ANTHONY TROLLOPE

CLERGYMEN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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I.

THE MODERN ENGLISH ARCHBISHOP.

THE old English archbishop was always a prince in the old times, but the English archbishop is a prince no longer in these latter days. He is still a nobleman of the highest rank,—he of Canterbury holding his degree, indeed, above all his peers in Parliament, not of Royal blood, and he of York following his elder brother, with none between them but the temporary occupant of the woolsack. He is still one before whose greatness small clerical aspirants veil their eyes, and whose blessing in the minds of pious maidens has in it something almost divine. He is, as I have said, a peer of Parliament. Above all things, he should be a gentleman, and,—if it were always possible,—a gentleman of birth; but he has no longer anything of the position or of the attributes of a prince.

And this change has come upon our archbishops quite in latter times; though, of course, we must look back to the old days of Papal supremacy in England for the prince archbishop of the highest class. Such careers as those of Thomas à Becket or of Wolsey have not been possible to any clergymen since the days in which the power of the Pope was held to be higher on matters ecclesiastical than the power of the Crown in these realms; but we have had among us prince archbishops to a very late date,—archbishops who have been princes not by means of political strength or even by the force of sacerdotal independence, but who have enjoyed their principalities simply as the results of their high rank, their wealth, their reserve, their inaccessibility, as the result of a certain mystery as to the nature of their duties,—and sometimes as the result of personal veneration. For this personal veneration personal dignity was as much needed as piety, and was much more necessary than high mental power. An archbishop of fifty years since was very difficult to approach, but when approached was as urbane as a king,—who is supposed never to be severe but at a distance. He lived almost royally, and his palace received that respect which seems, from the nature of the word, to be due to a palatial residence. What he did, no man but his own right-hand chaplain knew with accuracy; but that he could shower church patronage as from the east the west and the south, all clerical aspirants felt,—with awe rather than with hope. Lambeth in those days was not overshadowed by the opposite glories of Westminster. He of York, too, was a Northern prince, whose hospitalities north of the Humber were more in repute than those of earls

and barons. Fifty years since the archbishops were indeed princes; but now-a-days we have changed all that. The change, however, is only now completed. It was but the other day that there died an Archbishop of Armagh who was prince to the backbone, princely in his wealth and princely in his use of it, princely in his mode of life, princely in his gait and outer looks and personal demeanour,—princely also in the performance of his work. He made no speeches from platforms. He wrote no books. He was never common among men. He was a fine old man; and we may say of him that he was the last of the prince archbishops.

This change has been brought about, partly by the altered position of men in reference to each other, partly also by the altered circumstances of the archbishops themselves. We in our English life are daily approaching nearer to that republican level which is equally averse to high summits and to low depths. We no longer wish to have princes among us, and will at any rate have none of that mysterious kind which is half divine and half hocus-pocus. Such terrestrial gods as we worship we choose to look full in the face. We must hear their voices and be satisfied that they have approved themselves as gods by other wisdom than that which lies in the wig. That there is a tendency to evil in this as well as a tendency to good may be true enough. To be able to venerate is a high quality, and it is coming to that with us, that we do not now venerate much. In this way the altered minds of men have altered the position of the archbishops of the Church of England.

But the altered circumstances of the sees themselves have perhaps done as much as the altered tendencies of men's minds. It is not simply that the incomes received by the present archbishops are much less than the incomes of their predecessors,—though that alone would have done much,—but the incomes are of a nature much less prone to produce princes. The territorial grandeur is gone. The archbishops and bishops of to-day, with the exception of, I believe, but two veterans on the bench, receive their allotted stipends as do the clerks in the Custom-house. There is no longer left with them any vestige of the power of the freehold magnate over the soil. They no longer have tenant and audit days. They cannot run their lives against leases, take up fines on renewals, stretch their arms as possessors over wide fields, or cut down woods and put acres of oaks into their ecclesiastical pockets. They who understand the nature of the life of our English magnates, whether noble or not noble, will be aware of the worth of that territorial position of which our bishops have been deprived under the working of the Ecclesiastical Commission. The very loss of the risk has been much!—as that man looms larger to himself, and therefore to others also, whose receipts

may range from two to six hundred a year, than does the comfortable possessor of the insured medium. The actual diminution of income, too, has done much, and this has been accompanied by so great a rise in the price of all princely luxuries that an archbishop without a vast private fortune can no longer live as princes should live. In these days, when a plain footman demands his fifty pounds of yearly wages, and three hundred pounds a year is but a moderate rent for a London house, an archbishop cannot support a semi-royal retinue or live with much palatial splendour in the metropolis upon an annual income of eight thousand pounds.

And then, above all, the archbishops have laid aside their wigs.

That we shall never have another prince archbishop in England or in Ireland may be taken to be almost certain. Whether or no we shall ever have prelates at Canterbury or York, at Armagh or Dublin, gifted with the virtues and vices of princely minds, endowed with the strength and at the same time with the self-willed obstinacy of princes, may be doubtful. There is scope enough for such strength and such obstinacy in the position, and our deficiency or our security,—as each of us according to his own idiosyncrasy may regard it,—must depend, as it has latterly been caused, by the selections made by the Prime Minister of the day. There is the scope for strength and obstinacy now almost as fully as there was in the days of Thomas à Becket, though the effects of such strength or obstinacy would of course be much less wide. And, indeed, as an archbishop may be supposed in these days to be secure from murder, his scope may be said to be the fuller. What may not an archbishop say, and what may not an archbishop do, and that without fear of the only punishment which could possibly reach an archbishop,—the punishment, namely, of deprivation? With what caution must not a Minister of the present day be armed to save him from the misfortune of having placed an archbishop militant over the Church of England?

The independence of an archbishop, and indeed to a very great, though lesser extent of a bishop, in the midst of the existing dependence of all others around him, would be a singular phenomenon, were it not the natural result of our English abhorrence of change. We hate an evil, and we hate a change. Hating the evil most, we make the change, but we make it as small as possible. Hence it is that our Archbishop of Canterbury has so much of that independent power which made Thomas à Becket fly against his sovereign when the archiepiscopal mitre was placed upon his head, though he had been that sovereign’s most obedient servant till his consecration. Thomas à Becket held his office independently of the king; and so does Dr. Longley. The Queen, though she be the head of the

Church, cannot rid herself of an archbishop who displeases her. The Queen, in speaking of whom in our present sense of course we mean the Prime Minister, can make an Archbishop of Canterbury; but she cannot unmake him. The archbishop would be safe, let him play what tricks he might in his high office. Nothing short of a commission de lunatico inquirendo could attack him successfully,—which, should it find his grace to be insane, would leave him his temporalities and his titles, and simply place his duties in the hands of a coadjutor. Should an archbishop commit a murder, or bigamy, or pick a pocket, he, no doubt, would be liable to the laws of his country; but no lawyer and no statesman can say to what penalties he can be subjected as regards the due performance of the duties of his office. A judge is independent;—that is, he is not subject to any penalty in regard to any exercise of his judicial authority; but we all know that a judge would soon cease to be a judge who should play pranks upon the bench, or decline to perform the duties of his position. The archbishops, as the heads of the endowed clergymen of the Church of England, are possessed of freeholds, and that freehold cannot be touched. It is theirs for life; and so great is the practical latitude of our Church, that it may be doubted whether anything short of a professed obedience to the Pope could deprive an archbishop of his stipend.

