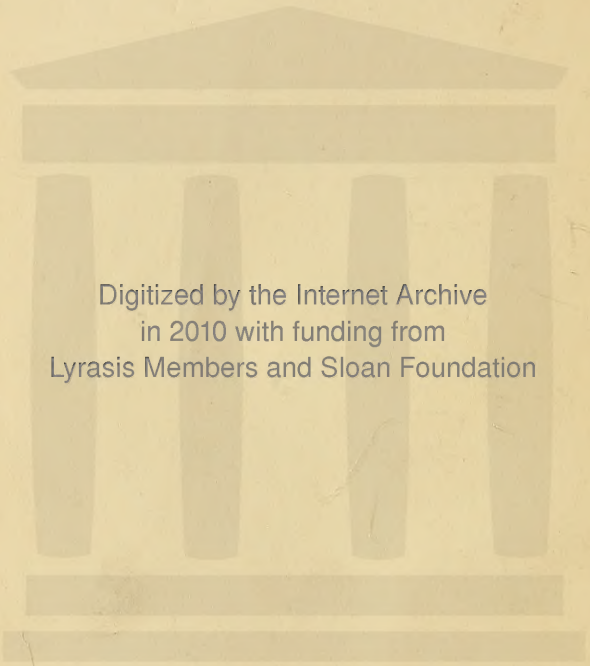
SOCIAL WORK
FOR
CATHOLIC LAYFOLK



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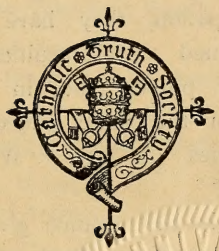

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PREFACE

THREE centuries of abominable persecution had practically reduced to zero the social influence of the Catholic laity in England. Now, after more than eighty years of emancipation, they have regained control over their atrophied civic faculties, and are once more taking their proper place in the van of social reform: and from the more educated and energetic among them comes the cry, "What can we do? What may we do?"

The pamphlets in this volume give some immediate answer to these questions. First is shown what has been and can now be the sphere of the laity's work; then are given a few instances of social undertakings that are even now waiting for workers. "Lift up your eyes, and see the countries; for they are white already to harvest."

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THE LAYMAN IN THE PRE-REFORMATION PARISH

By DOM ADRIAN GASQUET, O.S.B.

History relates that some years ago a Scotch Presbyterian, with serious religious difficulties and doubts, came for advice to a then well-known Catholic priest. In the course of the interview he asked to be informed as to what his position would be should the result of his inquiries lead him to join the Church. "Among us," he said, "I know exactly what the status and rights of the laity are, and I should like to know what is the exact position of a layman in the Church of Rome." "Your question," replied the priest, "is easily answered. The position of a layman in the Church of Rome is twofold: he kneels before the altar—that's one position; and he sits before the pulpit—and that's the other; and there is no other possible position." This brief statement, which illustrates one view of the question under discussion, cannot, of course, be taken as furnishing an adequate or accurate definition of the status of the Catholic layman of the present day. To begin with: he is always being invited to assume another, and, as things go, a most important position in regard to the Church, namely, that of putting his hand into his pocket for the money necessary to meet the thousand and one imperative wants incidental to the present circumstances of Catholics in England.

I am not called upon, however, to discuss the main question, having been requested merely to illustrate, as far as it is possible in a brief paper, the functions of the laity in the

mediæval parish. I am dealing with facts as I read them in pre-Reformation documents, and am not concerned to expose or advocate this or that theory, or suggest this or that solution of difficulties experienced at the present day. Whilst fully believing that the past has its many useful and suggestive lessons for us to-day, I am not such a *laudator temporis acti* as to suppose that we ought to imitate, or that we could imitate successfully, all we find flourishing in mediæval Catholic England.

At the outset, I may remark that what strikes the observer most forcibly in dealing with the records of parochial life in pre-Reformation times, is the way in which priest and people are linked together as one united whole in Church duties. In these days the strong sense of corporate responsibility in the working of a parish, and the well-being of a parochial district with which our Catholic forefathers were imbued, does not exist. I am not concerned with the why and the wherefore, but with the fact, and of this there can be no doubt. The priest in modern times has, for the most part, to worry through his many difficulties in his own way and without much assistance from his flock as a body. No doubt, in the main, he has to look to them for the money with which he carries out his schemes, but money is not everything, and the real responsibility for all lies upon the priest himself, and upon the priest alone. All church building and beautifying, the providing of vestments and sacred plate, the furnishing of altars, the erection of statues and pictures and painted glass, the establishment and maintenance of schools, and the payment of debts incurred in the many works and foundations necessary for the due working of the district, have all to be initiated, superintended, and maintained by the energy of the priest himself. There are, it is true, generally many volunteer labourers—all praise to them—who, for the love of God and His Church, do their best to second the efforts of their pastor.

But then they *are* volunteers, and herein mainly lies the contrast between the old Catholic times and our own. To-day, at best, a priest can enlist the sympathies and practical support of but a small fraction of his flock in their parish; the rest, and by far the greater number, take little or no part in the work—regard it, even if they do not speak of it, as his parish, his business, not theirs. It may be, and probably is, the case, that most of these do not neglect the plain Christian duty of supporting their pastors and their religion, and that many actively co-operate in charitable works in other places, and are even exemplary and regular members of flourishing sodalities or young men's societies attached to other churches; but so far as their own parish is concerned, it profits little or nothing by their support, or work, or sympathy.

In pre-Reformation days such a state of things was unknown and altogether impossible. The parish was then an ever-present reality; the taking part in its affairs was regarded as a duty incumbent on all, and so far as we may judge by the somewhat scanty records which have come down to us, the duty was well fulfilled in practice. No doubt it is partly true that in these days there are no parishes strictly so-called. Yet the canonical definition of an ecclesiastical district has little to do with the matter: the need of co-operation is to-day clearly as great, if not greater than in olden times, and if the law as to the hearing of Mass, and the fulfilling of other obligations in the church of the district, be now relaxed, that ought not to be construed into freeing the parishioner from all ties of fellowship contracted by the mere fact of dwelling in a particular district, or all duties connected with it. At any rate, whilst, no doubt, the stricter enforcing of parochial rights in mediæval times tended to impress upon men's minds the other obligations of a parishioner, there does not, in fact, appear to have been much need to remind them of those common duties. Everything seems to have been

ordinated as far as possible to interest and enlist the practical sympathies of all in the affairs of their parish. There was no question of mere voluntary effort on the part of individuals, but there is on all hands proof of the well-understood and well-fulfilled duty of all. Let me illustrate one or two characteristic features of pre-Reformation parochial life.

Our main sources of information are the various churchwardens' accounts and the inventories of ecclesiastical parish plate and furniture which have survived "the great pillage." From a general survey of the ground, the observer must at once be struck with the similarity of the evidence afforded by all these documents. They one and all so plainly tell the same tale, that it is fair to conclude that the picture of parochial life presented by these precious records that have survived the pillage of the sixteenth century and the neglect of subsequent generations, is practically true of every parish in Catholic England. What they prove to us, then, above all else is that the people at large took a personal and intelligent interest in building, beautifying, and supporting their parish churches, and that the churches were, in a way that seems strange to us now, *their* churches—their very life may be said to be centred in them, and they, the people, quite as much as their priests, were intimately concerned in their working and management. Whatever had to be done to or for God's House, or in the parochial district of which it was the centre, was the common work of priest and people alike. It can, in absolute truth, be described as a "family concern," settled and carried out by the parson and his flock—the father and his children. Moreover, in those more simple times traditions—family or parochial traditions—were sacred inheritances, and each piece of furniture and plate, every vestment and hanging of every parish church, had a history of its own, which was known to all through the publication on feast days and holidays of these benefactors to the common good.

We will come to specific instances presently; but just let

us fully understand how completely our Catholic forefathers were regarded, and regarded themselves, as the proud possessors of their various parish churches. Bishop Hobhouse, in an interesting preface to one of the Somerset Record Society publications, describes the parish thus: "It was the community of the township organized for Church purposes and subject to Church discipline, with a constitution which recognized the rights of the whole body as an aggregate, and the right of every adult member, whether man or woman, to advice in self-government; but, at the same time, kept the self-governing community under a system of inspection and restraint by a central authority outside the parish boundaries."

As Dr. Jessopp has well pointed out (*Nineteenth Century*, January, 1898, p. 5), the self-government of a Catholic pre-Reformation parish was most marked. The community had its own deliberative and administrative assembly—the parish meeting. It elected or appointed its own officers—sometimes men, sometimes women—who had well-defined duties, and were paid for services out of funds provided by the parishioners. Such, for instance, were the parish clerk, the gravedigger, watchman, keeper, and carrier of the parish processional cross. These were in no sense either the nominees or paid servants of the rector. They had duties which were directed, no doubt, to him, but they were paid by the parishioners themselves, and were "removable, when removable at all," by the rural dean or archdeacon at their petition.

"The president or chairman of the church council or parish meeting," writes Dr. Jessopp, "was the rector of the parish, or his deputy; but he was by no means a 'lord over God's heritage.' There is no evidence—but quite the contrary—to show that he initiated to any great extent the subjects of debate, and the income raised for parish purposes, which not infrequently was considerable, was not under his control,

nor did it pass through his hands." The trustees of parish property were the churchwardens. They, generally two in number, were elected annually, and were always regarded in fact, as well as in theory, as the responsible representatives of the parish. Many instances could be given where these wardens, either from parochial funds or specific bequests they were called on to administer for the common benefit, found the stipends for additional curates to work the parish, paid the fees for obits and other anniversary services to the parish priests and other ministers, or for clerical or lay assistance in the celebrations of some more solemn festivals. In some cases I have found them arranging the hours for the various daily masses which, in their opinion, would best suit the convenience of the people.

The parish possessions were considerable, and comprised all kinds of property—lands, houses, flocks and herds, cows, and even hives of bees. These were what may be termed the capital of the parish, which was constantly being added to by the generosity of generations of pious benefactors. Then, over and besides the chancel, which was the freehold of the parson, the body of the church and other buildings, together with the churchyard and its enclosure, and generally, if not always, the common church house, were then under the special and absolute control of the people's wardens. Then, if the law forced the parish to find fitting and suitable ornaments and vestments, it equally gave them the control of the ecclesiastical furniture, etc. of the church. Their chosen representatives were the guardians of the jewels and plate, of the ornaments and hangings, of the vestments and tapestries, which were regarded, as in very truth they were, the common property of every soul in the particular village or district in which the church was situated. It is no exaggeration to say that the parish church was in Catholic times the care and business of all. Its welfare was the concern of the people at large,

and it took its natural place in their daily lives. Was there, say, building to be done, repairs to be effected, a new peal of bells to be procured, organs to be mended, new plate to be bought, and the like, it was the parish as a corporate body that decided the matter, arranged the details, and provided for the payment. At times, let us say when a new vestment was in question, the whole parish might be called to sit in council at the church house on this matter of common interest, and discuss the cost, the stuff, and the make.

The parish wardens had their duties also towards their poorer brethren in the district. I have come across more than one instance of their being the guardians of a common chest, out of which temporary loans could be obtained by needy parishioners to enable them to tide over pressing difficulties. These loans were secured by pledges and the additional surety of other parishioners. No interest, however, was charged for the use of the money, and in cases where the pledge had to be sold to recover the original sum, anything over and above was returned to the borrower. In other ways, too, the poorer parishioners were assisted by the corporate property of the parish. The stock managed by the wardens "were," says one of the early English reformers, "in some towns (*i.e.*, townships and villages) six, some eight, and some a dozen kine, given unto the stock, for the relief of the poor, and used in some such wise that the poor 'cottingers,' which could make any provision for fodder, had the milk for a very small hire; and then, the number of the stock reserved (that is, of course, the original number being maintained), all manner of vailes (or profits), besides both the hire of the milk and the prices of the young veals and old fat wares, was disposed to the relief of the poor." *

The functions and duties of the mediæval parishioners were determined by law and custom. By law, according to

* Lever, *Sermon before the King*, 1550 (Arber's reprint, p. 82).

the statute of Archbishop Peckham in 1280 (Wilkins, ii. 49), which remained in force till the change of religion, the parish was bound to find, broadly speaking, all that pertained to the services—such as vestments, chalice, processional cross, the paschal candle, etc.—and to keep the fabric and ornaments of the church proper, exclusive of the chancel. In 1305 Archbishop Winchelsey somewhat enlarged the scope of the parish duties, and the great canonist, Lyndwood, explains that very frequently, especially in London churches, the parishioners, through their wardens, kept even the chancels in repair, and, in fact, found everything for the services, except the two mass candles which the priest provides.

To take some examples: first, of the way in which, according to the custom of our Catholic forefathers, the memory of benefactions to the parish was kept alive. The inventory of the parish church of Cranbrook, made in 1509, shows that the particulars of all gifts and donors were regularly noted down, in order that they might periodically be published and remembered. The presents vary greatly in value, and nothing is too small apparently to be noted. Thus we have a monstrance of silver-gilt, which the wardens value at £20, "of Sir Robert Egelyonby's gift"; and the list goes on to say: "This Sir Robert was John Roberts, priest thirty years, and he never had other service or benefice, and the said John Roberts was father to Walter Roberts, Esquire." Again, John Hindely "gave three copes of purple velvet, whereof one was of velvet upon velvet with images broidered," and, adds the inventory for a perpetual memory, "He is grandfather of Gervase Hindeley, of Cushorn, and Thomas, of Cranbrook Street." Or again, to take one more instance from the same, it is recorded that the "two long candlesticks before Our Lady's altar, fronted with lions and a towel on the rood of Our Lady's chancel," had been given by "old Moder Hopper."

So, too, in the case of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury, we have a wonderful list of furniture with the names of the donors set out. The best chalice, for instance, was the gift of one "Harry Boll." The two great lateen candlesticks were a present from John Philpot, and "a kercher for Our Lady and a chapplet and pordryd cap for her son" came from Margery Roper.

I have said that the memory of these gifts was kept alive by the "bede-roll," or list of people for whom the parish was bound to pray, published periodically by the parson. Thus, to take one instance: At Leverton, in the county of Lincoln, the parson, Sir John Wright, presented the church with a suit of red purple vestments, "for the which," says a note in the churchwardens' accounts, "you shall all specially pray for the souls of William Wright and Elizabeth his wife" (the father and mother of the donor) and other relations, "as well them that be alive as them that be departed to the mercy of God, for whose lives and souls" these vestments are given "to the honour of God, His most blessed mother, Our Lady Saint Mary, and all His saints in Heaven, and the blessed matron St. Helen, his patron, to be used at such principal feasts and times as it shall please the curates so long as they shall last." (*Archæol.* xli. 355.)

In this way the names of benefactors and the memory of their good deeds was ever kept alive in the minds of those who benefited by their gifts. The parish treasury was not looked on as so much stock, the accumulation of years, of haphazard donations without definite history or purpose; but every article, vestment, banner, hanging, chalice, etc. called up some affectionate memory both of the living and the dead. On high day and feast day, when all that was best and richest in the parochial treasury was brought forth to deck the walls and statues and altars, the display of parish ornaments recalled to the minds of the people assembled

within its walls to worship God the memory of good deeds done by generations of neighbours for the decoration of their sanctuary. "The immense treasures in the churches," writes Dr. Jessopp, "were the joy and boast of every man and woman and child in England, who, day by day, and week by week, assembled to worship in the old houses of God which they and their fathers had built, and whose every vestment and chalice, and candlestick and banner, organ and bells, and pictures and images, and altar and shrine they look upon as their own, and part of their birthright." (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1898, p. 433.)

It might reasonably be supposed that this was true only of the greater churches; but this is not so. What strikes one so much in these parish accounts of bygone days is the richness of even small, out-of-the-way village churches. Where we would naturally be inclined to look for poverty and meanness, there is evidence to the contrary. To take an example or two. Morebath is a small, uplandish, out-of-the-way parish of little importance on the borders of Exmoor; the population, for the most part, have spent their energies in daily labour to secure the bare necessities of life, and riches, at any rate, could never have been abundant. Morebath may consequently be taken as a fair sample of an obscure and poor village. For this hamlet we possess full accounts from the year 1530, and we find that at this time, and in this very poor, out-of-the-way place, there were no less than eight separate accounts kept of money intended for the support of different altars of devotions. For example, we have the "Stores" of the Chapels of Our Lady and St. George, etc., and the gilds of the young men and maidens of the parish. All these were kept and managed by the lay-elected officials of the societies—confraternities, I suppose, we should call them—and to their credit are entered numerous gifts of money and specific gifts of value of kind, such as cows, and swarms of bees, etc. Most of them had

their little capital funds invested in cattle and sheep, the rent of which proved a considerable part of their revenues. In a word, these accounts furnish abundant and unmistakable evidence of the active and intelligent interest in the duty of supporting and adorning their church on the part of these simple country folk at large. What is true of this is true of every other similar account to a greater or less degree, and all these accounts show unmistakably that the entire management of these parish funds was in the hands of the people.

Voluntary rates to clear off obligations contracted for the benefit of the community—such as the purchase of bells, the repair of the fabric, and even for the making of roads and bridges—were raised by the wardens. Collections for Peter's pence, for the support of the parish clerk, and for every variety of church and local purpose are recorded, and the spirit of self-help manifested on every page of these accounts. To keep to Morebath. In 1528 a complete set of black vestments was purchased at a cost—considerable in those days—of £6, 5s., and to help in the common work, the vicar gave up certain tithes in wool he had been in the habit of receiving. These vestments, by the way, were only finished and paid for in 1547, just before the changes under Edward VI. rendered them useless. In 1538 the parish made a voluntary rate to purchase a new cope, and the general collections for this purpose produced some £3, 6s. 8d. In 1534 the silver chalice was stolen, and at once, we are told, "ye yong men and maydens of ye parysshe dru themselves together, and at ther gyfts and provysyon they bought in another chalice without any charge of the parish." Sums of money, big and small, specific gifts in kind, the stuff or ornaments needed for vestments, were apparently always forthcoming when needed. Thus, at one time a new cope is suggested, and Anne Tymwell, of Hayne, gave the churchwardens her

"gown and her ring"; Joan Tymwell, a cloak and a girdle; and Richard Norman, "seven sheep and three shillings and fourpence in money," towards the cost.

These examples could be multiplied to any extent, but the above will be sufficient to show the popular working of a mediæval parish. The same story of local government, popular interest, and ready self-help, as well as an unmistakable spirit of affection for the parish church as theirs, is manifested by the people in every account we possess. Every adult of both sexes had a voice in the system, and the parson was little more in this regard than chairman of the village meetings, and, as I have more than once seen him described, "chief parishioner." In the management of the fabric, the service, and all things necessary for the due performance of these, the people were not only called upon to pay, but it is clear the diocesan authorities evidently left to the parish a wise discretion. No doubt the higher ecclesiastical officials could interfere in theory; but in practice interference was rare. It would not be to my present purpose to describe the various methods employed to replenish the parochial exchequer. There was apparently seldom much difficulty in finding the necessary money, and it will be of interest to see how it was expended by some further examples.

The church accounts of Leverton (six miles from Boston) have been printed in the *Archæologia*, and those that are interested in this subject may conveniently turn to them as illustrating it. The church, until the past three hundred years of neglect has disfigured it, must have presented a very beautiful appearance, when decked for a festival, in the hangings and ornaments which generations of the inhabitants had lovingly gathered within its walls. When first the accounts were open in 1492, the parish was beginning to be interested—as, by the way, so many parishes were at this period—in bells. The people evidently made a great effort

to get a new peal, and they contributed generously. The rector headed the list with ten and sixpence, which was afterwards paid for him by a friend; but what I would remark is that the whole arrangement for the purchase and hanging of the bell was in the hands of the people's representatives, the churchwardens. They bought timber for the framework, and hired a carpenter to make it. They hired a cart to bring over the great bell from the neighbouring parish where it had been cast, and there are notes of the cost of the team of horses and other items of expense, not forgetting a penny for the toll of a bridge. We may judge, however, that the work was not altogether a success, as in 1498 the two wardens made a "move" to "the gathering of the township in the kirk," at which they gathered £4, 13s. 10d. They forthwith set about the building of a new steeple, and ordered another peal of bells. The stone was given to them, but they had to see to the quarrying of it. Trees were bought in a neighbouring wood, and by direction of the wardens, were felled and cut into beams and boards, or fashioned roughly for scaffolding.

As the sixteenth century progressed, a great deal of building and repair was undertaken by the parish authorities. In 1503 the wardens ordered a new bell, and went over to Boston to see it "shott." The same year they took in hand the making of a new font, and a deputation was sent over to Frieston, about three miles from Leverton, to inspect and pass the work. The lead for the lining of the font was procured in pigs, and cast into a mould on the spot by a plumber brought over for the purpose. In 1517 extensive repairs were undertaken in the north aisle which necessitated much shoring up of the walls. Two years later, on the completion of the works, the church and churchyard were consecrated, the Bishop's fees, amounting to £3, being paid out of the public purse. In 1526 the rood-loft was decorated, and the niches filled with images.

In that year one of the parishioners, William Frankish, died, and left a legacy to the churchwardens for the purpose of procuring alabaster statues to fill the vacant spaces. The wardens hired a man, called sometimes the "alabastre man," and sometimes "Robert Brook, the carver," and in earnest for the payment, at the conclusion gave him a shilling. At the same time a collection was made for the support of the artist during his stay. Some of the parishioners gave money, but most of them apparently contributed "cheese."

I wish I had time to quote more fully from these interesting and instructive accounts. The serious building operations continued up to the very eve of the religious changes. They by no means satisfied the energies of the parish officials. If books required binding, a travelling workman was engaged on the job, and the leather, thread, wax, and other materials for the mystery of bookbinding were purchased for his use. Sometimes extra was paid to his wife for the stitching of leaves and covers, and the workmen were apparently lodged by one or other of the people, and this was accounted as their contribution to the common work. Then there were vestments and surplices and other linen bought, mended, and washed, and the very marks set upon the linen cloths are put into the accounts. So entirely was the whole regarded as the work of the people, that, just as we have seen that the parish paid for the consecration of their parish church and graveyard, so do we find the wardens assigning a fee to their own vicar for blessing the altar linen and new vestments, and entering the names of benefactors on the parish bede-roll.

I have said that the wardens often appear as arranging more than the ordinary material details. Thus, at Henley-on-Thames they ordained that the Chaplain of Our Lady's altar should say Mass every day at six o'clock, and the chantry priest of St. Catherine's at eight o'clock, as the hours most convenient for the majority of the people. At

St. Mary's, Dover, the wardens paid the parson a stipend for regularly reading the bede-roll, and charged a fee for inserting any name upon it. They paid deacons, sub-deacons, clerks, and singing men and children on great days to add solemnity to the church festivals. Two priests were generally paid at Easter to help to shrive, and one year there were payments to three priests "to help to shrive and to minister at Maundy Thursday, Easter Even, and Easter Day." The same year the parish paid for "a breakfast for such clerks as took pain to maintain God's service on the holidays"; and on Palm Sunday they expended threepence on "bread and wine to the readers of the Passion."

"How curious a state of things is revealed to us in these documents!" says a writer who had been engaged over these churchwardens' accounts. "We have been taught to regard our mediæval forefathers as a terribly priest-ridden people, yet nothing of all this, but quite the contrary, appears in all these parish papers."

