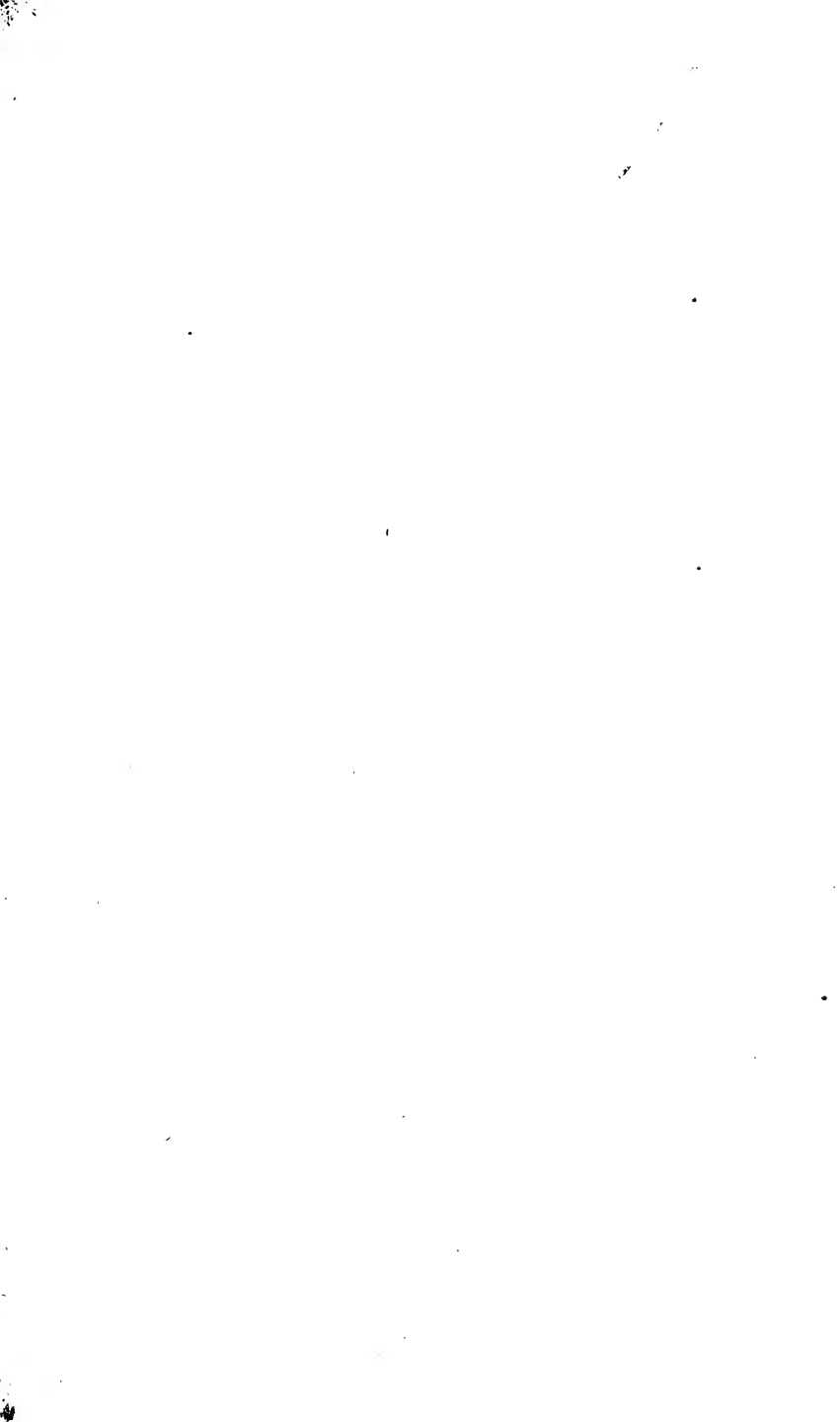




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THE

CHURCH AND THE MILLION.

No. II.

THE "NAVVIES," AND HOW TO MEET THEM.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD MONRO,

INCUMBENT OF HARROW WEALD, MIDDLESEX,
AUTHOR OF "PAROCHIAL WORK," "HARRY AND ARCHIE," ETC.

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A LETTER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You have asked me how I think the Church may be brought to bear more efficiently upon the masses of the population. I will apply myself to the question in one of its details which has come before my notice, and considerably excited my attention; and as it is a subject which is gaining attention in this day, it is one on which it may be worth while to offer any such practical hints as some little experience may enable me to give you.

There is a class of persons in this country popularly called "*navvies*"—short for navigators. They are also called "excavators," and by many other titles. Their work is the formation of railroads, canals, and other public works on a large and rough scale, nevertheless needing intelligence, and some amount of experience. These men are to be found in every parish in the kingdom through which a railroad passes, or any large work is in operation. Their habits of life, characteristics, circumstances, and predilections, lay large claim on the attention and sympathy of the Church. But the questions which arise are—

Are the Clergy grappling with the difficulty which this class represents?

Can the parochial Clergy successfully manage their case?

Is the Church occupying the vantage ground with respect to them which the successful efforts of other bodies of religionists show that they have to a certain degree attained?

I need hardly discuss a question which would take the precedence of all these:—need the Church consider this class at all?

Forgive me if I of necessity become slightly egotistic in this letter, as I must, to a great degree, represent my own case.

1. Six weeks ago I crossed a bridge spanning a portion of the North Western Railway which runs through my parish. It was at night, and I was attracted by some fires which were lit by the road-side. The deeply-marked countenance of a labourer who sat by one of them drew my attention, and I asked the cause of

the fires. I discovered that the Company had begun to lay a new line of rail by the side of the existing one, for the carriage of luggage. They had been compelled in doing this to disturb the bridge, and the fires had been kindled to avoid accident to travellers, from the broken condition of the wall. The watchman was the type of a class—rough, rude, intelligent, and independent : he answered the questions put to him, and seemed as indifferent to my curiosity as he was to the coldness of the night, through which he was to keep his lonely watch.

This intimation was sufficient to awaken some curiosity as to the condition, socially and morally, of the men who are called upon to do this work ; and the next day, on re-visiting the same district I found myself amid the hum and stir of a busy hive of men who were suddenly swarming and clustering round the banks and temporary workshops around the railroad. A mushroom growth of buildings as well as population had sprung into existence :—sheds, with their slated roofs ; small, long, low brick offices, with their new deal doors and unglazed windows ; rough, shingly roads and multitudinous planks, machines, and instruments of work lying on all sides, spoke of new work and a new population. They were resident and employed within the limits of my parish ; and whether the parochial system was the fitting one to meet the vast rising wants of the population of England in the nineteenth century, or not, was no point for me at that moment to settle. These were within the scope and reach of the only arranged system of the Church in their locality, and that was enough. Whether, as parish Priest, I was responsible for their moral and religious condition, or whether they should have had a body of mission clergy devoting their energies to them especially, was no matter then. I was accidentally their minister, and I must devise some means for their spiritual culture. There they were, five hundred of them, intelligent, thinking, inquiring, suspicious beings ; and they must be dealt with.