It may, therefore, be easily understood that a Prime Minister, in selecting an archbishop, has a difficult task in hand. He is bound to appoint a man who not only has hitherto played no pranks, but of whom he may feel sure that he will play none in future. In our Church, as it exists at present, we have ample latitude joined to much bigotry, and it is almost as impossible to control the one as the other. Such control is, in fact, on either side absolutely impossible; and, therefore, archbishops are wanted who shall make no attempts at controlling. And yet an archbishop must seem to control,—or, else, why is he there? An Archbishop of Canterbury must be a visible head of bishops, and yet exercise no headship. He must appear to men as the great guide of parsons, but his guidance must not go beyond advice, and of that the more chary he may be, the better will be the archbishop. Of course it will be understood that reference is here made to doctrinal guidance, and not to moral guidance—to latitude or bigotry in matters of religion, and not to the social conduct of clergymen. How difficult then must be the position of a Minister who has to select for so dangerous a place a clergyman who shall be great enough to fill it, and yet small enough; and one who shall also be just enough to remember always that he is bound to retain that quiescence for which credit was given him when he was chosen? The archbishop must be a man without any latent flame, without ambition, desirous of no noise,

who shall be content to have been an archbishop without leaving behind him a peculiar name among his brethren. He should hope to be remembered only as a good old man, who in troublesome times abated some trouble and caused none, who smiled often and frowned but seldom, who wore his ecclesiastical robes on high days with a grace, and exercised a modest and frequent hospitality, having no undue desire to amass money for his children.

It is not, perhaps, too much to say that the sort of man exactly wanted may be selected for any post, and be found adequate to the required duties so long as the sword of deprivation or dismissal can be made to hang over the occupant's head. But it is very difficult to find a man who shall do his work, not after the fashion which may seem best to himself, but in the way which seems most desirable to others, who, when once placed, cannot be removed from his place. Will your groom or your gardener obey you with that precision which you desire when he comes to know that you cannot rid yourself of his services? And human nature is the same in gardeners and in archbishops. It is not that the man is void of conscience and that he resolves to disobey where he has promised to obey, but that he tells himself that in his position duty requires no obedience. Your gardener with a taste for tulips would, under such circumstances, grow nothing but tulips; and what is to hinder your archbishop from putting down the miracles or putting up candlesticks? With Lambeth all ablaze with candlesticks the archbishop would still hold his place.

The same thing may be said of the bishops; but among so many bishops it is felt to be well that there should be some few who shall have a flame of their own. In the house that has many rooms the owner may indulge in many colours on the walls, and some of them may be of the brightest; but in the house that has but one or two chambers the colours should be chosen with a due regard to the ordinary quiescence of every-day life. Had we not High Church and Low Church among our ordinary bishops, were we to be deprived of our dear —— and our dear ——, we should miss much that we feel to be ornamental to the Establishment and useful to ourselves. There are a few among us of course who would be glad to see lights of the same splendour, even though so dangerous, at Canterbury and at York; but it behoves a Prime Minister to be a moderate man, and a man moderate, above all things, in religion. In the religion of to-day moderation is everything. And, therefore, whatever else he may be, let the archbishop be a moderate man. Let him always be throwing oil upon waters. Nothing should shock him—nothing, that is, in the way of religion. Nothing should excite him; nothing should make him angry. He should be a man able to preach well, but not inclined to preach often. In his preaching he should charm

the ears of all hearers, but he should hardly venture to stir their pulses. He should speak, too, occasionally from platforms and chairs; only let him not make himself too common. He should be very affable on Mondays and Tuesdays, secluding himself somewhat on the other five days of the week, answering his correspondents with words which may mean as little as words can be made to mean, and carefully watching that he commits himself to nothing. How hard it is to find the man who shall have talent enough for this, and yet the self-command never to go beyond it, even though no penalties await him, except such as may come from the venomous baiting of other clergymen.

But it must not be supposed that the archbishop of to-day can be, or should be, an idle man. It is his duty to be the precursor—probably the unconscious precursor—of other men in that religion which shall teach us that the ways of God are very easy to find, though they may not be so easy to follow; that forms are almost nothing, so that faith be there. Of all men, an archbishop should be the least of a fanatic. Can any one imagine an archbishop of the present day abhorring a Dissenter, or refusing to dine with a Roman Catholic because of his religion? And to do this is much, even though it be done unconsciously. An archbishop thus leading the van against bigotry has to stand with placid unmoved front against assailants by the hundred. Let us only think of the letters that are addressed to him, of the attacks made upon him, of the questions asked of him. Against every attack he must defend himself, and yet must he never commit himself. He must never be dumb, and yet must he never speak out boldly. He must be always true to the Thirty-nine Articles, and yet never fight for any one of them. In the broad his creed must be infallible, but he himself may make a standing-point on no detail. To carry an archbishop’s mitre successfully under such circumstances requires much diligence, considerable skill, imperturbable good humour, and undying patience.

The selections that have been made by the Ministers of the Crown for the last twenty or twenty-five years have all apparently been made on the principle of selecting such archbishops as have been here described, and English Churchmen in general seem to think that the Ministers of the Crown have exercised wise discretion in the appointments which they have made.

II.

ENGLISH BISHOPS, OLD AND NEW.

If it were said that the difference between bishops of the old school and of the new consists chiefly in the fact that the former wore wigs and that the latter have ceased to do so, the definition would be true enough if it were followed out, not literally, but with a liberal construction. In former days the wig and apron, of themselves, almost sufficed; but now, these outer things having been, to so great an extent, laid aside, other things, much more difficult of acquirement, are needed. There was, however, such an odour of pious decorum round the episcopal wig, that we cannot but regret its departure; and then, again, so much of awe has gone, now that the wig is abandoned! We who can remember the bishops in their full panoply can hardly understand how a bishop of these times can be a bishop at all to his subject parsons. And that veneration which arose from outer circumstances used to be so peculiarly the perquisite of the bench of bishops, that men of the laity, thinking over it all, are at a loss to conceive why appendages so valuable should have been abandoned thus recklessly. Even aprons are not worn as aprons were worn of yore,—but in a shorn degree, showing too plainly that the reverend wearer is half ashamed of the tranquil decoration; and lawn sleeves themselves do not seem to envelop the occupant in so extensive a cloud of sacred millinery as they did in the more reverent days of George the Fourth. Have the bishops themselves made this suicidal change; or have they only succumbed to the invincible force of public opinion in thus abandoning those awful symbols which were so valuable to them?

A full and true answer to this question would go far towards giving a history of the Church of England during the last sixty or seventy years,—from the days in which Lord Eldon was first consulted as to the making of a bishop, down to the last decade of years in which bishops are popularly supposed to have been selected in accordance with the advice of a religious Whig nobleman. Such a history cannot be given here, but the peculiarities of the old and new bishop may perhaps be so described as to show something of the result of the changes that have taken place.