What is seen so clearly in the parish accounts as to the powers exercised by the wardens in the management of the church property receives additional confirmation—were that at all necessary—from the pre-Reformation wills. We have only to turn over the leaves of the collection of Yorkshire wills, published by the Surtees Society, to see how well understood was the intimate connection between the parishioners and the parish church; how people loved to leave some article of value to the place where they had worshipped, in order to perpetuate their memory; and how to the wardens was entrusted the care of these bequests. Even where the names of the popular representatives are not inserted in the wills themselves, they, as the legal trustees for the common church property, and not the parson of the parish, trouble themselves in the matter. Did time allow, I might quote some curious illustrations of the gifts and bequests thus made for the common good. I wonder what

the authorities of some of our modern parish churches would think of a bequest of dresses and gowns to various images to make vestments, or even "20 marks to buy 20 bullocks to find a priest to pray for my soul and the soul of my wife"? Yet in these interesting wills there are numerous examples of such donations, which to my mind appear to indicate, more than any other way can, the affection of our Catholic forefathers for their religion, and the real practical hold the faith had over them. The local church was to them a living reality: it was theirs, and all it contained, in an absolute and sometimes almost a startling way. One instance comes to my mind. In the parish of Yatton, in Somerset, on the eve of the Reformation—about 1520, say—a difficulty arose as to the repair of certain sluices to keep back the winter floods. To make a long story short, in the end the parish were ordered to make good the defect. It meant money, and the wardens' accounts show that they had been spending generously on the church. It was consequently decided that to raise the necessary cash they should sell a piece of silver church plate, which had been purchased some years before by the common contributions of the faithful. "How monstrous!" I can hear some people say. Possibly: I am not going to try and defend what they did; but the instance furnishes me with a supreme example of the way in which the people of a mediæval parish regarded the property of God's house as their own.

THE LAYMAN IN THE CHURCH

By the REV. WILLIAM BARRY, D.D.

Eighty years ago Lamennais fixed a name, at once striking and accurate, upon the religious disease of the century. He called it "Indifferentism." Other men have invented other names for it—Positivism, Agnosticism, Secularism. They all tell the same tale and agree in a witness which we cannot reject. The Ages of Faith have long come to an end. I am not sure but Von Hartmann is well warranted in calling our own "the most irreligious century that mankind has ever seen." At all events, we can point to no large area of civilization in which there are not multitudes living without God in the world. Not merely is it that Revelation has been assailed on all sides, but millions have lost the very idea of a Day of Judgment and a life to come; their whole reasoning and practice take for granted the Epicurean maxim: "Live to-day; there is no to-morrow." Religion was once a great public authority, known to all, which could not be overlooked or put away; it had the support of the law, and made its power felt; nor would anyone have dreamt of calling it a matter for the private conscience alone. But now, as regards all except the clergy, it is something which stands at a distance from their daily business; they may take it or leave it, and coercion is a thing of the past. And owing to these and other circumstances, which affect everyone, religion tends to become a cloistered art—a profession of which the sphere is the Church, the school, the convent, but which has little

or no direct bearing on the world at large. When the layman has done with school or college, too frequently he has done with religion. He passes into a society as unlike that of which his teachers have spoken to him, as if it were on a different planet. If he continues to be devout, still his duties appear to be fulfilled when he has received the Sacraments and made certain contributions to his pastor. What public duties, besides these, did he ever learn in his young days? The conception of a social Christianity, here and now to be realized—who has taught him that? The parish—what is it but a name, identical with the four walls of the building within which he hears his Sunday Mass or receives his Easter Communion? The Church itself, in our modern condition of life, is not visible, but invisible. Outside and all round about is the great world, and its atmosphere, I repeat, is Indifferentism.

Our Great Losses

The consequences of all this should be clearly understood. Christians, by their baptism and by the vow they have taken at Confirmation, are soldiers of Christ, apostles to those that do not believe, and citizens of the Gospel Kingdom. All alike, men and women, they have rights within the Church, and therefore duties to themselves, to one another, to strangers. But how few, in comparison, escape the taint of secular indifference, once they become their own masters! A very great number lapse, the moment their schooling is finished, into pure and perfect irreligion. Young men, as we all confess, go out from our hands only, for the most part, to fall into this gulf and there lose themselves among the heathen. A certain number come back after years; many never darken the church doors again. In the more leisured class considerations of honour, and a training which lasts over this perilous interval, protect our youths from the same utter

abandonment of their good practices. Yet even they find it difficult, and some among them would say impossible, to do much in the way of Catholic effort. Neither have they, as yet, the sense ingrained and insistent, of duties to be undertaken during their spare hours, which has created in England or in America that immense network of non-Catholic voluntary associations, so distinguished for their encouragement of the higher life and their attempts towards social amelioration. It is well known, and is lamentable as it is certain, that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the League of the Cross, and even our own Catholic Truth Society, are much undermanned. I say that, considering the numbers of young lay Catholics, the percentage engaged in all these enterprises cannot be judged satisfactory. Those who carry them on show an admirable zeal, nor do they shrink from the sacrifice of their time, their means, their personal service. What a small company they are, nevertheless, when all told, will be evident to anyone who follows up the record of their achievements from year to year. The question is, how can their numbers be increased?

Want of Lay Apostles

I venture to throw out the following suggestions, which, perhaps, if cross-examined and thoroughly sifted in debate, may contribute towards the solution of this most difficult problem. I say, then, that we must begin at the beginning. And what is the beginning? It is to recognize frankly that in the Catholic Church there is, and ought to be, a Lay Apostolate. It is not enough to say one's prayers, receive the Sacraments, and help to support one's pastor. These are all necessary; but these are not sufficient. When the Church has raised to her altars devout laymen, it is remarkable that the most illustrious among them have held public offices, and did large social service in their day and genera-

tion. The heroic leaders of the past were such as St. Edward, St. Henry, St. Louis, Sir Thomas More. And others held in grateful remembrance, examples to us all, were such as O'Connell, Montalembert, Ozanam, Frederick Lucas, Windthorst—names eminent in politics which were not partisan, but liberating and humanitarian, or in the crusade of pity and of rescue inspired by the deepest principles of our religion. Again, I might quote the living statesmen, journalists, teachers of science, and lights in literature, who keep the Catholic Church to the front in these days, and who, in more than one country, have done notable deeds against the tyranny of persecuting governments, or, as in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, have stretched out their hands to lift up the submerged and give them a fresh chance in the struggle towards civilization. From instances like these, which might be multiplied, it is clear that laymen may exert a most just and beneficial influence all round them as Catholic apostles. Again, in the sphere of controversy or apologetics, I need only mention Joseph de Maistre and Dr. William George Ward. The principle, then, is beyond dispute; examples are abundant; yet I will ask whether in our schools and colleges we make mention of these things, and how far we do what in us lies to kindle an enthusiasm which, by-and-by, shall find scope and utterance in societies adapted to its working? Ought we not to acknowledge that the social instinct requires to be developed at an early age among Catholics more than is now done? My experience where that instinct is perhaps most lively—among those outside the Church—convinces me that it is the very young who are the hope of such movements, and who can most easily be brought into them. I would have this work of teaching the social Christian creed begun at school. In our higher colleges, with their evenings of leisure and endless opportunities, nothing would be more feasible; and to

spread among all their classes the characteristic works of our Society would be a simple means of planting these ideas in youthful minds. But even in elementary schools there are signs that social teaching has admittedly a claim on our recognition. And by social teaching I mean the concrete Christian virtues, as applied to the society in which we live and of which we are members. When, then, I hear of temperance pledges given to children, of penny banks, and practical lessons in cleanliness, order, and decency, I perceive that the lay teachers in our schools are being led, under the direction of the clergy, to fulfil an Apostolate which is certainly theirs. An excellent beginning, wherever it has been made, for the school that deals only in book-learning does not live up to half its mission!

Youthful Temperance and Social Effort

The next step is by far the most difficult. How shall these children be taken forward so as to join the ranks of social effort on leaving school? It is, as we all know, impossible for the clergy to keep a direct hold upon most of them; and the whole machinery of public Christian law which might avail has been long swept away in modern countries. Nothing is left but voluntary effort. Yet I would submit that the mistake, hitherto made in our education, has been to put off social training till this very time, or to overlook it altogether. Unless it begins earlier, the mind has taken a fatal ply of indifference, and little can be attempted. If a lad has strong convictions (and he may have—that is my point) on the subject of temperance before he leaves school, it should be comparatively easy to draft him into the League of the Cross; or, at any rate, he would join some association where help to this and similar virtues might be held out to him. I cannot hide my conviction, however, that for the whole range of our elementary schools and the classes

with which they deal, temperance is literally the one vital question—"*stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ.*" In our modern English world, the practical Christianity of our people depends on this, whether they let themselves down to be serfs and slaves of the public-house, or whether they keep away from it. The greatest hindrance to Mass and the Sacraments producing their Divine effect is the habit of drunkenness—the continual indulgence in unthrift, selfishness, and disorder which this habit carries with it. And every association that encourages sobriety is a branch of the Lay Apostolate. Therefore, in England, as the world now stands, it appears to me that the Society of St. Vincent, the Young Men's Society, and all Third Orders, since they aim at keeping Christians unspotted from the world, must, by the necessity of the case, insist on temperance as the great cardinal virtue and a condition of all other virtues. Temperance is, in fact, a compendious name for the blameless Christian life, as it bears on our combat against the social evil in all its forms. To this we should bend our utmost efforts, and in doing so we shall find ourselves taking up all manner of admirable works which enter into the plan of a true Christian restoration. But here, evidently, it is laymen who can strike the boldest strokes. They should take over the youths that are leaving school, persuade them to enter these brotherhoods of social service, and follow after them until they do enter them. It is a missionary calling, on which a thousand troubles attend; but I see none more imperative or more fruitful. Laymen must bring laymen into it, and those who cannot undertake the duty in person ought to help by supporting Catholic literature on these and kindred subjects. Something they are bound to do, else how are they spreading the religion which they hold in trust? But from everyone who has leisure or can make it; from everyone who admits that intemperance and irreligion are crying evils; from everyone who in a higher station can influence those under his

charge, personal service is demanded. There neither is nor can be such a thing as mere private, self-regarding Catholicism. The clergy, indeed, must answer for their flocks; but we all are bound to one another, and not one of us stands alone.

Have all done their Duty?

From this conception of a Lay Apostolate it would be obvious to draw out some idea of what a modern Catholic parish or district really is, how unlike the Mediæval, and how subject to difficulties in its very existence from year to year. We might inquire into the duties of laymen upon the School Board, the Board of Guardians, the County Council, the Bench of Magistrates. There is the interesting and important chapter of churchwardens, temporalities, and so forth. But I sum them all up in the one word, "social service." The parish with us cannot be a corporation recognized by English law; and while the priest is always there and must take on himself the responsibility of the mission, his people come and go, nor have they any share in his undertakings or anxieties beyond what they choose to make their own. Our system is voluntary, not by law established. But when all depends on free choice, the secret of success can only be enthusiasm kindled by great ideals. That is why we never can begin too early with Catholics in our preaching and training as for a life-long noble task, personal to each, but for the good of all, which is to create round about us some image, however faint and rudimentary, of the Kingdom of Christ. Even a handful of men and women, governed by this New Testament idea, will do wonders. They must, assuredly, aim at their own sanctification. Of course; but they, every whit as much as any priest or religious, are bound to live for their brethren and so to win the prize of their high calling. We appeal, therefore, confidently to all whom our voice can reach. We charge it

home to them that this urgent duty of setting up Christ's Kingdom as a real, daily, public influence among Catholics, whether in London, Manchester, Liverpool, or elsewhere, is a duty that none of us can escape from. If one channel of activity does not please, twenty others are at hand. There is rescue work of all kinds for women: there is the advocacy of temperance with all the measures of improvement or prevention that alone can make it effective in our teeming populations. There is this Catholic Truth Society which has done so well, but which could do infinitely more if it had men, money, and due encouragement. Let every Catholic ask himself when he is next looking into his conscience, "Have I helped any social Catholic enterprise? And what help have I given?" If the views put forward in these pages are not utterly without foundation, it is most certain that we must add to our Christian offices in Church other Christian offices outside—in that living Church, the members of which are continually recruited by Apostolic self-sacrifice. Since, I say, we are now thrown upon a period of religious anarchy and indifference, with no resources but such as the voluntary system affords, the first and last word of the situation in which Catholics find themselves must be individual heroism. Thanks to their generosity and self-denial in times past, the land has been covered with churches, schools, convents, and charitable institutions. But the time will never come when this more direct form of the Lay Apostolate will have done all that is required of it. The victory over Indifferentism, Secularism, and the worship of money, to which we look forward, can be assured, not by the clergy, who live out of the world, but by lay Christians living in the world, who have subdued it to the principles in which they believe, and by which they regulate their actions as well as their creed.

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THE HELP OF THE LAITY

By the Rev. JOHN NORRIS[1]

Every age has its own ways, its own difficulties and dangers, its peculiarities of thought and of action, its special advantages and possibilities; and this age of ours, this end of a century which we love to call great, is no exception, is not different from others. What our peculiarities are, we may leave our successors to say; of our advantages it is perhaps scarcely modest to speak; while a consideration of our difficulties and dangers may be very useful. Not that I am going to attempt to discuss or even enumerate all our difficulties and dangers—he would be a bold man who would venture to do anything of the kind: my purpose is a much humbler one, viz., to point out one or two sources from which flow many of the dangers and difficulties that beset the Church and her cause in our day, and to suggest for consideration and discussion what may possibly be remedies, or at any rate alleviations, of the weaknesses and drawbacks we are conscious of in our midst.

Looking back through the pages of history till we come to the obscure times that are hidden in the twilight of fable, we read of a golden age, a silver age, an iron

[1] A Paper read at the Catholic Conference, 1900.

age; later on we come to an age of chivalry, an age of reform, an age of adventure; and if we may give a name to our own age, we shall not be far wrong if we call it the age of industrial enterprise. Industry has taken possession of the land, and has evolved a system so perfect, so exacting, so comprehensive, that no man, if he will live, can escape being drawn into it and having his whole being, his thoughts, his actions, his aims, his ambitions, and even his leisure and pleasures, I will not say ruled, but certainly much modified and affected by it. No man can stand idle and live; no man may stand by and merely look on. Sooner or later the great industrial system that has gradually been set up amongst us draws every man within its influence, and, whether he will or no, carries him along in that great stream of humanity that passes through life beneath the tyrannous banner of industry. Industry is our king; that we are industrious is our pride; to seek for new fields of industry is our object: and we are never weary of pointing out the results of our industrial activity and expressing our pity, sometimes even our contempt, for nations who show no such reverence for industry as we do. I am not, of course, saying this either by way of praise or blame; I am only stating a fact, and a fact which is patent for everyone to see. Industrial activity, industrial enterprise, industrial ability, our industrial system—these occupy the thoughts, and are the field of the energy, of the average Englishman.

Now it is obvious to all that this industrial system, as such, is not favourable to intellectual improvement, still less is it favourable to moral progress. Its object is neither the one nor the other; its aims at best are material progress, material well-being, material prosperity, and in order to secure these it demands the whole man, not merely his bodily strength and health, but his thoughts and his energies; it absorbs him, and is so exacting in its absorption that it leaves him neither time nor energy, and too often

not even the will, to look to the higher things; it makes him so busy "about much serving," about its own material ends, that it blots out of his view, and makes him blind to the better part, the "one thing necessary," the knowledge and service of God. In other words, it materializes a man and tends to limit his thoughts and aims to material things; matter and its capabilities, matter and its possibilities occupy him, and with the race in life as close as it is, they occupy him to the exclusion of other things. Here, then, is a distinct danger in our modern life, the danger of practical materialism; and one of our chief difficulties is the difficulty of gaining a livelihood in this rushing stream of industry without losing our hold on the great truths of faith, and our practice of that which our faith teaches.

Another characteristic of our day is the spread of democratic views and principles in the public life of the country. Not long ago all power was in the hands of comparatively few; political and municipal life was sluggish, but now it is full of energy and vigour, and is widespread. Every one now has an interest in public life, every one has something to say to it, every one can take his share in it; in other words, the rights, privileges, and duties of citizenship, once the property of a limited number, are now extended practically to all. Now citizenship, however good it may be in itself, however desirable, however right and proper, has its own dangers, and some of these dangers are not slight. I pass by the dangers that may arise from too strong a spirit of Party, and I need not say more than a word of the dangers and difficulties arising from government by majorities. I do not refer to the tyranny that may be exercised by majorities, nor to the dangers arising from unscrupulous but eloquent orators and from the simplicity or gullibility of their hearers, or from possible corruption in any of its many forms; but I wish rather to call attention to the fact that neither political life nor municipal life, nor

any of the ways in which we exercise our citizenship, have for their direct and immediate end improvement in morals, or moral education, or moral training. Indirectly, no doubt, these are more or less affected; but the direct aims of public life and action are not these, but something below these—important, no doubt, to the well-being of citizens, and therefore much to be desired and sought for, but not as the chief ends of man's life. This public life, unless carefully and wisely ordered (I use the words of a recent writer, Mr. McCunn in *The Making of Character*), "may easily beget a certain energetic secularity of spirit, and a hardness and unscrupulosity which blunt the edge of honour, habituate the mind to compromise and trickery, and forget the more distant ends in the short-lived triumphs of faction."

You will notice the phrase, "secularity of spirit." It is, I think, worth dwelling on; it covers a danger I wish to call attention to. There are those amongst us who in the public press and in their speeches are ever asserting the paramount claims of the State as such—*e.g.*, the State has the right to educate our children in its own way and for its own purposes; and this doctrine of the supremacy of the State, judging from some of the things that have been said or written during the present war, is likely to be pressed upon us with greater insistence in the near future, and it will probably be presented to us under the guise of patriotism. I yield to no one in my admiration and love for everything British, whether it be our trade, our enterprise, our freedom, our Government, or our success; but there are higher things than these, higher even than the glorious British Empire—"the kingdom of God and His justice"; and it is much to be feared that ill-balanced patriotism, an over-sentimental devotion to public life, means after all devotion to material things. It limits a man's view of life, it uses up all his energies, all his mental

activities; it captures all his aims and ambitions, and so lays hold of him and takes possession of him that his standard does not rise above what is material, and he becomes material in his thoughts, in his aims, in his activities. He becomes secular in spirit; this present life, its aims, its interests, its well-being are the only things that move him or stir up his activity. The atmosphere created by too much devotion to public life, whether political, municipal, or social, is materialistic in its tendencies, and many a man has through it lost his hold on his faith and become loose in his practice.

A man *must* get his livelihood, and every man *ought* to take his part in public life; we must all therefore meet these dangers, each in his own place and degree. Happily, they are not insurmountable, and they can be met with success; and I venture to suggest that one of the best means of meeting these materialistic dangers and difficulties is by taking part in what is technically called "lay" work; that is, work not directly intended for one's own benefit, but work outside our own work in life, and intended in some way or other, sometimes directly, but often indirectly, to further the cause of God and His Church or the welfare of our neighbour. We live in times of quick and rapid changes, many of the old things are passing away, and the new that are springing up to take their place require new methods, new combinations of the old things that are left, new applications of old principles, and amongst these I believe that there is a large—a vast—field which the laity alone can cultivate. Our modern life, with its great, unwieldy cities and towns, with its free expression of opinion and discussion, with its higher education spread over a wider area, with its all-embracing journalism, and its wider public life, has created difficulties which the clergy alone cannot meet; is full of dangers which they are too few to contend with; has given rise to situations, serious and dangerous, which the clergy cannot fully deal

with ; and further, has taught large numbers of men to be critical and suspicious of everything a cleric does or says. In other words, modern life has made work, abundant work, which the laity, and perhaps they alone, can do ; and my contention is that while they can be of immense service to the Church and do much for God, they will at the same time save themselves from the unrest and weariness of those who are swayed and ruled by the Time-spirit, and will be free from the contamination of materialistic views and mere materialistic aims and purposes. In the days of old, when the Sepulchre of Christ fell into the hands of the infidel, men buckled on their armour and left all things and went forth to shed their blood, if need be, to win it back for Christendom, and they deemed death glorious in such a cause. We are not called on now to shed our blood, we have not to face death, but we have a more glorious work to do than even that of rescuing the tomb of the Lord from the infidel ; this work lies all around close to our hands, and it is so great, so vast, so extensive that it requires every one of us, and even should we all do what we can, still more workmen would be needed, so great is the harvest that is waiting to be gathered in. The clergy are but a handful, they cannot do even a tithe of the work that lies before us, and I for one believe that there are among the laity many hearts that are willing and hands that are ready to do what they can for the cause of Christ, even if it be only the humble work of saving the crumbs that are now falling from our Father's table.

There are many ways in which laymen can do good work for the Church, ways that are well known to all, and I have no new suggestion to make on the subject ; but, possibly because these ways are so obvious and so well known, it may be well to look at them again and reconsider their possibilities, and the opportunities they offer of good and solid work in the good cause.

1. I would put in the first place in importance, and as

affecting perhaps the largest numbers, the wise exercise of citizenship; and I would suggest as worthy of every man's consideration the duty of exercising his citizenship. A citizen enjoys many privileges, but he has also duties; when a man has a vote, it argues but little public spirit, and little thought of, or interest in, the public welfare if he will not take the trouble to give his vote rationally and intelligently when he has the opportunity. To abstain from voting is to prove oneself unworthy of having a vote; whatever be the motive, whether it be indifference, carelessness, or mere unwillingness to take a little trouble, to refuse to use the power entrusted to us is to refuse our share in the burden of government. It is a privilege to be able to vote, but it is a privilege that is meant for use. For various reasons of one sort or another, I am afraid it is only too true that as a body we are too apathetic in this matter; we are too apt to neglect our privilege, we too often refuse to exercise our power, and because we act thus we have frequently to suffer for our own negligence and want of spirit.

It would not be difficult to show from the history of other religious bodies how much we have lost and how much they have gained, because they have known how to use the franchise well while we have taken but little trouble about it. Civil rulers, whatever be their rank or position, are the ministers of God; it is our privilege to have a voice in determining who those rulers, those ministers of God, shall be, and surely to neglect such a privilege is to act the part of an unfaithful servant, is to hide the talent that has been given to us, and to refuse to perform our duty to the State and the community in which we live. We want more civic virtue amongst us, a better realization of civic energy, and a greater appreciation of our duties as members of the civic body. We want to bring it home to ourselves, first that we have a *duty* to vote, and secondly, the duty of voting *wisely* and *well*. It is of the utmost importance that those who

are chosen to take part in ruling either the State or any of its various parts should be men of high character and principle, fair-minded and just, sincerely desirous of promoting the good and welfare of all, and we who help to put such men in power must know what we are doing; we must not act rashly nor be led by mere glibness of speech, nor follow the many, nor let ourselves be blinded by party or prejudice, but we must know how to vote wisely, either by our own careful and thoughtful study of the situation or by going to those who are worthy of confidence and asking advice.