They had fallen within the reach of the ministrations of the Church—that Church which sprang from the womb of Mary to enclose the world within its arms—that Church whose Captain found out the weeping penitent at Magdala, and the thief on the gallows, sealed the pardon of the former, and took the latter to Paradise—that Church which taught all tongues to proclaim the glory of JESUS on the day of Pentecost, and struck out the Diaconate when the Apostolate was insufficient—that Church which made her titles and arrangements coincident with those of the Roman Empire, when by that means she could most easily enclose the world, and sent forth beggar missionaries to meet the case of beggars, and prince-preachers to touch the hearts of kings. Within the limits of that all-elastic machinery our Blessed LORD had brought five hundred “ navies ;” and if the Church in Eng-

land were endorsed with the Name of CHRIST, she must meet the "navvies'" case: and, if the Church is to do it, the parochial system must, and if that, in each parish, the parish priest must devise some means to bring the banished home. They have no one else to look to; there is no one else so responsible for their souls; there is no other man who is bound by such laws and obligations to place himself in their way, warn them of sin, cheer them when discouraged, visit them when sick, meet their arguments, and convince them of the reality of sympathy and genuine love. If the parish Priest does not do this, there are plenty of Baptist ministers, Wesleyan emissaries, and Methodist catechists who will,—to say nothing of the energetic and untiring energies of the priests of Rome.

But how was it to be done in the village I am speaking of? There were already nine hundred souls, forming the population of a district stretching over a circle of three miles in diameter; many sick, some dying; large schools and daily service. This seemed a case for the Additional Curates' Aid Society; but the society needs funds and advocacy, not cases.

Come what will, it would be a lasting shame as a railroad parish if it did not anticipate and meet the case of a railroad population; and "*all denominations*" might well laugh to scorn the power and efficiency of that body which had not elasticity enough to meet such a case.

2. I soon found that the "navvies," builders, carpenters, &c., connected with the work numbered five hundred; that they were a continually fluctuating body; that they were constantly swelling and sinking, ebbing and flowing. They were as a river—the same from day to day, ever the same yet never the same. This made it still more difficult. But there was no time to lose. While I was thinking, one of them had been cut in two by an express train, and his mutilated corpse lay in the hospital, demanding speed of the Church in saving others, and rebuking her for not having a Priest at hand to aid him on the grim scene of his lonely death. The whitened lip and rigid finger of the dead navy seemed to cry aloud to every railway parish, "O God, make haste to help us!"

The first thing to be done was to get at the "navvies," ascertain their characteristics, circumstances, and habits, and persuade them to listen at all to the message.

The second, to provide means for the aid and instruction of those who were in earnest, or might be casually affected.

The third, to watch results, to feel the moral pulse, and act accordingly.

I determined first to get among them, to know them, and make them know me. How was this to be done?

It was June—lovely weather and long days—the lanes beautiful

—everything which could cheer the clergyman in his walk. It was Monday morning—the Monday after I had seen my friend watching the bonfires on the bridge; and on Sunday I had determined must be made the first public stroke. Fresh men were flocking in on all sides; every morning brought new workmen who had travelled through the night from Brentford, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire,—all sides.

Where was the centre in which they could be reached?—Their lodgings, the tap-room, the pay-office, the gangs of work, the sheds and workshops, the barns, were the most natural. Many of them, multitudes, had to find sleeping-room far away; some slept—and are sleeping now that I am writing—under hedges and on haystacks. All these places, then, must be visited: these were the highways and hedges from which I was “to compel them to come in.”

a. My first visit was to a tap-room. It was late—half-past ten at night: the landlord advised me not to go in: he said the men were drunk, and would insult me; that I should do no good. I hesitated, but determined to go. The room was full: shouts of noise, quarrelling, and arguing met my ear: some were quite drunk, some smoking, some sitting on the tables, some leaning against the wall. I entered, and sat down in the middle of them. A murder had been attempted three weeks before in a tap-room in the neighbourhood: a policeman had been stabbed in eight places with a clasp knife by a drunken “navvy:” so there was some anxiety, but there *could* be no doubt.

At first I was received with a stare, and the noise went on. Presently a man sat on the table by my side, and laying his hand somewhat roughly on my shoulder, asked if I were a Baptist minister. I said “No,” and was proceeding further, when a drunken man got up and attacked me with violent language. A young man from a distant corner spoke for me, and two or three demanded a hearing for me. I soon found I had some friends.

It is not my object at this moment to detail the subject of conversation; I will refer to that by and by. I am now simply speaking to the question of getting among these men, and making them know you, and you know them,—a step *essential* towards any other further move. A group had by degrees gathered round; some on the tables, some standing, but most of them smoking. Their ease was consummate, and the confidence they displayed highly amusing. Their appearance on the whole was favourable: athletic in point of build and make, their physiognomy was by no means bad. A slightly sullen expression of the eye, and a stereotyped curl of incipient contempt about the lines of the lip, gave at first a somewhat forbidding aspect; but both of them became softened off as conversation went on, and their confidence grew. Their broad shoulders, as they sat upon the tables round, aided by

the ease of carriage resulting from utter absence of hesitation, gave a fine contour to their separate as well as grouped forms.

Our conversation at first assumed a social, and by degrees a religious character. An hour was soon consumed. They were thoroughly kindly to me in manner as I retired, and I felt I had a certain hold of their good feeling. If I met them again we should not be strangers nor did we suspect each other. I was heartily glad I had gone into the taproom.

b. My next line of approach was to a workshop. I found several were working in temporary workshops; barns and yards. These were the men more immediately connected with the smith and carpenters' work of the contract. But they were of much the same kind as the rest. In the first shed I entered I found from twelve to fifteen at work. They stared at me at first and smiled at each other. My object was to get them accustomed to seeing me, and I felt that a few days would then wear off all awkwardness on both sides. We talked about some of the work they were at, and indifferent topics, and I retired to go through the same process in other sheds and yards.

My apprenticeship was shorter than I expected. By the third visit—for I went in each day—I found they were glad to see me, and began to talk of their own accord. I had had some handbills printed concerning the service I proposed to have for them on the following Sunday, in a shed on the line, and the giving them away became an excuse for talking. Some took them and read them; some pocketed them with a smile, and some refused them; nevertheless, my handbill was a useful companion and aid to me,—it was a successful small end of a wedge.

The workshop occupants were rather more theological than those of the taproom. They plied me with several questions as to my position. Some thought I was a Baptist, some a Wesleyan, some a Jesuit,—none took me for a Clergyman of the Church of England. Their strong and main hostility, indirectly expressed, was against that latter body.

The sheds and workshops had done as good service as the taproom. The men were trusting me, and I was being looked upon more and more as a kind of amphibious "navvy," a cross between a Wesleyan tract-distributor and a Roman Catholic Priest. Their great horror I found on all hands to be of "a parson." I felt I might freely dispense with the title, and be anything they liked best. Anyhow, they were fish for my net, and I must catch them somehow. One man for a moment perplexed me by putting to me before a number of others very pointedly, "If, then, you are what you seem, you will not care what form a man uses, so as he truly serves JESUS CHRIST." I felt a moment's difficulty in the answer, but I floated past that rock. It was not the occasion for narrowness of view or statement.

c. My next approach was through the pay-office. This highly interested me. You must remember my immediate aim was to get so among them this week, that I might come forward with a good chance of an attentive hearing on the following Sunday at the "navvy" service in the shed. *There* was to be the battle, and I had to marshal my troops and gain their confidence before I encountered Satan in their hearts and lives. He was at work too. He had his emissaries, and they worked well in his pay. *Beer; the extreme heat; pugnacity; miserable or no lodgings; the hostility of residents to the new comers; reports of better pay up the line; the suspicion with which they were received by the resident gentry*: these were weapons from which Satan took his armoury. The first Sunday would be a pitched battle. The moral sympathy and gratitude for being noticed and cared for, were among the most important of the auxiliary forces which I had to beat up and depend on for the conflict.

