our nearest neighbouring farmer was holding high festival in his orchard. It seems that it was the custom on Christmas eve to form a procession of the friends and labourers of the farmer, who, after liberal potations of cider, carried a bowl of it, hot and spiced, and with a large slice of cake, to the orchard. Having beaten the bounds, the cake was placed on the largest and oldest apple-tree, and the cider being poured over it, the women shout, and the men fire off guns, in the fervent hope of thereby raising a large crop of apples the following year.

Finding such a vast amount of superstition existing among the parishioners, I tried at first to laugh them out of it, but in vain, for it was too deeply rooted. So I started a series of lectures, which in the end proved most successful; but at first, from their exceeding novelty—for the natives had never heard one delivered previously—they were scarcely understood. You may judge of my mortification and surprise, when about to deliver a lecture upon the Reformation in England, it was generally supposed that I was about to discuss the then forthcoming Reform Bill.

I established, with the consent of the vicar, adult classes for both men and women, the latter with the assistance of the vicar's wife, and of another lady about whom I have more to say presently. I held this class in the afternoon, and for the whole time that we conducted it the attendance was very fair; one piece of superstition came to light through it, of which I was not previously aware. One of the young women, most regular in her attendance at our afternoon class, and of cleaner exterior than many of them, was unfortunately subject to fits. She had been told by a so-called wise woman, that if she stood in the church porch the first Sunday afternoon of the full moon, and asked thirty young men as they entered the church to give her a penny a piece, and with these thirty pennies thus

obtained, was able to effect an exchange for a new half-crown, and with this latter coin had a silver ring made, which she was constantly to wear on her middle finger of the right hand, she would be perfectly free from fits. She never told us how much she gave to the wise woman for the information, but all this trouble the young woman most cheerfully undertook. But her industry was not duly rewarded, for her fits continued as badly as ever. The proposed remedy having failed, she was then advised to obtain possession of the church key, and to open the great west door, then to walk up the aisle and lay the key on the altar-table. This was to be done at midnight in the full moon. Now this ridiculous action was gravely recommended as a positive cure. The vicar was very particular about the custody of the key in question, and had not parted with it on any pretence whatever, ever since some of the ringers had surreptitiously obtained it and got tipsy in the belfry. We found subsequently that the clerk managed on this occasion to persuade the vicarage servants to get it from its accustomed place on the study mantelpiece.

About midnight, we were all awoke and alarmed by violent shrieks proceeding from the churchyard. Next morning we were informed that the young woman, accompanied by a large number of male and female friends, had herself unlocked and opened the great west door of the church, and had walked up the centre aisle towards the chancel, her friends meanwhile waiting, silent and awe-struck, in a body outside. It turned out that when she reached the altar rails her courage failed her, and screaming with fright, she rushed down the church and into the midst of her friends, falling down into a worse fit than she had ever experienced, which lasted several hours; and, indeed, from the evil effects of this fit she gradually sank into a state of imbecility.

When speaking to the vicar one day upon the superstitions of the parish, he told me he had noticed one particularly, namely, that if a person met him whom he had recently thought necessary to reprove, she immediately held down her right hand and opened the third and fourth fingers to their widest extent. This action turned out to be the remains of the ancient banning, and it was supposed that this opening of the fingers in the manner indicated, was a charm to do away with any evil that might be incurred by the reproof of the parson or priest.

One more instance of a different kind of superstition, and I must close this chapter. I could tell many more instances of Devonshire superstition, but they did not fall under my own observation, and they have already more than once been made public by careful and intelligent writers.

Among the young men who attended my male adult evening class, was one whom I had given credit for superior intelligence, perhaps from the fact that he was a farmer's son, and in partnership with his father. His bright looks and active habits also most favourably impressed me, yet I was much annoyed to find that the universal thralldom of superstition bound him as firmly as it did the members of the labouring class.

The farmer, his father, was suddenly taken ill and died. This took place a few weeks after I left the parish, but the vicar wrote to me and told me the whole of the circumstances of the case, and I know that I can rely upon the truth of the statement. Now about the same time as this farmer died, a cow on the farm premises was also taken ill and died; these two events happening at the same time, struck the son as

something unusual and ominous; accordingly, he thought it as well to consult a "white wizard" who lived at T—— concerning the coincidence. The wizard, wishing to make as good a market as possible out of the young man, told him that it was quite clear that this sad affair was no accident, but that he imagined an enemy had drawn a mystic circle in the farm, and that whosoever trod within that circle would surely die; but, added the cunning wizard, the circle was not meant for your father, that I feel certain of; I think it must have been meant for yourself.

My readers may easily picture to themselves the consternation with which this credulous young farmer would receive such a dreadful piece of news, nor will they be surprised when I tell them that he eagerly promised the T—— wizard a large sum of money if he would charm away the threatened mischief. This the man with seeming reluctance consented to do, for a consideration, but he added that his injunctions must be most carefully carried out. They were as follows:—The young farmer was to collect as many of his friends together as possible; they were to assemble in the best parlour, at a certain hour; they were to be all dressed in black, with not a speck of white appearing in sight—not even a shirt-collar was to be worn; the room was to be lighted only with a peculiar coloured candle, procured solely from himself; each guest was to hold it lighted in his right hand, and in the other a large nail, also to be procured from himself. I ought to say that for these articles he asked a long price, and obtained his price, too, without its fairness being questioned, for the young farmer was in such terror that he would have consented to any terms in order that the charm should be made perfect. The ceremony was duly performed and pronounced successful by the operator, but of course he did not unfold the manner by which he had been enabled to obtain this success; the outward sign was in the bending of a nail in a particular direction and certain mystic words appearing on the walls drawn with phosphorus. At the conclusion of the rites practised, when each was ordered to extinguish the candle he held burning, the curtains which darkened the room were withdrawn, and the wizard proclaimed with a loud voice that the young farmer was now enabled to walk about his farm free from danger wherever he listed.

As I said a page or two back, I only mention these things as coming in contact with them in my first curacy. Of course others who have resided years in a similar locality must have observed many more and grosser instances of superstition; but how awful it seems to the mind of any reflecting man, that such absurd ceremonies should still be carried on and believed in, in this enlightened age! It makes one blush that such practices as I have mentioned should be performed in a country boasting of its superiority among the nations of the earth, and professing more genuine Christianity than the other countries of Europe. We can only hope that, by more frequent intercourse with the neighbouring towns, and by the progress of education, in spite of the farmers' hostility, these things will cease to be recorded as facts. Interesting they may be, and amusing also, to look back upon as the superstitions of our ancestors; but to know that they are still held and practised is enough to make one believe that in many things we are not far removed from the heathen themselves, and that we of the clergy, with all our zeal and energies, are not yet able to root out such fanatical absurd belief as the existence of fairies, witches, and wizards.

Varieties.

DELITZSCH'S OPINION ON THE ARTICLE "WHAT IS THE TALMUD?"—A clever and learned Jew, named Emmanuel Deutsch, connected with the British Museum in London, has lately published an article in one of the most widely circulated and best written periodicals in England, the "Quarterly Review," in which he endeavours to make out that there is no such great difference between Judaism and Christianity as is commonly believed, inasmuch as the parables and proverbial expressions of the New Testament are almost all to be found in the Talmud, and therefore are not to be considered as the peculiar property of Christianity. The impression produced by this brilliantly written article was the deeper because it was apparently the work of a Christian: for as Judas, when he delivered up Jesus to his enemies, went up to him, saying, "Hail, Master," and kissed him, so the Jewish author of the article calls Jesus "Our Saviour"—he conceals himself behind a Christian mask. We point out a case where he has been throwing sand into the eyes of his English readers. The Talmud quotes (Kiddushin iv. 14) the saying of Rabbi Simeon, son of Eleazar, "Did you ever see a beast or bird work for their bread, yet they never want, even though they were made solely to serve me. But I was created to serve my Creator, and if those who were made my servants find food without being reduced to poverty, must I, who was made to be my Creator's servant, be only able to exist in poverty and need? Certainly, I only ruin my livelihood by a miserable conduct. On such an occasion who does not remember the words of Jesus:—Behold the birds of the air: they sow not, they reap not, neither do they gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Mr. Deutsch draws many like parallels, all the while deceiving himself and others because he leaves out the dates of these sayings. For when did this Simeon, son of Eleazar, live? In the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (Seder-Ha-Doroth 73 A), a full century at least after Christ. We would not on this account decide that he simply borrowed the expression from Matthew's Gospel which contained these words in the Hebrew—or had heard them from Christian discourse—but the expression being similar, it is here as in most other cases that the original was given by Jesus, and Simeon's was but the copy. We say, in most other cases, we might almost say all, for except Hillel, of whom I have spoken elsewhere, all the teachers in the Talmud whose sayings correspond with New Testament doctrine, lived in much more recent times than Christ and the great founders of Christianity. For the rest we readily acknowledge that the whole of Christianity may be gleaned from the Talmud, if it consist of no more than such moral teaching as exhortations to trust in God and be just in our dealings with man. But this would be a miserably diluted exposition of it to collect only such universal notions. What need was there of the heavenly wisdom taking the form of man if he only tells us commonplaces?—*Professor Delitzsch, of Erlangen.*

BEE BATTLES.—A Yorkshire farmer writes:—"Having long been a keeper of bees, I read the articles in your periodical with interest, especially the accounts of 'Bee Battles.' The theory as to the cause of these battles may or may not be correct, but my object is to mention a remedy which many years ago came to my knowledge. A neighbour had more than sixty hives standing in one paddock. Greatly to his surprise, he one day observed that there was a general war raging amongst them, which they continued from day to day so resolutely, that it became clear most of the bees would be destroyed. A garden engine was procured and vigorously worked amongst them, when they were soon driven to seek the shelter of their hives. They required watching for a day or two, and the engine was applied as soon as any disturbance arose, but they shortly settled down to their old habits, and there was no more trouble with them. If this is tried, those who work the engine as well as those who supply the water, must be well protected, as the bees are greatly irritated."

FLINT JACK.—This notorious manufacturer of flint arrows, stone celts, and other spurious relics, has again been plying a busy trade, and his lucrative art has now numerous followers, by whom the market is flooded with forged antiquities.

BRITISH MUSEUM.—The Parliamentary grant this year is £99,380, being an increase of nearly £4,000. Among the special charges is £1,000 for the agent attached to the Abyssinian expedition.

buy it for a few pence, and we recommend him to do so, seeing that it will show him how to make a profit of his holiday, whatever may be his personal preferences. It may chance to surprise him by the very various revelations it makes as to the pleasant uses to which a man may apply his available leisure. It may save him much waste of time by enabling him to plan his excursions beforehand; and it is very certain that by accepting its guidance, even for a single season, he may see and learn a great deal of which otherwise he would probably remain ignorant.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER V.—THE PARISH CHOIR.

I MUST commence this chapter with the description of a very important body; at least they were so in their own estimation. I allude to the parish choir. When I first went into the parish as curate they still reigned paramount, for, as I have already stated, the vicar had only just previously been inducted into his living.

I think I never met with a more conceited set of people than were the individual members of this choir. I feel sure that Mulready's celebrated picture of "The Village Choir" could or must have been painted from some actual choir such as that of the church in which I first officiated.

There were men and women and children of every age, from the toothless chorus leader to the shrieking infant, and of all conditions of life; for instruments, always an important feature in such a choir, they had the flute, the violin, the double bass, and I know not what besides. With regard to the singing itself, if so it could by the greatest stretch of the imagination be rightly termed, I must allow that the runs and shakes indulged in, and the prolonged notes sustained at the end of each verse, were most wonderful, not only to hear, but also to behold; at least the effects of these shakes were so; for the efforts to produce them upon the countenances of the actors, the contortions, the writhings made in order to keep up as long as those possessed with more powerful lungs were able to do; the red and purple faces indicative of apoplexy—all these efforts, so plainly visible from the reading-desk, produced the most painful effect upon the vicar, his wife, and myself. But the congregation themselves, from being accustomed to such exhibitions for many years, were happily totally oblivious of the impropriety of such exaltations of self in the worship of God.

Now I think my readers will agree with me, that if these were the kind of displays usually carried on every ordinary Sunday in the year, what outrageous proceedings would mark the services of the grand days on which charity sermons were preached by some local magnate. I remember, on one such occasion, soon after I had commenced my duties as curate, I was in the desk, the strange preacher and the vicar were inside the communion rails, that an anthem was sung after the third collect; there was a solo in it, which was sung by a female in the highest pitched key imaginable of a high soprano voice. As for the generality of the congregation, they looked on with silent admiration; while the members of the choir stared, as if they would have liked to have clapped their hands with delight. This expression of their feelings was evident in their countenances; but unfortunately for the lady herself, she got a little too high, and either cracked her voice, or so overstrained it, that she was only able to motion faintly for the

chorus to join in. So great was her emotion that she was gasping for breath, and had to leave the gallery. The chorus obeyed her behest, after a moment's pause; in fact, as soon as they were able to settle down after the wondrous display they had just witnessed. The whole performance was most lamentable.

As soon as the service was over, and the clergy and congregation had departed—the former to the vestry, to deplore such an exhibition, the latter to the church-porch, to applaud the vigour and talent of the singers—the leader of the band came hurrying in, in a great state of excitement; and with his face beaming with satisfaction and importance, he approached the vicar, with the words, "Was it not grand—was it not fine?"

He was quietly met by a face of utter blankness of expression, and with the words, "There certainly was a great amount of voice—the anthem must have been heard for a quarter of a mile, I should imagine."

"Thank you, thank you," quickly replied the man, taking the vicar's remark as a genuine compliment; he then hurried away, telling every one, with great glee, "that the vicar had given it as his candid opinion, that the anthem would be heard of throughout the country."

We resolved in solemn conclave that evening, that this exhibition must cease. But the difficult matter was how to arrange without giving unnecessary offence to any one. Of course, the band must at any cost be dismissed; but then the question naturally arose, what should we have in its stead?

Our unanimous answer was, an organ. Where was the money to come from to purchase one, for the farmers of the parish would be sure to fight shy of a subscription, and of course the mass of the people would follow their example. Before we broached the subject, therefore, in the parish, the vicar resolved to write to the squire upon the subject; for though, as I have shown, his personal character was bad, yet he had been liberal in matters relating to the church. We thought that if we could get him to head a subscription list with a good sum, that we might squeeze a little out of the scarcely squeezable pockets of the farmers. Accordingly the vicar wrote, and by return of post received the surprising and gratifying intelligence that the squire would undertake the entire cost of an efficient organ, and left it most generously to the vicar to state the dimensions and the price.

We kept this good piece of news an entire secret from the parishioners until the very day when the instrument began to arrive in most mysteriously packed cases. As may be easily imagined, the old choir was completely thunderstruck at the novel idea of an organ. They had considered themselves quite perfect.

Time would fail me to relate all the trouble, anxiety, and ill-will, that was incurred during the next few months; but at last the difficulties were overcome. Nor was there really any cause why the parishioners should grumble, especially as they were not asked to contribute a single shilling towards the erection of the instrument. Notwithstanding this fact, many were the openly-expressed wishes for its non-success, and for some time after its arrival it had to be most carefully guarded.

We succeeded in gaining over to our side one of the most intelligent members of the late choir, and persuaded him to go to the nearest town for lessons twice a week on the organ; and from being rather quick at learning music, and having a natural love for it, and perhaps, too, a little proud of the position the vicar meant to give him, namely, organist of the parish, he was quite able at the end of three months to play the instrument in so creditable a manner as to gain

applause from his enemies—from those with whom he had formerly joined in the old choir.

Now this old choir the vicar's wife tried to re-organise, but the opposition to the plan was so great from among the members of it themselves, that she was obliged to give the project up in despair. They were too conceited to learn any fresh method of singing, and so the idea was abandoned.

The next best plan which we fixed upon, as the more natural one had failed, was to train some boys and girls as quickly as possible, and meanwhile to restrain the old choir from using any but the plainest chants and tunes.

In this work of forming and training a choir we were fortunate in getting most efficient help from a single lady and her nieces who resided in the parish, not far from the church. They took every pains in their power to teach the members of the new choir the right pronunciation of the words, the proper division of the sentences, to keep correct time, and to sing in tune.