And here we come to an opportunity for good work. Many of our people have neither time nor knowledge to form their own opinions independently and on good grounds, they easily become the victims of some particular newspaper or ready speaker; to help them, whether by forming societies for the purpose of discussion, or registration, or by individual help, would be doing no mean service. To spread the knowledge of true principles, to instil right ideas, to correct false impressions, to lessen ignorance, to do something to stem the torrent of misrepresentation, to lessen the evils that come of a daily press that thrives on hastily-written articles and crude and ill digested opinions—to strive even to do any of these, and so help the formation of sane and sound views and the spread of true and solid principles, is work of which any man might be proud, and we need such work amongst us. We need men of high principle who are willing to devote themselves to civic work, who are ready to fill one or other of the many positions of honour and trust which public and civic life offer, and who will do so with knowledge and prudence, and who will work not merely to satisfy their own personal ends, but for the good and prosperity of all. We want men with true ideas of authority and liberty, with true ideas about education, with true ideas about the Church and her ministers, with hearts that can feel for and hands that are ready to help their

less fortunate brethren, men of prudence as well as zeal, men who have enthusiasm, but whose enthusiasm is controlled and disciplined by knowledge, men who are ready to work for the cause in public life without any thought of reward or return: these are the men we want to lead the way. Such men bring honour to themselves, and their lives attract and draw others, soften prejudices, and smooth the way for the Church's greater progress and increase. It will be objected that we are so small in number that it is not worth while attempting anything, and as to individual action, it will be said we don't get the opportunity. No doubt we are a small number, but it is wonderful what small minorities can do when they are in earnest and united; and as for opportunities, they are always to be found by those who really look for them.

2. I pass on to another point. It will be readily granted, I think, that the more the clergy and laity work together, the better for both and for the Church. Further, it is well known that the clergy are loaded, and in many cases overwhelmed, with work which is not strictly ministerial, such as the financial burdens involved in the building of churches and schools, in the confraternities and societies that are so important in the parish, in all that promotes the social union and well-being of their people. I need not go into further particulars of the many things a priest has to do outside his strictly clerical duties—things excellent and desirable, but not necessarily requiring a priest for their efficient performance. These things take up a priest's time and thoughts which are badly wanted for other things, the strain involved in giving them full attention often breaks down a priest's health, and still oftener breaks his spirit, and takes all the life and energy out of his more spiritual duties; and yet they must be done. I know that I am touching on precarious and much-debated ground, that I am walking on ashes that cover a smouldering fire; still, in

all honesty, and with all due deference to the opinions of others, I venture to say that it is not impossible that some way might be found in which the help, which I am sure the laity would gladly give, could be supplied to the clergy in these matters. Such work would bring the clergy and laity together; they would understand each other better, and learn to love and reverence each other more, and the common work would produce community of interests and aims, and would tend to the unity and harmony which are so important for the peace and welfare of a parish. The laity would feel the pleasure of contributing to all this, and the clergy would be freed from much care and anxiety, and would be able to devote themselves with greater heart to more spiritual things.

Let me give you a concrete example of what I mean. Last week I had the pleasure of assisting at the opening of a Catholic Grammar School in a large town in Yorkshire. The School has been established, with the approval of the Bishop, by a Committee of Governors, two-thirds of which are laymen, with laymen for its Chairman and Secretary. This Committee has collected the necessary funds, taken the house, which it has fitted up in the very best style for school purposes, and has taken upon itself practically the whole burden. The Bishop, in his address at the opening, referred to this with special emphasis, declaring that he had not urged the members of the Committee, but they had urged him, and he was grateful to them for it; and he went on to say that nothing in all the years of his episcopacy had so comforted him and gone so much to his heart as this work of the laity of the town of Bradford. Now what is possible in one place is not impossible in another. There is plenty of similar work to be done elsewhere, and it is hardly conceivable that a way of getting it done cannot be found if it is rightly looked for.

3. I come now to Personal Service in social work or

otherwise. Of the value of Personal Service of this kind to the community at large there can be no doubt, and I don't think I should be wrong if I were to say that it is in our day a necessity. The conditions of life in our great towns have created so wide an abyss between the well-to-do who live in comfort and those who have to fight and struggle for every scrap of food they get, that ill-feeling and alienation between tne two have very naturally arisen, and threaten to become a danger to the State, and he who helps to bridge over this terrible abyss and bring about better feeling deserves well of the community, and this he will do most effectually by Personal Service. Further, he who would be in touch with life as it really is, who would escape from the softness and effeminacy that creeps over many of us owing to the comfort in which we live, who would free himself from the hardness and selfishness that come of the everlasting pursuit of material ends and aims, who wishes to enrich his life with the love of others, and to comfort his declining years with hope and peace, who desires in his day to do something real and substantial for the good of his fellow-creatures—to such a one I would say, "Go and work amongst the poor, give them the sunshine of your presence, let them see that you have a heart that feels for them and with them, that your interests are their interests, that you are glad and ready to be of use to them; in other words, go in for social work in some form or other." We have noble examples amongst us of excellent work of this kind that has been successfully done, and is now being done by delicate ladies. I must not offend their modesty by mentioning their names here, yet there is one I may and ought to mention, and I do so with all possible reverence—the late Lady Margaret Howard, whom God in His wisdom has taken from us when we could ill spare her, but not before she had time to sow seed that will produce a rich harvest, and to set up a memorial of herself in the love and

affection of the poor in the East, whose lives she did so much to brighten by her presence and to sweeten by the example of her virtue. Thank God for her beautiful life, thank God for the love and charity of others who are doing what she did so well; but we want many more such workers. We want both women and men; we want men especially to follow the bright example that has been set them by women. I do not forget that there are devoted and generous-hearted men who give much time and thought to this kind of work, but we want more, many more if we are to do all that has to be done. We want men who will found settlements, who will work social unions and societies; there are boys' clubs and men's clubs all crying out for more workers, there are young men's societies ready to welcome genial assistance; there is the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, whose members do much good by stealth, so little is their work known, so little is it talked of; for, to use the words of Frederic Ozanam, "they search out hidden distress, interrogate sorrows that do not cry out, visit the attic where the sick man suffers in silence, and penetrate even into the prison, where the unfortunate find no echo to bear the voice of anguish to the outer world." It is an honour to any man to belong to such a society, and cannot fail to bring a bountiful blessing to him and his. There are, of course, many other ways of doing good through our own Personal Service to the unfortunate; but I have perhaps said enough on this point.

4. The greatest power amongst us is the Press—the ubiquitous, energetic, never-tiring Press, that never ceases to give to us its opinion on everything under the sun, and this with such persistence, with such consideration for our convenience, with such readiness and ease, that insensibly it forms and fashions our views; and our thoughts, so little time and opportunity have we for real thought of our own, are often but the echoes of what we have last read. I

venture to suggest that there is good work, an abundance of good work, to be done in the realm of the Press. We want first of all good writers, men with solid and extensive knowledge, men of sound judgment and prudence, of high principle and honour, men of tact and good sense, and above all, of thorough loyalty; such men as these may do immense good through the Press. It is not edifying, to say the least, to see men use the Press to give expression to every passing feeling of discontent, to pour out ill-natured criticism, to find fault with anything and everything that is done by those in authority; and worse still, to expose to the public gaze what they consider the weaknesses and failings of our Holy Mother the Church, and her system of government; nor is it any more edifying to see the Press made the vehicle of weak controversy, which tends to prove the ignorance and unskilfulness of the writer more than anything else. Nothing but disaster can come from such a use of the Press; but there is another use of it which, in skilful and prudent hands, can be of immense benefit, and any man who feels he has the power, the knowledge, and the skill necessary will do great and lasting service to us all if with true loyalty and real prudence he will use them for the public benefit. Few, however, at most can do this, few have the necessary knowledge and skill, still fewer have the time required. But there are other things connected with the Press and its outcome which more of us may attempt. These are parish libraries, club libraries, school libraries to be formed and managed; there are reading circles to be instituted; and there is last, but not least, such a Society as the Catholic Truth Society to be helped and encouraged. That Society is a remarkable instance of what can be done by the whole-hearted zeal of a few devoted men in a good cause. Long may it live and flourish, to continue the good work it is already doing so successfully!

5. The last point I will call your attention to is Educa-

tion. A lay element in our schools I hold to be of great value; and to be a successful teacher seems to me something so magnificent, so noble, so glorious, that I often wonder that more men do not offer themselves with eagerness for the work. There are some who do so with all enthusiasm, and one has heard of young undergraduates of the Universities deliberately choosing teaching in elementary schools as their "profession" not because they were obliged to do so, but out of love and esteem for the work. All honour to such noble young fellows; I should like to see some of the same sort amongst us. However, I have mentioned education and teaching in schools for another reason; there are such things as Sunday schools, and we know what wonderful benefit hey are capable of conferring on any community that makes use of them, and we know, moreover, that in some communities the laity throw themselves into the work of these schools with great ardour and success, and that the best men in these communities think it a privilege and honour to take part in it. What advantages we might get from Sunday schools! and surely if they were ever necessary, they are so now, when so little time can be given to religious instruction during the week, and when religious knowledge is more needed than ever. There must be many laymen willing to take part in such a work, many who are in every way fitted for it, and who would be glad to earn the reward of "those who instruct others unto justice." What a help to our overworked priest such co-operation would be, what a source of good to the parish, what a bond of unity and zeal for religion, and what a boon to the laymen themselves who take such work in hand!

I pass by "Evening Schools," not because they are unimportant, very far from it, but because time is short, and I am anxious to press another point in connection with education.

In these days, when so much is being done to improve education, when there is so much talk about it, when so much depends upon it, it is of vital importance to our cause that we should take our place in the very front rank of the educational army; that every one of us should feel the importance of education, and be ready to strain every nerve to secure good education for all our children of every class. I am not alluding to pecuniary help, I meditate no assault on your purses—they, I know, are always open in every good cause; I want your *interest*, I want you to give your thoughts to the subject of education. We need men and women who will study education, who will get up the subject, who will realise what true education means, what Catholic education means; who will be alive to false principles and false reasoning, which too often find their way into discussions on education; who will help to create amongst us a right public opinion on the subject, an enthusiastic public opinion, a loyal public opinion, that shall make us as one man in the face of the difficulties that are not unlikely to arise in the matter of education, and will strengthen the hands of our leaders when they have to deal with those difficulties. Further, we need those who will be ready to give their time and leisure to the work of School Boards and the like, and to represent our interests and the interests of all true education wherever and whenever they can.

And now I must come to an end, and as I do so, I cannot help calling your attention to the vast amount of ability, energy, and zeal that is running to waste amongst us —ability that would command respect, energy that would work wonders, and zeal that would give us all new life and vigour if rightly employed. Why should all this be lost to us? Why should we not have all the help and encouragement which this would give us? And what a bond of unity it would weave around us! What a power and strength it

would be to us! To all I appeal, clergy and laity alike, to bring about by every possible means this co-operation of the laity with the clergy in the work of God. Look around and see the fields white with the harvest, and, oh, how few, how very few are the labourers! In hundreds they stand in idleness around us, because no man hath hired them, no man has shown them that they are wanted, or how much they can do. The young especially, so full of life and energy, so full of promise for the future, who are the hope of the Church, save them from the curse of a mere worldly life, save them from the weariness of living merely for self, from the unrest that breeds disloyalty and discontent, by making them fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord. They will make mistakes sometimes, and do and say very imprudent things—even we who are older can at times do that—and they would not be young if they did not do such things. Bear with them, encourage them, *trust* them, and you will add a host to the army of the Lord. A few months ago men were bold enough to say that patriotism was dying or dead amongst us; no one can say that now: common interests, common action, common danger have awakened that which was dormant, until the whole country glows with the patriotism that lives in us. It will be so with us in the Church; let us work together, let us share toil and danger, let us join hand to hand, and loyalty shall revive, and discontent shall vanish. We shall live together in the unity of peace, and the cause of God and His Church shall grow apace and prosper in the land.

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RESCUE WORK

By Lady Edmund Talbot*

Official returns made a few years ago present a sad and painful picture of the material and economic condition of the English poor. Since then there has been an awakening among the upper classes; a desire to improve the conditions of the poor; philanthropic and religious movements are stirring; there is a rendering of personal service. These are hopeful signs.

What are the Catholic laity of England doing to further a movement which is all-important to us, for we have high interests at stake—the souls of our Catholic poor, who, we are told, are drifting away by thousands from the Church. It has been whispered that the laity are not sufficiently employed in the work of the Church, but may we not take it for granted that there are very few Catholics in England who would not come forward to help the parish priests to lessen the leakage, who would not give personal service in order to prevent the poorer part of our population drifting from the Faith, if the deplorable condition of the lapsed masses of the poor were clearly put before them, if they realized that there is now, here in England, a great work to be done, which it is in the power of the laity to do, but which can only be achieved by the clergy and laity working in harmony?

The Work and our Provision for it.

What is the work before us?

When school-days are ending, and our boys and girls

* A Paper read at the Catholic Conference, 1900.

enter the arena of life, we are told that large numbers of them drift away from the Church, and this because they are not properly provided for when their elementary education is over. This seems to be an educational question as well as a religious question, or rather the two questions dove-tail one into the other. For years we have confided to the laity the elementary education of our poor; for this a body of lay teachers has been trained under the direction of the clergy, and these have the care of our children up to the age of twelve or thirteen. At this critical period of their lives, when the children of the poor begin the battle of life, we leave them alone to do as best they can. They are cast into workshops and factories, with no other stay or security than the half-digested instruction they have received in early childhood; what wonder if, surrounded as they must be by temptations of every kind, living as they are forced to do in a non-Catholic atmosphere, they drift away from Mass and the Sacraments to an extent which is deplorable? They work all day, sometimes far into the night, to earn their daily bread, only to come home fagged out and weary, with no inclination for anything but dearly-bought rest, or the amusments which help to drown the dulness of their every-day lives. They return home to find a worn-out mother, and perhaps a drunken father, and half a dozen children who make rest almost impossible, and so they are driven to seek some place other than home, where rest is out of the question. So the evil begins; our boys and girls *go out* to find recreation, and they find it only too easily in public-houses, gin palaces, penny gaffs, and the like, where they meet with all that is injurious to faith and morals.

We who are better off take the greatest care of our children from the ages of thirteen to twenty. We are more anxious as to whom they see, where they go, than we were at the earlier stages of their existence. And why? Because in early childhood they were less likely to come into harm's way; whereas from thirteen to twenty we know they are more impressionable. From the age of thirteen we begin

our anxiety and our care; and we guard and protect them as far as we can from evil influences. But it is not thus with the children of the poor. They begin to fight the battle of life when they leave school, with no protection, often with few friends. What wonder that they drift from the Faith? It is to safeguard, to befriend, and to help the children of the poor after school-days are over that the Catholic Social Union and other such works have been started; and it is to do this work, which in reality is the continuation of the education of the poor, that the Catholic laity of England have been urged to come forward and help on a work which is all-important; for what is sown in the minds of children before the age of twenty makes an impression more or less lasting, and the influence exercised over the mind and heart of a child in its teens will tell later on in the life of the man or woman for good or for evil.

How can we expect our boys and girls to become good fathers and mothers of families, to make good citizens and Englishmen, if we neglect them at the age of thirteen, just as their character is being formed, when they are most open to impressions of all kinds? What provision have we for our youth who have left school? Gilds we have, but not enough; clubs we have, but not sufficient for our needs. If it be true that the Catholic youth are drifting away from the Faith by hundreds, what can we do to put an end to this ever-increasing leakage? What can the Catholic laity of England do to help their Bishops and their clergy to educate, instruct, and amuse those who are leaving school until they are settled in life?

What can we do for our boys? What can we do for our girls? We must give them the religious, moral, and intellectual attention which the children of the rich receive. The work to be done is the training of the minds and hearts of Catholic children when school-days are over—the continuation of the education they have received in our elementary schools; to educate the hearts as well as the

minds of our children, to make them love their Faith and live by it, in order to keep them in the Church. So much for the children who are on the point of leaving school. But there are others who equally need our care—those who have left school for some years, who are older and more independent; these, we are told, have gone altogether. Many are settled in factories, and have not been heard of for years. These have to be got back, and they can be got back; but this is more difficult, because they are sometimes hardened and generally indifferent, and can only be got at by patience and tact, as experience in the East End of London shows us, and also in Sheffield and other northern towns. Moreover, we have an example set us by non-Catholics, who have junior clubs and gilds, managed by lay workers, for those who are leaving school, and senior clubs for the roughest factory hands, where they are looked after, instructed and amused, in order to keep them out of harm's way. This is the work before us—to organize clubs for those who are leaving school. By this means our children will be kept together, and gilds can be formed which will give a religious tone to the club, so that the parish priest may feel that those who leave his school are cared for; that he can find them ready at hand; that he has an organized body of voluntary workers who are in touch with his children, whom they are keeping for him, in order that he may not lose sight of those he knew so well at school. These junior clubs will feed his senior clubs for girls, his young men's societies and his boys' brigade; and the two will work together, though they cannot be mixed if they are to be efficiently worked. Experience shows us that our elder boys and girls resent the intrusion of younger children in a club; but if evening clubs are opened for the former where amusements are provided, where useful classes are held, where sympathy and kindness are to be had, the boys and girls who have drifted away will return, and can be got to Mass and the Sacraments though they may have lapsed for some years.

This has been proved in the working of the Catholic Social Union Clubs, which are in reality doing rescue as well as preventive work.

The Object and Management of Clubs.

How is it proposed to do this work?

If every denomination saved its own poor, the social problem would be solved. Other denominations, as has been said, have given us an example of what can be done for those who are leaving school, of the care bestowed on factory hands, flower-girls, match-girls, and others. It would be impossible to give an exhaustive list of all the non-Catholic clubs in England. Many are run privately or in connection with places of religious worship, some are affiliated to societies like the Young Women's Christian Association, the Young Women's Help Society, and many others. Winchester, Altrincham, Barnsley, Bradford, Birmingham, Bromley, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Macclesfield, Oxford, Poole, Rotherham, Sheffield, Worcester, Leamington, etc., are examples of places where clubs for girls have been successfully run for years. Nottingham has done remarkable work of this kind; about two hundred young ladies, girls of the more educated classes, have given valuable help in the organization of clubs. Many of these clubs are managed by a committee of ladies; some have a paid, but most of them a voluntary, superintendent, and when a club is thoroughly established, the members are often invited to take a share in the management, which gives them a sense of responsibility and a pride in their club. Clubs such as these are on the increase all over England, and if we do not provide clubs for our Catholic youth they will be drawn into those of other denominations, to the peril of their Faith, for it stands to reason that if they have no clubs of their own, they will attend those provided by non-Catholic associations. The attractions of such places are great; money is plentiful, workers are zealous kindness and sympathy are to be had for nothing;

what wonder if our poor take advantage of all they can get, in spite of its being injurious to their Faith? We tell them to avoid the public-house, music-halls, and the like; we deprecate their going to Protestant clubs, but we do not trouble ourselves to provide Catholic substitutes. What can they do? They will, and they do, attend Protestant clubs; they possibly join in the prayers, they often assist at the Bible class; what wonder if faith is weakened, if they gradually become indifferent and give up their religion altogether?

The workers of the various denominations do not want our girls and boys—they have enough to do in looking after their own; we cannot accuse them of any direct desire of proselytizing; but their clubs are filled in many cases with our Catholic youth, simply because we have so few clubs of our own. If we ever think of the dulness of the lives of the poor, of the weariness of returning to a dingy room, tired out by a hard day's work in a noisy workshop or factory, if we appreciate what a little sympathy, an hour's rest and recreation in a well-lit and well-warmed room can do for those who live apart from the upper classes, whose lives are marked by an absence of all the elevating influences of wealth, education, and refinement, we shall know the use of clubs for our poor.

One would like to see clubs established as a matter of course in every parish in England, worked by lay workers under the direction and with the hearty co-operation of the clergy, for nothing can be well worked without the sympathy of the parish priest. A club is not a difficult thing to start; it only requires a little energy and a certain amount of tact. If the Catholic laity with time and leisure would organize them, they would find a large field of workers among the middle-class population only too ready to throw themselves into such work. Sheffield is an example of this, for most of the Catholic Social Union Clubs there have been managed by men and women who were drawn from this class, whose regular and un-

flagging attendance all the year round is remarkable, and whose influence over the boys and girls is greater than that of the most refined of the upper classes. Clubs for girls and clubs for boys, once begun, lead to other works, which spread in different directions. No one who has not seen the developments can imagine what good can be done throughout a parish by the mere fact of gathering together those who have left school. A club should be primarily recreative, though instructive classes should be organized; but a club is not a disguised evening school, as the enthusiast for education fondly imagines; it should be a place where our young working population, the fathers and mothers of future generations, on whom the welfare and happiness of England depends, will find an ever-ready welcome, so that evening time may bring some joy into lives which are at best colourless and often sad. So far scarcely anything has been done by us to brighten these poor young lives. Nor does the work end here, for a club is only a centre for wider activity. Those who have worked and watched and waited in the East End of London and in Sheffield have been amply repaid for any disappointment which may have attended their efforts in the beginning, and their testimony goes to prove that such work is well worth doing, and that the results obtained in the spiritual order have in many cases surpassed their expectations.

How the Work grows.

The work has been blessed, the seed sown is bearing fruit, for the face of many a parish has been changed. Out of a club where games, dancing, and amusements are freely indulged in grows the necessity of district visiting; the members fall off and need looking up to ensure a more regular attendance. In looking up the members many parents are found who have not "bothered" about Mass and the Sacraments for a long time, "nor has the neighbour next door." Thus the district work increases, and by degrees we get in touch with the parents of the club

members; in other words, we begin to *know* the poor. Then entertainments are given at the club, to which the parents are invited; a mothers' meeting is established, and perhaps a club for men; all this fosters a spirit of union amongst our people, strengthens the influence of the clergy, and breaks down the barrier which through our own selfishness and love of ease we have placed between ourselves and Christ's poor. The outcome of club work is not only productive of good in that we keep in touch with those who are leaving or who have left school, but it enables us to come into contact with all the parents of our club members if we choose to do so, or rather if we can get enough workers to help us. In East London and in Sheffield the experience of the result of club work is briefly this: whole families who have lapsed for years have been brought back to the Church, children have been taken from board schools, club members have been converted, gilds have been established in the club, and monthly communions for those who used to go but once or twice a year. Religious instruction classes have been organized for those club members who had not made their first communion. Mothers' meetings have been started; little children whose faith was in danger have been rescued; religious instruction classes and Sunday schools have been formed for children attending board schools, who receive no religious education. Men's clubs have been formed for miners and working men, many of whom had lapsed from the Church altogether; out of boys' clubs a boys' brigade has been formed; gilds and Sunday classes for boys who were leaving school. Many a lad who had lapsed from the practice of his religious duties has been brought back by attending the club or by joining the boys' brigade. Attention should also be called to the Juvenile Temperance League, which works so successfully in some of the clubs in the North, and which, if more widely spread, would help to stamp out a vice which is far too prevalent among our Catholic population. Last, but not

least, a more regular attendance at Mass and larger Easter Communions have rejoiced the heart of the parish priest and those who have worked under him. All this is slow to come, and if such work requires an intelligent interest in the welfare of the poor, it also requires patience, for it is often discouraging, and frequently results in failure, for which there is but one remedy; that is, to begin again—to begin over and over again until success crowns our efforts. One can only ask those who imagine such work impossible, and who doubt its ultimate success, to come and see what has been done by men and women of the upper and middle classes possessed of courage, tenacity, and dogged perseverance, who work for God in the sacrifice of self.