But of the pay-office. It was Saturday afternoon, and 500 men were to be paid. The office was small, and a single window was the only place at which they could receive their pay. Consequently, the delay must be considerable. I determined on getting into the crowd and talking with them singly or in groups, as opportunity might offer. I made myself one of the throng. Many stared and laughed, but not for long. They took my paper and asked about the service. I witnessed singular scenes, and took part in most curious conversations. Some asked me the explanation of difficult passages in the Bible; some assailed the vices and luxury of the rich; some talked about the service, and approved of it. I came into personal contact with large numbers. All this paved the way for Sunday and the service, and gave me a standing-ground for addressing them which I knew to be all-important.

d. But I tried other modes of getting at them still. I went up in the bedrooms where 20, and in some 25 and 26, slept. I talked to those who were awake. None seemed to resist it, but to hail, rather than otherwise, the visit. I prayed with them, after a few words of warning to repent of the sins of the day, and of the past life. I left the rooms feeling I was known and identified with a principle.

I had many other opportunities. The hedge-row often presented me with groups of men, three and four at a time, lying houseless and shelterless—wanderers by day and night. I never passed any of them without talking to them and ascertaining their whereabouts: and so, by degrees, I became known to wider and wider circles among them, and got myself to be recognised as a sort of odd nondescript—a kind of navvies' friend.

e. A week's work of this sort had made way. I felt in advance towards Sunday. I already knew several individuals; I knew more of their ways, their habits, and circumstances. But of all other

modes of access, the visiting them in their gangs was most efficient. The walk up the line and stopping among the various companies at their work gained me a greater access than any thing else. A walk of a mile down and a mile up the line threw me into contact with many. I started as on a journey, provided with papers, notices, prayers, tracts, &c. I went with time enough before me to admit of my preaching a short sermon to them, if opportunity offered, or explaining the Bible. I felt like a man going on a voyage of discovery. It seemed full of enterprise and interest, and as I saw little groups of men with their white shirt-sleeves and smocks before me, I felt the kind of interest a traveller might feel when he sees bands of natives in the distance of a country which he has hitherto deemed uninhabited, or of whose accidents he is wishing to make inquiry.

But I must bring this head to a close. The long and short of it is—If you do a work with them, you must get among them, become personally known to them, and win their sympathies. There is no use whatever in simply opening the doors of a barn or a temporary church. They *will not come* unless you have first convinced them that you are a “*navvies’ parson* ;” and you must get at them through all ways, all channels and means. They lie on every side, and with God working with you, and you working for God, what may you not do ?

3. But now, what kind of men are they, and what chance has the Church of getting hold of them and doing any effective good ? Well, as good a chance as she ever had of laying hold of the masses of the minds in days gone by, and of converting the profligate, the infidel, and the sceptic.

Their physical appearance is well known to all. They are a class—a body of their own, and present an interesting phase of population to the eye of the observer.

Their manner is not nearly so forbidding as general impressions would lead us to expect. At first, they usually receive you with bluntness,—generally, indeed, with something like contempt. But one or two things are striking and well worth observing by those really anxious to get among them, or who are at all deterred by the apparent awkwardness of going straight into their presence without introduction. Though they will seldom show any outward sign of courtesy of *manner*, they are at once satisfied if they discern the smallest sign of sympathy in their visitor, or absence of pride or contempt. Once sit down among them, or take a sip of their proffered beer, and you will find that the greater part of the taproom or yard of work will be upon your side, address you with genuine civility, and yield a considerable amount of attention to what you say. And if one man shall happen to be a little more rough than another, some advocate will spring up, insisting on “giving the man a fair hearing,” or an indignant de-

mand will be made to "let the man speak, and be civil to him." On the whole, they are courteous and attentive, when you have convinced them of reality, and got beyond the first introduction. I will give an instance as illustrative of their character.

The day was wet, and finding few men at work on the line, I went into a taproom, which was full to crowding. I should think there were forty men there. I asked a man if he would make room for me to sit down by his side. It was a good test, as the seat was full, and it needed some little effort to give me space; but it was immediately done, and I was invited to take some beer as the pot went round: this I did; and finding I was increasing in popularity, I determined to improve my advantage, as I had an ulterior end in view. I ordered a pot for myself, and sent it round. There was a general kind of murmur, which sounded like a wish of good luck, and I felt my moment had come. Though they were still smoking, most of the men were looking kindly, and none appeared inclined to oppose me. I asked them if they would give me ten minutes to have "a say" to them. They all assented, and I read aloud the parable of the "Marriage-feast," and explained it—several wandering loiterers crowded round the door, and I was at least convinced of a silent and listening audience.

Several monotonous assents accompanied the observations. But I had scarcely finished, when a man sitting on the table turned to the men, and charged them to be united, and "resist the parson and the humbug of religion;" began to denounce the Bible as a bad book, and David as a sinful character. He then assailed me. Had he been sober, I should have had some chance, as he had a certain clearness of view in what he said: but beer had addled his brain. Nevertheless, the evident inclination of the room was to see fair play to all, and to let him state his arguments, and hear my answers to them. I was struck with this. They were not so arrested by the last speaker as to be unwilling to hear another. There was something almost ludicrous in the solemn, attentive faces which some young men turned to the drunken and blasphemous rhetoric of my opponent, as if it was quite as fair an object of regard as anything which had been said. But at length my opponent got uproarious, refused to answer my arguments, and, finding popular feeling turning against him, left the room. A murmur of disapprobation followed him, which I checked by taking for granted that they gave me the best of the argument. They assented, and I took my leave, after as singular a three quarters of an hour as I have spent for a long time.

The navvies are men by no means unwilling to give an attentive ear to all you say. They only dread sham. They have a sound common sense, which leads them to value every word uttered which appeals to their moral sense, and which they feel intuitively is true. There is no inclination to reject or scoff and jeer at religious instruction, as such.

On one occasion, on going to a tap-room, I found that some were inclined to assail what was said, and at first to hinder any address. I turned to the whole body of them, and said, "Is there any man here who would not be frightened if he knew he would die to-night? And yet there's scarce a man here who is afraid of the *pain* of dying."

"He's right enough," said several.

"Then," said I, "it's something *after* death you're afraid of,—the being called to account for your actions; and if so, that shows that your own hearts tell you there is truth in religion." And they all gave a kind and attentive audience.

They are sensitively alive to *inconsistency*, and shrink from any one who holds them in the least degree at a distance. They are full of independence and a certain self-respect; and feeling they have *power*, and three or four shillings a day, all of which they spend on themselves, they care little for any one.

This love of independence was shown strongly enough in the following conversation in a tap-room.

"Well, my man, why do you wander about the world? Why do you not settle in some home? Would it not be happier for you, and better in all ways?"

"Yes, but then I must keep my wife; and I had rather spend all my money on myself. It is a choice between spending a pound a week on one or on two. No, no wife for me, while I can earn enough to live jolly."

He gave me a list of his outlay, and he was living with every comfort, without the slightest thought of the future.