The bishop of George the Third and George the Fourth was never a prince, as was the archbishop,—but he was a wealthy ecclesiastical baron, having the prestige of a Peer of Parliament, even when he did not use the power, living like

a great lord in his palace, drawing his income from territorial domains,—an income which was often so much greater than his needs as to afford him the means of amassing a colossal fortune. And as he generally entered upon the possession of this income without any of the encumbrances which are incidental to the hereditary possessors of great properties, and usually considered himself to be precluded by the nature of his profession from many of those wealth-consuming pursuits to which his lay brother nobles are prone, it came to pass that the bishop was ordinarily a rich man. He kept no race-horses; he was not usually a gambler; he could provide for clerical sons and clerical sons-in-law out of the diocesan pocket: and was preserved by the necessary quiescence of clerical life from that broadcast magnificence which is so costly to our great nobles, because it admits of no check upon its expenditure. The bishop, let him live as handsomely as he might, was not called upon to live beyond the scope of accounts;—and many of our bishops were good accountants.

But in those halcyon days, there was this drawback to being a bishop, that the good things did not all come at once. What was a bishopric with three thousand a year, when there were others of equal rank with seven, or eight, or occasionally with ten thousand,—not to speak of the sublimity of Canterbury, or the magnificence of York, or the golden opulence of Durham, or the ancient splendour of Winchester, or the metropolitan glory of London? The interest which made a bishop could translate a bishop, and, therefore, no bishop in those days could rest in comfortable content in the comparatively poor houses of Exeter or Gloucester, while Ely might be reached, or at least Worcester. Thus it came to pass that men, who in those days were never young when they were first chosen, were still living always in hope of some rich change; and that when the rich change came at last, the few remaining years, the wished-for opportunities of wealth, were used with a tenacity of purpose which might almost put a usurer to the blush.

But it would be unreasonable to feel strong abhorrence against the old bishops on this account. Men in all walks of life do as others do around them, and bishops are but men. It was thought to be the proper thing that a bishop should exercise his power over the domains of the see to the utmost extent rendered possible by the existing law. He would run his life against a lease on the ecclesiastical property. If he died before the lease expired the benefit would be to his successor. If he survived he could lease the property for a term of years to his son at a peppercorn rent, and the see would be so far robbed. It was an interesting, exciting mode of life, and as the ecclesiastical lands grew in value as all lands grew,—town lands, for instance, which gradually covered themselves

with houses,—the game became so delightful that it is almost a pity that it should have been brought to an end. Let no man say to himself that had he been a bishop in those days he would have done otherwise,—unless he is quite sure that he is better than those around him, even in these days.

But when such good things were going who were the men who got them? And to this may be added a further question, How far did they deserve the good things which were given to them? It used to be said that there were three classes of aspirants to bishoprics, and three ladders by which successful clergymen might place themselves on the bench. There was the editor of the Greek play, whose ladder was generally an acquaintance with Greek punctuation. There was the tutor of a noble pupil, whose ladder was the political bias of his patron. And there was he who could charm the royal ear, whose ladder was as frequently used in the closet as in the pulpit. To these was afterwards added the political aspirant,—the clergyman who could write a pamphlet or advocate a semi-ecclesiastical cause by his spoken or written words.

That scholarship should be remunerated was very well; that men in power should reward those who had been faithful to themselves and their children was, at any rate, very natural; that the Sovereign should occasionally have a voice in making those selections which, as head of the Church, it was popularly supposed that he always made, seemed only to be fair;—and who can say that a Minister was wrong to recompense ecclesiastical support by ecclesiastical preferment? But it must be admitted that the bench of bishops as it was constituted under the circumstances above described was not conspicuous for its clerical energy, for its theological attainments, or for its impartial use of the great church patronage which it possessed. They who sat upon it ordinarily wore their wigs with decorum and lived the lives of gentlemen; but, looking back for many years, a churchman of the Church of England cannot boast of the clerical doings of its bishops. Under the great wig system much of awe was engendered, and that amount of good was attained which consists mainly of respect and reverence for the unknown. The mere existence of a Llama is good for people who have no more clearly expressed God to worship,—and in this way the old, rich, bewigged bishops were serviceable. But, with a few exceptions, they did but little other clerical service. New churches were not built under their auspices, nor were old churches repaired. Dissent in England became strong, and the services of the State Church were in many dioceses performed with a laxity and want even of decency which, though it existed so short a time since, now hardly obtains belief. The wigs have gone, but in their places have come,—as we are bound to acknowledge,—many of those qualities, much more difficult of acquirement,

which men demand when wigs will no longer satisfy them. Let any middle-aged man of the present day think of the bishops of his youth, and remember those who were known to him by report, repute, or perhaps by personal intercourse. Although bishops in those days were not common in the market-places as they are now, some of us were allowed to see them and hear them speak, and most of us may have some memory of their characters. There were the old bishops who never stirred out, and the young bishops who went to Court; and the bishop who was known to be a Crœœsus, and the bishop who had so lived that, in spite of his almost princely income, he was obliged to fly his creditors; and there was the more innocent bishop who played chess, and the bishop who still hankered after Greek plays, and the kindly old bishop who delighted to make punch in moderate proportions for young people, and a very wicked bishop or two, whose sins shall not be specially designated. Such are the bishops we remember, together with one or two of simple energetic piety. But who remembers bishops of those days who really did the work to which they were set? In how many dioceses was there a Boanerges of whom the Church can be proud? It is almost miraculous that the Church should have stood at all through such guidance as it has had.

This has now been much altered, and the modern bishop is at any rate a working man. And while we congratulate ourselves on the change that has been made, let us give thanks where thanks are due. No doubt the increased industry of the bishops has come, as has the increased industry of public officers, from the demand of the people whom they are called upon to serve. But in no way and by no means has more been done to create this energy than by that movement at Oxford which had its beginning hardly more than thirty years since, and of which the two first leaders are still alive. Dr. Newman has gone to Rome, and Dr. Pusey has perhaps helped to send many thither; but these men, and their brethren of the Tracts, stirred up throughout the country so strong a feeling of religion, gave rise by their works to so much thought on a matter which had been allowed for years to go on almost without any thought, that it may be said of them that they made episcopal idleness impossible, and clerical idleness rare. Of course, it will be said, in opposition to this, that no school of clergymen has so run after wiggeries and vestments and empty symbols as have the followers of the men whom I have named. But the wiggeries and vestments have been simply the dross which has come from their fused gold. If you will make water really boil, some will commonly boil over. They have built new churches, and cleansed old churches, and opened closed churches. They have put on fuel and poked the fire, till heat does really issue from it. It is not only with the High Church,—with

their own brethren,—that they have prevailed, but equally with the Low Church, whose handsome edifices and improved services are due to that energy which has been so hateful to them.

The modern bishop is a working man, and he is selected in order that he may work. He is generally one who has been conspicuous as a working parish clergyman, and may be and often is as ignorant of Greek as his former parish clerk. In discussing archbishops it has been said that the chosen candidate must have no strong Church predilections of his own. In choosing a bishop a Minister is bound by no such limit. Perhaps it would be well if High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church could be allowed to have their turns in rotation,—as used to be the case with the two universities. For many years past the Low Church has been in the ascendant, and the chances now are that in meeting a bishop one meets an enemy of the Oxford movement. But the bishop's own predilections matter little, perhaps, if the man will work with a will. There are few, I think, now who remember much of the Low Church peculiarities of the Bishop of London, having forgotten all that in the results of his episcopate.