The Difficulties.

What are the difficulties?

This paper presumes that the Gospels are true and obligatory; that we are confronted by a huge social problem; that we are so ill prepared to meet it that we lose thousands of our young people by leakage; and that we are responsible for the loss if we draw back and decline to put our shoulder to the wheel, if we refuse to help to stem the tide of leakage which exists in the Church to-day. The answer to the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is in the affirmative: "I *am* my brother's keeper." By mutual forbearance and by efficient organization we can gather together our forces, which, though small and poor, are at least loyal to the Church, and animated by the spirit of the Gospel. There is an idea among some Catholics that the work done by the laity is tolerated, but not approved, by the clergy. If this feeling were allowed to increase, it would retard a work which has gone on successfully for some five or six years. It is a feeling which discourages the workers, and their work is carried on with a diffidence which does away with zeal, because they are not clear in their own minds that they are right in carrying on a work which they feel may not have the hearty approval of the priests of the

parish. This wave of doubt and uncertainty paralyzes the lay workers, and prevents their having that feeling of security which is necessary in the work with which this paper deals. If clubs for the poor who have left school are to be considered harmless but useless, the work can never be thorough, and the courage of those who manage such clubs is bound to fail sooner or later.

The laity, no doubt, are but imperfect instruments. They may be overbearing, interfering, and exacting; but viewed as a means to gain an end, would not most of our clergy say, "Am I not better with an exacting, overbearing, fussing laity, with all their disadvantages, than with an idle, indifferent, shut-up, selfish, though thoroughly pious people?" Then our clergy are very naturally suspicious of a new departure from the ordinary parish routine. They are accustomed to the old separation between the worldly world and the religious world; and a fear of having tactless district visitors in the parish makes them dread lay interference, lest the cure be worse than the existing evil. Then there are the imaginary objections founded on politics and class jealousies, all of which tend to make our clergy diffident in the employment of lay help. These difficulties can only be overcome by casting aside petty jealousies, by sinking personal feelings. The clergy and laity have a common aim; both are working for God in the salvation of souls, and unless they labour in harmony the work cannot succeed.

Sympathy and Co-operation.

No work can be efficiently carried on in a parish unless the parish priest and the workers are in complete sympathy, unless the work be done with his approval and his co-operation. To attempt to work a club without the approval of the parish priest would be to court failure. On the other hand, few of us appreciate all our clergy have to do, all the constant worry and anxiety that forms part and parcel of their daily lives; and if the laity are to help the

clergy, it is not by adding to their burden, but by lightening it. If the laity seek to gather together those who have left school, to amuse, interest, and instruct them, it is in order to have them ready for the priest, whose anxiety is to keep in touch with the rising generation, whose elementary education, religious and secular, he has watched over from infancy, until they drift into the vortex of a work-a-day life. It is then that he loses sight of those who were wont to attend his school; it is at this juncture that the clergy and laity must work hand in hand to keep those who are no longer in the elementary schools from lapsing from the Faith. In this the laity want their work more than tolerated, more than approved. Such work, to succeed, must be helped, aided, encouraged, and advertised throughout the parish; a word from the priest in the homes of the poor as he goes his daily round of house-to-house visiting fills the evening clubs. A well-organized body of lay workers might be as eyes to our clergy, as hands by which our priests could help hundreds of souls whose lives must otherwise be left uncared for and beyond their reach.

If this work requires an intelligent interest in the welfare of the poor, it requires patience and mutual forbearance. Moreover, this is a work the laity have been called upon to do by those in authority. The press for many years past has been full of appeals to the Catholic laity to come forward and help their parish priests to lessen the leakage. The Bishops have urged the laity to work in co-operation with the clergy. The results of these appeals have been proved in the work of the Catholic Social Union Clubs, and the like, which have gathered together those who are most forsaken. Surely what has been done affords matter for consolation! Surely the practical results already obtained will encourage the faint-hearted and reassure those who imagine that the poor resent being visited, and are no concern of theirs; and if there be difficulties and misunderstanding between those who work and those who guide, could not these be settled by an assurance of the approval

of the latter in some tangible form, such as a call from the parish priests to the laity to come forward and lend a hand in a work which neither can do alone? This would encourage the laity to volunteer in larger numbers and lighten the burden of the clergy; this would clear away the difficulties between those who are doing a noble work for the poor and the clergy under whom they must work, whose approval they desire, whose help they need; so that in spite of difficulties and drawbacks which are inevitable, the laity would feel that they were not alone in their labours, that the parish priest is there to guide, advise, and co-operate as far as he can in a work of which he is the pioneer.

Organization the Remedy.

If everybody swept his own doorstep, the whole street would be clean. Yes, but which *is* mine? That ragged tramp who sleeps on the Embankment—is *he* a responsibility of mine? Those lapsed multitudes living near me in a state of indifference, godlessness, and sin—are they my business or some one else's? And then the besom to sweep with—shall it be my own individual brush, or that of St. Vincent de Paul, or that of one of the existing gilds, confraternities, and clubs? Shall we do well to organize another system? Have we not enough patent sweepers? Why not strengthen the existing organizations rather than start a new broom?

The answers are as follows. The sleeping tramp on the Embankment wall is the responsibility of everyone who sleeps in a house and a bed, and has food and money to share with his poorer neighbour. Those lapsed multitudes living outside the Church are the responsibility of those who have all the advantages of social position, combined with a sound religious training. And as to the broom with which to clean the doorstep, different ages, places, and circumstances demand different systems of mutual help. What has been brought home to us is the fact which stares

us in the face to-day, that with all our existing organizations and gilds, the destitution and helplessness of the poorer part of our Catholic population are appalling, and the leakage from the Catholic Church is staggering.

This paper presumes that the well-to-do of the upper and middle classes acknowledge their responsibilities to the poor, that the existence of the lapsed poor needs only to be grasped by them as a great reality to urge them into action, so that by giving personal service they may stem the tide of leakage which exists to-day. We cannot do this vicariously, through priests and sisters. This is a work of personal service which we must perform ourselves. We need an army of voluntary workers (1) to save the lapsed poor—men, women, and children; (2) to missionize the heathen masses living friendless and godless in our midst. This is a work of regeneration, and can only be accomplished by unselfish personal exertion. The poor must be evangelized, and we need a host of lay missioners to do it, who are trained to work under and in co-operation with the clergy. As a rule, debating conferences on religious and philanthropic questions have a tendency to lapse into the condition described by Sydney Smith in his definition of a charity organization committee—that A and B sit down and decide that C is to be relieved, and that D is to do it. If we are to help our clergy to save the lapsed poor, we must not sit down and decide that the lapsed poor must be reclaimed, but that the clergy and sisters are to do it, unaided by the personal service of the laity. How can the clergy and nuns do this work alone? They are already overworked, and would in most cases welcome the assistance of a well-organized body of lay workers, who would keep in touch with their people, and who would do what they cannot do single-handed—make constant and steady house-to-house visiting part of the work they are called on to perform. The poor love to be visited; they only resent it when it is badly or injudiciously done. Hence the necessity of a training for those who take up this work among the poor. It is not our mission to patronize, but to sympathize; to give out to the

poor some of the affection we lavish on our relatives. We all know the value of a little sunshine; why cannot we shed some of our brightness into the homes of the poor? If district visiting is essential, the literature they distribute among the poor facilitates the work of the district visitors; and perhaps if the Catholic Truth Society realized the valuable assistance they could give in this direction, they might provide short, telling leaflets in large print, on Mass and the Sacraments, and on other matters intimately connected with the religious welfare of our people.

The Training of Workers.

The social problem of the lapsed poor viewed *en masse* is disheartening, because it is too great; the only relief to this is organization—small, fixed duties for individuals. St. Vincent de Paul, when he realized the need of his day, set himself to work to organize his Ladies of Charity; he gave each definite work to do, he made his workers devote themseves to the sick poor. Different ages, places, and localities need different methods, and we have now before us not only the poor who are suffering from bodily infirmities, but the poor who are spiritually diseased, viz., the lapsed poor; and besides the Catholics who have lapsed, we have multitudes living like heathen who might be brought into the Church if those who have the faith could be got to go among them, and carry on a crusade. We have missionary colleges for foreign missions, but there are practical heathen living in our midst whom we might get into the Church had we zealous and earnest men and women who would take up such work and carry it through in spite of difficulties. The foundation of such work is laid; we have settlements, clubs, gilds, and the boys' brigade, all working more or less well; what we need is more workers, and workers who are fitted for the work they undertake, be it great or small. We have confided the elementary education of our poor to a body of trained teachers, and we require a body of trained workers to continue the education of our children who are leaving school, for nothing can be well done unless we have efficient workers. Could not those

who work in settlements have a course of training which would fit them for working in other parishes, and so spread the system all over England? Would not our clergy help to form workers? This could be done if in settlements regular courses of lectures were given by different parish priests; such instructions to workers would teach them what is wanted, how to do it, and in what spirit the work should be done. These instructions have been tried on a small scale, and the result has been that those who were diffident received encouragement, and those who were ignorant of the good they might do volunteered to help in one way or another. Such lectures might perhaps give our clergy greater confidence in their lay workers, who had received their instructions.

A very good training can be got by ladies going about with Sisters, such as the Sisters of Charity or the Little Company of Mary, whose province it is to visit the poor; by doing this the ladies have learnt that their mission was to sympathize and not to patronize, to help and not pauperize the people If we require to know what to do, we also need to be taught how to do it. In taking up work of this kind, a knowledge of how to deal with cases which must come before us is absolutely necessary. We must have some idea what cases can be dealt with by law, what are cases for industrial schools, when and how we can appeal to non-Catholic associations, such as the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and others. If we have a trained body of teachers for the children in our elementary schools, surely we need a body of trained workers to care for and help those who have passed out of our schools. If our interest in elementary education is so keen, must not our interest in those who have left school cease just when they most need care, protection, and training? Our responsibilities remain, and are as great, if not greater, than ever. What has been done has proved that such work can be done; the spiritual results alone ought to encourage the diffident, and to urge into action those who are faint-hearted; and one can only ask those who are still

unbelieving to come and see what has been achieved by those who, animated by the spirit of the Gospel, see Christ in the person of His poor.

An Appeal for Personal Service.

The leakage will be lessened when the Catholic laity of England resumes its activity and unity, when every Catholic woman considers it her duty and her privilege to hold out the hand of sympathy to what the world calls the dregs of humanity, who herd together in the slums and alleys of our big towns; when, leaving for a while her pleasant surroundings, she endeavours to succour the poor, to heal the broken-hearted by rendering them personal service; when she assumes the position of the lady of the manor of mediæval times, who really loved and cared for her poor, and looked on them as one of her cherished responsibilities. If we are to succeed, we must not imagine we can stand selfishly aside, one of us in a country house, another in a city office, a third in any other field of activity, thinking only of our immediate interests, and abstaining from combining together for the co-operation in which salvation alone is to be found. Unless we co-operate we are lost; our Catholic children, when school-days are ending, will drift away; our Catholic poor will lapse from the Faith in ever-increasing numbers. Our efforts must be met by a corresponding effort on the part of those under whom we work. It is for the parish priest to rally his forces, and call his laity to his side to supplement, not to supersede him.

There is nothing new in this paper; the poor have always been and will always be with us, and to face the fact of the leakage among them needs no great intellectual effort. There is a great work to be done, and the number of those who can undertake it is insufficient. We are all more convinced by deeds than by words, and when the Catholic men and women of England realize what the leakage means, they will surely come forward and give their personal service for the honour and glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

SETTLEMENT WORK.

By LADY EDMUND TALBOT.[1]

This paper presupposes that Catholic life is based on the Gospels. It takes as its standpoint that the doctrine therein contained holds good now, as of old, and that to love God first and to love our neighbour as ourselves is the mainspring from which all work, be it philanthropic, educational, social, or spiritual, springs.

We have been told over and over again by those in authority that settlement work and social work are apostolic works, and what we have to do is to find out the best means of bringing this work to a successful issue. The questions, therefore, are: What has been done? How has it been done? What are the results? How can these be bettered?

Roughly speaking, the work done by settlements is divided into three parts: the first includes district visiting and relieving; the second embraces clubs and instructive classes, secular and religious; the third is the care and instruction of children.

I. District Visiting and Relieving.

We all know that there is nothing more depressing to the district visitor than to be confronted with poverty and sickness which she can do but little to alleviate, or when she finds that the money she has given has been wasted, or spent on drink, leaving the poor worse off than before.

Now, though relief must be given at times, it is a great mistake to suppose that no good can be done unless relief be given, and it is always best to distribute relief in kind, such as in milk, soup and bread tickets, than to give a few shillings here and there. To teach the poor that there is no necessity to live in dirt or in a general muddle, to teach them how to make use of homely contrivances, how not to

[1] A paper read at the Catholic Conference, 1903.

waste, to teach them the value of thrift and effort, forms a large part of the district visitor's work, and when she takes care that spiritual teaching goes hand in hand with temporal aid, when in her intercourse with the poor she gets them to realize that there is another life to come, that the miseries of this life are not lasting, by degrees she gets them to think less of material things, and she raises them from a low standard to higher aims and objects, and she has the satisfaction of knowing that any material aid she may have given has helped them in more ways than one. The poor, as a rule, are not thrifty, nor do they know how to make things go as far as possible, for they often throw away or waste things which might be used. Therefore by teaching the poor a few simple things, by persuading them that many of their prejudices are unreasonable, if not injurious, the district visitor obtains a real influence on the poor, because they feel she is a friend and not merely a relieving officer. Then again, many cases can be helped by non-Catholic charities and organizations; the poor are often ignorant of this, therefore a district visitor should know what societies to apply to, so that her people may see that she really enters into their lives, that her interest is real and genuine. If we ask ourselves what are the spiritual results of visiting the poor, we can prove that these have been very great; numbers of people have been brought back to Mass and the Sacraments, in many cases after years of lapsing, children have been baptized, people who were not married have been married, and perhaps the most important of all has been getting careless Catholics to send their children to the Catholic schools.

The statistics of work done during the year by the five settlements, or centres, and by the Association of the Ladies of Charity in London, is as follows: 21,360 visits were made to the poor in their homes; 177 children received in baptism who would have remained unbaptized; 137 Catholic children attending the Board Schools were brought back to the Catholic Schools; 185 lapsed Catholics were brought back to the Church; 511 Catholic children attending Board Schools received religious instruction.

Now, as a large number of our children attend the

Board and non-Catholic schools, and as these are mostly the children of mixed marriages who will not send their children to the Catholic schools at all, a very important part of settlement-work is to find these poor children and to give them some religious instruction, for they are entirely ignorant of the rudiments of their Faith. It is no exaggeration to say that there is an enormous work to be done for these Board School children, and in a small way this work is being done. Classes are being held of forty to sixty children who, when they were first persuaded to come, did not know how to make the sign of the cross or to say a "Hail, Mary." Of course it is the fault of the parents, but it is no use thinking such cases are rare, because they are not.

The poor sometimes think that because they have neglected their religion altogether, all is lost, and that it does not matter what they do, that they can never get right. One case of this kind came to light, and brought out the extraordinary ignorance of the poor. It was a case which took one lady three years to get right; it was that of a woman who was not really married and who had six sons; one of them was baptized, the rest were not, and all were brought up at the Board School. The woman seemed a very nice woman, but she always declined to go to Mass or the Sacraments. At last, after three years, she told the lady who visited her that the reason she could not attend to her religion was that she was not properly married, and she had got firmly fixed into her head that therefore all was lost, that nothing could save her. Now, there were no difficulties in the way: the husband, who believed in little or nothing, had no objection to being married in the Catholic Church, and after three years of constant visiting these people were married, and the boys are now attending the Catholic Schools. It was sheer ignorance which prevented this woman from taking any steps before, and it took a long time to dispel her illusions, for she had been twenty years thinking that it was no good doing anything, as she could not be saved. This is only one case out of many; it was brought to the notice of the settlement ladies by a poor woman who was full of zeal for souls and who

only knew that at some time or other the woman whose case I have quoted had been a Catholic. But it brings home to us that there is an apostolate for the working classes of England as well as for the upper classes. Those who drift away from God and Faith do not do so from very positive disbelief, but often from sheer ignorance and indifferences; weighed down by material cares they forget that there is the life beyond the grave. What these need is a friendly word of counsel, which they would fain have and do not get.

The working classes have in their hands a very great power if they will seriously consider the matter and come forward and use this power by combining with the clergy and those who are working in settlements, for there are numberless ways where the working man and woman can establish the kingdom of Christ among his fellows—ways which are closed to those of another class.

I have no hesitation in saying that all I know about district visiting I have learned from poor working women, who taught me where to visit, what to do, and what to say; and I believe that it is chiefly by the working men and working women that the working multitude will be saved. A settlement need not be a large house—sometimes it is only a few rooms; but wherever it is, or whatever it is, large or small, it should be a home to the poor, it should enlist the sympathy of the working classes in the mission, for then it becomes a centre from which the rich and the poor can do apostolic work. Small and humble it may be, nevertheless work for God is carried on there, and the zeal, intelligence, and united efforts of all classes who come under its influence are directed for the salvation of souls.

II. Clubs and Instructive Classes.

We have to face the fact that if clubs do not exist the working girls, out of work hours, seek their amusements in the streets. An objection is sometimes raised that clubs entice the girls from their homes and encourage them to spend their evenings away from the domestic hearth. The class of girls we want to reach, and have reached, do not

spend their evenings at home, which are mostly hot and overcrowded; and it is not to be wondered at that after long hours in factories and in laundries they should seek amusement in the music-hall, cheap theatres, or public-house, or that the glaring, bustling life of the streets proves too strong to be resisted. Undoubtedly the Catholic girls have been improved by the clubs; even the roughest—the shawl-girls who used to run the streets chaffing the passers-by—have, under the influence of the ladies, become quiet and well-behaved. It is also a fact that numbers of girls have been brought back to Mass and the Sacraments simply through the club. Numbers of girls who have left the elementary schools without having made their first Communion have been prepared for the Sacraments through coming to the club.

To take an instance, when some eight years ago a club was started for rough girls, three hundred of the roughest joined. These by degrees became so well-behaved that one hundred and sixty of them are now Children of Mary, and they help to manage their club. Some are formed into a committee, who with the ladies manage different classes and funds, such as the Country Holiday Fund; not only this, but the Children of Mary bring to the club other girls whose faith is not all that it should be; and by this means we have got into touch with the girls we want, and whom otherwise we should not reach at all. Those who manage clubs should co-operate with the nuns and the elementary school teachers as far as possible. The nuns who visit can often send girls to the club, and the teachers often know of girls who ought to join the clubs through the school children who have elder sisters. It is undesirable to mix the better-class girls with the rough ones—at all events at first, when a club is starting; but once the ladies show the better-class girls what help they can render to those who are more uncouth, it is wonderful what an interest the better-class girls will take in the rougher ones. There is an apostolate among girls and boys, if they can only be got to realize it; and they do realize it if the ladies managing clubs will point it out to them and make them see it.

As to the management of clubs, the girls should meet

once or twice a week for dancing and amusements, so as to attract them and keep them out of the streets; but the principal part of the work—that is, the moral improvement of each girl—is done within the four walls of the settlement or class-rooms, where the girls can be taught and influenced, where they get *individual* attention. Where clubs are large it is better to form junior and senior clubs, and one has to remember that the younger girls are more easily influenced than the elder ones, who may have got into bad ways and rough habits. The oftener a club can be opened the better; it should be opened every night where this is possible. An ideal state of things is when two nights can be given up to amusements and where the other nights can be devoted to classes, sewing, cooking, and the like, reading, singing, and music. This is only possible where settlements exist, or where a room can be taken in which the girls and the ladies can meet for class work. A room or a small flat has been found most useful in some missions for this purpose, and the schools can generally be used for the nights devoted to amusements. A committee of club members is most useful, as this interests the members in their club, and can easily be done by allowing the elder girls to share in the management, which fosters a sense of responsibility and an instinct of self-government lacking in most women. Recreation nights, dancing, &c., are means towards an end; out of these classes grow; and in starting a club, if you open it one night a week only, and that for dancing, you soon find that the girls want classes, and that some room must be got in which to hold them.

By coming into contact with the girls, by giving them individual attention, the managers come to understand the life of the girls, their home circumstances, their work and wages. Social evenings, country holidays and excursions, visits to picture-galleries, churches, and interesting buildings—all this is part of settlement work. And if a club is primarily a place of recreation, recreation is not the only object; it is merely a means towards an end—order and discipline. The fact of learning something is invaluable, but again, this is not all we desire to accomplish. The spiritual benefit is our aim and object in all Catholic clubs; the

ultimate object of a club is religious—it is a means of helping the girls to overcome the difficulties and temptations by which our working girls are surrounded, so as to fit them to live true Catholic lives, and later on to be good wives and mothers. Every attempt should therefore be made to bring the girls in each mission under such a good and refining influence.

If there is one influence which refines and elevates more than any other, it is the religious influence, and the managers of many of our clubs in London will testify to how much the roughest and poorest of our club girls have benefited by being brought into touch with nuns. Girls and women have been taken to convents for the day, the nuns have had retreats of two or three days for them, and it would be impossible to exaggerate what good these retreats have done.

Of course every convent cannot open its doors to the girls, but there are many convents who have given most valuable assistance to the clubs, and I may mention the Cenacle, because this order is established abroad, at Manchester, and in London. Retreats for working classes form the special work of these nuns, and the good they do is untold. The girls like going there—they like the peace and rest. The cost of these retreats is very small, and can be partly paid by the girls themselves.

If all this requires organization, thought, and energy, the results in the spiritual order prove that club work is well worth doing; moreover, as this work increases, no one can fail to realize how essential clubs for boys and girls are if we bear in mind one broad fact, viz., that though clubs are by no means an antidote to all the evils of the day, they are most certainly a great help to the youth of the country, they help to keep our people together, and to us as Catholics they tend to decrease the leakage by keeping our people in touch with the Church and with the clergy.

III. The Training of Children.

The third part of settlement work is the care of poor children. During the past year great educational changes

have taken place. The State holds the right to instruct, direct, and influence the rising generation, but it has left to religion a certain limited freedom, and the question before us to-day is, how can we make the best use of this freedom? Can we do more to influence and mould the character of those attending our elementary schools? Can we make the Faith appeal more strongly to the hearts of our Catholic children, in order that religion may take a firmer hold and enter deeper into their daily lives? and if so, how? Our clergy and our devoted school teachers are straining every nerve in the service of our elementary schools, but, overworked as they certainly are, how many of them are able to come in touch with the home life of the children? Even the parents whose children attend the elementary school often neglect to go to Mass on Sundays, or neglect to send the children to Mass or to the Sunday School. Now, as the main object of settlement and social work is to prevent the loss of our children when they leave school, it is obvious that the more such work co-operates with school work the better. We are told to catch the children when school days are ended, but why not catch them before? Why wait till they have left? The elementary school is the key of the whole leakage question, and therefore the children in the schools are, or ought to be, the objects of a settlement's care and solicitude; for when the parents see that an interest is taken in the children, they begin to take a greater interest in them too. To impress on the parents the importance of sending their children to the Catholic school, and not to the Board or, as now called, "provided" schools, is a work which surpasses in importance all other settlement works put together. And if we go a step farther, and make both the parents and the children see that we are prepared to interest ourselves in them out of school hours, that our interest is a religious interest, we should go far towards breaking down the indifference and apathy which characterises the youth of to-day.