This abundant supply of all bodily wants, and ample provision, with the consciousness of the power to earn it, gives them a health and vigour of conscious energy which our low-fed and low-paid agricultural labourer seldom shows. That consciousness of power, and the flow of healthy blood, caused by ample food, yields to these men an independence and indifference which we are little used to in the latter. Nevertheless, they stand mid-way between him and the artizan of the factory districts, by the absence of that development of the intellect which has led the latter to *suspect* a part in all said to them, and to brood in almost morbid and sullen discontent over the difference of positions in society. There is a striking difference between a strong, healthy, and vigorous "navvy," with his determined independence of manner,—his kindly manner when you have won his confidence,—and the cringing, beaten plaint of our half-fed and underpaid agricultural labourer of Bucks or Herts. But equally different is that "navvy," with his erect, kindly, independent, honest manner, sitting upright on the edge of a table, with a pipe in his mouth, to the quick, brilliant-eyed artizan, plying his busy task in the room of the factory with an independence which assumes contempt, and an indifference of manner which approaches to insolence: his questions

indicating dogged opposition, instead of good-natured raillery ; and his objections put forward with acrimony, instead of the tone indicative of the desire to put them.

4. But with regard to the distinctive opinions of "the navvies," there is much to say. They have a decided taste for theology, and a smattering of knowledge ; you can almost always guide the conversation into religious topics. They have a certain number of questions which you are nearly sure to have put to you in the course of a short discussion :—the fact of David's fall, the fact of Lot and Amnon's story being in Holy Scripture at all, and the general structure of the canon of Scripture, &c. Another favourite topic is the luxury and ease of the rich, who, they choose to imagine, are the peculiar proprietors of religion and the Bible, and whose inconsistent mode of living they are determined to identify with flaws in the theory of Christianity altogether. But they are willing to hear their objections answered, and to acknowledge the force of what you say to them.

Their habits of life are migratory in a remarkable degree. They have none of the associations of home, place, or a past. They have been wanderers as long as they remember, and go from place to place to find work. If their work is not remunerative enough in one place, they will move to another at any cost of ease or comfort, and will seem to delight in change of place and employment, to show you how little they care for one spot or association above another. This gives them a peculiar shade of character. They are without the mellowing influence which home and the past give even to the roughest agricultural poor. One man told me the other day, "I was born in a lane, and I never knew a home which belonged to me or my father." This gave an idea of houselessness indeed, and many of them bear this kind of stamp.

Their theological subtelties and difficulties assumed a singular shape ; nevertheless, showing some degree of thought and inquiry. They have got certain imaginary difficulties, and certain real ones, with which they delight to perplex their auditors. One is, the meaning "of the sin against the HOLY GHOST." "How Solomon built his temple?" "How David, who committed such sins, could be called 'the man after GOD's own heart?'" and so forth. The question of Sunday, and its claims on our devotion of time to holy exercises or merely worldly pursuits, is also a favourite question.

Any one who goes among them must be ready with answers to all these. They are not difficult to answer, nor are the men hard to persuade, when sober. Your chief danger consists in having a man present who is half drunk, and yet has wits enough to see his own arguing point. He will probably try to confuse you with a multiplicity of questions, which by crowding one on another prevent your being able to lay hold of any one separately, and yet give to his audience the impression that he is very wise. It is most im-

portant to deal with each question separately, and to answer each of them shortly, tersely, and pointedly. You will have a fair-judging audience. They will be ready to see fair play, and give full weight to all that is advanced. But if you give your drunken antagonist the advantage, by letting him muddle his hearers by a variety of questions, you will have to leave your position in the tap-room crestfallen and shorn of honour.

In their lodging-houses they are respectable, and careful of the decencies and comforts of life. They will generally appear dressed and washed for tea, sitting three or four at a table, and many often discussing intelligently; and on these occasions it is rare that you will meet with any kind of insolence. Nay, on the contrary, you will usually find them much pleased at your visit, and quite willing to converse freely with you. They scorn pecuniary relief, but are largely open to sympathy, reality, and evident honesty of purpose and aim.

5. Such is a slight sketch of their characteristics. I come now to the practical point, with which I am especially concerned,—the mode of bringing the Church to bear on this numerous and most important population; and when we come to think of the railways which reticulate our land, we irresistibly feel how powerfully the responsibility rests upon the multitudes of our parochial Clergy. It is impossible not to yearn with earnest desire after the day when the Church will gather into her bosom all who were born her heritage, and for whom she was placed a mother; to bring in those who are not yet in the fold, or for those other sheep whom He came to save, that they may know His voice, and go in and out and find pasture.

There is no inherent hatred to the Church *per se*, in their body. They do not know her, feel her, or understand her. They associate her with the wealthy, the selfish, and magnificent, and forget that she is in her original and native beauty especially the friend and guardian of the poor. If they have not known the Church, it has been her own fault. I speak of the Church in her application of JESUS CHRIST'S love and pardon to the wanderers of a ruined world.

One thing to do was to have a service for them in a shed near the line especially calculated for them. I held this at a quarter past two on Sundays, and then the point was through the week to try and draw them in and to induce them to come on the following Sunday. For the service I took the confession, absolution, LORD'S Prayer, the Psalms for the evening, and a lesson chosen by myself, either a parable of a plain and easy meaning or circumstances in the life and suffering of JESUS. We sang two hymns, one especially prepared for the purpose, and I used a few of the collects. I preached a sermon, generally taking one of the parables and expounding it. The service lasted one hour, including all. The re-

sult has hitherto been decidedly favourable. Each Sunday there has been a full attendance, and indeed an increasing one.

One or two things came to my mind in connexion with the working of these services.

First, there is no natural repugnance in the men of this class to the attention due to Divine Service. What they do shrink from is the finding themselves among those whose manner and dress, and above all, whose treatment of them indicate a conscious superiority and separation between the two bodies. They cannot endure this. More than one of them, intelligent and well-meaning men, spoke in strong and decided terms of the failure in many of the churches which had been erected especially and professedly to bring in the poor in London. "They are more full of the higher orders than any, and the navy does not feel at home, and therefore will not go." Now, if this is true, which I have heard from many it is, there must be a mistake somewhere. It is difficult to see what it is, and perhaps more still when trying to obviate it. But it ought to be met. No men, though, are more sensitive than the particular class I am speaking of, of anything like distinctive and separate recognition. They would naturally start from a "navy service," or a "navy church."

One mode, for a while at least, of meeting the difficulty seems to be to open sheds and barns for services along the course of any constant work on which navvies are employed; as for instance in this case a railroad, and inviting the workmen to it under the plea not that they are a separate class, but that their convenience is consulted by a shed service as a temporary arrangement; and the fact of their being strangers and their dress being rude operating as a hindrance in their estimation to their going to the church of the parish. This plan will obviate the difficulty. By this means they might be got at and influenced, and by degrees drawn to appreciate the more normal condition of worship; at least this might be a temporary device, and might open the way to further works of a more permanent character.

Temporary churches opened along the lines of railroads in formation, canals, or dockyards, would naturally produce and form navy congregations and call for navy missions, and this must bring about preaching and arrangements of service suited to their particular cases without the odium of appearing to *create* a state of things expressly for a class as if it were outcast from ordinary society and separate from the interests of the intelligent and respectable.

The long and short of it is,—by all means open barns and sheds for these men along the line of work; have sermons and services in them continually expressly for them, though put forward as a matter of convenience, not of principle. They will come and be glad, and by degrees, by such processes the great question will be

solved of how the Church is to get hold of this very important body of society.

Then as to style and length of service. This kind of man will not stand length. *Reverence* is no part of his creed; he sits the whole time with the restlessness of the sceptic, not with the stolid calmness of the agricultural labourer, who is there because it is "what we ought to do."