But, alas, in losing our fainéant bishops we have lost the great priest lords whom we used to venerate. A bishop now has no domain, but is paid his simple salary of 5,000*l.* a year,—quarterly, we suppose,—and knows not and recks not of leases. He is paid 5,000*l.* a year if his see was in former days worth as much, or less if the see of old was worth less. London, Durham, and Winchester are more gorgeous than their brethren, but even London and Durham have simple salaries, and Winchester, on the next vacancy, will be reduced to the same humble footing. It is a great fall in worldly state, and consequently bishops may be now seen,—as bishops never were seen of yore,—sitting in cabs, trusting themselves to open one-horse chaises, talking in the market-places, and walking home after an ordination. These ears have heard and these eyes have seen a modern bishop hallooing from the top of his provincial High-street to a groom who was at the bottom of it, brandishing his episcopal arms the while with an energy which might have been spared. It is so with all things. In seeking for the useful, we are compelled to abandon the picturesque. Our lanes and hedgerows and green commons are all going; and the graceful dignity of the old bishop is a thing of the past.

There still, however, remains to the bench one privilege, which, though shorn of its ancient grandeur of injustice, has in it still much of the sweet mediæval flavour of old English corruption. The patronage of the bishops is as extensive almost as ever; and though its exercise is now hemmed in by certain new stringencies of ecclesiastical law,—as in regard to pluralities, and is also subject

to the scrutiny of public opinion, so that decency must at least be respected,—nevertheless patronage remains, as the private property of the bishop. A bishop is not bound, even in theory as the theory at present exists, to bestow his patronage as may be best for the diocese over which he presides. He still gives, and is supposed to give, his best livings to his own friends. A deserving curate has no claim on a bishop for a living as a reward for the work he has done. The peculiarly strong case of a Mr. Cheese may, here and there, give rise to comment; but unless the nepotism is too glaring, nepotism in bishops is allowed;—nay, it is expected. A bishop's daughter is supposed to offer one of the fairest steps to promotion which the Church of England affords.

Is it not singular that it should be so,—that the idea of giving the fitting reward to the most deserving servant should have to reach the Church the last of all professions and of all trades? Sinecures and the promotion of young favourites used to be common in the Civil Service; but the public would not endure it, and the Civil Service has cleansed itself. The army and navy have been subjected to searching reforms. A great law officer has been made to vanish into space because he was too keen in appropriating patronage to family uses. Bankers and brewers will no longer have men about their premises who do not work; and yet bankers and brewers may do what they like with their own. But the bishop, in whose hands patronage has been placed, that he might use it in the holiest way for the highest purpose, still exercises it daily with the undeniable and acknowledged view of benefiting private friends! And in doing so he does not even know that he is doing amiss. It may be doubted whether the bishop has yet breathed beneath an apron who has doubted that his patronage was as much his own as the silver in his breeches-pocket. The bishop's feeling in the matter is not singular, but it is singular that bishops should not before this have been enlightened on the subject of Church patronage by the voice of the laity whom they serve.

III.

THE NORMAL DEAN OF THE PRESENT DAY.

If there be any man, who is not or has not been a Dean himself, who can distinctly define the duties of a Dean of the Church of England, he must be one who has studied ecclesiastical subjects very deeply. When cathedral services were kept up for the honour of God rather than for the welfare of the worshippers, with an understanding faintly felt by the indifferent, but strongly realized by the pious, that recompence would be given by the Almighty for the honour done to Him,—as cathedrals were originally built and adorned with that object,—it was natural enough that there should be placed at the head of those who served in the choir a high dignitary who, by the weight of his presence and the grace of his rank, should give an increased flavour of ecclesiastical excellence to those services. The dean then was the head, as it were, of a college, and he fitly did his work if he looked after the ceremonies of his cathedral, saw that canons, precentor, minor canons and choristers, did their ministrations with creditable grace, took care that the building was, if possible, kept in good repair, —and thus properly took the lead in the chapter over which he presided. But the idea of honouring our Creator by the excellence of our church services,—though it remains firmly fixed enough in the minds of some of us,—is no longer a national idea; and we may say that deans are not selected by those who have the appointment of deans with any such view. We use our cathedrals in these days as big churches, in which multitudes may worship, so that, if possible, they may learn to live Christian lives. They are made beautiful that this worship may be attractive to men, and not for the glory of God. What architect would now think it necessary to spend time and money in the adornment of parts of his edifice which no mortal eye can reach? But such was done in the old days when deans were first instituted. Multitudes, no doubt, crowded our cathedrals in those times,—when bishops and deans were subject to the Pope—but they were there for the honour of God, testifying their faith by the fact of their presence. That all this has been changed need hardly be explained here; but in the change it would seem that the real work of the dean has gone,—except so far as it may please him to take some part in those offices of the church service which it is necessary that a clergyman should perform. It is now ordinarily believed that to the dean is especially entrusted the care of the structure itself; and luckily for us, who love

our old cathedrals, we have had some deans of late who, as architectural ecclesiastics, have been very serviceable; but should a dean have no such tendencies,—as many deans have had none,—no penalty for neglect of prescribed duty would fall upon him. A certain amount of yearly residence is enjoined; and it is expected, of course, that a dean should show himself in his own cathedral. Let him reside and show himself, and the city which he graces by his presence will hardly demand from him other services.

In truth, the lines of deans have fallen in pleasant places. Man, being by nature restless and ambitious, desires to rise; and the dean will desire to become a bishop, though he would lose by the change his easy comfort, his sufficient modest home, and the grace of his close in which no one overtops him. To be a Peer of Parliament, to rule the clergy of a diocese, and wear the highest order of clerical vestment, is sweet to the clerical aspirant. A man feels that he is shelved when he ceases to sing excelsior to himself in his closet. But the change from a deanery of the present day to a palace is a change from ease to work, from leisure to turmoil, from peace to war, from books which are ever good-humoured to men who are too often ill-humoured. The dean's modest thousand a year sounds small in comparison with the bishop's more generous stipend:—but look at a dean, and you will always see that he is sleeker than a bishop. The dean to whom fortune has given a quaint old house with pleasant garden in a quaint old close, with resident prebendaries and minor canons around him who just acknowledge, and no more than acknowledge, his superiority,—who takes the lead, as Mr. Dean, in the society of his clerical city,—who is never called upon to discharge expensive duties in London, though he may revisit the glimpses of the metropolitan moon for a month, perhaps, in the early summer, showing his new rosette at his club,—seems indeed to have had his lines given to him in very pleasant places.

There is something charming to the English ear in the name of the Dean and Chapter. None of us quite know what it means, and yet we love it. When we visit our ancient cathedrals, and are taken into a handsome but manifestly useless octagonal stone outhouse, we are delighted to find that the chapter-house is being repaired at an expense of, say, four thousand pounds, subscribed by the maiden ladies of the diocese; or if we find the said outhouse to be in ruins,—in which case the afflicted verger will not show it if we allow him to pass easily through our hands,—we feel a keen regret as though all things good were going from us. That there should be a chapter-house attached to the cathedral, simply because a chapter-house was needed in former days, is all the reason that we can give for our affection; and we think that the old ladies have spent their money

well in preserving the relic. We also think that the Ecclesiastical Commission spends its money well in preserving the chapter, and should feel infinite regret in finding that any diocese had none belonging to it. We are often told that ours is a utilitarian age, but this utilitarian spirit is so closely mingled with a veneration for things old and beautiful from age that we love our old follies infinitely better than our new virtues.