The Catholic Church in England has secured for her children a sound Catholic education in every Catholic elementary school. Catholic prayers and the Catholic catechism are taught in all our schools; therefore the

knowledge of religion is acquired in the schools. Strong and sound foundations are laid, which can only be done by the priest and the teachers. But the priest and the teachers have to cope with the existing evils of the day. A spirit of independence is on the increase; there is the non-Catholic atmosphere around us, and the excitement of the streets: all this makes the task of *interesting* children in their religion more difficult than it was some years ago. Home life among the poor, owing to improper housing and irregular working hours, has gone. Home is often a place where the members of a family obtain food and a place to sleep during the intervals of work. In the struggle for life it is not much to be wondered at that the parents throw the whole responsibility of the children's moral and spiritual training on the overworked priests and school teachers. The parents think that as religion is taught at school no further trouble need be taken; in other words, the parents do not realize their spiritual responsibility as parents at all. They ask the priest and the teacher to do an almost impossible work, for they ask them not only to teach the catechism thoroughly, but they ask them to give to the children that influence which a good Catholic home secures. Then constantly the children are tired and ill-fed when they come to school, and cannot be expected to learn with any eagerness. Many are employed and are earning wages, some in workshops, as street hawkers, delivering newspapers or in doing domestic work, and if the children arrive at school tired out and heavy, are they likely to derive much real advantage from the instructions imparted to them? Are they likely to feel a thrilling interest or a keen desire for knowledge under such conditions? when with tired brains, and empty stomachs they go through the catechisms, to get it done, as they plod through the arithmetic table or the dates of the kings of England? In the towns personal interest in the schools falls entirely on the priest and teachers; outsiders feel that the poor have their schools and that this is enough. But is it enough? Do we see the same indifference to the training of children in the upper classes? Do they do nothing to refine and humanize their children? Is the Catholic father satisfied with the bare knowledge of the

catechism? Does the Catholic mother hold that as long as her child learns the catechism she need take no further trouble, that the foundations are all that is necessary? Every one knows that the religious knowledge our poor children acquire in the elementary schools is not perfunctory; that no one can better it; that it can be done by no one but by the priest and the teachers. It is this teaching which lays the foundation and teaches the principles of Catholic and Christian life.

Therefore it is not a question of supplanting a system which already exists, and which is perfect, as far as it goes, but the question of vital importance to-day is, can the knowledge of religion taught in the elementary schools be made use of in such a way as to make it act more powerfully on the children's daily lives? How is it that when our Catholic children leave school they drift away from the Church by hundreds? Is it because they do not *know* their religion, or is it because they do not *think* about it? It certainly *cannot* be because they do not *know*, because no one answers the catechism better than our Catholic poor children; therefore the reason why we lose so many of our children is because they do not *think*. The numerous opportunities for pleasure and excitement have necessarily affected the life of the children. Life in the town is not what it is in the country village, and the tendency is for children to cast off their filial sentiments as though the bond of affection were severed when the child feels it is able to take up its own life. Then the love of dress and what luxuries can be got are on the increase, and the sense of reverence is on the wane, if not lost altogether. The children keep late hours, and run the streets. With all this is it to be wondered at that we lose so many when they leave school? Now, as it is an acknowledged fact that the children *know* the catechism as well or better than most of us, it is obvious that the present system could be made use of if the child's thinking powers were brought more fully into play, and this could be done by getting some hold on the children out of school hours, by giving them something of that softening influence which the Catholic mother gives to her child, and which the poor

children seldom receive owing to the conditions of their lives. This would make the religious instruction received in school appeal to the heart and affections of the children; it would tend to increase their love for religion. They would get to realize that the Faith is something to be proud of, a treasure rich and beautiful, and perhaps it would make religion influence in a greater degree their daily lives.

Children are very responsive: they are very easy to lead if their hearts are appealed to, and they repay any little attention with affection; and a desire to please those who are kind to them is easily roused in a child's simple nature. Such work for children is eminently settlement work, and if Catholics have been behindhand in doing more for the children out of school hours it is little to our credit. Protestants do a great deal for the children in the elementary schools. They have recreative afternoons for them, when ladies and teachers devote themselves to amusing the children and playing with them; and why? Because they recognize that the mere fact of showing the children that an interest is taken in them refines them, and gets them into gentler ways. If non-Catholics do so much simply to refine their children, could we not do something more for ours, in order to bring out their affections, to make them realize that religion has its spheres of joy and gladness, and so encourage in them a greater personal love and confidence in our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Our children live habitually in a dull, cold Protestant atmosphere which needs to be counteracted by the warmer and genial Catholic atmosphere, and to do this the children must see that they are objects of interest. We must get a firm hold of their affections if we want to make religion appeal to their hearts, and the question is, how can this be done?

Perhaps in Catholic Lancashire such work is not required, in small missions it is probably organized, but in the large and thickly-populated towns experience proves only too strongly that this work for children is required, and must be done, if we are to keep abreast of the times, and if we mean to keep a hold on our children which is to be lasting. It is a very simple work; it is preventive. It is an effort to keep our children from drifting away. It is easier than

club work, because in clubs we have to get so many who have drifted back ; moreover, children are easier to influence when they are still under control, because they have not tasted the sweets of independence.

In the organization of this work there are two vital points to be borne in mind ; one is that such work must be done in co-operation with the clergy and the school teachers, secondly that it must not be done *in* the school, otherwise the parents and the children think it is extra schooling. Some definite period at which to select the children must be settled ; there must be a definite age at which to begin, an age when the children would respond to such training. By experience we know that they do respond, for this work has already begun, and though it has been very imperfectly done, the results have been most encouraging. Some time ago it transpired that a good many Catholic school children were in the habit of attending a Bible class which was organized by some Protestant ladies, and this with the sanction and approval of the Catholic parents, who, when asked why they allowed the children to go to these classes, answered that the children were taught something useful, that it was better for them to be there than in the streets. The parents thought that it was, on the whole, a good thing. Now all this went on unknown to the clergy, to the nuns, and to the settlement ladies, and it only came to light through the kindness of the Protestant ladies who held these classes. They told the ladies of the Catholic settlement that seventy-five Catholic children attended their Bible and sewing classes, and offered to give the children up if something of the same kind could be organized for the Catholic children. The results of a few shocks like this made a stir, and after a good deal of consultation between the priests, the school teachers, and the ladies it was decided to make a beginning with the children who were preparing for their first Communion. The children were fetched by the ladies from the school as the school was ending at 4.30 p.m. ; they were taken to the settlement once or twice a week, where they were instructed and generally interested in what they were going to do. The teaching was less of a dry catechetical instruction, and more of a talk

to the children about the life of Our Lord and Our Lady, with stories, examples and illustrations, and this was done in such a way as to interest the children and excite their imagination, so as to make them ask questions, and so to get out of their heads the idea that Our Lord and His Blessed Mother are persons living apart from us, and at a distance, and are therefore unapproachable and only to be treated with awe and fear, only spoken to occasionally. The children were shown pictures bearing on the Holy Eucharist, Mass, and the Blessed Sacrament; they had also, as a treat, instructions with magic-lantern slides representing appropriate subjects, mostly on the practical examples of the life of Our Lord. The lesson itself was short, only lasting half an hour; the children then sang hymns, and they began and ended with a short prayer. Everything was done to make these classes religiously attractive: an altar had been arranged and the children were allowed to have charge of it, to light the candles and arrange the flowers according to their behaviour in class. They were made to feel that this little class was for the privileged few, who were actually preparing for the greatest event in their lives, and that therefore everything was being done for them in order to help them to make a good preparation. The result was that these classes were attractive to the children, their interest was thoroughly roused, their hearts were effectually appealed to; and if such results were obtained from a small and very imperfect beginning, what results might we not expect if such work for children were properly organized on wider lines and on a larger scale? The parish priests who organized this work came to the conclusion that to do such work efficiently it was necessary for the ladies to visit the parents of every child in the preparation class—in order to interest them in the children's spiritual welfare. Of course the day of the first Communion was made as festive and solemn as possible, with a renewal of baptismal vows, and procession in which the children walked. The nuns and ladies spent the day with the children, dressing them and serving at the breakfast. If these classes were difficult to organize, the results were astonishing, for the children, who at first were rough and

independent, at the end of three months became gentle and well-behaved. They saw they had become objects of special interest and care; they realized that just because they were going to make their first Communion the priests, nuns, and ladies were doing all they could to make the time of preparation attractive and holy, in order that it should have a lasting and practical effect on their after lives. But though everything was done to make a lifelong impression on the children, the clergy who organized the work saw that the good begun would be lost if these classes were not continued; therefore all the children who made their first Communion are now attending perseverance classes, which are organized like the preparation classes, with the addition that the children are taught sewing, while they are read to.

If we are to keep abreast with educational advancement, an attempt must be made to refine and humanise our children. Dry *knowledge*, be it secular or religious, will not prevent the loss of so many of our children; something more is required to make knowledge act and become a living force and reality in every-day life: the heart must be educated and the affections must be appealed to in order that our children may see and love the beauty and consolation which are to be found in the Faith we all hold so dear. Such teaching and training and interesting children can only be successful by co-operation with the clergy; it requires on the part of those who undertake such work zeal for souls and patient perseverance. Again, we must take the children at an age when they are most open to good impressions if our moral and personal influence is to help them to begin the battle of life with a greater love for religion, with a stronger faith to resist the temptations of the world, and with hearts full of enthusiasm and admiration for the attractive side of religion.

The care of the children in our elementary schools is of absolute and vital importance; the religious training of our children is becoming more and more important as secular education advances. Sunday schools, first Communion classes, and perseverance classes are essential *now*—we cannot afford to sit still and be content with mere head

work, which is the essential foundation, but which demands a superstructure of refinement to bring it to a perfect whole; and in urging this I would venture to suggest that the care of our Catholic children is the common interest and work of priest and people. The children are the care and business of all, for their training has been, and always will be, the concern of the Catholic people.

Conclusion.

Indifferentism has become the religious disease of this country. There are multitudes living without God; others imagine that the poor and piety are in some way linked together and are to be left to priests and nuns, and need not enter into the life of the ordinary Christian. To many the parish is but a name; that they may have duties within the parish perhaps never occurs to them. The children are safe in school and all outside and around lies the great world with its atmosphere of indifferentism and sin ready to engulf our unsuspecting children the moment school days are over. Are we to attempt nothing? Are we to do nothing more for them? Are we content that the bare knowledge of religion is enough? We are a poor body and a small body, but we are all bound one to another, we all help each other, and not one of us stands alone. A vast amount of energy and ability is running to waste among us; we have forces, and what is needed is to put our forces into action. Look around and see the fields white for the harvest, and how few, how very few, who will work.

The youth of the upper classes especially—has any one shown them how much they are wanted and how much there is to do? It is the young that are the hope of these social movements, their enthusiasm is more easily enkindled, they are the hope of the Church, but do they know what endless opportunities they have before them, do they realize that personal service is demanded, that to live for self only will breed weariness and unrest? There is no doubt of the value of personal service in settlement and social work. But the value of personal service given to the children, be it in Sunday school or religious instructive

classes, cannot be exaggerated. It is the children who are to be the future Catholics of England, who need your training, who demand your care. Refine them, interest yourselves in them, attract them, make them love their religion, show them that it has its spheres of deepest joys.

To those who are conducting the education of the upper and middle classes so admirably in our convent schools I would suggest that the importance of this work for poor children be instilled into the minds and hearts of their pupils, that the needs of our Catholic poor children be made known to those who are receiving a higher education, so that when this education is over they may know how to make use of life, that the result of this education may force them to see that to do something for others is the law of life, if life is to be lived in all its fulness.

And there are also those who are teaching in our schools —I mean the teachers and pupil teachers—who might have much influence for good over the rising generation of our Catholic poor. The authorities, secular and religious, are endeavouring to draw these teachers into centres where they will get the equipment necessary for their high calling, and if it be their duty to train and teach the poor, it is their proud privilege to impress their individuality on the minds and hearts of our children, by giving them that true Catholic spirit which can only be imparted to others by those who possess integrity of character, strong convictions, and earnestness, and who are moved by a personal experience of the sweet and attractive influences of the Catholic Faith.

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WORK IN THE HOP-GARDENS [1]

By BERTRAND W. DEVAS

In the year 1904 the Bishop of Southwark visited Maidstone during the hopping season and became personally acquainted with the conditions under which the pickers live and work in that part of Kent. The Anglican *locum tenens* of a neighbouring parish took the opportunity of writing to the Bishop to inform him of the number of Catholics engaged in the gardens, and to suggest that the Franciscans—whom, as a High Churchman, he seems to have known well—should undertake an annual mission. The vicar was not very pleased with the action of his subordinate, but the Bishop made the suggested application to the Provincial and received the promise that a mission should be sent out in the following year.

Work in 1905.

The friars were encouraged in their new task by the zeal of their tertiaries. A society of twentieth-century Franciscans had already been established with the object of attacking the social problems of the day by means of the already existing organization of the Third Order of St. Francis. As soon as it was perceived that lay help would be essential if any substantial result was to be obtained,

[1] A paper read at the Catholic Conference at Brighton, 1906.

the leading members of the society consulted together as to how assistance could best be rendered, and in 1905 a small band of priests, nuns, ladies, and laymen established themselves in Kent at the beginning of the hop-picking season. Of their pioneer labours some account has already appeared; and this much they accomplished apart from the work done in the fields, that the Mission has been made a permanent institution, and that its sphere has been extended outside the boundaries of Kent. At a Provincial Chapter of the Franciscan Friars of the Capuchin Reform held on September 8, 1905, it was decided that an annual mission to hop-pickers should form part of the regular work of the Order in this country; and by the end of the same season those who had been personally engaged on the Mission determined that an essential part of their work should be to follow up in London, as far as possible, the cases of lapsed or negligent Catholics whom they had met in Kent.

Work in 1906.

The Mission which ended on September 22nd is thus only the second on the roll. The conference of workers has not yet been held to register and consolidate their experiences, and the whole of the work in London remains to be done. We are still in the experimental stage, accommodating ourselves to every phase of circumstance, and of guiding principles we have but one—our only aim is to bring the blessings of Faith to those among whom we labour. We are not concerned with the improvement of their material condition, except in so far as it is essential to their spiritual well-being. "Are you a Catholic?" "Are you coming to Mass?" are the invariable questions; not, "Are you well paid, well housed, well fed?" There

are other seasons for those questions; just now we have our own work on hand.

There has been a great change in the character of the hop-pickers during the last twenty years. They are less violent, less drunken, and more contented than formerly, but though their improvement in these respects is very marked, it cannot be said that their vision of spiritual things is less clouded and obscure than in their more barbaric days. Their very contentedness is an evil sign; for they have grown content to live from meal to meal as though physical existence were their only work in the world. Religion is an unnecessary luxury, for which in the struggle for life they have no time and little inclination: "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, and while there is life there is hope. It is more probable that we shall be starving before six months are out than that we shall be dead; therefore now, when hops are good, let us eat and drink our fill while we may; for the day of unemployment comes when no man may work."

In the midst of these, and bound to them by every sort of family tie, is a great body of Catholics, almost all of Irish extraction though few have been in Ireland; brought up in Catholic schools; well instructed in their religion—their knowledge becoming a little rusty, perhaps, as time goes on, but proud of their Faith and eager for their children to go to the convent schools and be taught by the same kind Sisters who have been so good to themselves; reverencing the priest, so that if they lie to everybody else they will tell the truth about themselves to him; and yet many of them have not fulfilled their Easter duties for years, and have scarcely heard Mass half a dozen times during the same period. But none the less they are Catholics, just as much as their neighbour who has never missed Mass in her life and

never will, and they believe and know and value the great mysteries of their Faith just as she does; but the exigencies of living have pushed religious practice aside, and though the light of faith is never extinguished, it has ceased to shine before men.

The Object of the Mission.

The object of the Mission is to raise the level of Catholic practice among such as these. A great many have long been out of touch with their parish priest, and are unknown to him as Catholics. They know *him* well enough and take care to avoid him, and do not enter the church for fear of meeting him there; for old habits are not broken without a painful effort, and the pain is more than they care to bear. But in Kent they are removed from habitual surroundings. The priest is a stranger, there is no church, but only a tent in which Mass is said and where there is no need for best clothes. Their evil companions are out of sight, and other public-houses have not quite the same irresistible attraction as their own particular London haunt. Now if ever, when they are down on their luck, is the time for them to make an effort to pull themselves together. All that is asked of them at first is to come to Mass on Sunday; for that is the mark of a Catholic. Their friends are not Catholics, and never go to church; *they* are Catholics, or used to be before they gave it up, and now they have only to come to Mass to feel that they are Catholics once more.

"Scouts."

Our first business, therefore, in the Kentish hop-gardens is to tell every Catholic at work where and when Mass will be on Sunday. The laymen helpers, who are called "scouts" (and by that name I shall refer to them throughout), go round to every bin in the garden and obtain the

name and London address of all the Catholics. The method of procedure varies with the individual, except for the preliminary question, "Are you a Catholic?" That is, so to speak, the motto of the Mission, and is continually on our lips during the greater part of our work, so that sometimes in the streets irreverent children shout the words out as we go by. The next essential question is, "Are you coming to Mass next Sunday?" The non-Catholic who has answered the previous question in the affirmative, hoping that there will be something to get, is thereby silenced; but the Catholic knows that it means business, and amicable relations are established at once. It is surprising how friendly and good-natured they are. They do not resent a series of questions as to their private lives, as to their full name and address, the numbers of their children, their regularity at Sunday Mass, and the nature of their employment at home; their answers are given in exchange for the information that Mass will be at a certain time in a certain place on Sunday morning, and that if they want the priest they must come at a certain time to the place where Mass is said. Even non-Catholics almost invariably give a civil reply to the question which every worker in the field is asked; it is either a "No, sir," and a shake of the head, or a sturdy "Church of England, sir," or, as in one case, "No, sir, 'Amurrican.'" A few state their beliefs or disbeliefs. "My religion is help one another," was the reply I got from one world-weary looking individual, and another would try and talk in a vague way about religion as though it were a rare phenomenon in which he was particularly interested,—a hobby for which, unfortunately, he had little leisure. Sometimes, too, a young fellow becomes extraordinarily preoccupied with his work as he sees the scout approaching and hears the continual repetition of the

inevitable question, but before his turn is reached a neighbour will point him out, and in a stumbling manner, with his face turned resolutely down to the hops in the bin, he will confess the Faith that is in him. A few do not care to reveal themselves to a mere layman, but somehow when the priest appears they are overcome by the spirit of truth and suffer their names and addresses to be inscribed on the roll of Catholic hop-pickers. That does not necessarily signify conversion, but it is surely something for a man to be reminded once a year by a priest that he is playing the fool with his eternal soul.

In making friends with the good Catholics it is essential to know their parish priests. I feel sure no one from Dockhead would give any one credit for being a good Catholic who did not know Father Murnane, and his praises were on my lips before I had spent an hour in the gardens. It is best to know the priest personally, sometimes perhaps at the expense of truth; but to know much about them from good report is so necessary that the claims of truth do not enter into the matter at all. In this way the first process is completed. Every Catholic is told when and where Mass will be, and each is registered in a book, with such comments on his or her character as will serve to guide the priest when the time comes for him to visit the people.

The next business of the Mission—for I am treating the work in barest outline—is to marshal together a congregation. On Sunday morning the scout hurries round to every camp in his district to inform all Catholics that now is the time for Mass; for hop-pickers never know the time. In London there is no need for watches, least of all on Sunday morning, but in Kent it is different, and the scout must take upon himself the part of the clanging, irritating discord which tells the city dweller

that the priest is waiting at the altar—hurry up ! come along !

Difficulties.

It is here that one begins to appreciate the real obstacle to the progress of religion among the masses of our people. The difficulties are accentuated in Kent by the inconveniences of camp life. A whole week's domestic work has to be crowded into the short interval between late rising and Mass time. Once in the week at least the children must be well washed, and if any one judges from the filthy pigstyes which some growers think fit to herd their labourers that our people are as unclean as their dwellings, let him walk through a camp between 8.30 and 10 on a Sunday morning, and he will find out his mistake. He will also judge less harshly of the hard-working mother who seldom comes to Mass herself, and is unable to send more than a small proportion of her children ; for, besides the trouble of washing, breakfast must be cooked, and after breakfast dinner. When the Bishop of Southwark paid a surprise visit to Wateringbury in a motor-car one Sunday afternoon, most of the Catholics whom he saw between 2.30 and 3, either at the Mission tent or just outside their own huts, had left their dinners simmering in the pot. Dinner at 3 instead of at 12 or 1 may be a very considerable inconvenience even to the humble hop-picker, and when, as in many cases, the husband is not a Catholic Mass on such terms is impossible. The children who are always willing to come cannot in every case be trusted by their mothers to walk a mile and a half or two miles along strange roads, among strange people. Some of them, too, have errands to run ; dinner must be procured, and in the country shops are not open all day ; and what are bigger children for if not to help their mother and

the babies ?—besides, it seems so easy to run the errand first and come to Mass afterwards, and it is surely not their fault if they are an hour wrong in their calculations.

It is indeed only the men whom as a class one finds it harder to forgive for neglecting their duties ; to discover an excuse for them we must go deeper into the circumstances of their lives. The women and children who are not great wage-earners at home come down to the hop-fields because, if hops are good, they can make a substantial addition to the family fund ; and if hops are bad, at any rate they obtain the benefit of three weeks spent in the open air. If the husband has a job he wisely remains in London, and only those accompany their wives who for the time being are in lack of good employment. Thus the Mission has to deal with that class of men whose condition constitutes one of our most difficult social problems. It is not to be expected that such as these should come to Mass at the first suggestion of a renewal of their religious practices. Taking them, therefore, altogether, these mothers, children, and men, we have to be content that of those who have promised to make the effort many do not appear at the tent on Sunday morning.

On Sunday, September 9th, this year, there were six Masses said by the three priests, and 1,100 people heard Mass. On the following Sunday, in spite of the fact that all the pickers in one district had gone home and a very large proportion from the other two, 950 people heard Mass. Five Masses were said on that Sunday, but at one of these, for various reasons, only a dozen persons were present, so that the proportional increase of attendance at the others was very great. We have not yet obtained the total number of Catholics at work, so I cannot give exact figures ; of this, however, you may be sure, that the percentage of attendances will

not prove very high. It did not require two years' experience to learn that there was much to be done before great statistical results could be obtained.

There is only one way of influencing those who have made themselves strangers to the Church, and that is by becoming their friends. The work of the scouts, which I have briefly described, is the merest preliminary ; it is the formal introduction, the mutual bow, the polite shake of the hand ; the real business of the Mission is to become intimate with the people. For the poor do not want patronage or charity or sermonising, but friendship, and only so much material help as a friend can give without destroying the mutual goodwill which exists between the two parties. For this object the services of the laity are required, and I must briefly indicate in what those services consist.