But this question of lightened services and liturgies to meet particular cases has been largely discussed. I am only now applying it to the matter in hand, and urging the necessity of the use of the utmost lawful elasticity and the rejection of all strait-laced plans. By all means have much singing of hymns. It is much liked; and preach in an extempore, vigorous, manly, and pointed style; making your language as terse as possible, and as nearly as possible approaching to humour and wit without transcending the bounds of reverence. The "navvy" does not appreciate eloquence. He does appreciate *point*, argument, and earnestness. I have found *the parables* best suited to these addresses. Such men will follow easily anything like *a tale*.

Do not be afraid of *preaching*. Preach plentifully to them. No mistake the Church movement ever made was greater than that of unfurling the banner of "No preaching." You *must* preach to these men, and in no sluggish way too. I should like to have seen the effect of one of Wesley's sermons on these men. You must do all you can to touch and keep their *hearts*. They need earnest, dramatic preaching, with words, phrases, and actions suited to their modes of life and expression. Prayers referring to their peculiar needs, and hymns on the solemn and stirring subjects of death and judgment.

I have tried a week-day service, at half-past eight in the evening, besides three services on Sundays. I held it in a barn. It was filled, and I never addressed a more attentive audience. They sat throned on the piles of beanstalks on either side, while the open space in the centre left a free scope for the movement of the preacher. Around the door a large number were sitting on the floor, while some were standing against the quiet evening light which was spread out in the sky behind them, their dark figures looming with singular picturesqueness with their short smocks and open swarthy necks. Nothing could exceed the quiet and devout manner and the evident gratitude evinced by all. The road seemed full as they retired, but there was no sound save the tramp of feet and the low under-tone of discussion. Very few women swelled the congregation. They were nearly all men; and among them a considerable proportion of youths between sixteen and twenty. I have just come in as I write from it and strongly persuade you to try the same. The only difference which I made between the week-day and the Sunday service is that I

had fewer Collects and Psalms in the former, and threw myself more into the sermon.

6. So much for the services.

The next plan I have adopted is a daily evening class. I have opened it at eight, and it lasts till ten. I have formed a small band of teachers from among my friends in the village, each willing to be responsible for his night, while any who likes comes and aids in the work. The class has been just opened, but it promises well; several have joined it already, and we had a large and very studious body of pupils hard at work last night. They learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, and I go in to give them instruction in Holy Scripture. It will become a great opportunity of further good in future, and of grafting more definite religious instruction upon it. As yet it consists principally of young men—just the body I should wish to get hold of. They are anxious to get on; and wherever I have mentioned the class along the line it has been universally well received. I cannot help hoping I may have in the winter a considerable company.

7. A third plan of getting them under instruction is a Bible class which I have formed to meet every Sunday for the present at my house. It consists of young men, some of them friends of my own, some of them “navvies,” and some inhabitants of the village. They have formed themselves into a class with the understanding that during the week they are to study a subject in connection with the Bible; and on the next Sunday to bring the passages they have found to bear upon it, and to ask any question they like or to make any suggestion. The class leader is to moderate and direct, and answer the various questions. For this week we have to consider the question of “How far Holy Scripture is a record of human nature, its good and its evil.” I gave this subject that I might indirectly lead the minds of the men to see the answer to an objection frequently put in taprooms “that the Bible is a bad book from its being a record of so much evil.” But one most important result ensuing from such a class is the strong provocation that it becomes to good works and the shame with which it fences round evil. These men realize the force of opinion. They would dread losing the credit of their fraternity by falling into open sin, and an *esprit de corps* is thus established, which tends to elevate the general tone and to give spring and impetus to the whole moral being.

It becomes also a nucleus round which others will gather, and a distinct centre to which many a hesitating navvy may come. They have tickets of membership as well as those of proficiency in their work and attention, which they may show in other parishes through which they may pass. They like this class; it gives the opportunity of doing something themselves and for themselves, and it raises up a body of friends and supporters against the day of adversity.

Then, too, a library of books is lent out among them or circulated through the lodging-houses where there are three or more together. This, over and above the important work of giving them employment and occupation, and keeping them out of the taproom, also tends to bind them together, and to increase around them the safeguards against falling.

On the whole, the short time I have been at work, and the difficulty of the work being taken into consideration, I am abundantly encouraged by the result. I find far more attention and less of opposition than I expected—a greater wish to be noticed—and a greater assent to the truths of the corruption of the heart, and the happiness gained by religion. They are a fine and noble race of men in every respect and deserve devoted care. Among them are the widow's only son and the wife's single hope for the sorrows which are gathering like a storm over the horizon of life. Among them is the great opportunity offered to the Church for exercising that energy, elasticity and love which are her attributes, and which ought to shine as the brightest jewels in her crown.

8. But there are questions which arise with regard to this work which it is important to consider. Supposing that no abnormal means of meeting the case of the "navvies" be supplied or invented, and the only machinery which we have to bring to bear upon them be the parochial one, will not the devotion of time necessary from every clergyman, to do anything, however small, in the way of visiting or Sunday services take away attention from the already multitudinous calls of parochial life, and give some colour to the cry that the regular work is being neglected to supply an irregular demand. That in short, with little time enough already to meet the case of the numbers who neglect church, break the sanctity of Sunday, and are without Christian knowledge at all, we are re-dividing the attention of our over-worked clergy by an invitation to attend to the case of hundreds or thousands more, and that the consequence is—what? Injury and damage to the existing cases; increased neglect and indifference to the calls of ordinary parochial life.

Just the contrary seems to be the result. The abnormal work re-acts with most beneficial results on those who have been and are subjects of the normal, and the hour spent by the clergyman on the outlying navvies will be repaid two or three-fold by the good done to the parochial population. The oft repeated visit at the cottage has possibly already ceased to be effective on those who frequently spoken to have deafened the ear and hardened the heart. Perhaps under this conviction the clergyman has ceased to visit, or continue his word of reproof and warning. The effort to gain the stranger and the wanderer; the care showed to their condition; the warning and consoling words said to them, will come with fresh energy and force on the old inhabitant, and many a

drunkard or blasphemer will be startled by the words which were uttered to rouse a stranger. Instead of absorbing too much attention from the visits of the clergyman, the work will become a substitute of a most efficient nature for them, and the syllables uttered will fall like waterdrops on the dim and misty picture which had long since lost its colour beneath the gathering dust of time.

The service in the barn or shed will be attended by more than one who has long refused to enter church, and the difficulty apparently raised by insufficient clothing, or some strange vow made, "never to enter *that* church," is of no power to hinder them coming within the reach of the Gospel at the barn. They find that they have gained a new idea of the whole thing. It is no longer the heavy, lengthened, continuous service, but the prayers and lessons are intelligible and clear, and the fact of being a little more elevated in social standing by the side of the "navvies" gives a zest to them in the service, which induces them to come next Sunday. Half the difficulty about spending Sunday religiously has passed away by the discovery that there can be an interest impressed on the religious worship, and that they can be prominent features in the gathered congregation.

This opens out another large and important question—How far *the mission* is *necessary* occasionally to rouse the dead sleep and torpor into which parishes sink, and from which no normal and stereotyped work can ordinarily rouse them?—How far the barn service is needful at times to give spirit, life, and reality in the minds of the people, to the church service; and the more plain and home preaching of the mission house, requisite to meet the case of those whom the church service does not touch.