Though it is difficult to define the duties of a modern dean, we all of us know what are the qualities and what the acquirements which lead to deaneries in these days; and most of us respect them. As it is now necessary that a man shall have been an active parish parson before he is thought fit to be a bishop, so it is required that a clergyman shall have shown a taste for literature in some one of its branches before he can be regarded among the candidates proper for a deanery. The normal dean of this age is a gentleman who would probably not have taken orders unless the circumstances of his life had placed orders very clearly in his path. He is not a man who has been urged strongly in early youth by a vocation for clerical duties, or who has subsequently devoted himself to what may be called clerical administrations proper. He has taken kindly to literature, having been biassed in his choice of the branch which he has assumed by the fact of the word “Reverend” which has attached itself to his name. He has done well at the university, and has been a fellow, and perhaps a tutor, of his college. He has written a book or two, and has not impossibly shown himself to be too liberal for the bench; for it is given to deans to speak their thoughts more openly than bishops are allowed to do. Indeed, this is so well acknowledged a principle in the arrangement of church patronage, that it has struck many of us with wonder that the Government has not escaped from its difficulty in regard to the Bishop of Natal by making him a dean in England.

And, when once a dean, the happy beneficed lover of letters need make no change in the mode of his life, as a bishop must do. He is not driven to feel that now and from henceforth he must have his neck in a collar to which he has hitherto been unused, and that he must be drawing ever and always against the hill. A bishop must do so, or else he is a bad bishop; but a dean has got no hill before him, unless he makes one for himself.

Who that knows any of our dear old closes,—that of Winchester, for instance, or of Norwich, or Hereford, or Salisbury,—has not wandered among the modest, comfortable clerical residences which they contain, envying the lot of those to whom such good things have been given? The half-sequestered nook has a double delight, because it is only half sequestered. On one side there is an arched gate,—a gate that may possibly be capable of being locked, which gives to the

spot a sweet savour of monastic privacy and ecclesiastical reserve; while on the other side the close opens itself freely to the city by paths leading, probably, under the dear old towers of the cathedral, by the graves of those who have been thought worthy of a resting-place so near the shrine. It opens itself freely to the city, and courts the steps of church matrons, who are almost as clerical as their lords. It is true, indeed, that much of their glory has now departed from these hallowed places. The dean still keeps his deanery, but the number of resident canons has been terribly diminished. Houses intended for church dignitaries are let to prosperous tallow-chandlers, and in the window of a mansion in a close can, at this moment in which I am writing, be seen a notice that lodgings can be had there by a private gentleman—with a reference. But still it is the Close. There is still an odour there to the acutely percipient nostrils as of shovel hats and black vestments. You still talk gently as you walk over its well-kept gravel, and would refrain within its precincts from that strength of language which may perhaps be common to you out in the crowded marts of the city. The cathedral, at any rate, is there, more beautiful than ever,—thanks to the old ladies and the architectural dean. The musical rooks fly above your head. The tower bells delight your ear with those deep-tolling, silence-producing sounds which seem to come from past ages in which men were not so hurried as they are now; and you feel that the resident tallow-chandler and the single gentleman with a reference have not as yet destroyed the ancient piety of the place.

The dean and chapter! How pleasantly the words sound on the tongue of a reverent verger! The chapters, I fear, are terribly shorn of their old glory, and each chapter must look at itself, when it meets, with something of wistful woe in its half-extinguished old eyes. And why does a chapter meet? Its highest duty is a congé d’élire,—permission to choose its own bishop. Permission is sent down from the Prime Minister to the chapter to choose Dr. Smith,—a very worthy evangelical gentleman, whose name stinks in the nostrils of the old high and dry canons and prebendaries who still hang round the towers of the cathedral; and,—under certain terrible penalties,—they exercise their functions, and unanimously elect Dr. Smith as the bishop of that diocese. There must be something melancholy in such moments to a reflective dean and chapter. We may suppose that the number of clerical gentlemen who really meet together to carry on the business of the election is not great. It is as small, probably, as may be; but something of a chapter must be held. The ignorant layman, as he thinks of it, wonders whether the work is really done in that cold unfurnished octagonal stone building, which has just been so beautifully repaired at the expense of the devout maiden ladies.

How English, how absurd, how picturesque it all is!—and, we may add, how traditionally useful! The Queen is the head of the Church, and therefore sends down word to a chapter, which in truth as a chapter no longer exists, that it has permission to choose its bishop, the bishop having been already appointed by the Prime Minister, who is the nominee of the House of Commons! The chapter makes its choice accordingly, and the whole thing goes on as though the machine were kept in motion by forces as obedient to reason and the laws of nature as those operating on a steam engine. We are often led to express our dismay, and sometimes our scorn, at the ignorance shown by foreigners as to our institutions; but when we ourselves consider their complications and irrationalistic modes of procedure, the wonder is that any one not to the manner born should be able to fathom aught of their significance.

Deans and chapters, though they exist with a mutilated grandeur, for the present are safe; and long may they remain so!

IV.

THE ARCHDEACON.

A DEAN has been described as a Church dignitary who, as regards his position in the Church, has little to do and a good deal to get. An archdeacon, on the other hand, is a Church dignitary, who in diocesan dignity is indeed almost equal to a dean, and in diocesan power is much superior to a dean, but who has a great deal to do and very little to get. Indeed, as to that matter of getting, the archdeacon,—as archdeacon,—may be said to get almost nothing. It is quite in keeping with the traditional polity and well understood peculiarities of our Church that much work should be required from those officers to whom no payment is allotted, or payment that is next to none; whereas from those to whom affluence is given little labour is required. And the system works well enough. There has as yet been no dearth of archdeacons; nor shall we probably experience any such calamity.

Nevertheless, archdeacons are seldom allowed to starve. The bishops have it in their power to look to that, and knowing that in these days starving men seldom can exercise much authority, they take care that their archdeacons shall be beneficed. The archdeacon always holds a living. In former happy days he not unfrequently held more than one, and there are probably archdeacons still living in that halcyon condition. He always holds a living, and almost always a good living. He not unfrequently is a man of private means, and has been selected for his position partly on that account. He is the nominee of the bishop, and is, therefore, not unfrequently intimately connected with episcopal things. He is, perhaps, the son or nephew of a bishop, or has married a wife from the palace, or has, after some fashion, sat in his early days at episcopal feet. He is one whom the bishop thinks that he can love and trust; and therefore, before he has obtained his archdeaconry, he has probably been endowed with that first requisite for a good servant—good wages. A poor archdeacon, an archdeacon who did not keep a curate or two, an archdeacon who could not give a dinner and put a special bottle of wine upon the table, an archdeacon who did not keep a carriage, or at least a one-horse chaise, an archdeacon without a man servant, or a banker’s account, would be nowhere,—if I may so speak,—in an English diocese. Such a one could not hold up his head among churchwardens, or inquire as to church repairs with any touch of proper authority. Therefore, though the archdeacon is

not paid for his services as archdeacon, he is generally a gentleman who is well to do in the world, and who can take a comfortable place in the county society among which it is his happy lot to live.