When at last the new choir was formally installed, the members of the old one had actually the bad taste to assemble in force on the first Sunday morning of its trial, and proceed to cough down each attempt they made to sing the hymns and chant the psalms; in the afternoon the same hostility was displayed, but the boys succeeded much better in their efforts; and on the second Sunday of their new undertaking, not being so nervous, nor meeting with quite so much opposition, there was a marked improvement.

When I left the parish, the choir, for a village one, was remarkably good, though preserving to the end a strong Devonshire dialect. In course of time many of the members of the old choir begged to be admitted, and by patience and perseverance on the part of the ladies who managed the different practices, efficiency up to a certain point was certainly obtained, and there was no village church choir like it for several miles round, as was acknowledged by our neighbours. But no one who has not had the management of a village choir can possibly tell the constant anxiety it is to those who undertake to organise one, and to keep it in order and up to the mark, when once it is fairly set on foot. Incessant watchfulness must be observed over each individual member of a village choir, or much mischief will be sure to arise, and months of careful training of their voices be entirely thrown away. The care of a parish choir is always more or less an unthankful task. Nothing but a strong sense of duty in promoting the decent and orderly worship of God could sustain in such an undertaking.

CHAPTER VI.—THE PARISH CLERK.

Our clerk was, as many village clerks are, a most eccentric character. I feel that I should not be doing justice to himself, but, on the contrary, committing an injury to his memory, if I did not devote an entire chapter to him and his doings.

I can give you a pretty accurate description of him. When I undertook the curacy, he was about fifty-eight years of age, but he had been clerk and deputy clerk for a period of thirty-five years. He had a wooden leg, was marked with the small-pox, his hair was iron-grey, he was about the middle height, neither stout nor thin, he had a kindly twinkle in his eye, and he was a tailor by trade. I must add that I liked him, and I think he was a general favourite.

What a fund of conversation he possessed; for William Strange was a great talker, but he was also a shrewd observer. "Ah," he said to me one day, "I have been clerk in this village more than thirty-four years, and I hope I am good for another fifteen, at any rate."

I asked him to give me the benefit of his long experience, which he kindly and cheerfully consented to do, very much in the following manner:—

"During the time that I have been clerk, I have seen no less than five vicars over this parish. All first-rate men, too, in their way; we never had a bad vicar, at least, not in my time. I don't mean *bad* in the moral sense of the word, but I mean that we never had 'a stick' (you understand what I mean, sir) in the pulpit, nor a fool in business matters.

"I do not, however, mean to say that all these five vicars were all equally good in every particular, 'taint likely; for instance, one was a better preacher than the others, another had a call for ruling a riotous vestry, a third was more affable and such like; but they were all noted for some good quality or another. I say *were* noted! why, bless them, some of them are alive and hearty now, in other parts of the country, and I hope, please the Lord, they may live in peace and plenty for many years to come!"

After a pause, the clerk resumed, "I said we had had five vicars in my time; let me recall them, for I can easily do that. The first was not much of a preacher, and kept himself much to himself, not seeing much of the people; but he was thought a great deal of by the Bishop and the gentry round. After him came a gentleman who had a most powerful voice: he was an eloquent preacher, he was; he had a beaming countenance, running over with the milk of human kindness. Ah, it was a sight, surely, to see our church then; why, sir, the people used to flock here on a Sunday afternoon for miles round; it was beautiful to see them coming across the fields in all directions. The third was a stately gentleman, in manners cold and distant, which, after the other warm-hearted man, made one feel the difference more; he was also of a delicate constitution. I have heard he was of a very high aristocratic family, and I know he had some grand people to see him, especially when he was ill. He died, sir, in that parsonage" (pointing to the vicarage, for during this part of our conversation we were sitting on the stone stile leading into the churchyard—nearly all our stiles were of stone). "Next came a gentleman who was very energetic. He roused up the people; but, poor man, the death of his wife and a bad cold seemed to shut him up all at once, if I may so say; and I did hear that at that time he lost a power of money in one of those bank swindles; and this threw him into a low way, and so he lingered for some years, and the parish went to rack and ruin. Then dissent spread, and our church got empty; but, poor gentleman, I know this grieved him sadly, but he could not help it, he could not do the work himself, and he was too poor to pay for a curate, and so things were left to themselves. Well, sir, after him came the present vicar, and I will say, before his face or behind his back, that he is a kind, persuasive gentleman, and he has got a good business head-piece, too, take my word for it.

"I would back my five vicars, take them all in all, against any other five successive vicars of any parish in Devon. Of course, they all had their failings (who hasn't?) and they were—"

I had to interrupt the worthy fellow in his eulogy upon the merits of his departed vicars, but upon the next day, taking the same direction for my walk, I met with him again, and after an interchange of common every-day civilities, I asked him various particulars about the parish and its inhabitants, and supposed he remembered, during the many years he

had held his clerkship, a good many incidents both amusing and instructive.

"Why, yes," he replied; "but I think our marriages have been among the strangest things I can remember. Perhaps, though, they are more commonplace now-a-days than they were formerly; parsons and people, too, are more particular; and the bishops also, they have looked into such matters rather recently—looked into them a little too closely, I think; the consequence is, that all those queerish, sly kind of marriages go to the registrar's office now for the performance of the wedding contract instead of coming to us. Why, the number of weddings in this church is now only one-half what they were before the year in which marriages were allowed at these register offices. That act has done a deal of mischief, and it's just the same with the registration of births. People are beginning to think that it will do instead of the rite of baptism."

Much more he said on this point, but not worth here repeating, as they were only such opinions as might be expected from a clerk of the old school.

"But I was a going to tell you," he continued, "something about our weddings. What a variety of characters come to be married, to be sure! Ah! I can picture one I once saw here in this church. She was a lovely creature, and no mistake—a perfect ball of snow, leaning on the arm of her stately, fine-looking old father, and followed by a string of pretty girls, all dressed exactly alike. And the carriages, and the nose-gays, and the footmen with the silk calves! But you must not suppose that many of our weddings are like that. Oh, no! we have some very poor ones indeed. I wonder why they marry at all, for I know sometimes they have to borrow the money to buy the ring with, and even the clothes they stand up in are often borrowed from a neighbour. Such silly young things, bringing trouble and children into the world almost before they have ceased to be children themselves.

"I remember one case in which a very shameful trick was played upon a woman by a man in our church. You know, sir, it is always our custom to have the intending couples into the vestry before the wedding takes place, in order to make the entry in the register, so that when the ceremony is over nothing remains to be done but the signing of the respective parties' names and the paying the marriage fees. In this particular case about which I am now speaking, the usual custom had been carried out, and the wedding party had left the vestry to proceed to the altar rails, when the gentleman turned quick round to the bride and said, 'I have left my handkerchief in the vestry, and will go and fetch it, for perhaps it will be stolen if I let it remain till afterwards!' Now there are two doors to our vestry, as you are aware; so the man goes into the one leading into the church, and out at the other leading into the churchyard. He never returned to fulfil his contract, and not one of the wedding party has ever set eyes on him since his disappearance into that vestry. The poor bride was very disconsolate, and would not allow any of us or her friends to comfort her, though he had shown by his base conduct that he was a worthless character, for he had actually succeeded in obtaining from her the money to pay the marriage fees with as they came into the church; she had also herself purchased the wedding-ring which she had just handed over to him. With both these articles he bolted, leaving the poor woman completely broken-hearted, at least for a time, at his atrocious conduct.

"One other bride I also remember lost her husband by a fearfully tragical event. The bridal party had all

arrived at the church, the clergyman was already robed, and time began to wear away and no bridegroom appeared. At last the impatience of the bride's father rose to such a height that he actually went over the way to the lover's lodging to learn the cause of the delay. Upon entering the young man's bedroom—he was a very respectable man, sir—to his horror and astonishment, he saw him stretched upon the floor perfectly dead. He had committed suicide!

"We have also had a few foreign marriages. Why they should have chosen this out-of-the-way spot I do not know, but I suppose they tell one another, and so hand the tradition down.

"You are aware, sir, that a marriage, to be legal in England, must be performed in the English language. Now sometimes it happens that the people who come to be married don't know a word of English, and have never perhaps been in an English church before, except to stare at the monuments; and they do not know what to do or what to say, and will put the ring on in the wrong place, and the women will put one on the men's fingers too, as they do (so I am told) in their own country, and there is a good deal of gesticulation and confusion and bother.

"And then there are sometimes absurd Christian names, men with women's names, and women with men's. And such breakjaw words, too—words with all the vowels taken out, and all the f's, and l's, and t's left in. But talking about absurd names puts me in mind that we have had some funny ones too in my time. Now what do you think of a Miss Pigge marrying a Mr. Hogg; or of a Mr. Catt marrying a Miss Mew? These are both facts, I assure you, sir; the latter wedding took place in the next parish, the former in our own. And perhaps you will hardly believe me, that I am telling you the truth, when I say that a Mr. Fox actually married a Miss Wolfe—but it's true, sir, it's in our register. Then again, a Mr. Summer married a Miss Winter. I was relating this fact to an old chum of mine, when he replied, 'I suppose the issue of that marriage was Spring?' That remark wasn't bad to my way of thinking. And I remember well, in a neighbouring town, a member of the Makepeace family marrying into the Goodwills. And the united family were so struck with the unanimity of the sentiment of their surnames, that they went into partnership and commenced shopkeeping, not twenty miles from this parish, and the strange sign-board drew them much custom, I know. I dare say, only my memory is beginning to fail me, that I could recall several such names. There was another wedding that now comes into my mind, in which a Mr. Gollup married a Miss Slush. When I ponder over these matters, I can't help believing that these couples were first attracted to each other by the oddness of their names; but of course I am not in their secrets, all I know is the result—marriage, and the fees."

Such was his practical way of looking at things, and our clerk was very practical; a spade was always to him a spade, and nothing but a spade. I must, however, now dismiss him from these pages, though in passing I must bear him the true testimony that he was a God-fearing man, which remark I have since found cannot always be applied to the officials round a church. It may be that familiarity with sacred things lessens the religious hold they ought to have and maintain; but with him it certainly never did.

He did not, however, live to fulfil his expectation of being "good for fifteen years or more," for he died in the summer after I left the parish, to the deep and sincere regret of all classes.

capacity. Without him we scarcely could have hoped that this expedition would stand upon record as a rare example among those occasions when a nation resorts to the bloody arbitrament of war, of an occasion upon which not one drop has been added to the cup of human suffering that any forethought or humanity could have spared, and on which the severest critic, when he reviews the proceedings, will find nothing from first to last to except to, whether it be with respect to their military or political or moral aspect. No man can read the despatches of Sir R. Napier without seeing that, after we have given to him the praise of a commander apparently consummate in his means of meeting every demand that has been made upon him for military qualities, there is something which remains behind—that there is a mind firm of purpose, never losing for one moment its thorough balance, and amid all anxiety and excitement, keeping the eye steadily fixed upon moral aims, and remembering under all circumstances the duty of keeping and maintaining untainted and in virgin purity and honour the character of this country. Nor can any one become acquainted with Sir Robert Napier—as we must all feel that we are acquainted with him after we have read his interesting, his manly, his simple, and his modest account—without being conscious that we depart from the consideration of this subject not only with gratitude and admiration for the general, but with respect, with regard—I would almost say with affection—for the man.”

According to precedent in such cases, the thanks and encomiums of Lords and Commons are accompanied by a substantial token of the gratitude of the country. Sir Robert, raised to the peerage, will take rank with the first of his name and lineage, and will enjoy an accession of wealth honourably won. He has also received the freedom of the City of London, accompanied with a sword of the value of two hundred guineas. The page which tells his story to future times will exhibit a new phase in the history of war, inasmuch as it will treat of a dangerous enterprise on a costly scale prompted by humanity alone, and untarnished in its execution by a single act of cruelty or oppression. “A victory is twicet itself,” says Shakespeare, “when the achiever brings home full numbers.” Never has so valuable a triumph been gained at so small a cost of life as the triumph at Magdala; it has been well termed a tearless triumph,—seeing that the “achiever” brought away the whole of his force with their numbers all but undiminished.

Our portrait is from a photograph given by the General himself to an Indian friend, and the autograph is copied from his first signature as a British peer.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER VII.—PAROCHIAL VISITS.

PERHAPS it is among the most difficult matters in a clergyman's administering rightly and profitably to the wants of his people, to know when to make his parochial visits.

Of course there are general rules which are always observed. To go at once when sent for, especially in sickness, is an obvious duty. But I refer to ordinary visitation. Here also some rules may be given, as, for instance, the avoidance of the dinner-hour, washing and rent days, or when their relations have arrived on a hasty visit, or other equally ill-timed seasons.

On the other hand, it is not politic to make our parochial visits on certain fixed days, at settled hours, always on the same people. I have had experience in these things. I bought my experience, and I paid rather

dearly for it too. The only occasions when pre-arranged times are necessary, are when groups of neighbours are invited to meet in one place. This system of visiting is now much carried out, under the name of “cottage meetings.” By catechising the children, and by various devices, these meetings may be made very profitable, both to young and old.

I think that the most convenient time in which to call upon farmers and tradespeople is invariably in the afternoon. And this period of the day generally suits most people, whether clergy or laity; the parishioners will have more leisure time to attend to your remarks, and be most likely in a better temper, after the earlier business part of the day has passed away. Moreover, it is a well-known rule among clergymen, never to ask for a donation, if possible, until after your expected benefactor has dined.

I think, however, that schools are best attended to in the morning; both master, children, and yourself, are fresher, and the boys and girls are more likely to give heed to what you teach them, than if you had stepped into the school during the last half-hour of the afternoon's work; but with visiting, and especially with the sick, the afternoon is, from my experience, the best time for parochial visits. When I entered into the ministry, an old clergyman put me upon my guard about laying too much stress on the arrangements of the room, the laying out of the family Bible, the tract you lent last carefully put by its side, the spectacles also, and I found that this caution was necessary.

I will give an instance or two in illustration. The event occurred in my first curacy, and I have since met with many similar cases.

I was called upon to visit and relieve an old woman, who was reported as being dangerously ill. I made no delay, but hastily told the messenger that I should be at the house in the course of an hour; accordingly, upon my arrival, I found that I was expected, and was shown up at once into the patient's room. I found the sick woman cleanly dressed, and prepared to receive me; she was engaged in diligently reading her Bible, and several other devotional books and religious publications lay scattered around her on the bed.

With this visit I was rather pleased; in the first place, I was exceedingly glad to find the old lady so happily employed in what she took great pains to impress upon me was her greatest delight in life.

After a few general observations upon sickness, its trials and its blessings, and brief prayer, I left, promising to call again in the course of a couple of days.

This I did, and again I found the woman similarly engaged in reading her Bible; but upon my making a pointed remark or two upon the holiness of daily life required in us by God, I was rather shocked by the replies she made, and perhaps more so by the tone in which she uttered the words, than by the words themselves; she plainly told me that she was very sure of going to heaven, and that I need not trouble about the safety of her soul.

The next visit I paid was quite unexpected either by mother or daughter, so much so, that the latter, with whom the old woman lived, rushed up-stairs as I approached the door, evidently to tell her mother of my arrival.

My knock was quite unheeded, though the door was standing open, and the sound could be most distinctly heard up-stairs. I heard a good deal of tramping about overhead, and presently, in answer to my repeated knocks, the daughter came smiling down the stairs, but looking slightly flurried.

I took no notice, but proceeded at once to the sick room; as I entered, the old woman gave a perfectly theatrical start, exclaiming, "I was so deeply interested in this blessed book, that I did not hear you enter."

Now I felt instantly that this was a most barefaced lie, for the daughter had certainly seen me approaching the door, so without making further reply, I went swiftly to the bedside, and took the Bible from her hands and said, as I did so, "Let me see in what you are so very deeply interested."

She was evidently wholly unprepared for my manoeuvre, from the painful result of my action. I very gravely said, "You are indeed a clever woman to read your Bible upside down," as was the fact.

Of course she was utterly confused.

I felt so much disgust, that I left the room and the house without saying another word; as I passed I could not help noticing, in my hurried exit, the haphazard way in which the numerous tracts, evidently kept for the purpose, had been profusely scattered over the bed by the daughter the moment before I was allowed to enter; and, without the least doubt, the Bible also had hastily been thrust into the sick woman's hand, only unluckily this time the wrong side upwards. I regret to add that this old woman actually died on the following day.

This true anecdote is very shocking, very repulsive, and very hardening. I had gone away from my first few visits rejoicing at finding apparently such a good Christian woman, and yet how painfully and rudely had I been wakened from my dream.