Then, too, no doubt by contrast the church service receives dignity from the ruder and simpler homeliness of the mission service. It retires into a more elaborate and substantial attitude, and appears more what it really is, the opportunity of building up the character of him who has been first attracted, convinced, or brought to penitence by the mission. There is no doubt our service, as it now is, is beyond the poor; it does not reach them, or touch them. It takes too much for granted. It assumes too much knowledge for our dull and blunt agriculturist. The Old Testament lessons, with their Jewish and historic allusions, and the lofty ecstasies of the prophets, become in many instances a dead letter to them. We read on and they are staring at vacancy, or gone to sleep. The arguments of S. Paul in the Epistles to the Romans or the Hebrews, are entirely beyond them; indeed they are beyond the scope of many of our wealthy but imperfectly educated classes. They are assisted here and there by beautiful passages, whose force and beauty are complete, and contained within themselves; those in the 12th chapter of Romans, or the 11th chapter of the Hebrews:

but it is only in their secondary and illustrative force that they are assenting to them. The prayers, however beautiful, are too terse in many instances to be at once clear, too frequent to be simple. The mind of our agricultural poor can only float in shallow waters, they have not depth of keel enough to draw a large body. But I am going off into a question in itself important enough for separate attention. The point is, the effect the mission service has on the church service. It tends to give it a position, a relative attitude it had not. The latter ceases to the parochial mind to be, as it is to too many, a dead letter, and becomes but a more reserved and refined expression of worship.

The brief parable of the mission lesson explained at each clause, —the psalm read so as to convey instruction to the heart, and not *only* as an ascription of praise, its highest but not to all its most intelligible value, the extempore prayers suited and applied to the particular cases, wants, and circumstances of the people, tend to bring out by their simplicity the greater reserve and pregnancy of those services which are more generally in use among us.

Then, too, the mission work,—the abnormal effort—reacts well on the settled population, in forcing many among them to feel how great their opportunities have been, and perhaps how much neglected! There is a man to whom you have spoken and pleaded in vain for years. He has refused and resisted all. You have ceased to speak,—the sound of the bell calling to Sunday worship and daily prayer falls on a deaf ear. The funeral passes to an unheeding eye,—the solemn circumstance,—the sudden death,—the raging fever, are “but the result of accident, the toss up of chance.” That man happens to work in the navy gang; you pass him silently by while you speak to the others, and yet he feels that he knows you, and you have more reason to care for him than any of those who are there. He hears old pleadings perhaps listened to by strangers. It gains a new form, a new colour, a new force applicable to his position, and he thinks, or reasons, or trembles. The return of “a stranger” to give glory to God, will often compel the “nine” to pause on their heedless journey. And this is equally powerful on the multitudes of the parish—men and women who have become too used to oft-repeated words: the words said to others, received or rejected by others, acquire new power to them. In the same way the appearance in church of the navy smock, or, still more, the appearance at the altar rouses attention, and shames recusants. The village night schools receive new force from the navy night school; and the desire to learn in the stranger and the proverbially rude and uncultivated excites a similar one in those who have had and have a more abundant though neglected opportunity.

In short, the best thing that can happen to a parish is the introduction of an abnormal population, if they are well attended to and worked: if they are neglected nothing can be worse; they become

then either a nucleus, drawing off to themselves any which may be inclined to go on better, or they adhere single and easily attracted units to the evil principle which exists near them. I have said nothing here of the vast opportunity which such work gives of calling out the kindness, active benevolence, sympathy, and enterprise of many in a parish who are thirsting for the opportunity of finding some whom they may feed, clothe, or visit, and by doing so find CHRIST: many who long to come across some forsaken "wandering brother," who, "hearing may take heart again."

No, neither regret nor neglect the navvies, or the temporary railway work which may have brought them to your parish. Who can tell whether they will leave a blessing behind them? No doubt they will, if used as a new and glorious opportunity of working for JESUS, and bringing souls,—tired, oppressed, weary souls,—beneath the yoke of the cross.

Difficulties of course there will be in the very fluctuating and transitory nature of this population. But here, too, good, not evil, may ensue. They pass on from point to point on the line, the tract or tale you have given them,—the kind word said,—the conviction forced upon them travels with them, and like winged seeds, they bear their fragrant harvest to distant and unexpecting homes; their very migratory habits become a distinct advantage.

It is a noble work, and worthy of every effort. It is scarcely possible to overrate the good which may be done. The navvies brood over the land as a swelling cloud of outcasts from normal society. They embody in their number hordes of the homeless, the friendless, and the unrecognised. They enrol in their catalogue of names men whose cradle has been the wayside hedge, and their mother the chance strumpet who deserted her child as soon as she had given it suck. Many of them never knew a home. Few as its attractive associations may be to those who among our labouring poor have had a home, still these have had none. That home where it exists becomes the point of appeal to some feeling of a higher, nobler kind. The farm house with its undulating corn lands, the cottage with its garden of stocks and wall flowers, are images associated with some higher thoughts in the mind of our poor. The figures which stand out before the background of that scenery are, the mother, whose clamorous voice impressed the infant mind with the idea of Amazon protection; or the father, whose jolting step with his spade on his shoulder suggested the impression of the sweat which earned the daily bread. No such memories have many of these for whom I plead. As one said to me the other day, it is true of many of them: "Sir, I was born in a ditch, and my father was before me."

It is a noble work for the teacher of JESUS, to give to such men as these a tender association,—a substitute for a home, and the Church is that. I do not now pause to show how.

Hordes of these wanderers are without homes. They are essentially wanderers; they lead an Arab life; brought up to roving habits they cannot settle, and life is simply diversified by the arrangements of different taprooms, or the varied forms of vulgar vice or sceptical blasphemy, which they may meet in one neighbourhood, or another. It is hard to conceive the effect on the character of having *no home*; no human claim to break in upon the long monotony of reckless selfishness; no tie on earth to impress the mind with moral responsibility, or to call out higher feelings, than the gratification of the passing moment.

It is scarcely possible to estimate the opportunity which the preacher of JESUS has, to give such men the ideas of a refuge and home—some fold which may be a point for the memory of the wanderer on the wilderness of life—some soothing affection to which he may turn in hours of sickness and loneliness. It may seem at first sight hard to awaken personal pity for the navy. We conjure up the image of the athletic form,—the sweating skin,—the bare neck, the blue shirt, and the daring insolence of the eye, and we smile to think of the idea of these evoking pity. But why not? They are our flesh and blood, with human feelings, human responsibilities, and immortal destinies; and more than that, capable in a peculiar manner of appreciating and estimating attentions and kindnesses shown to them.

Amongst them will be found the Crimean soldier, turned adrift for drunkenness,—the ticket-of-leave man,—the convict,—and the jail-bird; with such antecedents, they are likely to be rude and wild,—they have tales to tell of “crossing the desert,” of the Balaklava charge, and the horrors of the morning fog of Inkermann;—they have tales to tell of gaol discipline, and the tyranny or mercy of gaol governors. But what claims can be stronger on the energies and the sympathies of the Church? They are outcasts from society; she has it for her blessed work to bring them in; she who follows His steps Who sought the outcast, and made his cause His own—Who in Bethany heard the insolent cry, “The woman is a sinner,” and said to her, “Go in peace”—Who met the outcast adulteress, and said, Go, sin no more; I do not condemn thee—Who traversed Syrophenicia to meet the afflicted mother, and having met her, when the disciples bid Him “send her away,” healed her daughter; and when He ascended the cross turned and looked on the outcast assassin, and because He read penitence there said, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” Then surely the taking the outcast and making their cause her own is the work of the Church, and a blessing will follow those who track the wanderers and bring them home.