But, above all things, an archdeacon should be a man of the world. He should know well, not only how many shillings there are in a pound, but how many shillings also there are in a clerical pound,—for in these matters there is a difference. Five hundred a year is much more in the hands of a country parson than it is in the hands of a country gentleman who is not a parson,—all which the efficient archdeacon understands and has at his fingers' ends to the last shilling of the calculation. He should understand, too, after what fashion his brother rectors and vicars live around him,—should know something of their habits, something also of their means, and should have an eye open to their welfare, their pursuits, and their amusements. Of all these things the really stirring archdeacon does in fact know very much.

The archdeacon is, in fact, a bishop in little, and as such is often much more of a bishop in fact than is the bishop himself. To define,—or rather to make intelligible by any definition,—an archdeacon's power and duties, would be very difficult; as also it is very difficult, or I may say impossible, to do so with reference to a bishop's functions. The archdeacon holds a court, and makes visitations. These visitations may be made pretty much at his pleasure. He must, I believe, make them once in three years, but may make them every year if he thinks fit. He inquires as to the administration of the services, seeing that the canons are maintained, but has no power to alter aught; and as there seems to be much difficulty in knowing when and by what the canons are maintained, and when and by what they are not maintained, we may imagine that the inquiries of a discreet archdeacon into the practices of a respectable and efficient parson will not be too close or searching in this matter of the canons. It is, however, easier to see whether the windows of a church are in repair, and whether the roof keeps out the rain, than it is to be intelligibly and efficiently explicit on the subject of canons, and, therefore, the outward structure of the parish church gives very safe employment to an archdeacon. The little difficulty as to church rates which sometimes follows upon an order for repairs is not uncongenial to the archdeacon's mind. It hinges upon politics, and upon a vexed political question in which the archdeacon, as a strong local Conservative, has hitherto had his victories. There remain so very few subjects which are still grateful to him in the same way, that church rates, with all their little impediments and embargoes, naturally present themselves to him as pleasant matters. And then the archdeacons receive reports from the churchwardens, if churchwardens have

anything to report,—any scandal of which to tell, or evil practices on the parson's side of which complaint has unfortunately become necessary according to the judgment of those churchwardens! By the word "scandal" let not the uninitiated reader be led to think that undignified tittle-tattle with his neighbour's churchwardens is the duty or the employment of an archdeacon. Open moral misconduct in a clergyman's life is supposed to be matter of justifiable public scandal—the scandal arising with the clerical sinner, and not with those who tell of the sin—and, as such, is, by the constitution of our Church, an especial subject for the care of our archdeacons, and indeed, under them, of our churchwardens. But in such matters archdeacons are liberal, and much prefer to wink an eye than to see too much. We may imagine that a churchwarden, misunderstanding his mission with regard to scandal, and taking upon himself too promptly the duty of watching the moral conduct of his parson, would not receive much comfort from a visiting archdeacon. No one knows better than an archdeacon—no one knows so well as an archdeacon—that it is needless and absurd to look for a St. Paul in every parsonage. He would, indeed, be very little at his own ease with a local St. Paul, much preferring a comfortable rector, who can take his glass of wine after dinner and talk pleasantly of old college days. St. Pauls, however, do not trouble him; nor is he troubled much by the scandals of his clerical neighbours; but he must be troubled sorely, I should think, by the increasing number and increasing influence around him of those "literate" clergymen who—from want of better, as we must in sorrow confess,—are flocking to us from Islington, Birkenhead, and such like fountains of pastoral care. The man who won't drink his glass of wine, and talk of his college, and put off for a few happy hours the sacred stiffnesses of the profession and become simply an English gentleman,—he is the clergyman whom in his heart the archdeacon does not love.

Thus the archdeacon is a bishop in little as regards his own archdeaconry, which may probably comprise half a diocese; and as an energetic financial secretary at the Treasury may, under an uninstructed Chancellor of the Exchequer, have much more to do with the finances of the country than the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, so may an energetic archdeacon have a much stronger influence on his clerical district than the bishop who is over him. He is the bishop's eye, or should be so, and may not improbably become the bishop's hand.

But the archdeacon, in spite of all his power and authority, though he be so great among his brother parsons, is hardly in the way to better promotion. High promotion in the Church now comes from political influence or from the

friendship of Ministers,—from those things, combined of course with high clerical attainments—and an archdeacon is not often in the way to obtain political influence or the friendship of Ministers. As deans live in towns, so do archdeacons live in the country; and like other country gentlemen they are always in opposition. And then they are men who have been made what they are by the bishops, and, therefore, are known well in their dioceses, but are not much known beyond them. They culminate in their own local dignity, and, knowing that they do so, they make the most of it. An archdeacon who is potent with his bishop, and who is popular with his clergymen, who works hard and can do so without undue meddling, who has a pleasant parish of his own and is not troubled by ambitious or indifferent curates, who can live on good terms with the squires around him, understanding how far it is expedient that he should be restricted by his coat, and how for he may go in discarding hyper-clerical constraint, is master of a position in which he need not envy the success of any professional gentleman in the kingdom. But he is not on the direct road to higher things, and will probably die in his rectory, an archdeacon to the last.

If an archdeacon be ambitious of moving in higher clerical matters than his archdeaconry affords him, he generally looks to gratify that desire by sitting in Convocation. This method of doing something more than routine duty is easier and less likely to fail than the other method of publishing a volume of sermons. Sermons are not read now as they were some thirty or forty years since, and Convocation has lately held its head a little up, obtaining recognition in the newspapers, and appearing to do something. An archdeacon is just the man to believe that Convocation can do much; and this faith on his part is evidence of a moral freshness and a real earnestness which adds a charm to his normal character. Who can bring himself to believe that a bishop believes in Convocation—a bishop, that is, who takes his seat in the House of Lords, talks to other peers, and knows what is going on in the well-instructed blasé London world? Such a one cannot but see, cannot but know, that Convocation is a clerical toy, a mere debating society to which belongs none of the vitality of power. But the archdeacon, fresh from the country, believes in Convocation, and works there with some real conviction that he is one of a clerical Parliament, and that he is animated by true parliamentary life.

But it is in his own rectory that an archdeacon must ever shine with the brightest light. I have said that he is a bishop in little, and I may also say that he is the very chief among parsons; and as the country parson—the country parson with pleasant parsonage, pleasanter wife, and plenty of children—is the true and proper type of an English clergyman, to which bishops, deans, canons, and

curates are mere adjuncts and necessary excrescences, so is the archdeacon the highest type of the country parson. He is always married—an exception here or there would but prove the rule—he generally has a large family; of course he has a pleasant rectory. He must be an earnest working parish clergyman, or he would hardly have been selected as an archdeacon. He is necessarily—I may say certainly—a gentleman. Alas! that the day should have gone by when the same might have been said of every clergyman bearing orders in the Church of England. He is a man of the world, as I have above explained, and as such it is not probable that he will be a fanatic, though living examples may probably be adduced that fanaticism can exist under an archdeacon's hat. And he walks just a head taller than other clergymen around him, receiving that pleasant attitude from the modest authority which he carries. Of all attitudes it is the most pleasant. He who stands high on a column can hardly talk pleasantly with those who stand round his pedestal; and that haranguing with loud voice from column top to column top is but a cold ceremonial conversation. Who can imagine two archbishops slapping each other's backs and being jolly together? But an archdeacon is not raised by his dignity above a capability for jovial intimacy, and yet he walks with his head pleasantly raised above the heads of other parsons around him.