These things seldom happen singly, for take another case, which very shortly afterwards came under my notice. I was in the habit of visiting an old woman suffering most dreadfully from ulcerated legs. The pain she constantly endured really made her a true object of pity. Old as she was, and she was turned seventy-seven, she could see to read pretty well, and was better educated than most of her neighbours in her own standing of life. But I fear, from her subsequent conduct, her only religion consisted in the fact upon which she prided herself, namely, that she had "kept her church," that is, attended pretty regularly when well the services of the church on the Sunday afternoon. This woman, whom I will call Nancy White, lived in a small house with only one window down-stairs and one entrance. I am particular as to these details, because they are necessary to the understanding of the incident I am relating. A person wishing to call upon her was obliged to pass close under the sitting-room window, and then to turn down a passage, before the door of her room could be reached.

Now, as I was passing along one day, I saw Nancy White standing up before the window busily engaged in ironing some articles placed on a table before her (I ought to say that this was not the hour in which I usually paid my parochial visits). Being rejoiced at such an improvement in Nancy's health as to allow her to carry on such a useful occupation, I went up the passage, on purpose to congratulate her.

When I reached the door, I knocked, as is my unvarying custom when I make parochial visits, as also to take off my hat before entering. I have known the observance of these little civilities win the hearts of the people, and the breach of them do just the reverse. Upon receiving the customary "Come in," I did as I was bid and entered, when, to my perfect astonishment, there sat Nancy, some way removed from the table, intently reading a book I had lent her, and rubbing, meanwhile, her sore legs as if that was her sole business in life.

All the ironing things had been hastily thrown into a corner and covered with a cloth, so that not a vestige of wet linen remained visible to tell a tale.

Now, as there was no other window, and the road by which I had come was close under the casement, and commanded a good view of the room and its contents, and no door by which a person could escape unseen by myself, I was quite certain that Nancy had been the only occupant of the room, and that I had not been mistaken in my recognition of herself.

This was a sad case of hypocrisy, but I could, I am sorry to add, relate several more, similar in many respects to the two I have already mentioned; but I have merely selected them as true specimens of the deceit practised upon us in making our parochial visits among the poorer classes, teaching us that we should not trust too much in these matters to outward appearances only.

I have found from experience that a clergyman of a parish, if indeed he would truly know the real character of the people entrusted to his charge, should go out at all hours among them; although it is painful that practically he should thus become a policeman in plain clothes.

The unmasking of these deceitful actions is a very disheartening, but, I am convinced, a necessary work; for their success, of course, finds imitators on the one hand, and on the other, honest, striving, painstaking poor, who are above such deceit, are rendered discontented and often soured by the passing over unrelieved of their needs and wants, which sometimes are greater than those of the successful hypocrite.

Of course these actions are to be most strongly reprehended; but I know that the clergy and district visitors generally have brought this state of things upon themselves in a great degree. And this, by relieving the temporal wants of the sick and poor, at the same time that they have called with the object of making a visit upon spiritual matters. The patient is quite aware of this, and consequently wishes to appear as good as possible, in order to obtain the expected shilling or half-crown.

Now when it can be done without great inconvenience, the two objects of temporal and spiritual relief in a visit to a sick person should be kept perfectly distinct; seldom or never, in my opinion, should the relieving of the body be coupled with the ministering to the soul.

It is certainly a very pressing temptation to a sick person, entirely subsisting upon parish allowance, to shake his head solemnly and to turn up his eyes heavenward, when he really feels no true emotion, if he expects thereby at the close of your visit that you will the more freely open your purse.

I think that parochial visits to the poorer classes are much more easily made than those paid to the well-to-do tradesman or farmer. It is so difficult a matter in these latter cases, not to allow the time of one's visit to be frittered away in useless commonplaces, which will serve only to lower the clergyman in the estimation of the persons upon whom he is calling; though at the particular moment they may consider him a pleasant companion, and his visit an agreeable relaxation from the routine of daily life.

I shall not pretend to lay down rules for such visits as these; I know they are the most difficult to render profitable which occur in our ministrations. I only remark that too much watchfulness cannot be observed, lest, in accepting these hospitalities, we should be tempted to forget that we are the messengers of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel.

had gone, received her explanation, that his kindly-meant payment was useless, as there was no writing in the letter, but merely certain marks on its outside, which let her know that her mother was well. They were too poor to correspond at the cost of a shilling a letter. Another person, similarly circumstanced, used to address a newspaper to her mother, addressed "Mrs. Campbell" if she was well, and Mrs. "Campbill" if she was ill; which was, certainly, in the latter case, a very unsatisfactory communication. But we may judge from the existence of such cases, what a widespread blessing it must have been, when the penny-stamped letters were first distributed by the country letter-carriers.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER VIII.—SOME PAROCHIAL EXPERIENCES—PREACHING—LECTURES.

I MUST confess that my first curacy was no sinecure; for, as I have before observed, during the last few years of the late vicar's life the parish had been much neglected. Accordingly we found that many things wanted setting on foot, and maintaining in efficiency when fairly floated. Under the zealous guidance of my fellow-workman—for my vicar was really a fellow-labourer—we originated, and in several instances carried out successfully, various different schemes for the temporal and, I hope I may add, the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of the parish.

Our first aim was to endeavour to draw the parishioners more frequently and regularly to their church. I think that the new choir, about which I have already spoken, was one great means to this end. It gradually grew into popularity, and the pains taken by the vicar's wife and the other ladies I have mentioned, in regularly attending to and superintending the different practices of the choir, regardless of weather, reacted upon the attendance of the choir members and their friends.

The next change my vicar and myself set about was to greatly simplify our sermons. We tried to make them as plain and practical as possible, and enlivened them with as many illustrations as we could from scripture, and from nature and life. I am persuaded that, in general, preachers take far too much for granted as to the knowledge of their hearers in regard to religious truths. Next we also shortened our discourses, making them seldom to exceed twenty minutes in their delivery. For occasional services, or for audiences in towns, who can congregate round a chosen preacher, this time is, of course, short; but for an ordinary mixed audience, especially in the country, I think it enough.

My vicar was no advocate for extempore addresses, and I myself fully agreed with him in this respect, not having "the gift": but though we did not preach extempore, we both made a point of studying our sermons well, so that we really *preached* them, and not *read* them, in the pulpit.

I remember that when I preached my first sermon, nervousness made me elevate my voice too much for the size of the church. I heard two or three remarks upon this first sermon of mine. One of the farmers said "he should like his farm boys to have such a voice to scare away the birds from the young wheat." Another labourer thought "it was not bad for a journeyman parson." Not at all a misnomer for a curate, I thought, when I had this remark repeated to me afterwards. Such hints were useful, both as regards overcoming nervousness and managing the voice.

The first time that I baptized a child, also, my gravity

and fortitude received a somewhat violent shock. The infant in question was more than two years old, and in its struggles to free itself from my arms, it seized my spectacles and dashed them into the font, exclaiming, "I won't, I won't." Now this font was rather a deep one, and as, on account of my deficiency in sight, I could not see to finish the ceremony without them, nothing remained to be done, after I had baptized the crying and struggling child, and gladly returned him to his mother's arms, than to strip up my sleeve and fish for my spectacles until I found them, which happily I quickly did, and having wiped and adjusted them, resumed the service, which I concluded without further accident; but my composure was slightly ruffled, as the affair happened in the presence of a large congregation of grinning rustics, and the squire's pew was full of magnates from a neighbouring hall.

Another and more important accident once made me exceedingly uncomfortable for a time. I was going to preach in the evening at a town about ten miles off from my parish, and in a church where the service was "strictly rubrical," and where the attendance was exceedingly large. This same church had been entirely restored by the resident parishioners themselves, without any assistance from outside. The vicar was popular, but just at this time in a bad state of health; accordingly, as I was well acquainted with him, I volunteered to assist him occasionally in the evening.

On this particular night I had to set off rather hurriedly, having been detained at home by unexpected extra work. When I arrived at the vestry I felt in my pocket for my sermon-case, but, alas! it was not there, nor in the pocket of my great-coat. Now I knew that the vicar was an exceedingly nervous man, and of course totally unprepared to preach, as he naturally expected that I had everything ready. Being late, the choir were already robed when I entered; so, as it was time for service to commence, I just asked for a Bible, which was given me, and I saw the vicar stare at my unusual request, because I had always arranged that I should read the lessons whenever I preached. I made no reply to his inquiring gaze, but silently followed him out of the vestry, and as I did so I could feel the cold chill down my back; but I resolved that I would brave out the matter, and that the vicar should be put to no inconvenience.

Although I read the lessons, as I have stated was my allotted task, yet I managed to find a text and arrange an outline of a sermon. The season was Advent. I took for my text, "He shall judge the world in righteousness." The suddenness of Christ's return, the signs of that coming, the events, as far as scripture tells of that day, the judgment itself, the effects of the judgment, the necessity of preparation for it, and that now, because none can tell how soon it may begin, these topics formed the subject of my discourse. I certainly trembled as I knelt in the pulpit, but I did earnestly pray for assistance from on high, that the congregation (and it was a vast one) might not suffer through my carelessness in losing my manuscript. I feel sure that the prayer was heard. All fear left me after I read the words of my text; and then, remembering whose message I had to deliver, I was able to proceed, and for twenty minutes never faltered or hesitated for a moment. I had preached in that church several times before, but never previously extempore, so perhaps it was from this fact, added to the solemnity of the subject, and the earnestness of the preacher, that the congregation was fixed in deepest attention.

Although my vicar and myself did not deliver strictly

extempore addresses in the pulpit of the church, yet he wished me to give a sermon of this kind once a week, in a building which had been an old chapel in a distant hamlet of the parish. This sort of "irregular" service I am sure produced a good effect among the people; at least outwardly, for I know that the attendance was numerous, and the chapel always full.

From my own observation, I have come to the conclusion, that if the same clergyman, in a country village church, has to preach twice every Sunday, that a written sermon in the morning, and an address without notes in the afternoon, would be found to produce most efficient good among his parishioners. The circumstances of each man's parish must determine his arrangements, but if I ever am the incumbent of a parish, I shall certainly try the plan I here advocate.

Passing from sacred to secular addresses, I stated a few chapters back, that, with the consent of the vicar, I started some lectures, in order to counteract the silly superstitions of the people. Though the first which I delivered, upon the subject of the Reformation, was not so clearly understood by my audience as I could have wished, yet I am happy to say that the majority of those delivered by myself and other friends were generally successful. During the six winters I was in the parish, I myself wrote and delivered forty-seven lectures upon popular subjects. I will not weary the reader with a list of them, but I may add that the subjects included a wide range. In addition to these, others were delivered by several of the surrounding clergy, and by two of our resident farmers. But in case of a failure, such as the carriage conveying the lecturer being upset in our narrow lanes, I was always prepared to act as a kind of stop-gap. Lecturing upon secular subjects was not our worthy vicar's especial forte, but he very kindly and ably assisted us by his constant presence in the chair, and by his purse also, in hiring the various diagrams used to illustrate the different subjects of the lectures.

We generally wound up the evening's entertainment with a hymn and the National Anthem, the clergyman's wife presiding at her harmonium. Now the mentioning of this instrument reminds me of a very noble act of heroism performed by the vicar's wife herself. For a few Sundays, while the organ was undergoing repair, her private harmonium was removed from the vicarage and placed in the organ gallery. At this instrument she herself presided. One afternoon there was an unusually large congregation, the occasion being three funerals from one family. The people found great difficulty in finding a sufficient number of seats; the vicar's wife perceiving this, went down from the gallery to assist in obtaining the desired extra accommodation; just as she re-ascended the stairs, she slipped, and her leg was broken. This accident, happening at the top of the stairs, was not perceived by scarcely any one. In some way or other, with the greatest presence of mind, she managed to regain her seat at the harmonium; and my readers will hardly credit my veracity when I tell them, that after this painful accident, the vicar's wife actually not only played the whole of the appointed music on the instrument, using the remaining unbroken foot to move the bellows, but also led the singing in addition. The first intimation to her husband of the accident, was the sight of his wife's pony carriage at the church door, and herself being carried down the gallery stairs at the conclusion of the service. She withheld the knowledge of her fall from her husband, for she felt that, had he known it, he might have been so unnerved as not to have been able to perform his duty (I was away at the time). All honour be to such a wife!

Varieties.

THE AUTHOR OF "JAMES BRAITHWAITE, OR THE STORY OF A SUPERCARGO."—The Queen has contributed £100 towards the Kingston Testimonial Fund, which is promoted by the Duke of Manchester and other admirers of Mr. Kingston, the excellent writer of boys' books.—*Athenæum*.

GEOGRAPHICAL PRIZES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.—The Royal Geographical Society, on the suggestion of Mr. Francis Galton, Author of "The Art of Travel," have announced a series of prizes to be competed for in the chief schools of England, Scotland, Ireland. The first competition will take place in May, 1869, by examination papers sent down to the several schools, thirty-seven in number, as follows:—*English Schools*: Birmingham, King Edward's School; Brighton College; Cheltenham College; Clifton College; Dulwich College; Eton College; Greenwich, Royal Naval School; Haileybury College; Harrow; Hurstpierpoint; Liverpool College; *London*, Charter House, Christ's Hospital, City of London School, King's College School, Merchant Taylors', St. Paul's, University College School, and Westminster;—*Manchester School*; Marlborough College; Repton; Rossall; Rugby; Shoreham; Shrewsbury; Uppingham; Wellington College; Winchester.—*Scotch Schools*: Aberdeen Grammar School; Edinburgh Academy; Edinburgh High School; Glasgow High School.—*Irish Schools*: Ennis College; Enniskillen Royal School; Dungannon Royal School; Rathfarnham, St. Columba's College.

POST-OFFICE NEWSPAPER DEPARTMENT AT BERLIN.—In the convenient and economical transmission of newspapers and periodical publications, Prussia is superior to England and France. By sending an order to any post-office in Germany, newspapers, &c., are obtained promptly and for the publishing price. There are ninety clerks and porters employed in the office at Berlin. Paper and string cost annually £1,500; a bale of paper being used every day, as the newspapers are sent out entirely covered. The work of the evening dispatch begins at four o'clock, and lasts till ten; that of the morning begins at one a.m., and closes at seven a.m., for which there are two different sets of clerks. During the day there are all the alterations in the registers of the orders to be made. In one room of the large building, German newspapers are received; in another, German periodicals of all sizes; in a third, newspapers and periodicals from Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Prussia are received, whether destined for the interior, or sent from any one to any other of those countries; in a fourth, parliamentary despatches are wrapped up and addressed to the deputies.

BEER FOR FOREIGN PARTS.—British beer finds its way to almost every part of the known world. The export list for the year ending with October last shows that it was shipped from this kingdom for all parts of Europe and America, for South Africa and Western Africa, for Morocco, Syria, and Palestine, China, Persia, Java, Madagascar, Cape Verde Islands, and various islands in the Pacific. To India were shipped in the year 170,504 barrels, of the declared value of £499,033; to Australasia 111,839 barrels, of the value of £461,029; to the British West Indies 27,377 barrels, to the United States 19,856 barrels, to British North America 7,588 barrels, to Brazil 19,727 barrels, to the Argentine Confederation 13,964 barrels, to Chili 12,551 barrels, to Uruguay 11,578 barrels, to Peru 7,392 barrels. The largest export for Europe was to France, 14,418 barrels. The total export of the year, though not equal to that of 1865 or 1866, amounted to 525,619 barrels, of the declared value of £1,960,053.

CROSS PURPOSES.—Many years ago a man named Cameron, who was employed at the George Hotel, Kilmarnock, Scotland, left for Australia. For many years he did not hear from, or had not written punctually home. At last, when he did so, it seems that his wife, instead of replying by letter, at once set off for Gladstone, Queensland, from which place he had written. The steamer in which she came to Gladstone passed a steamer in which he was leaving Gladstone for Sydney. From Sydney she followed her husband to Melbourne. Not hearing from his wife, Cameron went home to find his daughter in the hands of their friends, a grown-up child of twelve years. He at once returned to Australia in search of his wife, Jane Murdoch Cameron, but they had not met since. We insert this at Cameron's urgent request, and in the hope that it will meet the eye of somebody who may know something of Mrs. Cameron's fate?—*Queenslander* (Brisbane).