Of the scouts I have said sufficient, but before passing to the other branch I should like to add here, in justice to "the trade," that one of those who worked this year in the hop-gardens was a brewer, who came down with his wife to give a helping hand. They returned home visibly worn out by their untiring exertions in the most difficult district of the Mission. We owe him —I suppose I must not mention names—a further debt of gratitude for his influence among the hop-growers. To remind a man, when you are asking permission to visit his pickers, that you purchased fifty pockets at a time of his hops two years ago is to obtain your request. The moral influence, too, of such apostolic zeal on the part of a Catholic brewer cannot easily be overestimated.

"Ladies of the Mass."

The other branch of the laity is composed of hospital nurses and "Ladies of the Mass," as the hop-

pickers call them. They are distributed under three priests over three centres and three sub-centres, in each of which the conditions are different, and the work varies accordingly. Where there is a nurse, the Mission tent becomes a hospital tent, open, of course, to both Catholics and non-Catholics. In Wateringbury, where there is an excellent cottage hospital with the authorities of which we are on very friendly terms, there is no need for a Catholic hospital tent, and the Wateringbury Ladies of the Mass can expend their energies in other directions. At Paddock Wood milk was sold in the evenings at the tent, and elsewhere conveniences for reading and letter-writing were established. As a rule the ladies do not visit the gardens, but when cases are reported of women or girls needing help they visit them outside their huts or arrange to meet them at the Mission tent. In connection with this part of the Mission we have established a St. Clare's fund for the protection of girls in difficult home surroundings—a work which we hope will be considerably developed as time goes on. When the pickers come from the gardens after their work there is always some one at the tent ready to see them, and at Wateringbury the pleasantest part of the day was the evening promenade by the main shops and public-houses, gossipping with our friends. Our rule is not to give material assistance, but in cases of real distress we issue tickets which will be honoured to the extent of 1d. or 2d. at a friendly grocer's, or sometimes even at the Anglican coffee-stall. A similar rule applies to the distribution of clothes. At first we found it difficult to harden our hearts against excessive generosity, but it was very gratifying to discover, when once our minds had been made up to it, how easy it is to make friends with the poor when you have only goodwill to give them.

This year we suffered very greatly from the exceptional shortness of the season. We were just beginning to know the Catholics, and they were just beginning to know us, when the time came for their departure. It so happened at Wateringbury that in the two farms which were the last to break up a very large proportion of the pickers were Catholics, and we were able to realize the value of the extra few days among them. Next year we shall start with the advantage we have gained this, for we shall renew old acquaintances and strengthen existing friendships instead of building from the beginning and excavating for foundations.

The Value of Entertainments.

We have profited, too, by experience. At our first meeting this year the workers were divided into two hostile camps on the question of concerts and entertainments at the Wateringbury tent. One side pleaded that secular songs and the profane magic lantern had nothing to do with the conversion of sinners, and might very well be left to the parish rooms of the vicar; the other side, displaying, as it proved, a truer insight into the Franciscan spirit, argued for evening amusements on the ground that they would provide further opportunities for making friends with the people. They were justified by the event. The concerts proved immensely successful as soon as we realized that the men and the children should be allowed to come forward and sing their own songs; while the magic lantern was a complete triumph for the Catholic religion over the public-house, and gave real prestige to Holy Mother Church in the eyes of the world. The immediate and most important result of our efforts was that we obtained the affection of all the

Catholic children. I was "hail fellow well met" with every boy in the place, though personally I spent most of my time amicably chatting with the men at the back, both Catholic and Protestant; and the Lady of the Mass who with infinite courage had made herself responsible for these entertainments, had only to show herself on the road within half a mile of an encampment to have all the children running down to greet her.

We then realized, what perhaps in our zeal for the conversion of sinners we had been inclined to overlook, that the welfare of boys and girls is not our least important duty. The hop-picking season gives us an opportunity of making friends with them in a manner that would be impossible in London, and though for the most part they stand in less need of spiritual ministrations than their elders, we must yet have regard for the future. For the same pickers come down to the same fields year after year, and the girls whom we have just met in the bloom of their innocence will soon be passing into that difficult stage of early womanhood when friendly help is most urgently needed. If they grow accustomed in childhood to pleasant intercourse with the Ladies of the Mass during their stay in Kent, they will find when they grow older that the presence of the same Catholic friends working in a Catholic organization will be a source of strength against the very great temptations to which unhappily they are exposed in the hop-fields.

The concerts and entertainments had this further direct effect, that the children were easily brought together on a Sunday afternoon to informal Catechism classes—without Catechism—held by the Ladies of the Mass and the two Sisters of Mercy who were helping the Mission. These Sunday classes chiefly concern the girls and the smaller boys.

The Boy Problem.

The problem of bigger boys is more difficult, and deserves, I think, our most careful attention; for the problem is not what to do with them in Kent, but how to prevent them from drifting into the ranks of casual labour when they leave school. It is not enough to impress upon them, what most of them are keen and intelligent enough to know already, that to learn a trade and get definite and permanent employment is the surest road to happiness, for they have not the power so much as to take the first step towards this desirable end. Neither can we of the Mission do very much to assist them. We ourselves are not employers of labour, nor have we such influence with the Government as to draft every boy we meet into the Navy or the Post Office. But something must be done, and done quickly, by the Catholic body in England for these its poorest and most deserving members. The President of the Board of Trade is not omnipotent, and it is our duty as Englishmen, as it is wholly consonant with the best English tradition, to establish some sort of association ourselves which shall have for its object to secure that every Catholic boy in the kingdom shall be enabled to learn a trade. For all I know some such organization may already exist, and if that is so it will serve to point the moral of what I would say next.

Indignant passengers on the South Eastern Railway describe the hop-pickers as the scum of the East End. The description is a base calumny, but it contains this much of truth—that many of them have touched the lowest ebb of fortune, spiritual and material. For such as these the Mission single-handed can do nothing. If any good is to come of our work in the hop-fields we must be put into touch with every

kind of social work in London. We do indeed send to every parish priest our list of lapsed or negligent Catholics, and of those whom we think to be in dangerous surroundings. But London priests are far too grossly overworked for us to expect or even to ask that they should add to their present burdens ; we can apply to lay associations, and if existing institutions are by force of circumstance incompetent to give the aid we require, other associations must be created, for the welfare of our people is at stake. But first let us have a complete list of those which already exist. The Catholic Mission to Hop-pickers will not stand alone in welcoming such a publication, though for them the need is most urgent.

The Actual Work.

Of the actual work in Kent there is, however, much more to say—more, in fact, than can be well compressed within the limits of a short paper. I have mentioned the Sisters—two Sisters of Mercy from the convent at Brighton—but I have not described their work ; indeed, I despair of being able to convey more than the faintest idea of what they do. The other workers take their orders from the priest, and have definite duties to perform each day. The duty of the nuns is, as far as possible, to be ubiquitous, and their only act of obedience to indicate the region they will be in at a particular hour in order that the scouts may go elsewhere. Others are tired and need rest, and find the Monday holiday essential for health. The Sisters are never tired, and to all appearance never rest. They visit all the Catholics in three-fourths of the whole area covered by the Mission. They are found on the hottest days in the most distant fields, whither the scout on his bicycle has hardly the energy to pene-

trate. They have never been seen to hurry, and yet no one ever knew them to be late. They relieve the doctor by carrying his medicines through the gardens or to the huts. They distribute clothing when and where it is required, visit all the sick cases, bring people to Mass on Sunday, and catechize the children in the afternoon. Indeed, it is only on Sunday that one realizes that they share the limitations of common humanity. On that day alone it would seem that they cannot reinforce the congregation in two places at once for the ten o'clock Mass. And all this is but the outward show; for their real work I can only refer you to the hop-pickers themselves. The scout may take their name and address, and tell them when and where Mass will be, but the sight of the Sisters in the hop-gardens brings more to their duties than would all the efforts of a dozen laymen.

The Duty of the Priest.

Finally we come to the duty of the priest. Briefly it may be said that it is his duty to bear the weight of all the work done in his district. The laity enable him to do more work than he could without them, but they cannot relieve him of work: they can only create work for him to do, and, as is always the case, a number of laymen contribute to impose the work upon a single priest. It is good to be a scout in order to get rid of the erroneous opinion that the labours of priests are not more arduous than those of other professional men. They certainly are in the case of the Franciscans who serve the Mission to Kentish hop-pickers. For the priest must personally visit all the gardens. He is introduced by his scout to the Catholics, especially the lapsed ones, and there, sitting on the edge of the bin or resting against the hop poles, he carries the

mercy of God to the bewildered souls of the London poor. I fear that the Franciscan beard is something of a stumbling-block to the ignorant, who believe that all priests are clean-shaven, and that no one is a Catholic who is not Irish. We hope to root out both these prejudices as time goes on, especially the latter, which is sometimes malignant. The sight of a bearded priest saying Mass and preaching on our Lady's Purity, with a packing-case for a pulpit, will soon familiarize the people with the successors of St. Francis. The Irish problem is more difficult, but I must not stop to discuss it now. But it is not enough to visit a garden once, even if it were possible to cover it at a stretch. The priest cannot be seen too often among the pickers, whether during their work or at their huts or in the streets. Catholics do not touch their hats and call their priests Father for nothing. He stands too near the altar of God for his word or his look to be wholly disregarded. His presence in the hop districts is in itself a moderating influence. One of the most gratifying features of the Mission this year was the welcome we received from several growers or their agents, who had witnessed the good effect among the pickers of what had been done in 1905.

Reforms Needed.

Much remains to be done, and there are many reforms which we would set ourselves to bring about if our very existence were not so dependent on the goodwill of others. One particularly can be mentioned —for it is typical of the way in which temptations are gratuitously presented to the poor through the negligence of the proper authorities—and that is the arrangements for sending the pickers home to London by train. An immense crowd of more than one

thousand people are told to be near the station yard between one and two o'clock. Outside are two large and flourishing public-houses, the interval between them being filled with hawkers' tables set with all kinds of sweets and provisions. There is one tiny Church Army coffee-stall inside the yard. Every one has had his pockets full of money since ten or eleven in the morning. After this payment no one is allowed to stay in the encampments, and all the huts are closed, so that the streets of the town are the only possible resort. The custom of mutual treating, very prevalent on such an occasion, is a serious temptation even to the most sober. The first train does not appear in the station till after five, and it is seven o'clock before the last batch of pickers has departed. Under the circumstances sobriety is practically impossible. We found the most respectable, even of our own people, somewhat the worse for liquor after waiting about outside these two great public-houses for three or four hours of a cold and rainy afternoon. But even in this truly pitiable scene the presence of a priest was not wholly vain, and more than one bottle of beer was intercepted between the public-house and the original purchaser. On one occasion, however, when nearly all the pickers leaving were Catholics, the priest could boast that there was not a single case of disorderly conduct on the platform, and no serious drunkenness at all.

We have another grievance, nearer home, which should be mentioned here. It has become the custom in certain London parishes for the priest to organize a Sunday excursion to the hop-fields. The hop-pickers go to the station to meet their friends, as indeed they must, but it either happens that the train arrives somewhere about Mass time, or else that the friends, whom we credit with having been to church in London, have

no wish to spend the best part of the morning hearing another Mass at the Mission tent. Consequently the hop-pickers who have not fulfilled their Sunday obligations plead the duty of hospitality as an excuse for missing Mass, and the work of the Mission is seriously handicapped. It does not seem a very great thing to ask those parish priests who are responsible for these excursions to impress upon their people that to keep others from going to Mass is no less sinful than missing Mass one's self. Perhaps by next year better arrangements will have been made.

Mass and the Sacraments.

The Mission priest has the further duty of saying Mass and administering the Sacraments. This is the romantic side of his labours, as to the outer world it is the most impressive. Low Mass in church has become such an habitual affair with most of us that we are inclined to miss the more subtle and elaborate details of the rite. It is only when he finds himself responsible for making *all* the necessary preparations for Mass that the ignorant layman begins to realize the wealth of detail involved in this apparently simple service ; and, on the other hand, that the altar should be set in a common and secular tent, without any adventitious ornament or any of the ordinary paraphernalia of a church, cannot but inspire all those who are present with a special sense of the nearness of God to man in the Holy Sacrifice. That one person was so inspired who had never known the Catholic Faith before, and who had come to the hop-fields as a member of a Protestant Mission, is a wonderful testimony to the value of the work which the Franciscan Fathers have set themselves to do.

I have already referred to the pulpit. In the hop-fields

the congregation join in the sermon. "Yes, Father," "No, Father," "We will, Father," "Very wrong indeed, Father," represent the extent of the lay contribution to the preacher's eloquence. How far such interruptions added lustre to his words it would hardly be proper for me to say. I hope I shall not forget myself when next I go to the Franciscan Church at Peckham or at Crawley.

After Mass unbaptized children are brought for baptism, and I need not say that the full rite is used. It is a little disconcerting for the would-be godfather to be unceremoniously ejected from that office because he has not been to his Easter duties for five years. But that was what happened once, and the prodigal parent thought well to put himself in as good a position as his godson by coming to confession. Sick calls, always significant of the true dignity of a priest, have a special solemnity in the hop-fields ; but to meet a dying woman being carried to the nearest Union in a cart—to make the driver stop at the first quiet corner in order that the priest may climb up on to the box and hear her confession while every one else stands well away—then to find that the woman is not a Catholic, but that her husband is, and that she has often been to Mass and wishes to be baptized—for the scout to be sent at once to the nearest house for a glass of water, and then to hold the horse's head at the critical moment—and all this in the public highway at noon—is such an illustration of the Sacraments as is not often seen in this unspiritual age. The priest lays his bicycle down by the roadside, puts on his stole, and behold ! all the ministrations of the Catholic Church are there in his hands.

There is much else I should like to describe, if only to share with those who have not been able to take

part in the Mission the pleasant experiences of those who have. But there is only time for the final duty of expressing our needs and seeking assistance. Next year we must both extend the area covered by the Mission and increase the lay staff on the districts served this year. In other words, scouts are wanted. All that is required to be a scout is good health, a bicycle, and either a puncture-outfit or a sufficient purse. The time occupied is, roughly, four weeks. The work is eminently pleasant, and not the less so for being sometimes arduous. The expenses are small and can, if necessary, be reduced to a minimum. There is a movement on foot for bicycle repair expenses to be paid out of the Mission fund. More ladies will no doubt also be required, but in this matter recruiting is so delicate an affair that I had better leave it to the other powers to act in the matter as they think fit.

In conclusion, I trust that this Mission will never fail in its object through lack of that which is essential to it—lay assistance in London as well as in Kent. For all further particulars I beg to refer you to Father Cuthbert, O.S.F.C., The Friary, Crawley, Sussex.

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RETREATS FOR WORKERS [1]

By CHARLES PLATER, S.J.

A REMARKABLE change has been passing over European society of recent years. With its main characteristics we are all familiar, though it is to be feared that many of us overlook its significance. We are witnessing a movement which is as important to the Church as was the growth of feudalism or the Protestant Reformation. The Church which in a single century Christianized a pagan Roman empire, is now called to a conquest no less vast. The work is one in which every Catholic must take part. We have to understand and to face a new situation.

What has happened? Briefly, the democratic spirit has swept over Europe. The development of industry, the giant growth of the industrial centres, the increased facilities of communication, the concentration of capital, the severance of the classes—these and the like causes have produced a political, social, and economic revolution.

With the situation thus created we are here concerned only so far as it affects the attitude of the new democracy towards Christianity. And the first thing to

[1] A paper read at the Catholic Conference at Brighton, 1906.

notice about it is, that it has tended to make the workman inaccessible to Christian influences. This results in part from the actual conditions of life of the working classes ; they are simply severed, from force of circumstances, from those opportunities of contact with the Church which were offered to the workmen under the old system. In the Middle Ages the wealthy were taught to believe that they held their wealth in trust for the community : the relations between employer and employed were of a personal nature, and did not rest, as at present, upon a mere cash basis. The worker felt himself to be an integral part of the social organism, and saw that his interests were bound up with those of his master. But in these days economic liberalism has driven a great wedge between capital and labour. The workman is thrown back upon himself, and lives his life apart. He is simply out of touch with all save his own class. He finds himself, in the great industrial centres, thrown together with enormous numbers of those in a position precisely similar to his own. They form a class apart, and have their own standards and estimates of things. If they want a religious atmosphere they have to create it for themselves. It is not ready made for them as it was in the old mediæval parish. Hence it is that the clergy and the educated laity have been called upon with such insistence by the late Pontiff to "go to the people"—implying that the conditions of modern society make it difficult, and even impossible, for the masses of the people to come to them.

Furthermore, the working classes are becoming inaccessible to Christian influences, not merely by reason of the actual conditions of their labour, but also on account of certain tendencies of mind which are coming to characterize them as a body.

Three Characteristic Tendencies.

In the first place, they are, not unnaturally, profoundly interested in the efforts that are being made to secure for them improved material conditions of life. They feel acutely the injustice which too often prevails in the modern system, and they listen to those whom they believe to be really working for their benefit. Now in Germany and Belgium, where the clergy have taken to social work in obedience to the exhortations of the Holy See, the working classes have responded by giving the clergy their attention and their confidence. In England the working man is by no means convinced that the Churches are really anxious to secure him just treatment. "The labourer of to-day," writes Mr. Head, "does not look for real help to the Anglican Church. The labour leader, the political leader, the free-thinker will command his attention, for he believes that with them lies the power to do him present good." There seems to be a consensus of opinion among those who know the English workman (I am thinking primarily of the non-Catholic working man) that, although he has no quarrel with Christianity itself, he looks upon the existing forms of religion as mere buttresses of an antiquated social order, or methods for providing a soothing Sunday occupation for the wealthier classes. It is often found, however, that the Catholic Church is exempted from this criticism, and regarded as being in reality the Church of the poor. Yet we have grave reason to fear that, owing to this class isolation of which we have spoken, the adverse judgement which is passed by the working man upon other denominations may come to be extended to the Catholic Church as well.

A second feature which is apt to render the working

classes particularly insensible to religious influences is one which we have reason to believe is specially prevalent in this country. I mean the increasing passion for pleasure, which, according to so many acute observers, applies to every class alike, and constitutes a grave peril to the nation. Mr. Shadwell, in his striking book on "Industrial Efficiency," is but one of many who have sounded the warning. We must bear in mind, then, that no remedy can be effective which does not do something to check this alarming one-sidedness of the national character.

And, thirdly, we have to reckon with another circumstance which keeps the working classes aloof from Christianity. Materialistic and secularist teaching in the form of newspapers, pamphlets, cheap books, and lectures, is being pumped over the working classes to an extent that is appalling to contemplate. This matter has been dealt with elsewhere, and it is sufficient to mention it here.

An Imperative Need.

What, then, is to be done in face of this great gulf which would appear to separate the working classes from all forms of Christian influence? Two conclusions would appear to emerge at once. In the first place, we must, clergy and laity alike, endeavour to draw the severed classes together in accordance with the principles of the Gospel—striving to diffuse, not charity merely, but social justice. We must show the working classes that we care about their temporal miseries, and not merely exhort them to acquiesce in injustice here while hoping for a supernatural recompense hereafter. *Pietas ad omnia utilis est.* "Christianity," says Dr. Barry, "is not a thing which you can put into commission or get done by contract. If I am asked how it

is to be brought to the masses, I reply, 'Show them how they can be saved by it, and enabled to live a pure and human life in this world; then perhaps they will believe.'"

In the second place, we must reach the workman through the workman. We must raise up an *élite* among their own body who will impress upon their fellows the principles of the Gospel, and strive towards social amelioration on the lines laid down in the great encyclicals of Leo XIII. This is not impossible. It has been done with signal success in Germany. It might be done in England.

If, then, we are to impress the principles of the Gospel upon the working classes, we must approach them in a spirit of sympathetic interest for their social welfare; we must show ourselves alive to the inequalities from which they suffer, and we must throw our personal influence into the work of ameliorating their condition. Yet we have to remember that social work divorced from religion cannot attain even its own limited end; far less can it secure those deeper human needs of which the workman himself is dimly conscious. Outside the Catholic body especially, we have seen one organization succumb after another precisely because no attempt was made to rest the social work upon a religious basis: all the efforts were concentrated in keeping up the efficiency of the football club or the smartness of the brigade or the finances of the benefit society.

Possessing as we do a definite and certain religious position, we Catholics have no excuse for falling into a similar mistake. We have an enormous advantage in this matter, for we are able to supply just that foundation upon which all successful social work must be based.

Many thoughtful non-Catholics, who are familiar with the needs and aspirations of the working classes, have seen that their fundamental mark is spiritual rather than material poverty; such social workers are often seen groping in a somewhat pathetic manner for a method of supplying what is the greatest need of all. Thus Mr. Masterman writes as follows :—

"A background to life,—some common bond uniting, despite the discordance of competitive struggle,—some worthy object of enthusiasm or devotion behind the aimless passage of the years,—some spiritual force or ideal elevated over the shabby scene of temporary failure,—this is the great imperative need of the masses in our great cities to-day. With this, the mere discomforts incidental to changing conditions of life and the specific remediable social evils can be contemplated with equanimity : without it, the drifting through time of the interminable multitude of the unimportant becomes a mere nightmare vision of a striving signifying nothing : doing and undoing without end ! No material comfort, increased intellectual alertness, or wider capacity of attainment will occupy the place of this one fundamental need. The only test of progress which is to be anything but a mere animal rejoicing over mere animal pleasure is the development and spread of some spiritual ideal which will raise into an atmosphere of effort and distinction the life of the ordinary man" (*The Heart of the Empire*, p. 30).

So much of introduction seemed necessary before the value of the work which we are about to describe could be fully appreciated. It is a work which, at first sight, might seem scarcely to merit the name of a social work at all; yet its social effects have been so marked and far-reaching as to challenge the attention and enlist the practical co-operation of many social workers who have

little sympathy in revealed religion. It begins by giving just that background to life for which the working classes are groping; and it ends by creating over a wide area an increased endeavour to improve the material conditions of life of the poor and distressed. It is no ordinary parochial work which we are about to describe: no mere devotional practice for the edification of the masses: it is the elevating into a spiritualized organization of the shapeless, hopeless, toiling mass of humanity; it is the transformation, under seemingly desperate circumstances and in an incredibly short space of time, of thousands of indifferent, disaffected, or even irreligious workmen into veritable apostles—centres of light and strength to their fellows.

Of course, the notion of spiritual retreats for workmen is no new one in the Church. Sanctioned by the Holy See and the Episcopate, they have already played a great part in the sanctification of Catholics, and many districts abroad owe to them their present sturdy faith. But in view of their recent extension and development, necessitated by the growing importance and isolation of the workman, a new chapter in their history may be said to have commenced.

Retreats in Belgium.

There are now in Belgium six houses specially devoted to retreats for working men. The first of these was opened at Fayt-Manage in 1891. Three years later a similar institution started at Ghent. Arlon followed in 1896, Lierre in 1899, Liège in 1901, and finally Alken (in Limburg) was added in 1905. Besides these, there are similar houses of retreat for women workers.