V.

THE PARSON OF THE PARISH.

THE word parson is generally supposed to be a slang term for the rector, vicar, or incumbent of a parish, and, in the present day, is not often used without some intended touch of drollery,—unless by the rustics of country parishes who still cling to the old word. But the rustics are in the right, for of all terms by which clergymen of the Church of England are known, there is none more honourable in its origin than that of parson. By that word the parish clergyman is designated as the palpable and visible personage of the church of his parish, making that by his presence an intelligible reality which, without him, would be but an invisible idea. Parsons were so called before rectors or vicars were known, and in ages which had heard nothing of that abominable word incumbent. A parson proper, indeed, was above a vicar,—who originally was simply the curate of an impersonal parson, and acted as priest in a parish as to which some abbey or chapter stood in the position of parson. The title of rector itself is new-fangled in comparison with that of parson, and has no special ecclesiastical significance. The parson, properly so called, had not only the full charge of his parish, but the full benefit derivable from the tithes; and then he came to change his name and to be called politely a rector. The vicar was he who had the full charge of his parish, as also he has at present, vicariously at first for some abbey or chapter; and now, in these days, vicariously for some lay improprietor,—but who had and has the benefit only of the so-called small tithes; and then he also came to be called the parson. Rectors and vicars at present hold their livings by tenures which are equally firm, and they have done so now for more than four hundred years. The rustics above mentioned would be much surprised if told that their vicar was not a real parson. In speaking, therefore, of the parson of the parish, let us be understood to mean the parish clergyman, who has that full fruition of his living which is given by freehold possession. There is a pleasant flavour of old crusted port present to the palate of one’s imagination when mention is made of a rector, which he misses perhaps in inquiring after the vicar, whose beer may be better than his wine; and the rector cuts lustily from the haunch, while the vicar is scientific with the shoulder. But we expect, on the other hand, and are gratified in expecting, a kinder and more genial flow of clerical wit from the vicar than the rector gives us; and I have generally found the vicar’s armchair to be easier

than that of his elder brother. But here, in speaking of the English parson,—of the priest who has full clerical command in his parish,—no distinction between rector and vicar shall be made.

The parson of the parish is the proper type and most becoming form of the English clergyman as the captain of his ship is of the English naval officer. Admirals of the Red and Admirals of the Blue, and Commodores with authority ashore, are very fine fellows, and may perhaps be greater in their way than the captain can be in his; but for real naval efficiency and authority the captain of the ship on his own quarter-deck stands unequalled. And so it is with the parson of the parish in his own glebe. He is pure parson and nothing else, and in the daily work of his life, if he does that daily work diligently, he cannot but feel that he is devoting himself to those duties which properly belong to him. Whether a bishop in the House of Lords may so think of himself, or a bishop speaking from a platform, or a bishop in the turmoils of correspondence, or even a bishop dispensing his patronage, may be more doubtful. And the easy dean may doubt whether such ease was intended for him when he took upon himself to bear the arms of St. Paul. And the fellow of a college, even though he be tutor as well as fellow, may feel some qualms as to that word reverend with which he has caused the world to address him. But the parson in his parish must know that he has got himself into that place for which he has been expressly fitted by the orders he has taken. The curate, who is always a curate, to whom it is never given to exercise by his own right the highest clerical authority in his parish, cannot be said to have fulfilled the mission of his profession satisfactorily, let him have worked ever so nobly. He is as the lieutenant who never rises to be a captain. But the parson requires no further exaltation for clerical excellence. The higher he rises above parsondom, the less will he be of a clergyman. He may become a peer of Parliament, or the head of a chapter, or a local magistrate over other clergymen, as is an archdeacon; but as simply parish parson, he fills the most clerical office in his profession.

The parson of the parish in England, a few years since, was almost necessarily a man who had been educated at Oxford or Cambridge. An English parish might indeed have an Irishman from Trinity College, Dublin; and, now and again, an outsider was admitted into the fold as a shepherd. There was a small college in the north to fit northern candidates for northern congregations, and the rule was not absolutely absolute; but it prevailed so far that it was felt to be a rule. And thence came an assurance, in which trust was put more or less by all classes, that the parson of the parish was at least a gentleman. He was a man who had lived on equal terms with the highest of the land in point of birth, and

hence arose a feeling that was very general in rural parishes, and as salutary as it was general, that the occupant of the parsonage was as good a man as the occupant of the squire's house. It would be interesting to us to trace when this feeling first became common, knowing as we do know that for many years after the Reformation, and down even to a comparatively late date, the rural clergyman was anything but highly esteemed. We are told constantly that the parson left the dining-room when the pudding came in, and that he by no means did badly for himself in marrying the lady's maid. We most of us know the character of that eminent divine Dr. Tusher, who lived in the reign of Queen Anne. Then came the halcyon days of British clergymen,—the happy days of George III. and George IV., and the parson in his parsonage was as good a gentleman as any squire in his mansion or nobleman in his castle. There is, alas! a new order of things coming on us which threatens us with some changes, not for the better, in this respect. There are theological colleges here and there, and men and women talk of "literates." Who shall dare to say that it may not all be for the best? Who will venture to prophesy that there shall be less energetic teaching of God's word under the new order of things than under the old? But, as to the special man of whom we speak now, the English parish parson, with whom we all love to be on familiar terms,—that he will be an altered man, and as a man less attractive, less urbane, less genial,—in one significant word, less of a gentleman,—that such will be the result of theological colleges and the institution of "literates," no one who has thought of the subject will have any doubt.

And in no capacity is a gentleman more required or more quickly recognized than in that of a parson. Who has not seen a thrifty household mistress holding almost unconsciously between her finger and thumb a piece of silk or linen, and telling at once by the touch whether the fabric be good? This is done with almost an instinct in the matter, and habit has made perfect in the woman that which was born with her. Exactly in the same way, only much more unconsciously, will the English rustic take his new parson between his finger and thumb and find out whether he be a gentleman. The rustic cannot tell by what law he judges, but he knows the article, and the gentleman he will obey and respect, in the gentleman he will believe. Such is his nature. While in the other, who has not responded favourably to the touch of the rustic's finger, the rustic will not believe, nor by him will he be restrained, if restraint be necessary. The rustic in this may show, perhaps, both his ignorance and servility, as well as the skilled power of his fingering,—but such is his nature.

But the adult parson of the parish in England,—the clergyman who has

reached, if I may so say, the full dominion of his quarter-deck,—is still customarily a man from Oxford or from Cambridge, and it is of such a one that we speak here. He has probably been the younger son of a squire, or else his father has been a parson, as he is himself. Throughout his whole life he has lived in close communion with rural affairs, and has of them that exact knowledge which close communion only will give. He knows accurately, from lessons which he has learned unknowingly, the extent of the evil and the extent of the good which exists around him, and he adapts himself to the one and to the other. Against gross profligacy and loud sin he can inveigh boldly, and he can make men and women to shake in their shoes by telling them of the punishment which will follow such courses; but with the peccadilloes dear to the rustic mind he knows how to make compromises, and can put up with a little drunkenness, with occasional sabbath-breaking, with ordinary oaths, and with church somnolence. He does not expect much of poor human nature, and is thankful for moderate results. He is generally a man imbued with strong prejudice, thinking ill of all countries and all religions but his own; but in spite of his prejudices he is liberal, and though he thinks ill of men, he would not punish them for the ill that he thinks. He has something of bigotry in his heart, and would probably be willing, if the times served his purpose, to make all men members of the Church of England by Act of Parliament; but though he is a bigot, he is not a fanatic, and as long as men will belong to his Church, he is quite willing that the obligations of that Church shall sit lightly upon them. He loves his religion and wages an honest fight with the devil; but even with the devil he likes to deal courteously, and is not averse to some occasional truces. He is quite in earnest, but he dislikes zeal; and of all men whom he hates, the over-pious young curate, who will never allow ginger to be hot in the mouth, is the man whom he hates the most. He carries out his Bible teaching in preferring the publican to the Pharisee, and can deal much more comfortably with an occasional backslider than he can with any man who always walks, or appears to walk, in the straight course.