9. There are one or two thoughts which are naturally suggested by studying the habits of a class of men like these. Is the plan of ordaining deacons among men who will still pursue their callings

as artizans and labourers, possible or advisable? The question came strongly before me in this way. A young navy of very striking and determined character, who had been in a remarkable way brought to a sense of religion, has been frequently with me. His character and reputation seem unexceptionable, his earnestness in doing right, and in leading a consistent life most striking, and his desire and efforts to be of use to his fellow navvies unwearied. He has been, to my knowledge, in the habit of reading the Bible aloud to those who assembled at night in a large room, where twenty of them sleep. He spends his evenings in striving to teach others, and to keep two or three young "mates" of his from evil. He suffers some persecution for all this, but he bears it heroically; and on the whole has considerable weight among the men, and gains far more attention and respect than we should imagine. I always feel I ought to work through that man. He understands the rest; he appreciates their wants,—can detect their unreality,—can sympathise with real distress,—can precipitate in a moment the false element, and leave the true one floating on the surface. If he is ordained he will desire as much as any of us invested with holy orders the happiness, temporal and eternal, of his fellow workmen and he will use a power of continual persuasion in the bedroom, the taproom, and the lodging house, which no one else can. Why should not he, after being tested by satisfactory standards, and found sufficient, if willing, receive a direct mission from the Church, and be endowed with all the power which the laying on of hands, or the prayers and abstinence of the congregation, can give him?

I know this is a subject by itself, but it is inseparably connected with that of which I am treating, and one which I daily feel more and more practically interesting. Aquila and Priscilla continued tent-making, and the great Apostle does not seem to have forsaken his craft long after his body was worn with apostolic labours. S. Peter and S. John returned to their fishing boats after the resurrection; and the call of JESUS did not hinder or destroy the habits and associations of their childhood. The boat of Zebedee was still the well known and accustomed resort of him who lay on the bosom of God; and the broken nets of Gennesaret were a care to him who held the keys of all the churches. I feel hampered and hindered by being unable to employ more directly the men who stand up around me, so exactly suited as they are to go forth as navy missionaries among the navvies.

I know there are objections to all this. Some will say, and with a certain truth, "They will not carry with them the same influence, or the same amount of influence which an educated man taken from other classes will." I grant it. Not the same *kind* of influence, or even the same amount. But they will carry *their own peculiar* influence, and that is much; and that is neither what I nor

any other man in Orders can carry. He can get among them when I cannot; he can detect false and second motives which are veiled to me; he can apply language which would be unbecoming in another; and he can test sincerity by after conduct, which is beyond my reach. Nor is there any hindrance to that man receiving some such mission as may make him a most efficient and useful helpmeet in the general work.

10. Before I close this letter, I would say a word upon one thing which I have found to be a most important matter, however simple a truism it may seem,—the *spirit* in which you must go to work with these men. You must enter on your mission with the spirit of trust and confidence—not that of suspicion. There are but two attitudes our mind can assume in dealing with a work like this: that of the determination to suspect every man we come across on the work as an impostor, a hopeless sceptic or irreclaimable profligate, and therefore to work with magisterial, not priestly sympathies, backed by police, instead of deacons, and pointing to prisons or reformatories, not churches and schools, as the mission-house from which we issue, and to which we direct the objects of our search. We may do some work, even then, though it will be but small, and the result doubtful, even though at first apparently effective. The other mind in which to work is this: to go believing in men's sincerity of intention as the rule, determining not to distrust them *a priori*, but to wait for proof. To believe that if given fair play, and made convinced, that you sincerely care for their welfare, they will like to reason and succumb to persuasion, and that they are, after all, but like thousands among us, and ourselves to boot,—only steeled against those they believe to be their enemies, and as much within the reach of conscience, reason, or common-sense, as any one else who has formed for years the habit of resisting the calls of all three. We must go to work among them not only wishing for, but believing in the probability of their conversion or good feeling, and as if they were men peculiarly under the influence of that goodwill which comes out with especial energy towards those who show a sincere care for their well-being, and social or moral welfare. There is no intermediate line; and we must make up our mind which shall be our animating spirit. And I say this the more strongly and earnestly, inasmuch as so many hindrances will arise to the effectually entering on this spirit,—nay, more than you would at first sight expect.

At times, every thing will seem to be against you. The clerks and pay-officers concerned on the works will smile and shake their heads at your enthusiasm,—tell you that the whole set, from the sub-contractor to the labouring navvy, are a set of scamps—wandering vagabonds, without homes, principles, or goodwill. You are thrown back; the sub-contractor comes out of the pay-office swearing against clerks and pay-officers because they only pay him a

third of the sum which he has to meet his gangs with two hours hence, or which he has already advanced to the men working under him; and assures you, with a knowing wink, that you are completely taken in by "that there paymaster. As for the contractors, they'll squeeze a poor man down to the last farthing; and unless they did, how could they make the vast fortunes they do? It's all the blood of the navy."

You go away perplexed, and turn to a ganger. There are four, perhaps, along a line of two miles. Each has seven or eight men working under him. They seem the very embodiment of energy, a continual "sharp look out" over work, with kind feeling to the men. You shake hands with the ganger, and then talk to the men. The ganger calls the men, in a kindly tone, "poor fellows," which means that his gang is peculiarly deserving of your sympathy, and the men talk without restraint before the ganger, and you feel that you have found "a happy family;" and that Eastern despotism might sit on a railway bank and learn a lesson of supreme power exercised with the very ideal of beneficence from a railway ganger. Charmed with your interview, you walk away, brooding over works of good and schemes of energy which are to include ganger, workmen, and cart-boys. A step behind you tells you that the ganger is following, and you loiter to hear, doubtless, of some "excellent, deserving fellow," whose case you are especially to select from the gang. But the ganger has only to say, "Sir, they're all taking you in; don't trust one of them—don't be too free with them: they're all a set of vagabonds. You'll not say as I said so?"

"Oh dear no! you may quite trust me. But I'm very sorry to hear you say so. Is it really so?"

"I wouldn't say so, sir, but I've known that kind of man a long time. I don't like to see good nature imposed upon, and men's pockets picked."

"Oh, no, certainly. That is anything but pleasant. But—"

"Well, sir, two of my men were making a boast of how they had got you to pay for their lodging last night."

"No, really? Well, I must take more care."

And the ganger goes off leaving you to pursue your mournful way in sadness, with your soul vacillating between believing in every one, and believing in no one. Pray decide in favour of the former. I will show you why presently. You enter into conversation with one of the men next day, and he assures you that "there isn't a worse man on all the line than the ganger; that he was discharged last night for bad conduct; that he's a tyrant to the men, and hated by every one."

Then you pick up some cartboy, whose checked shirt and intelligent face makes sixteen doubly interesting; and his absence from his home makes him doubly an object of regard. You lavish favours upon him, are delighted with his open-hearted good-nature, and

are astonished to hear that he has left his work without the slightest reason—was seen drunk last night—has gone farther up the line, in quest of a new job—has left his lodgings in debt and you without thanking you for your kindness (the worst of all.)

So you will say this is a hopeful sea on which you are embarking.

But this is not all. The idea of energy among the navvies is so strange, so proverbially hopeless, that the richer and upper orders among your parishioners will smile good-naturedly at your enthusiasm, and refuse to give you sixpence to help you in your undertaking, or perhaps worse—will openly assail you for your folly, charge you with restlessness and love of excitement, and call it the “navvy rage.” They have no belief in the possibility of success, or in the conceivable humanity of a navvy.