So within the last fifteen years six centres have been created. Some of the effects of the work will be described hereafter. For the present let us merely

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give a few figures to show the extent to which it has been taken up.

At the first foundation, that of Fayt-Manage, eighteen retreats were given in the first five months to 215 men. In 1898 there were thirty-three retreats to 902 men ; in 1901 forty-five retreats to 1,712 men ; in 1904 fifty-two retreats to 3,312 men. Since the foundation over five hundred retreats have been given to more than 20,000 men, by far the greater number of whom were working men.

At Lierre the numbers are no less astonishing. In the last four years (1902–1905) we have 227 retreats to 9,470 men. At Ghent during the same time 157 retreats to 5,110 men. At Liège the first eighteen months witnessed 51 retreats to 1,800 men. Last year alone some ten thousand men made a three days' retreat in one or other of the various houses. We say nothing of the special houses of retreat for women, which are outside the scope of this paper.

Consider what these figures mean. Ten thousand men in one year have come to spend three days in seclusion, prayer, and earnest thought. They have made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. They have put aside their business for that time in order to think of God, of their own souls, of the example of Christ, of the meaning and dignity of their lives, of their duties as of their privileges.

The Church has been revealed to them as the Divine foundation, answering all the needs of the human heart, binding men together in a great communion, giving worth to the humblest life and meaning to the most trivial action. In the vast majority of cases they have gone out from their retreat changed men—tranquillized, strong, hopeful, humble, and anxious to spread among their fellows the benefits they have received. They

return to their workshops and their factories more reliable workmen, more conscientious, more painstaking, so that even their non-Catholic employers, who regard the work only on its social side, are found to give it their substantial support, and even to make the experiment themselves, to the great advantage of their employees. The men return to their parishes not merely better and more devout Catholics, but valuable auxiliaries to their pastors: the thorny question of lay co-operation solves itself to the satisfaction of all, and the community is welded together with the happiest results.

Some Commendations.

Commendation of the work has showered in from all quarters. The late Pontiff took a peculiar interest in the work and gave it much encouragement. He wrote, for example, on February 8, 1900:—

"There is no doubt that these retreats, penetrated with meditation upon the celestial truths, procure not only the sanctification of individuals, but the general utility of society. . . . We have learned with the most lively joy of the creation of the new work, and of its fruits, already so abundant. . . . We desire to see this work, so happily begun in France and Belgium, spread with equal success among other nations."

We surely require no excuse, after these words of Leo XIII, for referring to these retreats as "a great social work" and for advocating their introduction in our midst.

The present Holy Father has already given ample proofs of his great interest in the work, and lost no opportunity of furthering it. His commendations of it fill a pamphlet. The bishops of Belgium have welcomed the work with a litany of praise, entitling it

the "Means, *par excellence*, of establishing souls in the practice of good works"; "An institution which satisfies the most ardent wish, the *desiderio desideravi* of the pastor"; "A solitude from which men go forth positively transformed"; "A work which is fundamental and perhaps unique"; "A work which deservedly occupies the first place among social works"; "The popular remedy for all our ills"; and much more to the same effect. These retreats, as the Bishop of Tournai says, provide for the great need of parochial life to-day, namely, the creation of a group of profoundly pious and devoted laymen to help the clergy in their laborious ministry; above all, of devoted Catholic workmen to influence the solid and unheeding mass of their fellows. The workman must be reached by the workman.

The Belgian clergy bear similar testimony, and from all sides come accounts of the wonderful results produced by the new work. Churches hitherto deserted by the male portion of the population are now crowded. Sodalities flourish and multiply. The whole organism becomes invigorated; for the individual members have been sanctified. This is a point that we often lose sight of in our schemes for social reform—forgetting that the best way to improve society is by creating a nucleus of healthy members thereof. Vigorous Catholic action which is to be effective can best be secured by means which at first sight seem to point to an inaction and quietness which lets God's enemies triumph unchecked. But the truth is that while a retreat involves solitude it by no means connotes inaction. It is a setting free of the higher activities, which alone can direct effectual labour in the best of good causes. It is a gathering and storing of energy, a provisioning for the campaign; and if it is spent in silence, the silence

is one wherein may be heard the still small voice which alone can tell man all that it is well for him to know.

Few things are more striking about these Belgian retreats than the way those who have made them spare no pains to induce their fellow-workers to do the like. They band themselves into committees for the purpose of spreading the work. Their dominant desire is to put before their comrades of the workshop or the factory the need of a "background to life" which will make them better citizens as well as better Christians. It often happens that one man out of a parish comes up to make a retreat, and reappears the next year bringing a dozen of his companions. The workman is reached by the workman.

Sketch of a Retreat.

It may not be uninteresting to sketch briefly the conditions under which these retreats are given and the atmosphere which pervades them. As an example we may take one of the more recent houses, built especially for the purpose—that of Xhovémont, near Liège.

The house stands on a high hill overlooking the city, from which it is easily accessible by the tramway—a most important point in institutions of this kind. It is a spacious and airy building, containing about fifty bedrooms for those who are making the retreats, a large recreation-room, a devotional chapel, a dining hall, and rooms reserved for the small staff of Jesuit Fathers who conduct the retreats. Along the front of the house runs a glass-covered terrace, where the men can walk in all weathers.

Far below us is Liège and the winding Meuse, not altogether unlovely with its forests of spires and back-

ground of hills. But there is a grim, strenuous look about it too, and from over the hills to the right come the dull clouds of smoke from the works at Seraing—in striking contrast to the freshness of our present surroundings. This is the first great advantage of such a house—the men get away for three days from their daily routine of city work with its sordid environment. It is a new experience for them; at every turn they find evidence that they are face to face with a new world of ideas. The silence, the constant round of devotional exercises, the prayer in common, the quiet thought in their own rooms, the devotional reading during their meals, the presence of holy pictures and images, all give emphasis to the great truths put before their minds three or four times a day in the meditations. These meditations follow the familiar method of St. Ignatius. The soul is withdrawn from its distracting surroundings and conventional estimates; it considers the great purpose of human life, which is the glory of God by the manifestation of His excellence in man; it considers its own duties in view of that purpose; it reflects how, in the past, it has thwarted that purpose by sin and irregularity; it looks upon Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, enabling man to fulfil that purpose aright. All these considerations are put before the men three or four times a day by an experienced priest, and they afterwards retire to their rooms to reflect upon them. Confession on the second day and Holy Communion on the third bring cleansing and strength. And finally the soul comes to see how the love of God is the force which raises man above himself, ennobles his life, and secures his eternal happiness. Every afternoon there is an instruction adapted to the special needs of the men—dealing with their practical duties, their responsibilities, the dangers

of Socialism, the need of Catholic social organization and the like.

Results.

Only those who have witnessed the retreats can have any idea of the wonderful miracles of grace which they normally effect. The men—plain workmen for the most part—enter on the retreat with some bewilderment and even apprehension. Some are merely awkward, others almost defiant. Ringleaders of infidelity have been known to come out of curiosity, the only condition required of them being that they should keep the rules of the house. But on the second day a change is seen on the faces of all. They are very much in earnest—hopeful and courageous, and for the most part as simple and docile as children. It is touching to hear their expressions of gratitude for the benefits which they have received from their retreat, which all are sorry to quit at the end of three days. "J'y reviendrai," says each one, as he descends the hill, and starts his new life amid his old surroundings.

Here are some expressions which have actually fallen from the lips of workmen within the last year. We translate them literally :—

"If people only knew what a retreat is, there is no one who would refuse to make one."

"I would not exchange for a fortune the treasure I have here received."

"The greatest happiness I could procure for my son, my father, or my friend, would be to get him to make a retreat also."

The following was found on the table in one of the rooms after a batch of exercitants had just left :—

"Whoever you are who have come here in retreat to meditate in silence and recollection on your last end

and the salvation of your soul, remember this. Here, at this table before that crucifix on the wall, a man weighed down with iniquities has been before you, and has wept tears of repentance. Believe this, he has never found happiness, consolation, and pity save in the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of His Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Other such testimonies might be multiplied indefinitely.

This intense spiritual experience is no vague sentimentalism or "revivalism." It is the deliberate and reasonable adoption of a new attitude with regard to life. Moreover, its effects are permanent, and solid as well as intense ; and this leads us to what is an essential feature of the system.

Subsequent Organization.

A new view of life, a new outlook upon the world, a new equipment of purposes and resolutions and habits —these are not to be gained once and for all even at the price of a three days' retreat. It is obvious that they must be sustained by careful organization and reinforced by frequent reminder. Accordingly we find in Belgium that those who have made retreats are organized in their various parishes into bodies for the purposes of Holy Communion, consultation, encouragement, and the further propagation of the work. Monthly recollections are held, and one may see six or seven hundred men trooping to Holy Communion in procession through the streets with bands and banners—and this in districts where, a few years ago, a workman would have been ashamed to confess that he was a Catholic.

This, indeed, is one of the most striking effects of these retreats, the spirit of zeal which they infuse into the men. They return to their homes and their work-

shops determined to influence others for good. They convince their fellow-workmen, as no priest could convince them, that practical Catholicism holds the answers to all the problems that have so perplexed them. They persuade others to follow their example and make a similar retreat. The gain to domestic life is most apparent. It often happens that a workman's good wife will come to the Fathers in charge of the retreats, begging them to take her husband and give him a retreat, for he is a drunkard or a spendthrift. If the lady is endowed with sufficient muscular strength, she will sometimes solve the difficulty by bringing her lord and master an unwilling captive to the house.

Such, in brief, is the work which is transforming Belgium. It has met with difficulties, as all good works do, but it has triumphed over them, and all who have witnessed it must acknowledge that the special blessing of God is upon it. It is a striking renewal, in these dark days, of the events of Pentecost.

It must not be supposed that these retreats are exclusively intended for workmen, though it is true that workmen form by far the larger proportion of those who attend them. Business men, professional men, and men of leisure also make retreats in large numbers, generally among those of their own class, but not infrequently with the workmen. The present writer has seen a distinguished member of the Belgian Senate sitting among the workmen, and listening to the points of meditation. Sometimes retreats are given to a special class of men. At Tronchiennes there is a special wing built for retreats given to clergy and gentlemen. Twice a year over a hundred university students come and make a retreat in common. At Arlon there are special retreats for teachers. Two bishops at least make their annual retreat there.

The Question of Finance.

The practical question will at once occur, "How are these houses maintained?" The expense is, of course, enormous. It is calculated that the cost of keeping them up works out to about ten shillings for each man making a retreat. Hence a sum of several thousand pounds a year is required for keeping up the work in Belgium. How is this obtained? This difficulty might well have deterred the most sanguine. But several considerations go to diminish its force.

In the first place, a considerable amount is provided by the men themselves. This arrangement is encouraged, as tending to promote their self-respect and independence, and to give them an increased appreciation of the retreats. But it is very often waived, for the men are frequently unable to raise the required sum. Further, the marked benefits which they derive from their stay in these houses often prompt the men to contribute towards the expenses of a needy comrade.

Again, as has been said, employers of labour, even though not Catholics, are generally ready to give substantial support to the work. Besides giving the men a holiday, they frequently pay them their wages during their absence, and sometimes add their travelling expenses. But the bulk of the funds is provided by committees of laymen in each town. These obtain from the Catholic body regular subscriptions which enable the work to be carried on. The donation of a certain sum, called a "foundation," provides interest with which a retreat can be given to one man every year. And the work is so triumphantly successful that all are glad to help it. The social value of the retreats makes an irresistible appeal to all thinking men.

The selection of candidates for the retreats is at first a matter of extreme importance. When once the work is in full swing, and a tradition has been formed, and an atmosphere created, almost any one may be admitted provided that he agree to keep the regulations and avoid disturbing the others. In this way many come from curiosity, and end by becoming as fervent as their fellows. One may see the hardened cynic or confirmed atheist positively melting under the treatment! But in the earlier stages it is important that only picked men, known already for their good Catholic spirit, should be admitted. These are carefully chosen by the parish priest from the existing guilds or confraternities. They only number a very few, perhaps one or two from each district, and must already have given proof of their piety and devotedness. They are, moreover, men of some position and influence. The scope and object of the retreats are carefully explained to them, and they are invited to make the experiment. Afterwards these pioneers form committees in their various localities for the purpose of bringing the work before the notice of suitable workmen. And so the numbers grow automatically. Thus, at Ghent, the committee consists of twenty members, half of them converted socialists. These men can approach their fellows without provoking the suspicion and distrust which a priest would too often inspire.

Social Value of the Retreats.

Stress has been laid throughout this paper on the social value of these retreats, since this is an aspect of them which is frequently overlooked. Their spiritual value will at once be recognized by all Catholics. But in view of our increasing realization of the value of social work, and of our desire to bring under Catholic

influences the many devoted non-Catholics who spend themselves on such work in this country, we may well emphasize an aspect of these retreats which has been singled out for special commendation by many of the bishops.

What, then, has been the social effect of these retreats? It has been, in a word, the substitution of a higher ideal for a lower. The men have been groping towards improved social conditions. They are now brought to see that such must mainly be effected by the moralization of society, and in the first place of themselves. Hitherto their higher faculties have been dulled by the roar and unrest, and uninspired sameness of their lives. Simple pleasures and spiritual emotions could not reach them. They craved for lurid and volcanic excitements. They sought, as we all seek, "a background to life," and small blame to them if, in the absence of Catholic influences, they adopted the wild programme of their socialist leaders, with all its materialistic implications. The result was a bitterness of soul and desolation of spirit which was particularly unsusceptible to religious influences. For we must remember that Continental socialism is a very different thing from some of the English varieties with which we are familiar. It is markedly anti-Christian in its tendencies, and by no means limits its endeavours to the advocating of an economic programme.

Now these retreats have sensibly diminished the power of this anti-Christian socialism in Belgium. At Liège in particular the Catholic party has gained ground to a notable extent within the last few years. And surely the choice of weapons has been a wise one. It is far better to combat false social theories by substituting true ones, embodied in concrete form, than by publishing a wilderness of argumentative text-books

and destructive criticisms. Now these retreats do emphatically result in increased social energy and efficiency. They lead to the creation of numerous social institutions of great value. The men who have made them are keen to benefit their fellows temporally as well as spiritually. Catholics are sometimes accused of preaching contentment to the poor, instead of trying to improve their condition. These retreats, at any rate, cannot be suspected of being a capitalistic device to perpetuate iniquitous social conditions. They result, to an eminent degree, in an increased sense of justice and Christian charity in the community.

Retreats or Missions?

"But," it may be asked, "cannot the same results be secured by less expensive and less complicated methods? Why not substitute ordinary 'missions' for these secluded and elaborate retreats?"

No doubt missions have been and are a great power for good. But their objects and their effects differ from those of retreats. This fact has been generally admitted by the high episcopal and other authorities who have studied the working of both. The mission is addressed to masses of men: the retreat to a select few. The mission is designed to convert: the retreat to form an apostolate. The mission makes men Christians: the retreat, standard-bearers of the Christian faith. The mission leads them to the Church: the retreat introduces them into the sanctuary.

Again, the actual spiritual revolution produced in a soul by a mission is not likely to be so thorough, so profound, or so lasting as that effected by a retreat. The complete change of surroundings for three days, the absence of the usual distractions, the close and systematic presentation of the subjects for meditation—

all these tend to encourage a complete break with the old life, and the acceptance of a new and lofty ideal. The men themselves are amazed at the change which has come over them. "Whereas I was blind, now I see," is the general sentiment. They come out, as it were, into a new world, full of hopes and possibilities.

Retreats Universally Needed.

We have spoken only of Belgium, and chiefly of the part played in the retreats by workmen. We must not forget, however, that similar retreats are provided for all classes of society, including the employers of labour themselves. This fact adds much to their efficacy on the social side. Again, it would have been interesting, had time allowed us, to study the way in which these retreats have been started in other countries (as, for instance, Germany) under conditions more closely resembling our own. In every case the same wonderful results have followed. Modifications had to be introduced. Special difficulties were to be encountered. But the work has in every case prospered, and justified the opinion of Pope Leo XIII that these retreats are exactly what is wanted, not only in Belgium, but elsewhere. They are, in fact, a very effectual method of carrying out the exhortation of our present Pontiff that we should "renew all things in Christ."

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STUDY-CLUBS FOR WORKING-MEN

By C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

Together with the demand for Catholic anti-Rationalist and anti-Socialistic literature, and the supply which is beginning to respond to that demand, has grown up a conviction that sheer literature is inadequate to cope with the situation, and must be in some sense helped by the living voice.

Apart from the difficulty of knowing *what* to read—for certainly Catholic literature does not as yet even roughly cover the whole field of social and apologetic inquiry, and among the profusion of non-Catholic works discrimination is obviously necessary—it stands to reason that even when we have selected our book, it will often happen that only a small part of it may be useful to our purpose or (from technical or educational or other reasons) within our comprehension ; and in this case loss of time and discouragement will be avoided if there be at hand an expert to whom we can expose our wants and who can furnish us with the reference to the important pages. Finally, there may be those who are afraid of books, feeling, like Socrates, that you can never talk to them : they may bewilder

you, or annoy you, or actually raise difficulties, the solution of which lies beyond you and is yet felt to be imperative. The *judging* of a book is, after all, one object of our reading it ; books like those of Mr. H. G. Wells, for instance—fascinating to so many thousands because of their familiar diction ; their vivacious imagination ; their brilliant display of a kind of common-sense logic not devoid, in its presentment, of charm, and most agreeable to our large engineering classes and to all who see the poetry of machines—need a very great deal of judging. And, as the taste for accuracy grows, a desire to check references and verify the facts supplied will make one intolerant of the mere printed page.

It is, roughly speaking, considerations such as these that have given rise in France to the institution of what are known as *Cercles d'Études*, or Study-Clubs, intended, for the most part, for working-men or lads. It was for the study in common of social, rather than apologetic, questions that the Clubs first grew up ; but really it seems less and less possible—and especially in France —to keep wholly apart the great Social Question, in all its ramifications, and the Religious. And if, as seems too true, the waves of the still rising Socialistic flood are sweeping men by thousands from the Church's decks, any organization that professes to help, in whatever way and to whatever extent, in the social area, does incalculable service to the religious.

It is not as suggesting that they should be in detail imitated in England that I proceed to give a brief account of these Clubs ; rather is it wished to put before

the eyes of our English Catholics a series of facts from which they will draw their own conclusions, and, where imitable details or principles display themselves, will make their own use of these for their own time and place and circumstances.

Origin.

In the year 1894 the second "Working-Men's Christian Congress," held at Rheims, passed the following motion :—

"Considering that working-men should learn to discuss their own interests ;

"Considering that *study in common* is necessary if they are to be taught the truth about Ideas and Institutions ;

"The Congress expresses the desire that Clubs for Social Study be formed in all industrial and agricultural centres, whether in towns or in the country."

This idea, which had originated in the Catholic Clubs for Working-Men, was valiantly championed by the well-known priest and deputy, Abbé Garnier ; Catholic associations throughout the country, of the most varied political and social colouring, have welcomed the plan and put it into execution.

Organization.

The organization of these Clubs is naturally that which the foregoing considerations suggest.

1. The Club will consist of two main divisions : the *members* and the *directors*. Of the former it is exacted that they be *active*, and it has been proved best (partly

to ensure activity) that they be *few*. Twelve or fifteen is considered in France a satisfactory maximum. Small units may be more expensive, both in money and labour, than large ; but they are, perhaps, more manageable ; and labour, of head at least, is what the Club exists for. An *élite* is a legitimate object of ambition : St. Teresa liked her convents small ; the public schools are annoyed when they grow large and consequently unwieldy ; the system of Homes, of which St. Hugh's at Balham hopes to become the nucleus, intends deliberately to restrict the number of inmates to a few. The *Director* will act more and more personally in proportion as the members of the Club are younger : true to his name, he will *direct* rather than command ; will confine himself as far as possible to hints, timely corrections in the course of a debate, to summing up debates, especially if he be an expert in the matter in hand (as, relatively speaking, he ought generally to be) ; and, if he be a priest, or have had occasion to consult one, to adding the theological aspect or solution of the question, should such be needed or appropriate. How far he will be aided by a *committee*, elected, of course, by the members, and including a chairman chosen for the debates of the year, or term, or even day, and a secretary for the keeping of the minutes, will depend on local considerations. In any case, the Administration will always keep as its ideal the helping members to work and think *for themselves*.

2. The work of the Club will, of course, consist partly of the normal, individual study of which we shall speak below, partly of the general meetings of the Club held,

say, on Saturday or Sunday evenings, and varying in order according, once more, to local conditions.

And let it be frankly said that, these Clubs being a *Catholic* and no mere educational enterprise, the Director ought not to be afraid frequently to ask some priest, if he be not one himself, to open the proceedings with prayer and a very brief address (of five minutes at the most) upon the supernatural aspect of the Club's work. This will not be a sermon : the style will be conversational, admitting—nay, inviting—question and reply. The fundamental fact remains—unless the Spirit of God is at work in the Club, it will degenerate into a purely intellectual and philanthropic movement, productive of far more mental unrest and discontent than of good.

After the reading of the minutes, and any business which has to be transacted (election of president, &c.), follows the main feature of the evening, which in general appears to take one of these forms.

A *paper* will have been prepared by a member of the Club, on a subject advertised beforehand, and will be read, or, better still, *spoken*, at the general meeting. Either before or after a chromographed analysis of the lecture (since such, in a modest way, it is) should be put into the hands of all. Not only will this make it easier for them to follow and especially to *retain* the subject-matter, but little by little an extremely useful set of skeleton lectures is accumulated by all.

Again, if time, ability, or material be lacking for the preparation of any such lecture, a simpler, but by no means less useful, plan is to prepare a *digest* of some

noticeable book, review, speech, or pamphlet, or even to read, from newspaper or other printed source, some striking publication of the past week. Thus in some clubs the *social leading article* of certain French Catholic papers is regularly discussed; and in England it has been observed that in many places the last leader in the *Clarion* regularly forms the theme of the Socialist harangues which, on Sundays, have become so common in our market-places. Recognition of this fact has enabled Catholic speakers, in at least one town in the North of England, to arrive on the scene ready with their reply.

Need I say that both these orders of the day *expect* to lead to a discussion, and even admit of interruptions? It will be in this concluding part of the sitting that the Director will have most to do.[1]

Finally, the more directly Socratic method will be resorted to, especially where the members are young and less experienced. The Director will question them on what they may have seen or heard or read during the week, what they think of a political situation; he will propose a difficulty or objection which he has him-

[1] In England the *Universe* and *Catholic Weekly* have had useful series of social articles. The *Tablet* not unfrequently has leading articles on social or simple apologetic subjects. Mr. Toke's *Methods of Social Study* (C.T.S., 1d.) includes a most useful elementary bibliography; and, in fine, no Study-Club, were such started among us, would be without its social library, however small, including the C.T.S. social and anti-Rationalist pamphlets, all of which would offer matter for these debates. Moreover, should such become frequent, a demand for serious yet popular treatment of these topics would occasion a more regular supply of social and apologetic articles in the Catholic press.

self met with, leading the lads to work out the solution in conversation with himself and one another, and abstaining manfully from any bolt-from-the-blue solution of sheer authority. Incidentally, the Director's own gain will be enormous. He will strike a mine, in all probability, of fresh and frank and often extremely witty views and comments, of their capacity to offer which the catechumens were wholly unaware. And an idea struck out new from your own brain occasions a sense of power which is delightful, and proves the best of incentives.