They must ford the numerous shallow streams, toil up the rocky paths, often merely the dry beds of mountain torrents, and carry the norimon and its contents for many a weary mile. Even in the towns the labour is not slight, for high flights of stone stairs are often necessary in the streets, in order to facilitate locomotion. Up and down, up and down these out-of-door staircases the bearers and their burdens must go. It is no unusual thing in some of the southern cities for a temple to be approached by flights of granite steps, numbering a hundred or a hundred and forty, and up these the norimons frequently pass when conveying Japanese ladies to their devotions. Ponies, also, can run up these staircases almost as safely as cats. They are spirited and somewhat vicious animals, tolerably easy to ride but always snapping and biting at each other. It is a Japanese custom to shoe them with straw shoes, which of course are rapidly worn out. They are then left on the roadside, and a fresh pair tied on. A supply is attached to the saddle.

Japanese women are never seen on horseback.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER IX.—LECTURES, READINGS, NIGHT SCHOOLS.

My anecdote about the vicar's wife has caused me somewhat to digress from the immediate subject we were engaged upon, namely, the utility of lectures.

I cannot help thinking, one great reason why our series were more successful than many others, arose from the fact that they were not dry nor very learned. Another reason was, that an hour and a quarter was the well-kept limit allowed to each lecture. A kind friend, quite unintentionally, placed the whole series in jeopardy by keeping us two entire hours in the moon, clothing his ideas in a mist of the most scientific language, and far-fetched words. The room was densely crowded at the commencement of the lecture, but gradually thinned as it proceeded. I am sure that not more than four persons of the whole audience could understand five consecutive sentences. The preparing of the lecture must have involved much labour, and its materials showed great powers of research and a very high order of intellect. But he might as well have delivered a Greek oration, for all the benefit or amusement our people obtained. I did not again ask my learned friend to assist us.

These kind of unsuitable lectures do more harm than good. You cannot expect uneducated persons to sit quiet, and to be interested in a subject which in itself may be highly instructive, but which, from the peculiar organization of the mind of the lecturer, or from the absolute want of common sense, he is unable to present in a popular manner.

After three years' trial of lectures alone, we thought it wise to introduce a little variety; accordingly, the lectures (which were held every fortnight) we alternated with readings of poetry and prose. Now, these readings took remarkably well, partly because we had a different reader every ten or twelve minutes, and partly because there was a continual change of subject from grave to gay, though, of course, great care was exercised lest anything vulgar or coarse might crop up. We found, also, that in these readings we were enabled to obtain far more assistance than we could in our lectures, and thus our own burden was considerable lightened. Under the name of "Penny Readings," these entertainments have lately become

quite "an institution," but our adoption of them was entirely our own experiment.

In summing up the practical results, both lectures and readings, I think they were chiefly these. First, they formed a subject for conversation, both before and after the event itself. Now, the gaining of this simple point alone was worth the trouble taken, for I am sorry to say our village was much given to scandal and gossip. Secondly, they certainly imparted a large amount of instruction and information to the people generally. Thirdly, by frequent reference to particular books in the lending library upon kindred subjects, they very much aided in the circulation of these particular volumes, thereby creating a taste for reading which was, of course, a great object attained. And lastly, I found that they tended to produce a more kindly feeling among the parishioners themselves. The more distant ones were asked by those dwelling nearer the lecture-room to come and spend a social evening, of which the lecture was to be the centre of the night's amusement. In thus drawing the people together, and inculcating a love of hospitality, which from various causes is not very general among the middle class in the country, much good, I believe, arose, and there was produced a kinder feeling.

I do not, for one moment, pretend to say that the lectures or readings succeeded in drawing old drunkards from the public-houses, or in attracting all the idle characters of the village. This would have been simply impossible to bring about by any form of entertainment we could have established, in which plenty of good eating and drinking, especially the latter, did not form the principal attraction. But I subsequently found that the minds of many of the parishioners were enlightened upon numberless subjects, concerning which they had hitherto possessed but little knowledge, and among the young men especially, a desire to hear and to read more about them was certainly created. And when you consider the long winter evenings, the early hour at which, of necessity, the farm labourer must leave off work, the unoccupied time hanging upon his hands, unless some instructive amusement is provided for him by others, the result is in nine cases out of twelve that the evenings are spent unprofitably, and too often foolishly and sinfully. I know that the getting up of these things, and the keeping them going when set on foot, entails a vast amount of extra work, but it must be done—and by the clergy too, for we get very little help and still less sympathy from the laity of our respective parishes in our desire to raise the tone of our rural population. Our efforts are very often frustrated, and our schemes of usefulness brought to nought, because we are not supported as we ought to be by the employers of labour.

With regard to night-schools and adult classes, I had three evenings a-week devoted to them during the winter months, two for all ages, one exclusively for young men. How fearfully these classes were wanted! I never could have believed that such ignorance existed as I found to be the case. I would not disgrace these pages by the unintentionally absurd, and even blasphemous answers given in reply to my various scriptural questions, but I think the reader will easily imagine they were bad, when he remembers that I have told him in a previous chapter, that all the Bible history the children had been taught at school, was contained in the two books of Leviticus and Revelation, not forgetting the earlier part of the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Let one answer showing genuine simplicity in a little girl suffice. A lady of my acquaintance was asking her some questions about a

chapter in the Second Book of Kings, which the class had just been reading, and among the questions asked, was one, "What did the little Hebrew maid do for Naaman's wife?" The unexpected simple answer was, "Please, ma'am, I think she cleaned the knives."

The first thing in our night school we had to set about was, to reform the filthy habits of the boys, to teach them common decency, and to wash their hands and faces, and to comb their hair. They sadly wanted not only Christianising, but also civilising. To promote this end, I called in the assistance of the vicar's wife and the services of the younger of two maiden ladies, who lived in the village, not far from the church; and their united help was most valuable, especially that procured from this single lady. The vicar's wife was delicate and could not always attend; but this lady was always at her post. Wet, cold, and snow, never prevented her attendance, and the knowledge of this fact not only acted as an inducement to the boys to come regularly, knowing that their teacher would be there, but it also acted as a spur to my own exertions.

Oh what walks I sometimes had to these night schools and choir practices! My road, for a mile and a half, was up and down a steep lane, with high banks on each side: it was also so narrow, that frequently I have had to rush up the banks in order to avoid being driven over by drunken carriers returning from the market town. In addition to sometimes finding the lane blocked with snow, at other times finding nearly impassable pools of water in the hollows, I could fill many a page with the curious adventures I met with in this lane, in the dark evenings of both summer and winter; the frights from poachers and gipsies, the laughable incidents too that happened to me—as falling over a donkey, most unexpectedly lying in the middle of the lane, on one of the darkest nights I ever remember to have been out in; the tumbling into ditches, the running against gates, and the like accidents; but I forbear, as I wish to continue my narrative concerning our evening classes.

During the whole of my stay in the parish, this lady was my firmest friend, most uncompromising champion, and resolute fellow-labourer. I believe she would have made any sacrifices for the boys and youths of the parish; indeed, she suffered much inconvenience from them, and even persecution at times. For instance, I have known her to have been pelted, frightened, snowballed, fired at by a pistol, her garden run over, the beds trodden down, the flowers gathered, and the plants destroyed. I have known her shutters repeatedly rattled, her door-bell violently rung very frequently, disgusting valentines and anonymous letters sent to her; and yet, notwithstanding all this cruel ingratitude shown to her by individuals with whom she had taken the greatest possible pains, she did not grow weary in well-doing. She possessed a sharp eye and a quick ear, both necessary qualifications in an efficient teacher, and what is more rarely found among ladies, she had a perfect knowledge of arithmetic. She understood music, though she played but little herself, so that she was of great assistance also in that stumbling-block of so many parishes, a village choir.

We were accustomed to keep the boys two hours nightly, the last half hour being invariably devoted to scriptural instruction, ending on alternate evenings with prayer and praise. The attendance of boys at first starting the evening school was very numerous, so much so, that I was obliged to limit the admissions; but, in course of time, as the novelty wore off and the boys saw that we intended to make them work, there was no further necessity to do so.

Now, the advantages of the night school were twofold. Firstly, to the boys themselves, for, by the education we imparted to them in the course of two or three winters, they were enabled to obtain various situations in the neighbouring towns, and even in the metropolis itself. They thus escaped the painful privations during their manhood, and the extreme amount of penury which so many of their parents endured in that particular agricultural district. The second advantage arising from our evening classes, chiefly concerned our neighbours and ourselves. Many of the boys became gradually less noisy in their conduct and at their various games, though some of our enemies, for all persons who try to better existing evils will have enemies, called them "stuck up" and "self-conceited." They certainly came more regularly to church, and behaved much more reverently when there. They were more respectful and gentle in manner, and some of them learnt that difficult but all-important lesson—self-respect. I do not mean to allege that this change was wrought in a month, or in the course of a single year's teaching; but it was as the leaven working in the meal. I will not pretend either to say that our instructions produced the same good fruit in all; that would not be true—far from it. There were many disappointments with particular individuals, who showed by their after conduct, that our influence had only been temporary and not lasting.

After I had become really acquainted with the boys and the young men of the parish, I made it a point, which I still retain, of corresponding with each youth as he left the parish. I did this about every six weeks or two months. This plan, I allow, adds much to one's labour, especially as I have removed to a more extensive and difficult sphere of duty; but I am frequently convinced, by practical knowledge, that very much good results from this practice; and though my correspondence grows apace, yet, under God's blessing, I mean to continue to write to them all as often as possible. The course I pursue is not to be "sermonizing" in my letters; and, consequently, the replies I receive are open and confidential. Numberless are the secrets entrusted to me, and advice is asked on a variety of subjects.

With the class of young men I stood in even closer relationship. I wished them to look upon me as an elder brother. In this I succeeded with some; and many is the tale of sorrow, of deceit, and of sin, I have had poured into my ear, not as to a priestly confessor, but as to a friend ready to sympathise both with advice and with my purse, as largely as it lay in my power.

Poetry.

WRECKED.

O SOUL, storm-driven on the shoreless sea,
Which thought of man ne'er fathoms, nor can bound,
No helper seeing through the darkness round,
But borne alone towards dread immensity,—
Is this proud reason's glorious destiny?
So drifts the wreck on ocean's great profound,
While winds pursue, and restless waters sound,
The noblest form reduced their toy to be:
No sovereign hand controls the ready helm,
No cheerful voices rise above the wave.
Not thus forsaken, though the billows whelm,
Is he whom Christ hath walked the seas to save:
Above the stormiest day the clouds shall break,
And the worn spirit in His presence wake.

builder-up of the skeleton elephant in the Manchester museum; Benjamin Satchwell, the discoverer of the saline springs at Leamington; John Younger, of St. Boswell's, author of "River Angling for Salmon and Trout;" S. A. Mackay, of Norwich, author of "Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients;" and John Brand, Secretary of the Antiquarian Society of London, and author of several learned works—had all, at one period of their lives, been shoemakers. So had Hans Christian Andersen, the celebrated Danish writer; and Hans Sach, of Nuremberg, the poet and friend of Luther; while of those members of the gentle craft who have preached the gentle words, "Peace on earth, goodwill to all men," I may mention the illustrious missionaries, Dr. Carey, Dr. Morrison, and Dr. Ebenezer Henderson, Dr. Marshman, the Rev. John Thorpe, of Masbro', and Dr. John Kitto, to whose biblical illustrations and researches every student of the Holy Scriptures is deeply indebted.

Among living members of the craft I may name Mr. John Kelso Hunter, shoemaker and portrait painter, known in his native Ayrshire and throughout the Western Highlands of Scotland by the familiar name of "Tammis Turnip." Mr. Hunter has now extended the circle of his admirers by the publication of his autobiography, entitled "The Retrospect of an Artist's Life: Memorials of West Country Men and Manners of the Past Half Century."

Another more notable name is that of Mr. Thomas Cooper, shoemaker, schoolmaster, newspaper reporter and editor, Chartist leader, political prisoner, infidel lecturer, poet and novelist, and Baptist preacher. His death was reported last May, but after a few days' interval, letters appeared in the newspapers from Mr. Thomas Cooper himself, to say that he was still alive and well. His career affords a remarkable example of that diligent pursuit of literature and cultivation of thought which has often been found in connection with the shoemaker's bench, and of which I have already adduced many instances. It has been recorded of Mr. Thomas Cooper that, born in 1805, "he was taught the humble trade of a shoemaker in his youth, and, having instructed himself in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French languages while at his stall, became a schoolmaster at twenty-three." It was while in prison that he wrote his poem on "The Purgatory of Suicides."

I will conclude this paper with a peep at a member of the gentle craft given by Luther in his "Table-talk," and it is a happy illustration of religion in common life. "Anthony the Hermit was told in a dream," says Luther, "that there was a shoemaker in Alexandria who was to be the sharer of his immortal glory. Anthony was astonished, and hastened to Alexandria to see him; for he thought that the shoemaker must be a most excellent and highly-gifted man, to be fit for his company in heaven. When he came to him, he found him at his work, by which he supported his family, and said to him: 'My friend, I know that you serve God faithfully—I pray you, tell me what you do, what you eat, what you drink, how or when do you pray? Are you in the habit of watching and praying all night?' 'By no means,' said the shoemaker; 'but morning and evening I thank God for his gracious protection; and I pray that he will forgive all my sins, for Christ's sake; then I pray that he would continue to guide me by his Holy Spirit, and not give me up to temptation. When I have offered my prayers, I again go diligently to my leather, and work for the support of my family; beyond this I do nothing, except to take care that I do nothing against my conscience.'"

Poetry.

THE WATCHER AND HIS ANSWER.

"Oh watcher on the walls of life beyond the dimness and the dream,
Look forth upon the mighty world, its field and forest, town and stream;
And as we hearken sunder sure the things that are from things that seem."

"I see a smiling phantom pass, which jostling crowds pursue
amain,
They call her Pleasure, and they catch the radiant fringes of her train;
But evermore she melts in air, and every hand is closed in vain."

"What more, oh watcher?" "Now I see red War tramp forth—
he drips with gore;
Great navies ride upon the sea, and armies gather on the shore;
And women's shrieks and children's cries are mingled with the cannon's roar."

"What more, oh watcher?" "Famine comes; all ghastly
grey he takes his stand,
And mildew, blight, and canker fall, dark poison droppings from his hand;
The grapes are withered on the vine, the corn crops rot along the land."

"What more, oh watcher?" "Stalking slow I see the black-robed
Pestilence;
He treads the squares, the streets, the lanes, and climbs the little garden fence,
And folk by thousands droop and die, or blindly moan, bereft of sense."

"Oh watcher look beyond the earth! We sicken as we hear
you speak—
This tale of woe has frightened us and stopped the red blood from the cheek.
Look up, look up, is naught beyond? We hold our breath and listen meek."

"I look, and lo, from Heaven above, the coiling clouds are swift
unrolled,
And glittering bright, in gate and wall, I see a city all of gold;
The sheening splendours of the place to human ears may not be told."

"The portals open; through them pass a long procession clad
in white—
They sing aloud, and thus they sing, 'Here comes no darkness of the night,
But Loss and Famine, War and Plague, yea, even Death, are banished quite.'"

A. N.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER X.—SOME CHARACTERS OF THE VILLAGE.

EVERY village and small place contains one or two people who are noticeable, in some way or other, as differing from the rest of the inhabitants, either in dress, appearance, or manner. And these people are "the characters" of the place. They are a source of much amusement to their neighbours, and their sayings and doings afford many a topic of conversation, especially when there is a dearth of local news.

I have already given a brief account of our clerk, always a notable character in any parish, and sometimes a notorious one too. Then you have had the parish choir upon the carpet; a little has been said about the squire and others who figure more or less in the routine of a curate's vocations. But I have omitted all mention of our parish "doctor," and I should be doing a

serious injury to a most worthy man if I did not notice him among other village celebrities. Every one called him "doctor," though I doubt if it was more than a title of usage and courtesy.

In person "Doctor" Jackson was tall and thin, with white hair, regular features, a sharp eye, and intelligent face. In manner he was blunt, and frequently hurt the feelings of his patients by his rough manner and straight-to-the-point way of speaking. But nevertheless, offended or not at his manner, the parishioners would have no one else to attend them. Once indeed, after "Doctor" Jackson had given offence to two of the chief farmers, because he would not leave a poor sick woman, in whose case he was much interested, to attend to their temporary ailments after a late carouse at a tithe-feast, it was thought that an opening was made for a rival practitioner to come and settle in the village. Certainly at times the doctor was greatly overworked, and though it was some satisfaction to know that the rich and poor were treated exactly alike, yet a man who is ready and willing to pay the doctor's fee does not like to wait his turn in the village apothecary's daily rounds. Though the services of an assistant were unceasingly pressed upon him, year after year he always delayed obtaining one.