Such a gentleman lives in an ample home, in the midst of a well-kept garden, with a lodge at his gate, and a reserved seat in church, and four thousand a year in his pocket. He will give you £5 yearly for all your village charities, lavish a few shillings on one or two village pets, for the sake of opposition, or the reputation of liberality, and will assail you because you attempt to evangelise seven hundred of God’s creatures, who are more intelligent than himself, and without whose hard, sweat-wrung labour he would neither take a journey nor have made his fortune. He seems to think that the enormous and countless race of men whom he would see if he ever cast his eye out of a railway carriage, swarming along the banks, were created for the crisis of laying down a new line, and were, immediately after it was finished, to be absorbed and scattered into space like the animalcules, which some tell us are created by electricity with scarcely a tangible existence and no future. Many a kind friend will incredulously smile at your attempts, and the poor of your own parish will be jealous of the attention paid to the wanderer and the stranger. All this is discouraging. But the introduction of Christianity into the world had the same difficulties to contend with, and the same objections and objectors were ranged against the fisherman of Galilee and the Evangeliser of the world. You must bear up against this. It is not unnatural. The workmen themselves condemn each other because they simply view one side of each other—their worldly one. You view the other side; and every one has two sides. They have no call to look favourably on one another; their interest is to suspect one another.

There are other traits and points in them, if you study them. There are yearnings for sympathy, responses to moral reasoning, fears with regard to the unseen future; a dread lest death may be something more than a mere passing agony. Many are sceptics because no one has cared earnestly to put the truth to them, and many have cared to place infidelity before them. Many are profligate and intemperate because they have no refuge in the evening

but the tap-room and have formed no other habits from their earliest infancy.

It is your duty, your privilege, your power by grace, to appeal to and bring out all these feelings and tendencies, and draw them back to Him Whom they have deserted. It is a glorious mission, and he who, having a body of these men working within the limits of his parish, shall neglect them, will lose one of the greatest opportunities of applying the energy of the Church which exists at this day—will leave a talent buried in a napkin, and yield to Satan untold vantage ground in the great struggle between him and our Blessed LORD.

11. Nevertheless, I strongly feel that this population loudly calls for a distinct mission-work of its own,—it needs a new machinery. It wants something more than the parochial system; it needs the invention and application of some more elastic energy, and clearly illustrates the inadequacy of the parochial system alone to meet the growing wants of our immense population. We want men whose one sole work is the railroad,—whose one population is the shifting navy,—who will travel up and down among the thousands which camp here and there along a line of rail; who will get thoroughly into their habits and ways of speaking and thinking; will adapt themselves to the taproom and the navy lodging-house, and will show there fearless, manly, unfettered energy. We need such men to live in societies and go forth from centres of prayer, and meditation, as men did of old, to those great works which marked the pioneer age of the Church. We need the power of adapting services to the wants of the population,—short, popular, intelligible, and telling. We want men who can preach extempore and argue readily. We want Clergymen who can drop stiffness and be natural, original, and hearty,—men who can do a peculiar work without wearing a peculiar coat, and who can form themselves into a brotherhood for CHRIST'S sake without calling it in this day an order,—men who can lay the foundation of orders and rules which may hereafter emulate those which rise so luminously on the history of past Christianity. Perhaps you will say, and with truth, we want *men* to do this—*hearts of love and tongues of earnest simplicity, which alone is real eloquence.* So we do; but if there are such, why do they not come forward? and may not many a man have all this in him who from diffidence or indolence has never tested it? Till work is done in this way, we shall never make the Church in England felt among the masses. She will remain the Church of the respectable, and the higher orders, not the Church of the poor, the artisan, and the navy. The mission is the instrument which is to be elaborated in the forge of the nineteenth century in England.

I have done. I have but hinted on a subject worthy of volumes. I want to spur you on to your noble work. I want to make you

realise how great and worthy it is. It is noble to throw yourself, in an age of too much dilettantism and conventionalism, into immediate and manly contact with thousands of your perishing fellow-creatures. It is noble to grapple with men who present, at first sight, more difficult and repulsive features than any other class of the community. It is noble to create a feeling of affection in hearts which have scarcely ever known its power, and to give sympathy to feelings and yearnings which are withering for lack of its support. It is noble to be the friend of the friendless, the advocate of the condemned, and the unshrinking companion of the outcast from ordinary society. It is noble to try to rescue from hell those over whom Satan has cast, from childhood up, the toils of his net. It is noble to answer the sophistry of hell with the eloquence of heavenly wisdom, and to refute assaults on God by generous appeals to the assailant's own soul. It is noble to be banded with Apostles, missionaries, and martyrs in a work of evangelisation : to be the instrument of impressing the soil of the Church of the nineteenth century with the footprints of the same form which marked it in the first, the third, and the fifteenth ; to prove her identity, and to give tests of her Catholicity ; to go forth, trusting to no arm but that of grace, and caring for no result than that of glorifying JESUS. To feel we are joined in the same band with S. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles,—and S. Augustine, the evangelist of England,—of S. Francis, the missionary of India,—and Henry Martyn, who slept the evangelist's last sleep in Persia : to feel we are one with that company, which numbers in their glorious band men who have defied the spirit of the world, carried the weapons of the victorious Gospel to the very gates of hell, assailed old empires which represented and assisted the principles of world-wide corruption, and tore up creeds whose tenets seemed to have coiled round the inmost hearts and thoughts of the human race, and borne the simplicity and self-denial of the Cross into fastnesses and citadels where pride and indulgence ruled uncontrolled, and did all this, coming off more than conquerors through Him Who had loved them ; to feel this is elevating. The past is repeated in the present, and rolling centuries are mirrored on the glass of to-day. The struggles of ages are epitomised on a railway, and the histories of Gospel triumphs re-enacted among the "navvies" of your parish.

It is a heart-inspiring work to apply the powers and efficiency of the Church and her teaching to so vast and striking a need as that put forth by this enormous population of wanderers. We have tried her normal power ; we have tested the force and hold of her parochial system on the hearts of men ; we want to test the possibility of her efficient elasticity. You are called on to aid in the effort. All these are noble and soul-stirring considerations ; and if there are any others which may be added to crown them, they will lie in the

glorious hope that in your work of energy and love you may come across many a one whose affections, once gushing, are now dried up; whose hopes, once quickened, droop withered now. Some whose ear, nearly deaf and dull to the word of sympathy and love, because so long unpractised, will receive with joy your message of heavenly affection and your tone of unfeigned regard; will imbibe, as water by the thirsty desert, the consolation conveyed by your ministrations. He may not *seem* to heed it; a thousand reasons may induce reserve: but it may be to such an one the first drop of a shower whose end will be "abundance of rain."

"Some forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Hearing, will take heart again."

And if you achieve this but for *one*, it is worth the lost labour, if lost it be for a hundred; for the failure of your efforts on hundreds can but result in the scorn of the world, and the beating back of your own heart more entirely on the love of JESUS, as the motive of action; whereas the salvation through penitence or confidence of *one* outcast awakens the songs of the hierarchy of angels, the peace of an undying soul, and the glory of Him "in Whom we live, and move, and have our being."

I remain, dear ——,

Yours very affectionately,

EDWARD MONRO.

HARROW WEALD,
September, 1857.