3. The French Study-Clubs make it a point, in their choice of matter for debate, to go "from the known to the unknown." That is to say, in large country villages questions of agriculture, of property, of small holdings, and even of quite minute material points, such as the use of manures, the best kinds of agricultural implements, will be discussed. A great point is gained when once the members of the Club can couple the question of their immediate interest to the more abstract themes of social equity and the like. Every one who has read the first book of M. Fonsegrive's famous trilogy[1] will remember how the parish priest won the hearts of his parishioners not least by a display of intelligent interest and enterprise connected with chemical manure! In big towns, where ideas move more quickly, subjects are legion. A living wage; the sweating system; examples need not be multiplied. With us, no doubt, it is in the big towns alone that these Clubs could flourish. But it

[1] *Lettres d'un Curé de Campagne; Lettres d'un Curé de Canton; Journal d'un Évêque.*

is by modest and rudimentary Study-Clubs, formed in the higher classes of our colleges, and always in our seminaries, that men are trained to initiate and carry on popular Clubs in later life. The whole subject, however, of social training in our colleges deserves a pamphlet to itself. In France, where men of good will are, after all, Catholic (could we but convert that proposition, in France or England either !), both urban and rural Study-Clubs flourish. As we observed above, it is by the prevailing professions of their members that they begin their campaign. In the North and East, engineering and the use of chemical manuring (a subject which, to judge from the frequency of its occurrence in the literature of this topic, appears to exert a quite peculiar fascination) are much discussed ; in the South, especially of late, the problems of viticulture. Everywhere questions of leases, of insurance against fire, of old-age pensions, of Catholic savings banks, are of permanent interest. Historial questions—Galileo, Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Inquisition—are as important in France as in England. Cheap anti-Catholic controversy rages round these topics everywhere. M. J. Debout tells us the delightful fact that in his *elementary Club* (for boys under sixteen) he had once to separate two juvenile combatants who had come to blows over the question of "Who was Responsible for the St. Bartholomew Massacre" (*Les Nouvelles Semailles*, J. Debout, Paris).

4. The Club does not, however, confine itself to these public reunions. It will be open on other occasions, providing room and quiet and material for individual

study ; and here, even more than in the debates, it may be, the Director can exert his influence. It will be his part to provide cross-references, to give hints in the preparation of some future discourse, to solve difficulties which annoyingly retard progress ; in short, to give all that *individual* attention to the members which is always so much more helpful than any wholesale treatment can be. It is here, too, that he will come to closer quarters with the minds and hearts of the men he must have made, gradually, his friends. The private conversations, started on occasion or excuse of some intellectual difficulty, will often lead to that spiritual consummation for which, after all, Catholic social work exists. Since it is quite clear that much information and experience, and above all *patient self-sacrifice*, is necessary in one who will thus devote night after night to such work as this, it is equally clear that *settlements*, where men of resource and generosity are permanently established, should be encouraged by Catholics with a whole-hearted enthusiasm.

A corollary of the Study-Club is the " Popular Institute," to transliterate the French name. When the Club feels itself strong enough, it sallies forth from its entrenchments, hires a hall, or at any rate opens its own rooms (if these be large enough) to the public, or at least to invited guests—Catholics, perhaps, or, better still, those " not of the household," whether of the faith or of social or of political ideals. Lectures are then given, lecturers being often invited from without—from other Study-Clubs, or even from hostile platforms ; indeed, when an antagonist is thus your guest, much of

the bitterness, at any rate, of his hostility may vanish, and, in a calm and friendly debate, all manner of rancours may find their ending. Be that as it may, the idea of the "Popular Institute" is the exterior radiation of the heat gathered in the "Study-Club"; it is the Club, moreover, which arranges programme, date, lectures, locality; it is into the Club and its domestic activities that the Club-men finally withdraw, better comrades than ever after their experiences with outsiders. Still, ambitions of apostolate must never be allowed to obscure the fundamental notion of the Club, which is one of study and preparation. Needless to say that where occasional lectures or private visits of the squire or leading employer of the neighbourhood can be secured, a real blow for the practical solution of the class problem has been struck.

In fine, one Club may found others; and thus within one town, or even district or county, federations may be formed which, for purposes of exchange lectures or combined research, are invaluable. Such federations will be powerful enough to publish a monthly bulletin, or even to print and scatter abroad some of the more successful of their essays and discussions. We quote, for example's sake, the Permanent Committee of the Clubs of Dunkerque, Douai, and Roubaix, which organizes meetings every three months, where one particular subject, prepared by all alike, shall be discussed. Instances of such common research may be quoted from the district around Orléans:—1903: *January*—Work and Children under Sixteen Years of

Age; Liberty in Education; Your Local Industry. *April*—Trades Unions; Field-labour; Liberty in Education (continued). *July*—Apprenticeship; Labour. *October*—Hygiene; Apprenticeship (continued); Farm Animals. In 1904: *January*—The Family; Professional Risks; Vines and Wine. *April*—Family (continued); Professional Risks (continued); Wider Cultivation. *August*—Continuation of the three subjects of January. *October*—Family (concluded); Agricultural Risks; Housing of Working-classes. It will here be noticed how practical topics preponderate, and also how certain subjects were evidently fastened on with avidity, one of them, "The Family," giving matter for combined consideration for the whole year. The immediate effect this should have upon questions of Marriage, Divorce, and Population should be very great.

On a more immediately exalted plane are the *skeleton plans* of research or lectures issued, *e.g.*, by the *Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Française;* these were, for the end of 1905 and for 1906:—Material Science as a Guide in Life; Professional Organization; the Benefits of the Church; the Separation Law; Miracles; Property; Comparative Study of the Prosperity of Catholic and Protestant Countries. In one Club, founded among incredible difficulties, the bi-weekly essays were preserved, and, at the year's end, were ranked in order of merit and won prizes—for they were written by working-lads of fourteen to fifteen years of age. The subjects of the successful essays were as follows:—The Origins of France; Charlemagne and his Influence in Europe; Freemasonry; Apostolic

Age ; Catacombs ; Martyrs ; Iceland ; Balloons ; Coal ; Alcoholism ; Republican Constitution ; Revolution ; Leo XIII. An ambitious but inspiring programme.

Development.

It is rather hard to obtain the actual numbers of Study-Clubs existing in France. So many associations exist that might almost be called by that name, and yet prefer not to put themselves forward as primarily, at any rate, in that category. Their development has, however, been of an extraordinary rapidity. In 1900 twenty were grouped in Paris alone. The Third National Congress, at Lyons, in 1904, received delegates from over one thousand. Some fifteen hundred, at any rate, now exist in France. As for Belgium, full references can be found in that standard work, the *Manuel Social*, of Fr. A. Vermeersch, S.J., ed. 2 (Louvain, 1904)—a volume treating exhaustively (it numbers 1,089 pages !) of all social legislation and enterprise, Catholic and neutral, in Belgium. It has been officially recognized by the *Conseil de perfectionnement pour l'enseignement moyen*, and is indispensable to any Director's social shelf.

Part II., division i. section 2, c. ii. p. 468, fully describes the various Study-Clubs (not all explicitly Catholic) which exist, whether for employers or employed ; and on pp. 478 *seqq.* are given details of Catholic "University Extension" systems, adapted to the various social layers. These, however, usually run very far beyond the humbler ideals of the Study-Club

as we conceive of it, unless (as often happens) they explicitly belong to the "Christian Syndicates" which flourish so in Belgium.[1] In Germany, too, the *Volksverein* has organized all manner of educational centres, scaling from "Ruskin Halls"—where working men would come, often from great distances and at great sacrifice of time and even situation, to spend two or two and a half months in social study—to the modest assemblies of which I have spoken. For all alike, it has issued a programme of suggested social study. It is as follows :—

1. *Actual Position of the Working-Man.—Habitation :* Working-men's blocks and gardens. *Food :* Co-operative food associations. *Work :* Apprenticeship ; duration of work (women, children, adults) ; necessary and just wage ; contracts. *Protection of the Working-Man :* Insurances (accidents, sickness, old age) ; benefit societies.

2. *Rights of the Working-Man.*—Adequate wages ; respect ; religious, political and social liberty ; right to work and to strike, and to professional association.

3. *Duties of the Working-Man.*—Conscientious execution of contract ; respect towards employers ; respect for fellow-workmen ; obedience to the Government ;

[1] Tract XIV of the A.P., *The Soul of Agricultural Syndicates*, by Abbé V. Tissot, deals with the whole subject of the Study-Clubs which form this "soul" of the Christian "syndicates" in question. He considers the Club to accomplish a work which a system of public lectures would accomplish less fast, less well, less cheaply. The labourer, says he (p. 9) can use the knowledge thus conveyed (*i.e.*, by lectures) to him about as easily as a child might use a 40-h.p. motor. He insists on the value of these Clubs during the long winter evenings in the country.

work towards the improvement of the craft; respect for family and religion.

A brief bibliography of this topic may be of interest. (I insist most strongly upon the invaluable publications of the *Action Populaire:* Lecoffre, 90, Rue Bonaparte, Paris; and 48, Rue de Venise, Reims (its headquarters). All possible information upon the social position in France and, though necessarily with less detail, in other countries, is to be found in its yearly *Guide Social* (2 fr. 50) and its pamphlets, which appear thrice a month (25 centimes), dealing with social theory, special research, new foundations of social works, &c.)

Guide Social, 1907, pp. 123, 127–30, where a quantity of references to this subject are given (a most entertaining account of the foundation of a Study-Club); *G.S.*, 1908, pp. 96–105. This gives special information about the flourishing Engineers' "Social" Clubs in Paris, &c., its programme of studies, lecturers, and publications; p. 102, printed matter dealing with Study-Clubs; p. 100, Study-Clubs for women; p. 229, for priests; *Tracts* LVI, LXXXIX, CVII; ib. *Tract* XLI on the *Volksverein*, pp. 26 *seqq.*; *Tract* XXX, *Le Sillon*, pp. 18 and 23 (Instituts Populaires); *Feuilles Sociales*, 7, *Salles de Lecture Populaires; Education Sociale du Peuple* (65 centimes), and *Une Methode d'Education démocratique* (1 fr. 20), published at the *Sillon* headquarters, 34, Boulevard Raspail, Paris. See also *Vermeersch* (*op. c.*), and cf. Mr. L. A. Toke's *Methods of Social Study* (C.T.S., 1d.), the section on "Oral Instruction," pp. 6 *seqq.*

Further Advantages.

It will easily be gathered that the advantages of this system of Study-Clubs extend very much further than those which were at first indicated, *i.e.*, the supplementing of purely *literary* work.

The Directors of the Clubs will, as was hinted, be the first to profit. It will be no slight thing week by week to associate with men of other classes than their own ; of other experiences, pleasurable or painful, other occupations and ideals ; to *associate* with them in the strict sense of the term, to be their side-by-side companion in the search for truth and the fight to make truth conquer ; for not only will this mental and spiritual union mean much more than the mere physical approximation involved by giving alms (for such it too often is, though not always even that), but it is a union of fellow-workers —not the patronizing, even personal, of the ignorant by the learned. For need I point out what continual alertness, what dogged study in spare hours, what wrestling against the hydra-heads of prejudice, directorship involves? And that is partly why it is quite certain that many—perhaps most—of our Directors will not and ought not to be priests. The Bishop of Salford has written that this century would be the *century of the laity*. Priests, over-rushed, too few, even as it is, cannot cope with the appalling amount of work to be done, nor deal with the equally appalling accumulation (I confess it) of arrears—not due to them, thank God, for the most part, but still, alas ! existing. It would be idle and indeed impertinent, after the golden Encycli-

cals of Leo XIII,[1] the repeated action of Cardinal Vaughan, and of many another to whom we look for guidance, and it would be silly in face of the late Catholic Truth Society's Conference, to deny that the arrears are there. If, then, it can hardly be asked of the priest that in most cases he do more than occasionally make his paramount direction felt, if the ceaseless labour and expense occasioned by an active Study-Club cannot in decency be added to his already excessive responsibility, what remains but to appeal louder and yet more loudly to the educated laity for help precisely in this thing? Educated! Not "anyhow," as Aristotle might have said, but "civically"; their schooling, especially in the higher forms, their own efforts if possible at the University, being directed explicitly to that end; their spiritual training—so liberally catered for throughout their life by sodality and retreat—never losing sight of their duty towards Christ in the "least of these His little ones," the sheer neglect of which seems, in the Gospel parable, to have resulted in so appalling a condemnation of those who thought themselves above reproach in the matter of attendance upon Christ. Is it too much to hope that the sodality will shortly be unfindable which does not exact, or at least strongly insist upon, this externalization of our faith? the Retreat never be preached which does not make much of this best exercise of love and of self-sacrifice?

Again, beyond the incalculable advantages which accrue to the members of the Clubs, they in their turn

[1] See *The Pope and the People*, C.T.S., 1s.

become the priest's best ally. After all, it must be confessed that there are positions which the priest cannot take. He really cannot smoke in a public bar, discussing Evolution with a dozen not too deplorably sober navvies. Yet only inexperience (both of navvies and of bars) will deny that such subjects are there discussed. Cain's wife, the nature of the serpent, Jonah's whale, the feud between SS. Peter and Paul, the "secret" of the confessional, are subjects which we have chanced upon among such company. And in a thousand sets of circumstances, in clubs, social reunions, smoking-rooms, where really a priest might find himself bewildered and bewildering, who but the trained layman can speak the right word for Christ and His religion? To those fain to enter a railway carriage, I was once told, the presence there of a Roman collar is as effectual a deterrent as that of a baby. This was rude, but its transparent sincerity invited a smile. Considering, however, the frequency with which one have been invited, collar and all, into a conversation with chance passengers, which soon became "religious," or at the least "social" (from Winchester to London have I been forced to defend the right to private property against a Protean objicient!)—one wonders how enormously increased might be the chances of the less alarming but well-instructed and zealous layman, on the look-out for opportunities, in a similar situation. Information, clear head, steady temper, quickness at the "up-take," and *tact*, would need to be his equipment; but all this, we might hope, he would gain at the Study-Club; where else he could do so is hard to see.

Objections.

Two main objections, it appears to us, may be, and indeed are, taken to the scheme for an organized system of Study-Clubs.

The first insists on our primary duty of *protecting* the young. Our business is, we are told, to keep the young men out of harm's way, out of the public-house, away from bad literature ; to keep their faith unclouded and their innocence unspotted ; and in view of this double end to refrain, as the saying is, "from putting thoughts into their heads." This is the objection which is chiefly urged in France, if we may judge from the vigour with which M. l'Abbé Leleu, in *Tract* LVI of the *Action Populaire* Series, combats it. Whether or no it be of such actuality here in England (and abstaining deliberately from any discussion of the abstract *desirability* of "sheltering" our "young men," and delivering them from every danger of strain to mental or moral muscles) two facts stand out clear. First, that the Catholic Clubs, &c., &c., which in France, far more even than in England, have been opened for lads and youths and men have, as a rule, almost totally refrained from any attempt to develop the mental side of their members, supplying them both in literature and in occupation exclusively with matter for amusement and piety, or in a few rare cases, with opportunities for improving themselves in trade or craftsmanship. Next, to suppose that *silence* on our part concerning the great problems, religious and social, the shock of which upon unarmoured souls we rightly deprecate, will *prevent* such shock, is really, as

M. Leleu observes, too naïve. "Of themselves they will propound to themselves these problems, and if we do not supply them with the solutions of Truth, the newspaper, the workshop, and the bar will make it their business to present them with the solutions of Falsehood." In this country, where the mass of the population is not even in name Catholic, it is quite impossible to have even one oasis in the howling deserts of our factory-land, like M. Léon Harmel's Catholic Port Sunlight; nowhere can it be hoped (and *ought* it to be hoped?) that into their daily life the boys and men of to-day can carry forth their souls as "gardens enclosed," where no enemy can come to sow the tares and no cold wind of scepticism penetrate. The very virtues of the non-Catholic become not the least stumbling-block to the thoughtful man. I will resume a characteristic anecdote quoted in *Tract* LVI, p. 7, by M. Leleu:

The Director of a Young Men's Club was convinced of the necessity of some such organization as the Study-Clubs by the following incident. He was talking with five or six of his most satisfactory members, and, for curiosity's sake, put to them one or two of the stock objections by which Socialists like to try to corner Catholics. Not a man could find an answer. "But," said the Director, "don't your mates ever talk to you about that sort of thing?" "Please, Father, it's nothing but that all day and every day." "And what do you answer them?" "Please, Father, nothing." "And then they say you're all idiots?" "Yes, Father. They say Catholics are simply a set of dummies, all on the same pattern." The priest sighed; but worse was to come.

He returned to one of the Socialist objections, and proposed an answer. At once the men found their tongues! A score of objections to the Christian answer poured out. So horrified did the priest appear that the poor lads felt some excuse was necessary. "Beg pardon, Father," said one of them. "We're always hearing that sort of thing in the workshops; and here in the Club *no one ever mentions it.*"

The story is no new one, but it has permanent value.

An objection of another sort has been raised. It echoes the true old dictum, *Non in dialectica.* . . . Not by arguing has God decided that mankind should win salvation. Preach the pure gospel, the doctrines of supernatural virtue, purity, humility, submission, patience, value of suffering, heaven as the reward of it all. On all sides we hear that said, even by the professional "social" agitators, Christian and other, when they are out of conceit with schemes and systems. Even the mercurial Mr. Adderley, in his social romance, *Behold the Days Come,* practically ends in the old advice, "Live up to the Sermon on the Mount." Even the optimistic and fertile fancy of Mr. Wells can, in *The Days of the Comet,* devise no other means adequate to inaugurate the reign of Social Peace than the advent of a Green Cloud. The Green Cloud, though, has to create a new heaven and a new earth, and certainly a new race of men. And that is what we believe the gospel, and it only, can do. Preach it, therefore, and leave theories politic or economic to those whose ideals are material merely.

This is certainly not the place to point out the con-

nection between social or political studies and the living of the Christian life. The Encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII, moreover, relieve us of all responsibility in this matter. Any one who thinks sufficiently about Catholic social work to wish to combat, or even consciously neglect it, may be assumed to have read those Encyclicals. The onus of proof rests henceforward with those who suggest that between practice of the gospel and social energy a gulf is or even can be fixed. Anyhow, we may content ourselves by two reflections; first, that Pope and theologians and common-sense tell us that, short of a certain minimum of material well-being, a man *cannot* (speaking in the rough) lead the Christian life; it becomes forthwith our duty to struggle might and main against the awful social conditions which do deprive so many thousands of our fellow-citizens of precisely that *chance* of becoming Christians; and, secondly, that theologians have thought that the parable of the sheep and goats already quoted referred only to believers, precisely because no mention of lack of faith was included in the grounds of their condemnation. But condemned they were for the lack of works *for Christ in others.* "I never knew you," said He.

And the preliminary of salutary *material* "works" is often *intellectual* activity. Although St. Paul speaks of "*doing* the Truth," and Christ declares that he who *does* shall *know*, the Church assures us that if we "will be saved," we "must *thus think*. . . ." Nor is it astonishing if religious faith have its corresponding true *ideas* in every direction of thought—political, social, moral.

Hence, even for our own full development, right *ideas* all along the line are asked for by the true religion. And when it is by *ideas* that we are being attacked, it is by *ideas* that we must meet our opponents—ideas governed, no doubt, and often directly inspired by our rule of faith; still, ideas, and ideas which issue into action, are necessary to beat back the bristling line of ideas sharpened for our destruction.

> "Armourers are we:
> Each for himself has wrought
> A sword in the forge of thought;
> We bring them for you to see."

Ideas, then, *are* works in the wide sense; and so clear is this principle of action, and so wholly in keeping with the Catholic doctrine of "right *thinking*" which ever tallies with "right believing," that we might confess, almost, to the natural charge of setting up a man of straw to tilt against. But not only does the literature of the Study-Club movement persuade us that the Clubs have constantly had to face this objection—"obedience to the Commandments of God and His Church, not philosophy, is needed"—while all of us must have so often met people profoundly *discouraged*, and have been so ourselves, at the prospects of any sort of immediate or general success against the tide of Socialism and Rationalism based on an intellectual campaign, that we have felt compelled to dwell for a few lines on this point. After all, the great movements have followed the Ideas: the Encyclopædists and Rousseau, more than taxation and starvation, struck out the Revolution. The Socialist and *a fortiori* the

Rationalist campaign live on a few leading notions, admirable in themselves, fatally misunderstood and misapplied. Liberty, Progress, Reason, are all splendid and leading and divine ideas, and are all so masterfully usurped by the enemy, that it becomes a risk for Catholics to use them! Nothing (unless it be the late development, as many think, of *emotionalism* amongst us) is so remarkable as our new alertness in the matter of *ideas*. The revolution in the working-classes is, in this point, bewildering. The objections they can and do put, at the close of lectures, prove it. Their newspapers prove it. So does the enormous demand for popularized science. And our very schools seem more and more to fall into two classes: that in which this awakening is recognized, and children's brains are packed too early and too full with general notions and shibboleths; and that in which not soon enough is acknowledged the intellectual transformation of the growing creature's soul; the needful abandonment of memory for reflection work; the duty of supplying *ideas* and forcing the mind to work with these. The latter class of school will go by the wall; and with it, we cannot but think, those very excellent Clubs where the manhood part of growing men is not catered for.

We would, therefore, very strongly recommend the study of the French Catholic Study-Club system, and the creation of analogous institutions at home. And we would, in conclusion, urge (what in view of our insistence on the cultivation of *ideas* cannot be condemned as pietistic) that, as Catholics—working, as we trust we are, with our Holy Father Pope Pius X for the

restoration of all things (even intellect and society) in Christ—we have no business whatever with any *purely* educational scheme. Round Christ must gather those ideas; explain Him, protect Him, and ultimately lead to Him. They will themselves be governed, as we said, by a zeal inspired by Him; they will be our means of reaching the world which is constantly declaring that He is out of touch with it, and that we, if we stand with Him, are equally out of touch. We trust we do stand with Him, and, like St. Paul, we wish all men to stand with us, in order that they may stand with Him; and since ideas, men teach, have dug that "great gulf fixed," it is our business to show them that ideas are able, too, to bridge it.

NOTE.

In *Jeunes Gens de France*, published by the *Action Populaire*, information concerning Study-Clubs is plentiful. C. i., by M. l'Abbé Lemoine, deals with them in embryonic form *at school;* M. Leleu reprints, as c. 2, his *Tract* so often quoted above. Perhaps M. René Lemaire's account of what is being done at Epernay is most of all inspiring (p. 137 *seqq.*). The *Cercle d'Instruction Populaire* there comprises a *Cercle d'Études* and an *Institut Populaire*, as well as many other flourishing social enterprises. The story of the development of this Club is as exciting as could be wished. The method of propaganda and of private work is fully detailed. The prospect of extending the benefits of this work to women is here and increasingly dealt with.

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