Accordingly, the two farmers before mentioned did invite a young man, who had passed a creditable examination, to come into the village. He came, it is true, but in six months he left; not from any fault of his own, or from want of skill, but simply because he had no patients upon whom to exert his medical skill. He could not persuade the old parishioners to trust themselves to his care; and the children needed none of his help, for they were, as I have already stated, "crossed" if anything was the matter with them. As for the two farmers who had encouraged the poor young man to come, they were hale, strong men, with good constitutions and powerful lungs; and as no tithe-feast occurred while the new medical man was in the parish, they did not stand in need of his assistance, and we can hardly have expected them to dose themselves with physic in order to accommodate their friend. Sorrowfully he had to pack up his drugs and to betake himself to a district where the inhabitants were less healthy, and where there were not so deeply rooted prejudices against newcomers as in our parish. The failure of the scheme to bring in a rival surgeon, cemented Dr. Jackson's union with all his patients; and the unfortunate farmers were obliged to make an apology to him, and beg him to attend them in case they should be taken ill suddenly, apoplexy not being a disease quite unknown in our village.

I never witnessed such faith as the people possessed in Dr. Jackson's power of healing. If he could only be got to attend, then the relatives of the sick man were quite satisfied. This happy state of feeling might partly have arisen from the superstitious frame of mind which was the natural one among the parishioners, but at the same time we must not forget to render justice to Dr. Jackson's skill and experience in the healing art.

One thing I must not omit to mention: it is that while Dr. Jackson was an authority, a great notable authority for miles round the village, at home the doctor was not the master of the house. Be it gently spoken, Mrs. Jackson was somewhat of a virago, at least she was a tyrant, and ruled the house, her daughters, and her husband, with a more effectual weapon than a rod of iron, namely, a woman's tongue. Some persons ill-naturedly said that Dr. Jackson's assiduous attention to his

patients was owing to the disquietude of his own home, and that he found peace and happiness only when abroad.

Mrs. Jackson was a woman that stood high in the estimation of some of the good people in our parish. Perhaps they did not know as much as I did of her domestic life, for the doctor was a quiet man in all that did not relate to his profession. But I have noticed that sins of temper and of tongue are often too easily overlooked; and, moreover, if religion is real, it will show its reality in daily life as well as in Sabbath profession. I do not wish to say anything against Mrs. Jackson's religion: all I know is that some of the usual fruits of good living were sadly lacking. She did not make her husband comfortable, and she did not adorn her profession, even in outward matters. Her cap was never clean and never straight; her dress too was nearly shapeless, and no efforts either of husband or daughters could ever succeed in rectifying these little matters. If she had been an invalid, or if she had worldly anxieties, there might have been excuse for her, but with everything prosperous, her habitual discontent and repulsiveness really brought discredit on her Christian profession. Of course she was a wet blanket upon any project of a pleasurable nature, however innocent. "Pleasure!" she would say, "is pleasure right? will not pleasure-seekers suffer, and shall not mirth and gladness be turned into mourning?" And then with sundry shakings of the head, she would mutter some words unintelligible, though I was sure they were as disagreeable and "nasty" as possible. Often did the doctor come up to the vicarage, and in his rough-and-ready way, exclaim, poor man, in answer to inquiries after his wife's health, "Oh, worse than ever!" We always knew that something had gone wrong at home; he would generally unburthen himself of his trouble before he left, and we found it invariably proceeded from some difference with his wife. Perhaps it was the accepting or declining of some invitation, all feasts and merry-making being an abomination to her, though relaxation to him. Sometimes as a matter of worldly prudence, especially when the rival surgeon came into the village, did she consent to accept a few such invitations, but she froze the party by her presence, and having made every one uncomfortable around her, she would sit on her chair resigned and gloomily think she had done her duty. Mrs. Jackson did not come to our church. She took an early opportunity of telling the vicar she went where she could get good! And in search of it she had to walk many miles, when she went to church at all. The doctor could not spare his servant or horse in the morning; in fact he was very much opposed to her leaving her parish church, where he in the afternoon was a regular attendant. I remember one very hot day a farmer met her on her return from the neighbouring church, and seeing she was much fatigued, he suggested that her own church was much nearer. She placed her hand on the farmer's arm, and with marked emphasis, in a sepulchral voice replied, "Mr. Carter, even a drop of poison is a very bad thing!" And then shaking her head she went her way, leaving the farmer in a haze as to the proper meaning of her words. Now I do not mean to say that Mrs. Jackson was a bad or an uncharitable woman, because such a statement would be simply untrue, but she was mistaken as to the nature of her religious duties and had allowed her judgment to become thoroughly warped. The result was an unhappy home for the husband at least, if not for the daughters also.

Another celebrity of our parish for a time was "a

coffin." Start not, gentle reader, I have no tale of horror to unfold, but rather to give as true an anecdote of a very eccentric old gentleman. He died worth a great deal of money, which he had invested for the purchase of a number of almshouses for poor widows and widowers. These were located in the neighbouring town, but he was buried in our churchyard in a vault he had himself chosen, and in the building of which he had been much interested. But one extraordinary request was made in his will, namely, that all his mourners, the undertaker and his assistants, and even the horses of the different carriages, were to wear yellow scarfs instead of black. This request was faithfully performed. Another request, or rather bequest (for the payment of an annual sum depended upon the carrying out of this portion of the will), was that a small pane of glass should be fitted into the lid of his coffin; for he had a strong presentiment that he might be prematurely buried, and therefore wanted a window made in order that when people visited his vault they might at once see his body; and to prevent any neglect on the part of his friends, he left a sum of money to be given to certain of them, if for a stated number of years they would inspect his coffin and its contents. When the time was completed, the grave was finally closed.

Another notable person of our village was a sick woman. Upon the authority of her sister (the female who figured as the leading singer in the anthem on an eventful Sunday in the history of the old choir), and of several neighbours, this sick woman had been confined to her bed for seven-and-twenty years. Never once during that long period she had had her clothes put on her, or been moved further than the chair by her bedside! Can we picture to ourselves seven-and-twenty such wearisome years? And Mary Glanville was totally unable to earn anything during that period, or even to raise her hand to her mouth. If a fly rested on her face, there it must remain until some neighbour came in and drove it away, for her sister was a great part of her time away, and consequently Mary was continually left in solitude. She was also dependent upon her relatives for the smallest morsel of food or drop of water: she was completely paralysed.

I went very frequently to see her, and often as I entered the room I thought she was a corpse. She had attained, by long confinement I suppose, a most peculiar pallid appearance. She seldom could bear the window open, it seemed to give her pain; and her head was tied up in the strangest manner I ever saw: it was covered with a kind of nun's cap of linen coming low down upon the forehead, over the ears and covering also the chin, so that her eyes, nose, and mouth, were the only features visible; and from her position, lying straight at full length in the bed, with very little perceptible motion, the resemblance to a corpse was the more striking.

She had the power of speech, however, and spoke nicely, but in a very drawling voice; invariably did she greet me with one set speech, and never missed quoting the text, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Poor Mary! I hope she has realised the truth of these words, for I have lately learnt that she died about four years ago, after having been confined to her bed, with the rafter and thatch (for there was no ceiling to the room) above her, for thirty-two long years!

Dear readers, when inclined to murmur think of the wearisome months and years passed in a state of utter helplessness by Mary Glanville without repining.

Varieties.

MOSQUITOES.—I was at Monaco last October, and the place at that time was infested by mosquitoes. My wife was attacked by them night and day, and no contrivance, either of net curtains over her bed or lotions prepared by Nice and Mentone chemists, could keep them from her. One day, by accident, she gathered a bunch of wild rosemary, which grows plentifully all along the Riviera, and placed it in her room. From that moment not a single mosquito entered the apartment, and as long as she carried some of it about with her she was quite free from their attacks.

J. H. C.

READING FOR THE BLIND.—The American missionaries at Beyrout lately brought out a new translation of the Scriptures in the Arabic language—the language of 120 millions of the world's population—and they had scarcely begun to circulate it before their attention was arrested by the number of blind Arabic-speaking people, and they determined to prepare for them "The Sermon on the Mount," Matthew v. In order to do this, they set their ingenuity to work, and the plan they adopted was to take twelve sheets of tin, to form the letters in wire, put them in proper order, solder them to the tin, soften the paper, impress it upon the plate, and thus form a beautiful book, a copy of which lies before me. It cost me only 6d., and each sheet of tin with the letters upon it may be had for 1s. It is important to call the attention of the friends of the blind to the fact that they themselves, unaided by a blind asylum, may do almost all that is required for many of the blind.

C. S.

EARNESTNESS IN THE PULPIT.—One day a bishop met Garrick, the actor. The bishop said, "How is it, Mr. Garrick, that your house is crowded, and people pay to get in, while my cathedral is all but empty, though admission is free?" "The reason," said Garrick, "is plain. In my house we speak fiction as if we believed it to be truth. In your cathedral you speak truth as if you believed it to be fiction."

LORD RAGLAN.—Lord Raglan possessed many of the qualities of a great general. The firmness with which he suppressed the murmurs against the expedition at Varna, his coolness and presence of mind under fire, the equanimity with which he bore reverses, the bold front which he presented during the winter of 1864, by which he probably saved the remnant of the British army; the magnanimity with which he bore calumny, when an attempt to defend himself might have jeopardised the French alliance—these are all qualities of a great man, and when added to the military skill which a long experience in a good school of army must have engendered would have obtained for him, under happier auspices, the reputation of a great commander.—*Sir John Burgoyne.*

TAVERN SIGNS.—Tavern and other signs have recently been much written about; but I have seen no notice of "The Gentle Shepherd of Salisbury Plain." Yet such has not only been in existence in England, but an example has found its way to the Cape of Good Hope. Halfway between Simon's Town and Cape Town, Flormer Peck (from England) kept a tavern with the following unique quadri-lingual invitations to the public on his signboard—

Multum in parvo, pro bono publico,
Entertainment for man or beast;
Lekker kost, as much as you please,
Excellent beds, without any fleas,
Nos patriam fugimus, now we are here,
Vivamus, let us live by selling beer,
Ou donne à boire et à manger ici,
Come in and try, whoever you be." T.

WATCHGUARDS.—Watches may be easily protected against sudden assault by adopting the following plan:—Let a small ring be firmly sewn inside the waistcoat pocket, and the lower end of the guard-chain passed through it before being attached to the watch. Whatever may happen to the chain will then be of little consequence, as the watch will remain safely in the pocket of the owner.

T. F.

WELSH SAINTS.—To the Romish catalogue of saints Columbus is just now about to be added. As the Welsh claim to be discoverers of America, it might be as well, perhaps, to transmit a few of their canonisations to that country to be invoked at due seasons, if they can only manage to pronounce their names. Ex. gr., Saint Glywys Ceriniw, Saint Gwrddelw, Saint Gwrfyw, Saint Gwrthwl, Saint Cynflyn Drwsgl.

RICE REES.

at 4.39 P.M., and on the 31st at 3.32 P.M. He is consequently now very favourably situated for observation, and is a beautiful evening telescopic object, with his four attendant moons. Jupiter is above the horizon all night at the beginning of the month, but at the end he disappears below it nearly three hours before sunrise.—Saturn can only be seen during this month in the south-west, as an early evening star, for an hour or two after sunset. He sets on the 1st at 7.41 P.M., and on the 31st at 5.52 P.M.—Both Uranus and Neptune can be observed as telescopic objects in October throughout the night.

The moon will be only a short distance from Jupiter on the evening of the 1st. On the 5th she will be near the Pleiades, and on the morning of the 6th near Aldebaran. On the 10th she will be in conjunction with Mars, and on the morning of the 12th Venus, Regulus, and the moon will be near each other. On the 28th, during the evening, the moon will be again near Jupiter at 8 P.M., when they will only be separated by about two degrees. At this time both objects are in the constellation Pisces.

The principal lunar phases are as follows:—Full moon on the 1st, at 7.58 P.M.; last quarter on the 9th, at 6.13 A.M.; new moon on the 15th, at 11.1 P.M.; first quarter on the 23rd, at 9.42 A.M.; and full moon, for the second time this month, on the 31st, at 11.5 A.M. The moon is nearest to the earth, or in perigee, on the 13th, and most distant, or in apogee, on the 25th.

LIFE IN JAPAN.

VIII.—AMUSEMENTS.

THE public amusements of the Japanese are nearly as varied as those of more western nations. Dramatic representations, including equestrian performances, wrestling matches, feats of skill and strength, ropedancing, conjuring, etc., afford them entertainment.

There is no desire to shorten the enjoyment of theatrical displays, neither are they reserved for the evening time. A large square, or horseshoe-shaped space, is surrounded by temporary erections of two storeys. The upper one is reached from the outside, and partitions are set up at regular distances: each of these boxes will contain a family, and may be hired by the day or week. The enclosure is open to the sky, and the stage extends along the whole of one side. The audience are summoned by the sound of a rattle (which is sometimes continued for two or three hours). They are in the habit of providing themselves with provisions and refreshments; and a whole day can be passed quietly in witnessing the performances, which are sometimes of a soothing, sometimes of a rousing, character. Scenes of love and hatred, revenge and retribution, form the subject of their dramas. Male and female performers act the parts. Comedy does not enter largely into these compositions; but single combats are frequent, and seem to be much appreciated by the lookers-on. Their history, which has been of a most varied and striking character, furnishes them with numberless plots, and love, jealousy, and murder, supply the usual quota of domestic incidents. In some of the representations several plays are carried on alternately, that is, the first act of number two succeeds the first act of number one, and number three that of number two, and then the second and following acts of the three plays are performed in similar order; thus spectators can choose which piece they will follow, and in the intervals they may retire and attend to their business or pleasure.

At some of the theatres the performers pass through the midst of the audience to reach the stage, in order to familiarize them with the dress of the part they are acting, as the great object of a Japanese actor is to represent as many different characters in the same piece as possible. There are seldom more than two or three personages on the stage at one time, so this can be effected without much difficulty.

Occasionally the performance is so natural that the tragic episodes exercise great effect upon the more susceptible of the audience, and tears are freely shed when the hero of the piece, who ought to wed the fair heroine, falls a victim to the sword, or is secretly poisoned by a rival; but, as a rule, the performance goes smoothly on without much demonstration of feeling on the part of those who are present. In fact, the length of time through which these performances continue prevents any excessive outburst of emotion, as it would be impossible to keep the feelings harrowed and sympathy excited for a week or so on account of the woes of those who are palpably acting their parts; for the broad daylight which shines around, and the absence of accessories in the shape of scenery and lights, renders the task of a Japanese actor a particularly difficult one. Gorgeous dresses of silk and satin are worn, both the materials and colours being much richer than those which are in common use.

Besides set theatres, with a regular *corps dramatique*, itinerant performers are met with in the streets, who represent shorter plays and scenes. Both women and men in these small companies have their faces hideously coloured with red and white paint. Their dresses are poor, compared with those of the superior class of actors. They soon gather a large crowd around them in the busy streets, and seated or standing on mats and cushions, they recite their parts and enact the scenes in the open air, the spectators throwing down a few cash or a tempo when the performance is concluded.

The equestrian performances are rather plays on horseback than scenes in the circle, and consist of mounted actors, who ride in and out gesticulating, fighting, and going through mimic combats, while managing their wild-looking steeds on the wooden platform; a great clatter ensues, but the results are by no means terrific. In an exhibition of this nature, witnessed at Nagasaki, the only feat worthy of note performed by the horses was the ascent and descent of a somewhat steep wooden staircase; but as all travellers in Japan are constantly passing up and down stone steps when mounting the hill-sides and visiting the temples, such a performance was by no means extraordinary.

Japanese jugglers deserve a special mention for the great dexterity they exhibit in some elegant and surprising feats of skill. Nothing can be prettier in that way than the celebrated butterfly trick. A conjuror twists a piece of thin paper into the shape of a butterfly with outstretched wings; he then places it on his fan, and with a slight movement launches it into the air, where it flutters about, now settling on the edge of the fan, whose gentle motion regulates its movements, now flying high in the air, and then once more hovering over the fan with all the fitful gracefulness of a live insect. A second fan is sometimes brought into requisition, and the butterfly passes from one to the other, or flies away seemingly directed alone by its own will; the illusion is rendered still more perfect when another butterfly joins its companion, and the two together flutter about, hovering over a bunch of flowers, which the conjuror holds in one hand, seemingly sipping their sweets as they rest for a few seconds on the coloured petals, and

then dance away again on their airy flight. A teapot is held out, and the butterflies quit the bright flowers and rest on its rim; then they fly inside, as if anxious to explore the dark interior, and are lost to sight for a few seconds; but they soon emerge and flutter about more gaily than ever, glad, it would seem, to regain the light and liberty. One experiences a feeling of regret when the pretty graceful butterflies are at length ruthlessly caught and torn to pieces, so completely do they seem animated creatures, and not mere toys.

Top-spinning is also carried to perfection in Japan. The tops are of various sizes and shapes, chiefly that of a brightly painted wooden cylinder, pierced by a small round metal axis, on which the cylinder moves freely. Others are more like umbrellas, but nearly all can be made to revolve in extraordinary places. For instance, a top is set spinning along the edge of a sharp sword, on a slender piece of twine, or up an ascent and into the interior of a box, where it strikes a certain number of bells and then emerges at an open door, still spinning as fast as when it commenced its curious journey. It is well to mention, as another peculiarity of Japanese top-spinning, that this journey is made on the side of the cylinder, and not on the point of the axle. Family—or, as they are sometimes called, hen and chicken—tops are also common. A large top contains a number of small ones, and while the large one revolves these pop out one after the other, and commence spinning around the parent top, which is soon surrounded by a number of small ones, all turning so rapidly that the eye can scarcely see them move.

The tops vary in size from three inches to three feet in circumference; sometimes a large top is, as it were, wound up to such a degree that the sides of smaller tops are applied to its side, and the momentum thus acquired is sufficient to set them spinning at once. From time to time the performers wipe their hands on their paper pocket-handkerchiefs, so that no moisture may impede the perfect action of the top. The top is removed from place to place with the greatest freedom, the equilibrium being maintained, whether it is spinning on the point of a bamboo or on the surface of a flat table.

Birds are trained to play many tricks; to select cards, pull up small buckets, carry weapons, and run up ladders, open doors, etc. The clever little performers hop about with a well-satisfied air, and are rewarded for a successful trick by the present of a hemp seed. When going through their mimic labours they are quite at liberty, and have the full use of their wings, but do not attempt to escape, and seem perfectly under the control of their trainer, who, with his assistant, carries the cages and apparatus from village to village, stopping at the country houses of the better classes, and at the residential parts of the temples, where he exhibits his little companions' skill to the admiring eyes of the ladies of the establishment. There is a serious gravity of demeanour about these exhibitors, when, seated on their heels, and dressed in dark silk garments, they direct the movements of the birds, which renders these performances far more picturesque than similar ones in England.

Some of the balancing is also very extraordinary. The Imperial Japanese troupe, at present exhibiting in this country, give examples of these efforts of skill and strength. Some of them are in the highest degree sensational; yet but few persons feel alarmed at these exhibitions, so calmly do the performers go through their evolutions, and each one manifests such perfect confidence in the address and skill of the others. It is also a feature of Japanese exhibitions, that

a number of assistants are always at hand, dressed in handsome garments, who stand about in picturesque groups, and, while adding to the general effect of the scene, are prepared to act should an emergency arise. Sensational as many of our exhibitions are, they are equalled by those of the Japanese rope-dancers, bamboo-climbers, and acrobats, who appear to have learnt from the monkeys the art of ascending upright poles, and of clinging by the toes and hands to the smoothest surfaces; and while the performer is in a position which to an ordinary person would be one of the greatest danger to life and limb, he calmly draws out his fan from his girdle and begins to fan himself, regarding the spectators below with a self-complacent and nonchalant air. A juggler lies on his back and balances a huge tub on his feet, and puts it through a variety of evolutions; a number of buckets are placed under it in succession, and raise it to a considerable height; after balancing these for a short time, first on one foot and then on the other, he kicks away the small buckets, and catches the large tub upon his feet. A boy sometimes is introduced, and takes the place of the large tub.

Musicians, either male or female, accompany these exhibitions with their tinkling guitars and sharp-toned flutes. Feats of posturing and agility are also performed, and boys, whose vertebral columns must resemble india-rubber, put their heads between their legs, double themselves up, and walk in the most crab-like fashion; and when two of them are gambolling together, it is difficult to distinguish to which individual the respective heads and limbs belong. Some street mountebanks dress themselves up in a feathery head gear, or draw over their heads a mask, which makes them resemble frogs, whose movements they imitate.

WRESTLERS.

The Japanese differ from the Chinese and Hindoos in the value they attach to athletic games, and wrestling is the national sport. Wrestling matches are therefore amongst the most popular exhibitions.

Each Damio has a number of professional wrestlers attached to his establishment, who, like the gladiators of old, devote their existence to trials of strength. These men are remarkable for their muscular development, and they take a great pride in the size and strength of their limbs. They are attended by servants, who wait upon them, hand them their fans, and dress and undress them, for when they engage in wrestling they are all but perfectly naked; but this is not remarkable in a country where the men of the lower or working classes throw off their loose garments the moment they have any extra work to perform. Wrestling is not reserved for the professionals, but nearly all Japanese men exercise themselves in it, and when the labours of the day are concluded, arrange matches amongst themselves. A circle is formed, the spectators squatting on their heels, and two antagonists step into the ring. First they assume the national attitude of sitting on their heels, then they each take up a handful of earth and cast it over their shoulders, and watch each other like two cats, intent upon a spring. Several feints are generally made before an opportunity arises of seizing each other. The great object of each one seems to be to throw his opponent over his head; and when a skilled wrestler encounters a novice, this is quickly done; in other cases, the contest continues for some time, the wrestlers exerting their utmost strength, and entwining their limbs round each other in their efforts to throw one another. But no ill-feeling seems engendered, and there

are no spiteful blows or savage looks, but the conquered and the conqueror part in perfect good temper. A succession of antagonists enter the circle, until all have exhibited their prowess or tried their strength. It is not alone at matches that they thus exercise themselves. If two coolies meet who have nothing particular to do, they may be seen striving with one another; and in default of a living antagonist, a strong young sapling has been seen to serve as a substitute, the wrestler putting forth all his strength and pushing against the tree, as if endeavouring to overturn it. This national characteristic is doubtless an indication of the greater vigour of mind and body possessed by the Japanese, and which causes them to present a strong contrast to the more enervating forms of ancient civilization met with in Asiatic communities.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER XI.—SOME SPECIAL CASES.

THERE exists no parochial clergyman but has met with cases of peculiar interest in the course of his ministrations. I will endeavour to relate in this chapter one or two of the most interesting cases that fell under my immediate notice in my first curacy.

In a former part of my narrative I have alluded to three burials in one family. The case was as follows. Abraham Adams had been a tradesman from early manhood in one of our neighbouring towns; indeed he succeeded his father in his business, that of a tailor, and at one time was well-to-do in circumstances. But when he was about thirty years old, the hereditary disease of his family, consumption, attacked him; it had previously carried off several of his relatives. He strove against its insidious progress as long as he was able, but was soon obliged to relinquish an active share in the management of his business. This declined, and the foreman robbed him, and absconded with so much ready money, that Adams was made a bankrupt. The family honourably paid all their debts, but when this was done, very little, in fact only a few pounds, remained to them. They gathered all together, and took a lodging in a poorer part of the town. Here Adams became rapidly worse, and as the only means of saving his life, the surgeon who attended him ordered him into the country. Hopes were created which were only raised to be blighted, for when he arrived at our village, I saw upon my first visit that there was not the slightest chance of his recovery. He was extremely patient under his trying affliction, but he did not live long after he came into the parish. On the particulars of his illness and my repeated visits I will not dwell, though to me, as a clergyman, they were gratifying and hopeful.

One remarkable and sad coincidence occurred at this trying period. Adams's two sons caught scarlet fever, and it was so violent in its attack that they both died on the morning of the fifth day after they were taken ill. The same evening their father died. Thus was the poor wife bereft of her husband and two sons in one day.

But a worse personal calamity also quickly befel Mary Adams. Her eyesight had been rather defective for some time; indeed, during her husband's illness she had rather overstrained it by taking in a little needlework, so she told me, in the town where she had lived. But now, from excessive grief at her triple loss, and from anxiety of mind with regard to the future, in six weeks time from the death of her husband and children she became totally blind, and when I left the parish she

remained in that sad state without the slightest hope of restoration.

The father and two sons were buried on the same day, and the overflowing congregation testified to the deep sympathy excited by the sad events. We succeeded in raising a sum of money for the widow, as the distressing nature of her affliction created sympathy on every side. With the money she purchased a mangle, and was promised the linen belonging to many families; she was only able to turn the handle of the mangle, while her little girl, the only child left, laid the linen straight within the rollers.

It was a saddening sight, and also pitiful, though comforting in another view, to see the eagerness with which this woman tried to learn the raised letters of Moon's type for the blind. How very quickly she learnt to master the difficulty! Perhaps this arose partly from the fact that she had been a pretty good scholar in her earlier years; but, however this may have been, certainly God does seem, when he deprives any of his creatures of one sense, to sharpen and strengthen the powers of those remaining. Very regularly was the widow to be seen in her wonted place in the house of God, led by her little daughter; and I know that it often caused a feeling of shame in the minds of other people, to behold her peaceful resigned expression of countenance, knowing how light their own trials were compared with hers.

I have previously stated that the wages of an agricultural labourer in this part of Devonshire were very low, compared with those of other counties. But the smallness of the pay of the farm-labourer was distanced by the poverty of the needlewomen in the district.

A manufacturer in the nearest town contracted very largely with Government for shirts for the army and navy, and these he was accustomed to have made by the women living in the villages surrounding his warehouse. But he paid these women very badly, and must have made a very large profit from his different contracts. Two old women in my district had been employed by him for many years. But after all, what was their remuneration? Threepence-halfpenny a shirt, in which they had to work six button-holes, and to find their own needles and thread!

One of the poor old creatures informed me that she had been engaged in this kind of shirt-making for ten years; that when she had mastered the little difficulties which have to be encountered at first learning any trade, her fingers were so nimble that she could regularly make three shirts a day, which were all able to bear the severe strain of the "approver and weigher;" but now that she was getting old, and her fingers stiffening with rheumatism, she could only with difficulty make one shirt during the day.

I could tell even of worse things than this, for I really found some of our women engaged upon coarser shirts for a French house, receiving the mere pittance of twopence halfpenny each shirt, working four button-holes in each, and finding their own needles and cotton! Surely Hood's poem was no fable.

Another case I have to report which was painfully interesting. I was called upon, in the vicar's absence, to go immediately and visit a man said to be dying in one of our most remote hamlets. With a little difficulty I found my way to the house I was in search of, if it was allowable to apply such a term to a building consisting of a mere decayed heap of "cob," with the thatch off in many places, and with large stones placed on the remaining portion to keep it from being entirely blown away. A broken gate and neglected strip of ground led to this dilapidated-looking dwelling. Two noisy

and rather savage dogs made their appearance at my approach, and I was obliged to shout out for them to be tied up before they would allow me to come nearer to the house. I have a legitimate horror of Devonshire dogs, having been bitten by them no less than six times in the space of five years. When at last I succeeded in entering the cottage—and even to effect this I had to step over a couple of puddles of dirty water, a potato-skin heap, and another of peat ashes—I found that the interior was even in a worse condition than the badness of the outside could have prepared me for. Filth of every description lay scraped into little heaps on the floor, which having been deprived of its tiles, presented an uneven appearance. In the midst of all this dirt was a truckle bedstead; there was an old mattress on it, but no blankets, and the sheets were entirely in holes. On this bed was the object of my visit. As he lay there, I should have said he was probably about fifty or fifty-five years of age, though I afterwards found that he was much younger. He was, or rather had been, exceedingly handsome; he possessed most regular features, curly black hair and beard, the latter at the period of my visit tinged with grey. He presented a marked contrast to his female companion and attendant, whom the neighbours called his wife. She was coarse, common, and bloated, from her constant drinking habits. I found that the man was in the last stage of consumption. My visit on this occasion was very short, as the atmosphere of the room was more than I could bear; besides which, I found out that the man was very deaf, and as I had to approach close to the bed in order to make him at all sensible of what I was saying, I had to keep a strict watch, lest the innumerable vermin which crawled about in all directions should be attracted to myself as fresher prey.

The next day I repeated my visit, for I was anxious to make some faint impression upon the man who I thought would not have lasted many days, though he actually lingered for nearly a month.

I made inquiries if he had no relatives who could come and see to his wants, or at least send some assistance, as he evidently stood in need of the common necessaries of life, and even of common decencies also. The woman told me the sick man had a sister, and that she had written for her to come immediately, and, added she, "she is a perfect lady." I was somewhat surprised to hear this statement, but the man's features and manner showed plainly enough that he was not of the lower orders of society.

On the day of my third visit the sister arrived, and very thankful indeed I was to see her there, for she had brought a large supply of things with her, and immediately had clean bed-linen supplied, and sent off to the nearest town to procure blankets and other necessaries. Her brother was too far advanced in his illness to be removed to better lodgings, even if they could have been obtained. His sister told me his history.

"The name he now bears," she said, "is not his own, he has borrowed it from the woman with whom he lives: His father was a colonel in the army, his mother was the daughter of an Irish Earl. His godfathers were a peer of the realm and a baronet. His brothers, three of them in number, died early in life as officers in the army, cut off by the same disease which is now approaching a fatal termination in himself.

"He is only forty-one years of age, though he looks so much older. His father died when he was quite young, and his dying words to his wife were, 'bring Edward up tenderly.' This request, it is needless to say, was literally fulfilled. He was brought up ten-

derly, too tenderly as it proved, for his wayward temper first led him into many a boyish scrape, afterwards ripening into manhood's vices.

"When seventeen years of age, a commission was procured for him in the Indian army; he soon afterwards set sail from his native country and joined his regiment. In India his temper, which he had never learnt to control, led him into a great deal of trouble, and a love of gambling and drinking which soon developed itself, encircled him with large debts. These his dotingly fond mother paid. Soon afterwards, however, he committed such an offence against all military honour, and morality in general, that he was obliged to resign his commission and return to England. His disgrace was a crushing blow to his mother, it broke her heart, and she died.

"A few months after, appearing to be deeply penitent, a most excellent appointment was procured for him in Australia, a post of influence and trust. He went out provided with everything suitable to his new position. Here, however, as soon as the novelty of the situation wore off, his old bad habits were renewed with tenfold intensity, and a second time he returned to his native land covered with disgrace.

"A rupture took place between himself and his family. I, his sister, paid all his debts and settled a small sum upon him to be paid monthly through the family lawyer. For four years he entirely disappeared, and would never let us know where or how he was living. At length we traced him to a low part of the east end of London, and found him living with the vilest associates. Our efforts were in vain to reclaim him, and I never met him until the day I came here and saw him in this awful condition. When he was in London he met with this woman, and they passed as man and wife. A feeling of shame perhaps induced him to drop his own surname and adopt hers instead. I must, however, do her the credit to say that she persuaded him to leave the vile neighbourhood in which they were located, and they removed to a back street in the west central district of the metropolis. She obtained the washing of some of the more respectable families in the neighbourhood. And he, when he was sober, employed himself in ironing the linen, and was so lost to shame that he actually carried it home to the very houses where he had formerly dined as an equal. Their quarrelsome habits and their drunkenness combined, lost them the washing of respectable people, and his illness increasing they were obliged to move into cheaper lodgings. They tried to support themselves by keeping a sweet shop for children, but failed; and at last they resolved to sell all they possessed and come down into Devonshire, where they vainly hoped the climate would perhaps restore him to his wonted health."

Such was the melancholy history told me by this lady. She was much distressed at the sad condition of her brother, and most anxious about the state of his soul. The payment of his debts had much impoverished her, as they were of very large amount. She remained in the neighbourhood for three weeks, until her brother died, seeing him and attending him every day. She seemed satisfied with the sincerity of his repentance, but I confess that his excessive deafness made it an extremely difficult task to make him at all sensible of what was addressed to him, and when he seemed to understand there was little response.

What a sad ending was this to a life so happily and prosperously commenced; and what a lesson of warning to young men should this record be of a thoroughly wasted life!

General Colby is this chiefly due. His officers were invariably selected by merit; and if found not equal to expectations, were soon changed for abler. The names of Drummond, Portlock, Sir Thomas Larcom, and Captain Ross Clark, all engineer officers, are household words in the homes of science. Under General Colby the officers were trained to disregard all personal consideration and to give all their attention to the work in hand. The annals of the survey tell how General Colby has walked many miles over mountains before breakfast; and the twenty or thirty mile journeys he made day after day with his subalterns at almost racing pace over the roughest country, evidence how he infused energy by example. Not content with example, he carried with him the highest feelings of his officers by embracing every opportunity to publicly acknowledge any improvements suggested by them, however junior their rank; and perhaps in this was the secret of his success in rearing zealous men. Had he lived until Lieut.-Colonel W. D. Gosset, R.E., initiated the application of photography as an economical method of reducing plans from a large to a smaller scale, and until Captain De Courcy Scott, R.E., by his chemical researches developed this into photozincography, whereby thousands a year have been saved, he would have gloried in making known the authors of the improvement. The solicitude of his officers for their work was as remarkable as it was sincere. Their observing instruments they regarded almost as mothers do their children; and there are yet a few living whose eyes brighten as they talk of "Ramsden's" (the familiar name of the great three feet theodolite), and the old days of the trigonometrical survey. The pastimes of these gentlemen in hazy weather on the mountain tops were not many; but a favourite one with officers and men, was to dig about some huge rock, often several days' work, and at last by powerful levers to detach the mass, and send it hurling down the mountain side, crashing, and dashing, and bounding away, a great Leviathan in its disportings.

As might be supposed, many of General Colby's lieutenants have been called upon to fill important situations in other departments of the State, both at home and in the colonies, and with advantage to the public service.

The head-quarter-office of the Ordnance Survey is at Southampton, to which station it was transferred after the destruction of the Map-office at the Tower by fire; and there are branch offices in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and at other stations, when required. In addition to the general business, the engraving and printing the maps is carried on at Southampton; also the reduction of maps from a large to a small scale, by the aid of photography. The force consists of four companies of the Royal Engineers and a number of civil assistants, every branch being under the direction and control of the Royal Engineers, who are responsible that the work is carried out accurately, and in accordance with prescribed instructions.

The Ordnance Survey has long been in existence, but it began by a travelling map of England. It is progressing as a work which will subserve every known purpose of valuation, agricultural statistics, and taxation, that can be worked from accurate detail plans. It is to be hoped that it will not conclude until it forms the basis and index for a complete registration of deeds, connected with the sale, lease, mortgage, or demise of property, whereby the transfer of, and all transactions relating to, landed property might be as easily effected as a transfer of stock in the funds.

Although the Ordnance Survey appears to occupy a

long period, it must be remembered that every year the face of the country in many districts undergoes considerable change. Cities and villages spring up; railways, bridges, and roads are constructed with marvellous rapidity; woods are cut down, or arable land converted into plantations; so that new measurements and maps are often required to keep pace with the modern architect and engineer. At the same time every bleak mountain, forest, moor, river, plain, is gradually brought under the power of the Ordnance Survey.

The latest official report of the Director-General of the Ordnance Survey and Topographical Department to 31st of December, 1867, states that in England the survey is proceeding in the counties of Kent, Surrey and Hants; and we are completing the survey of the interior of London. The general progress of the survey has been greatly retarded by the excessive amount of work required to make a perfect survey of London and its environs, but except the central sheets, the plans are now well advanced and many of them published. The parish of Aberdare in South Wales is now being surveyed, and drawn on the scales of 1—500, and 1—2—500, the inhabitants having undertaken to pay £2,200, two-thirds of the actual cost, in consideration of their having the survey of their town made immediately. In Scotland the survey is proceeding in the counties of Aberdeenshire, three-quarters of which is surveyed, Banff, which is nearly finished, Elgin, Inverness, and Argyle. The small county of Nairn has been finished. In Ireland the county of Dublin and the township of Bray in the county of Wicklow, have been revised and redrawn on the scale of 1—25,000, for the purpose of the valuation, as Sir R. Griffith, the chief valuator, did not consider the valuation of so closely inhabited a county could be properly valued with plans on a lesser scale. The survey of the Isle of Man is finished, and the plans are in progress. The cost of this survey will be defrayed out of the revenue of the island.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER XII.—VEXATIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

THERE are vexations and disappointments in every class of life. Yet perhaps a clergyman is exposed to a greater number of vexations and "worries" than fall to the lot of others. I am not speaking now of personal and private troubles, but of trials in the work of the ministry. Nor am I speaking morbidly, nor despondingly, though the frightful scenes of disease, distress, and poverty combined are quite sufficient to cause a man to despond. Still it is very hard to see one's hopes blighted and desires frustrated, when all has been done that is in our power for the benefit of some individual in whom a great and warm interest had been taken. Yet a clergyman, knowing that these trials will not fail to come, should be prepared to meet them. He should remember the text, a very favourite one of mine, and one which has often brought light in darkness, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

I will relate a case or two of bitter disappointment.

A young man in whom I wished to take an interest, but to whom I could not readily obtain access, he being rather wild and careless in conduct, was one day thrown from a waggon when half tipsy, and broke his leg in the fall. It was a bad fracture, and he was confined to his bed for six weeks. I cannot say truly that I was altogether sorry for this accident, for I was thereby enabled to get near him, and try what influence I could exercise over him for the future. I went to see him at

once, and attended him nearly daily the whole of the long period he was confined to his bed.

I tried to make his wearisome hours as pleasant as possible; accordingly, I taught him several games, such as chess and draughts, and lent him interesting pictorial books. I did this partly as a help to his recovery, which depended much on his general health, but chiefly in order to gain his ear for his spiritual welfare. Often as I read and prayed with him, the tears would run down his cheeks, and he would promise fervently to lead a holier and more steady life. Now, if he had died during this illness, his friends would have said that his repentance was sincere, and I might have coincided with that judgment. But was it true, real, and genuine?

He rose from his long confinement perfectly cured. He also went to church once after, it is true; but he quickly made vast strides in the downward path, and became much worse in his habits of life. He behaved so badly that he ran away to the city of Exeter, leaving a poor village girl to die of a broken heart, her last words breathing a prayer for him. Oh, how bitter was this particular disappointment to me! But does it not show the hollowness of so many apparently genuine repentances, and the caution required in judging of them?

After I had been in my first curacy a few months, I became painfully aware that my visits to a sick man, instead of doing good, produced positive harm. In this instance I had been asked one day to visit a man in consumption. I was warned that I might not find him very civil, as he was of a morose, sullen disposition, but nevertheless it was thought he would receive me. Accordingly I went, and in answer to my knock the door of the house was opened by a tall, military-looking man, standing about six feet three inches at least; he begged me to enter, and, strange to say, was extremely civil and polite.

In order to open conversation with him, for I had not previously seen him, I asked if he had always lived in Devon, to which question he replied that he had been a soldier in the Horse Guards, and since the period of his discharge had travelled in America, of which country and its institutions he seemed very proud, and concerning which he told me many interesting anecdotes. He made also shrewd remarks touching the state of England, and its government, which caused me to notice his finely shaped forehead. Altogether he was a remarkable man both in body and mind. After a little more general conversation, I relieved his bodily wants, and took my leave, intimating that I should call again, to which remark he made no objection. During my next visit I found the thin edge of his moroseness inserted: he was not quite so polite, still I thought people had much exaggerated the evil of his character. He spoke disdainfully of the higher order, and yet the tone of his voice had a certain tinge of envy in it, as he decried their wealth and power. I found also he had some queer notions respecting the laws of this country, and he so excited himself while talking, that it produced a violent fit of coughing which quite exhausted him. When it subsided I left, feeling saddened at my want of success, for hitherto religion had hardly been named between us, as I had been especially warned not to speak upon it until I had made some way with him in common conversation. I made two more attempts to bring him to a right understanding of many things, for it seemed his judgment was perfectly warped, and he was besides exceedingly bigoted. During these later conversations, I found that he was a complete infidel.

A few days after my last visit, his wife called and wished to see me. The object of her call was to ask me

to discontinue my visits to her husband, and she was prepared with reasons to back her request. She told me, in vindication of her conduct, that her husband, not being able for some reason or other to fall out with myself, he after each of my visits had given her a severe thrashing, for allowing me to come in and see him, though it was himself in the first instance that opened the door, and so gave me entrance. Three successive beatings the wife had borne in silence, being anxious for his soul's sake that I should speak to him upon the subject of his approaching death; for the surgeon had told her most distinctly, from the nature of his complaint, that he would never recover. But the fourth beating she received was so severe that she said she could not endure another such, even for the sake of my visits. I now know that these acts of cruelty were of frequent occurrence, and were not invariably caused by the advent of "the parson." The wife added that as lately as that very morning, because the new loaf of bread which she had provided for his breakfast was not exactly to his liking (I think she said it was not crusty enough), he cut it into small pieces, put the fragments into a wooden bucket, piled up all the fuel in the house upon it, and covered it with burning peat, daring her to touch it till all was consumed. Nor was this a solitary instance of outrageous conduct. Yet he was entirely dependent upon his wife for everything he had, not having been able to do a stroke of work for eighteen months.

Now I have only singled out two particular cases of disappointment from a vast number, and the sole reason why I do not give the details of other more depressing disappointments, is because they are more personal; they consist of ingratitude of the deepest dye, practised towards myself.

I may, however, bear my strong testimony as to some causes and some times of special annoyance and sorrow. How I dreaded the season of Whitsuntide! There was a kind of fair held in one of the hamlets of the parish at that period, ever since old times. Why it was held in that spot I never was able to ascertain; but its effects upon the young people were most baneful. More girls were at that season led astray than in all the remaining portion of the year put together.

"Mops," or statute-hiring, also occurred once a year in our neighbourhood. They were held on the borders, and not strictly speaking within the bounds, of the parish. I attended one of these mops, and I can assure my readers who have never seen one, that it was a most disgraceful scene. The waggoners had whipcord and ribbons round their hats; the servants wanting cooks' places held little gridirons in their hands; housemaids brushes and dustpans; dairymaids milk-cans; ploughmen and labourers toy implements representing the situations they respectively required: so that without any questions you saw at once what place the person waiting to be hired wanted. No character was asked for or given. The hiring was merely for a year. The second or third day (for these mops were held for several days, the publicans reaping a rich harvest each evening), wages fell, just as prices do the last few hours of an ordinary cattle market, the best beasts having previously been disposed of at a higher rate.

Happily the efforts of philanthropists have been and still are directed towards the suppression of these disgraceful scenes, and with great success, I am glad to add. The evils attending this pernicious system, both with regard to master and man, maid and mistress, are too apparent to need comment.

That particular part of Devonshire in which my first curacy was situated, was nearly entirely given up to

“the gang system,” one of the greatest curses, I believe, to the well-being of the morals of the labourers’ children. It is also the constant bugbear of the parochial clergyman. For instance, no sooner is one school nicely established and the attendance good, than one fine morning you enter the room and find it nearly deserted, and the schoolmaster or mistress in great trouble; for all education is virtually abandoned at such times, when “stone picking,” “bird keeping,” “potato gathering,” “bog or peat turning,” arrives. Thus the children’s education proceeded under great difficulties, which made the establishment of night schools and adult classes all the more necessary.

BUSINESS HOURS IN LONDON STREETS.

THE lower we descend in the scale of commerce and traffic, the harder and more oppressive becomes the labour of those by whom business is carried on. When the great Baron Rothschild used to take his station at that pillar in the Royal Exchange, and transact his momentous bargains more by nods and signs than by articulate speech, he was seldom there for more than an hour or an hour and a half in the day; yet in that brief space of time it was nothing unusual for him to gain from fifty to a hundred thousand pounds. Our merchant princes spend but little time, comparatively, in their offices and warehouses, and derive their magnificent incomes without undergoing anything like bodily labour, being able to delegate all that to others. It is much the same with the prosperous banker: his hours are fixed, to be sure, but they are few and limited, and followed by certainly-recurring leisure. So with the wealthier class of dealers and traders in the money-making callings; they can and do shut up their shops and places of business early in the evening, and betake themselves to the enjoyments they most affect. It is different with the average trader, who pleads that he must make the most of his day in order to keep his credit good; and it is still more different with the struggling one, who must rise early and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness, that he may make both ends meet, and have bread to eat at all.

It is in the traffic of the streets that the limitations as to time are the widest, and the struggle for bread is the fiercest. There are peripatetic traders of one class or other pursuing their occupation in the highways and byways of London for more than twenty hours out of the twenty-four; they are the earliest and the latest of all the traffickers of the metropolis: so early and so late, indeed, are some of them, that to many people it is a mystery what business they find to do. Let us glance at one or two of them.

The early breakfast-houses in London, thousands in number, though they open long before sunrise, are anticipated in their labours by the early breakfast-stalls erected in the streets. We have come upon these stalls at their first appearance less than three hours after midnight. They are among the oldest of the street institutions in London, and are doubtless a boon to a large class of early workers, who, rising long before dawn, are enabled by their means to break their fast with something solid and something hot at the price of a penny or threepence; and they are no less welcome to the poor night-wanderer, who, not having twopence to pay for a bed, camps out, and hoards his one penny to pay for a breakfast. The breakfast used to consist of a thick hunch of bread, with dripping or salt butter, and a cup of saloop, which was a decoction of sassafras

chips, in place of salep (the dried and pounded tuber of *orchis mascula*), sweetened with coarse sugar. Since the fall in the price of tea, saloop is gone much out of fashion, though there are still a few of the old stagers who supply it to customers to whom use has made it pleasant. The salopians pitch their stalls in all weathers at all seasons of the year, and for the most part in spots where in daytime the traffic is densest: we have seen them in the Strand, in Holborn, on the bridges, and in the most frequented parts of the City. They vanish before the business hours, and that of necessity, for the crowd would crush them out of the way did they attempt to remain. An exception seems to be made in their favour in Covent Garden, where they do business under the piazzas to a later hour.

The milkman is known for an early bird, but he is not generally known for such an early bird as he really is. He has to turn out often before four in the morning, to get his horse in the cart and load his empty cans, that he may drive off to the railway-station and exchange them for full ones—most of the London milk now coming daily from the country, and being sent up by the earliest trains. Almost as early, the watercress hawkers betake themselves to Farringdon Market to buy their stock, and to cleanse and bundle it in preparation for hawking. About the same time the straggling hosts of costermongers begin to invade Covent Garden and Billingsgate. Few people who have not witnessed their matutinal gatherings have any conception of the numbers of these gentry. They not only inundate the district, but literally overflow in all directions, blocking up the channels of approach from every quarter, and presenting in their motley assemblage a spectacle as startling as it is significant.

Of the mass of traders of all descriptions who throng the thoroughfares during the ordinary business hours, we can say but little here. Their numbers, which have always been great, are constantly on the increase. With the growth of wealth around us there is, and always must be, a corresponding growth of poverty—and numbers are being constantly thrust into the streets to earn a living, who in times past were able to maintain themselves at home. This is one reason—perhaps the principal reason—why within the memory of the existing generation the traffic of the streets has assumed so many and such various phases. Time was when little if anything besides comestibles was sold in the street. Pies, gingerbread, cakes, nuts, fruits of all kinds when they were in season, fish just arrived from the sea, vegetables for the table—such used to be the stock of the street trader, supplemented in summer by flowers “all a-growing and a-blowing” in pots, and flowers in bouquets and posies gathered from the garden. We have changed all that now, and indeed have been long familiar with the change. At the present moment you can buy almost anything in the streets of London without troubling the shopkeeper—anything, that is, which is at all portable. The travelling stationer hawks his writing paper and envelopes; the printseller sets out a gallery of art in the concavity of an upturned umbrella; the cabinet-maker decks the dead-walls with his writing-desks, work-boxes, and letter-racks; the cutler sidles up to you with his razors; the working optician claims attention to his eye-glasses and spectacles; the toy-maker displays his stock of toys on the kerb; walking-sticks, padlocks, dog-collars, carpenters’ tools, microscopes, mirrors, musical instruments, flat-irons, roasting-jacks, pots, pans, brushes, mops, glass, china, tin-ware, jewellery, statuary, paintings in oil—all these things, and a thousand things besides, walk the streets

cession draws near. We had an opportunity of hearing this fine chanting or singing of old hymns in a musical celebration that occurred during our stay, and I could therefore well imagine the thrilling effect of the voices heard at night. The gorgeous lamps used in the churches are seen casting bright rays on all the sumptuous dresses of the priests, who of course take part in the pageant; and the most splendid silken banners, one mass of gold and silver embroidery, are waved aloft, all gathered round the central banner on which the figure of the Virgin is represented. No sooner has the long stream of the procession passed by than every light is extinguished, thus keeping up the idea that the sacred banner sheds light and brightness along the way it traverses, while darkness closes in on those regions not blessed by its presence. The ceremonies during the Holy Week, as they call it, are said to be second only to those at Rome in the magnificence of the arrangements, decorations, and pomp.

The number of convents and other religious establishments that formerly existed at Seville seems almost incredible; it is stated as high as between 150 and 200. All are now in a measure dismantled and turned to other uses. This universal destruction of these venerable establishments gives an air of melancholy desolation.

The Moorish decorations in the alcazar, or royal palace, are unique, and many of the most beautiful have been admirably restored, chiefly by removal of the whitewash from the gilding and from the delicate colouring. Don Pedro the Cruel was one of the great restorers of this interesting old palace. Most of the celebrated Spanish sovereigns resided here. Charles V was married in the alcazar to Isabella of Portugal. The grand court is magnificent, but the rooms looking to the garden are the gems of the whole building in my opinion. In some of the gardens at Seville the orange-trees, without exaggeration, attain almost to the size of large trees. The myrtles also are beyond description beautiful.

The museum at Seville is with good reason considered the best in Spain. Here are some of Murillo's exquisite pictures, especially one of the Virgin and Child, called La Serviletto, because it was originally sketched on a dinner napkin; the figure of the Holy Child is very highly praised by the best judges.

Any one who likes getting into odd corners, and finding out striking little bits of scenery for himself, may have his taste amply gratified at Seville in the Jews' quarter, "La Juderia." It is rich in the most picturesque scenes; such houses, such gateways, such arches, such balconies as are not to be seen elsewhere. The establishment of Laundresses is also a most picturesque scene; it is in El Corral del Conde.

We were rather disappointed in the beauty of the women of Seville. There were beautiful women there, no doubt, but they were more the exceptions than the rule; the generality of female faces we saw there were sunburnt, and singularly devoid of freshness and bloom.

One excursion we made down the river to an old convent, called San Juan de Alfarache. It is built among the ruins of an old Moorish castle, and we spent the evening at a charming country seat in the neighbourhood, which had also been a Moorish retreat in days of yore. In those country seats one continually meets with relics of Moorish labour and taste, channels cut in the sides of the hills through the living rock in search of choice springs of cold and delicate water, and basins and fountains to collect it, and to cool the courts and halls of the mansions.

But we had already reached the middle of September, and it was necessary to make preparations for our onward progress. We reflected that more than two-thirds of the time allotted to our stay in Spain were gone, and we had yet much to see before our tour was completed. We were to go to Madrid, pausing only a short time at Cordova.

One spot in the environs of Seville it was impossible to pass by without a shuddering feeling of horror seeming to pervade one's whole being. I allude to the plain just outside the walls, called El Prado del Sebastian, where were enacted all those awful and guilty tragedies connected with the Inquisition. There the miserable victims of a narrow-minded and most ferocious bigotry met their death. The gloomy fires of the Inquisition were constantly lighted on that spot, and the traces of the terrible scenes enacted upon it are not left entirely to the imagination, for there are still to be seen the marks of the places where the foundations of the square platform were raised on which the faggots were placed.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE CURATE'S PETS.

THAT "man was not made to live alone" is a trite truism. Start not, fair readers, and think that I am going to indulge in a piece of sentimentalism, and introduce you to some, or rather to one, of the numerous young ladies of my acquaintance. My narrative is not a novel, but merely a record of dry, true facts. But many a man who cannot afford to marry and settle, and who tires of being always at his work and his books, must seek some relaxation in his leisure hours. It will not do to keep the bow always strung. How often has this been felt since I have become a metropolitan curate, with not many minutes to spare from dawn till night! Health gives way, and usefulness is at an end, under the strain of incessant toil.

When I was in the country I amused myself with keeping various pets, including a dog, a number of good white Cochin China fowls, a canary, an aquarium, and a tame pike. A short description of the last shall come first.

An artificial pond had been made in the vicar's garden for the purpose of supplying the house constantly with water. I have mentioned previously that the village was only supplied by little running brooks from the Tors and from small hill-side springs. A young pike was procured to cleanse the pond from all impurities, such as beetles, lizards, and the like insects and reptiles which inhabit stagnant fresh sheets of water. He fulfilled his appointed task so effectually that he himself soon needed to be artificially fed. This I undertook to do, and every morning when I went to the pond I nearly always found him in one identical spot. If he was not on the surface of the water, he would immediately rise and begin to wag his fins and tail with delight in anticipation of the coming banquet.

In the course of a few weeks he would follow me round the pond, and a little later he would allow me to tickle his back and sides with a slender twig. I managed to retain him as a favourite for three years. Each winter he used to disappear for nearly three months, and when he reappeared in the early spring he looked all the worse for his long fast, for I suppose he went to sleep in the mud at the bottom of the pond for that period. When he again awoke up his appetite was enormous, as if he intended to make up for lost time, and he would easily

swallow eight or ten good-sized frogs as his daily meal.

One day, unfortunately, I tried the experiment of seeing if he would take and eat one of those disagreeable-looking brown land lizards, which are commonly found under trailing plants in a damp situation; so, having caught one of these newts, I first threw into the pond two or three frogs, which the pike greedily and quickly devoured; I then threw in my lizard, when it was as quickly captured and swallowed as the frogs had been, perhaps because it was thought to be one. A bad and fatal result attended my experiment. In about half an hour after seizing the lizard the fish began to swim about the pond as if in the greatest agony, increasing his speed each hour, and even lashing the water and covering it with foam by the impetus of his movements. I was really quite dismayed at the issue of my thoughtlessness, but powerless to render any assistance. The next day the pike, having completely lost his natural colour and exchanged it for a dull leaden one, turned over and died. When I had rescued it from the water it weighed four and a half pounds. The cause of its death, I suppose, was poison from the lizard it had devoured.

Of course my dog was of all my pets my especial favourite, being the most intelligent. He was my constant companion in my walks, and in my parochial visits, though, from his showing a decided enmity towards cats, he sometimes brought us both into trouble. He was a mongrel-bred dog, though the skye terrier predominated. He was a very faithful watch, and possessed of no ordinary cunning. Among other capabilities, he could sham illness to perfection. When he wanted to gain what I had denied him, he would go to the side of the room, and there lean his head against the wall and turn up his eyes until nothing but the whites of them remained visible. And if, when in this position, I began to pity him, he would shake and tremble all over, so that a spectator would imagine he was going to die in convulsions. But, as I have already said, these shams were only put on to gain a desired object. For instance, if I had denied his accompanying me in a walk, he would begin to act in the above-mentioned way. If I told him he might go out along with me, no sooner had the words escaped my lips than he would jump about so furiously with delight, and wag his tail, and make such a disturbance, that he would forget everything about his pretended illness. I suppose he at first expected I would have to stay at home with him. He did not try the trick when he saw I knew what he was up to.

The clerk's wife gave him to me as a puppy, and he always retained great affection for her. If he could steal away from the parsonage and get to her house he would be quite delighted and perfectly satisfied. On these solitary journeys he never travelled by the ordinary road, fearing, I suppose, lest he should be stopped and brought back; but to avoid such a catastrophe he would go to the clerk's house by way of a long ditch overshadowed with fern and brake, and then skirting the village in a roundabout manner, he would jump a high wall and alight in the garden, and thence sneak into the house, where he would rest content till I called for him to take him home. But, on the other hand, if I called *with* him, and wished him to stay there while I paid parochial visits, nothing would induce him to remain: why, I know not.

With respect to my aquarium, it was a source both of much amusement and instruction to myself, as hundreds who possess a properly ordered one can well suppose.

The interest is much heightened if all the inhabitants of the aquarium have been procured by the personal exertions of the owner. Give me a good clean ditch, or a shallow pond, and then I have a fund of amusement for hours together. Often when the old people of the village passed me as I was groping and poking about the side of a pond with my can and my nets, they smiled at my enthusiasm, and wondered what I could see in a pond that was worth all this searching. Nevertheless I persevered, and even induced several of the young people to find specimens for themselves.

A caution or two I would venture to tender to those wishing to form aquariums. Never crowd your tank with too many inhabitants. Insects, like human beings, thrive best with plenty of air and space.

The next important thing in regulating an aquarium is to discover what species will best agree together in the same globe. Now the golden carp and the common little stickleback will by no means do together, for the latter will soon destroy the former, chasing them incessantly about the aquarium, and trying to pierce their enemies' sides with the sharp thorn, or horn, that they are able to erect and thrust out from their own sides. They remind one very much by their motions of what we read of a combat between a sword-fish and a whale; for the poor gold-fish are just as defenceless against the attacks of the sticklebacks, although they are only the size of their tails, as are the whales against the persevering attacks of their foes.

Again, the larger striped black-beetle should never be put into the same aquarium with fish of any kind, for they will soon attack and kill the fish, especially tench or roach, by biting them under the belly.

I could tell many interesting anecdotes about my aquarium and its inhabitants, but I will only on the present occasion relate two. Mine was a large one, and possessed a vast variety of insects, who, from my constant vigilance, lived somewhat in the same relation towards one another as do the indwellers of those cages entitled "happy families," seen about the London streets. Among other things I had a quantity of the larvæ of the dragon-fly, and a number of those beetles which are popularly known by the name of "boatman." These were always at variance one with another; perhaps, more properly speaking, I should say they were engaged in an exterminating warfare. I did not find out this at first, but saw that daily the number of each species was rapidly decreasing. So I resolved to watch and discover the cause. Sitting down quietly, I soon perceived a "boatman" beetle sink to the bottom of the aquarium, and then proceed to carefully survey the surrounding neighbourhood. Presently a larva of the dragon-fly peeped very cautiously out of some weeds, and commenced to crawl along for a little way towards the beetle, and then halting, remained motionless. It was, however, soon perceived by the beetle, who advanced circumspectly to the fray. The two insects crept gradually towards each other, until the distance between them was diminished to about an inch. There they remained without the slightest outward sign of movement for a few minutes; when the larva, darting forth a tongue somewhat like the ant-eater's, as it advanced to the attack, seized the beetle with it, and in a second or so, so very short was the interval, the beetle was torn in pieces and eaten on the spot.

In this same aquarium the larger kind of water lizard, commonly called the great black triton, strove to become master over all the tribe of lizards: and its enmity, or appetite, was especially directed towards a small buff-coloured lizard, which the black triton

frequently swallowed to the extremity of its tail. The words "frequently swallowed" may surprise the readers of this anecdote; but I declare that it is true, for I have seen the buff lizard in the throat of the larger triton for upwards of eight hours at a time, and at the end of that period it has been released apparently without injury.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

By the time the readers of these papers have got so far, they will have become acquainted with a few of the disjointed incidents of my first curacy, the particulars of which have been rather hastily jotted down. In this curacy I served my apprenticeship in the ministry of the Church of England. I remained in it seven years—seven of the best years of my life, as regards physical strength. In such perfect harmony did my vicar and myself work, that during the whole of the seven years we had not a single serious disagreement. The little varieties of opinion between us on some occasions were caused by the interference of another, who should have been the very last to have tried to engender strife.

I thankfully acknowledge that in this retired pastoral Devonshire parish I enjoyed much hospitality, and received many kindnesses, especially from those ladies who assisted in the parish, to whom I have already alluded, and also from two or three of the farmers.

But I should not be honest, nor would this narrative be truthful, if I did not also confess that in this parish I met with many trials and was caused much needless sorrow. Some of the vexations which befell me were no doubt brought about by my own errors of judgment; but whether I succeeded or failed in the various undertakings I set on foot, I can conscientiously say that I laboured hard during the time I was resident among the people, with an earnest desire to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of all classes.

Upon looking back upon these seven years one acknowledges that if this time could be recalled a different line of action might have been chosen in conducting many schemes of usefulness in the parish; but this being simply a vain and fruitless complaint, the past must live to speak for itself. A day will come when the work will be tried by its results, and I, as other curates, must stand or fall by that verdict. Be this as it may, very grateful am I for the experience I bought in my first curacy—grateful to my fellow-helpers in their labour of love, and grateful above all, I hope I am, for that protecting, guiding Hand which sustained me in times of trouble, cheered me when cast down, and strengthened me when fainting under a sense of my awful responsibility in the work of the ministry.

JAMES BRAITHWAITE THE SUPERCARGO.

CHAPTER XVII.

I WENT down into the captain's cabin, and, awakening him, told him what the surgeon had said.

"Mutiny!" he exclaimed, as he dressed himself with the usual rapidity of a seaman. "We will soon settle that matter." He stuck his pistols into a belt he put on for the purpose, and took a cutlass in his hand. "Here, Braithwaite, arm yourself," he said. "Tell the officers to do so likewise. We will soon see which of the two, that sea lawyer or I, is to command the Barbara."

Telling Gwynne and Toby to guard the arm-chest, and Randolph to rally round him the most trustworthy men on deck, he desired Stubbs and me to follow him forward. Without a word of warning he suddenly appeared among the men, who were supposed to be in their

berths asleep. Going directly up to the berth Badham occupied, he seized hold of him and dragged him on deck, with a pistol pointed at his head, exclaiming at the same time—"Shoot any one who offers to interfere."

The captain was very confident that he had the ringleader, and that the rest would not move without him. "Now!" he exclaimed, when he had got him on the quarterdeck. "Confess who are your accomplices, and what you intended to do! Remember, no falsehood! I shall cross-question the others. If you are obstinate, overboard you go."

Badham, surprised by the sudden seizure, and confused, was completely cowed. In an abject tone he whined out, "Spare my life, sir, and I will tell you all."

"Out with it then," answered the captain. "We have no time to spare."

"Well, sir, then I will tell you all. We didn't intend to injure any one, that we didn't, believe me, sir; but some of us didn't want to go back to Sydney, so we agreed that we would just wreck the ship, and as there are plenty of seals to be got hereabouts, go sealing on our own account, and sell the oil and skins to the ships passing through the straits, and, when we should get tired of the work, go home in one of them."

"And so, for the sake of gaining a few hundred dollars for yourself, you deliberately planned the destruction of this fine ship, and very likely of all on board. Now, understand, you will be put in irons, and if I find the slightest attempt among the crew to rescue you, up you go to the yardarm, and the leader of the party will keep you company on the other."

Badham, in his whining tone, acknowledged that he understood clearly what the captain said, and hoped never again to offend. On this he was led by two of the mates to one of the after store-rooms, where he could be under their sight when irons were put on him, and he was left to his meditations, the door being locked on him. The next morning the crew went about their work as usual, Badham's dupes or accomplices being easily distinguished by their downcast, cowed looks, and by the unusual promptness with which they obeyed all orders. The officers and I continued to wear our pistols and side-arms as a precautionary measure, though we might safely have dispensed with them.

A short time before this, in 1802, a settlement had been formed in Van Diemen's Land, and lately Hobart Town, the capital, had been commenced. It was, however, a convict station, and no ships were allowed to land cargoes there except those which came from England direct with stores or were sent from Sydney, in consequence of which restriction the colonists were several times nearly on the point of starvation.

The heads of Port Jackson at length hove in sight, and we entered that magnificent harbour, the entrance to which Cook saw and named. Wanting in his usual sagacity, he took it for a small boat harbour, and passed by without further exploring it. Having first brought up in Neutral Bay, that we might be reported to the Governor, we proceeded some miles up to Sydney Cove, where we anchored in excellent holding ground about half-pistol-shot from the shore. Sydney had already begun to assume the appearance of a town of some consideration, and contained fully 5,000 inhabitants, though still called the camp by some of the old settlers. As to the houses, however, except the stores and public offices, the greater number, eight in ten at least, were of one story, and were, for the most part, composed of wattle and plaster, although a few were of brick and stone. It is divided into two parts by a river which runs into the cove, and affords it unrivalled advantages