It almost seems that something approaching to hypocrisy were a necessary component part of the character of the English parish parson, and yet he is a man always on the alert to be honest. It is his misfortune that he must preach higher than his own practice, and that he is driven to pretend to think that a stricter course of life is necessary than that which he would desire to see followed out even in his own family. As the mealman in the description of his flours can never go below “middlings,” knowing that they who wish to get the cheapest article would never buy it if it were actually ticketed as being of the worst quality, so is the parson driven to ticket all his articles above their real value. He cannot tell his people what amount of religion will really suffice for them, knowing that he will never get from them all that he asks; and thus he is compelled to have an inner life and an outer,—an inner life, in which he squares his religious views with his real ideas as to that which God requires from his creatures; and an outer life, in which he is always demanding much in order that he may get little. From this it results that a parish parson among his own friends differs much from the parish parson among his parishioners, and that he is always, as it were, winking at those who know him as a man, while he is most eager in his exercitations among those who only know him as a clergyman.

The parish parson generally has a grievance, and is much attached to it,—in which he is like all other men in all other walks of life. He not uncommonly maintains a mild opposition to his bishop, upon whom he is apt to look down as belonging to a new order of things, and whom he regards, on account of this new order of things, as being not above half a clergyman. As he rises in years and repute he becomes a rural dean, and exercises some small authority out of his own parish, by which, however, his character as a parish parson, pure and simple, is somewhat damaged. He is great in the management of his curate, and arrives at such perfection in his professional career that he inspires his clerk with mingled awe and affection.

Such is the English parish parson, as he was almost always some fifty years since, as he is still in many parishes, but as he will soon cease to become. The homes of such men are among the pleasantest in the country, just reaching in well-being and abundance that point at which perfect comfort exists and magnificence has not yet begun to display itself. And the men themselves have no superiors in their adaptability to social happiness. How pleasantly they talk when the room is tiled, and the outward world is shut out for the night! How they delight in the modest pleasures of the table, sitting in unquestioned ease over a ruddy fire, while the bottle stands ready to the grasp, but not to be grasped too frequently or too quickly. Methinks the eye of no man beams so kindly on

me as I fill my glass for the third time after dinner as does the eye of the parson of the parish.

VI.

THE TOWN INCUMBENT.

DR. JOHNSON tells us that an incumbent is he who is in present possession of a benefice, and by quoting Swift shows us that, though in possession of a benefice, the incumbent may be in possession of very little benefit from his benefice. “In many places,” Swift says, as quoted by Johnson, “the whole ecclesiastical dues are in lay hands, and the incumbent lieth at the mercy of his patron.” The word, therefore, is legitimately used in its ecclesiastical sense, and can apparently be legitimately used in no other sense; but, nevertheless, it has no pleasantly ecclesiastical flavour, and carries with itself none of that acknowledged right to respect which is attached to other clerical titles. To be named as a curate is almost better than to be named as an incumbent; for the curate is supposed to be young, and is on his proper road to higher church grades, whereas the incumbent is one who has obtained his promotion, but who is, after all, only an—incumbent. Every parish parson in the kingdom is no doubt an incumbent, but in ordinary parlance we hardly apply the name to the country rector or to the vicar blessed with a pleasant parsonage. The incumbent, as we generally recognize him, is a clergyman who has obtained a town district, who has a church of his own therein from whence he draws what income he may make, chiefly by the letting of sittings, and is so called simply because no other clerical title seems properly to belong to him. No clerical aspirant would be an incumbent,—so to be called,—who could become a parson proper.

The town incumbent, therefore, is rarely a man well to do in the world. He is one who earns his bread hardly in the sweat of his brow, and too often earns but very poor bread. It is not he who has married or who will marry the bishop’s daughter. Indeed, before he becomes a town incumbent he has generally put himself beyond such promotion as that by marrying the girl of his heart without a penny. Had he not done so, and thus become terribly in want of an income,—an income at once, though it be a small income,—he would not have taken a district church, and have submitted his neck to the yoke of town incumbency. He knows that in doing so he is consenting to place himself in that branch of his profession which is the least honoured, though not perhaps the least honourable. He is subjecting himself to the heaviest clerical work with but a small prospect of large clerical loaves or fine clerical fishes; and he is prepared to live in a

much lower social rank than that which is enjoyed by his more fortunate brothers in the country. The country parson is all but the squire's equal,—is below the squire in parish standing only as a younger brother is below his elder; but the town incumbent is not equal to the town mayor, and in the estimation of many of his fellow-townsmen is hardly superior to the town beadle. Indeed, he is too often simply recognized as the professional gentleman who has taken his family into the last built new house in Albert Terrace. There, in Albert Terrace, he looks out upon a brickfield, and writes his sermons with very little of that prestige which belongs to the genuine British parson of the parish. His flock are his hearers, not his parishioners. They sit under him, some because his district church of St. Mary is the nearest to them, some because the sittings at St. Mary's are 5*s*. 6*d*. a year cheaper than they are at the next place of worship,—for St. Mary's is a place of worship rather than a church to the minds of the townsmen, —and some because they prefer his preaching to the preaching of another town incumbent. They sit under him, but they are not his people jure divino, for him to deal with them concerning their eternal welfare as he may please. He does not even know the name of the man who lives next door to him in Albert Terrace; whereas the true parson of the parish knows every detail as to every child born within his domain. The one is simply the town incumbent of St. Mary's as another man may be an attorney, and a third an apothecary; whereas the rural parson is the personage of his parish.

To the position of the town incumbent are attached none of those half-barbarous but picturesque circumstances which still make the position of our country parsons almost unintelligible to the inquiring foreigner. One clergyman, with little or nothing to do in his parish, has fifteen hundred a year and a beautiful house for doing that little,—which after all is done by a curate; while his neighbour in the next parish with four times the area and eight times the population, receives one hundred and fifty pounds a year in lieu of the little tithes! And yet neither does the one feel himself to have been unduly favoured, nor does the other think himself to be injured! Such are the more-than-half-barbarous, but still picturesque circumstances of our rural parishes. But there is nothing either barbarous or picturesque about the town incumbent. He has allotted to him a district, with such or such a population,—a certain number of thousands over whom it must be much beyond his power to achieve anything approaching to a pastoral surveillance,—with a church in the middle of it, and an income which will fluctuate as the seats in it may be full or empty. Here, in this arrangement, all the principles of political economy are kept in view. Here are supply and demand. Those who want him will come to him and pay him,—as

they do to the baker or the dentist. If they don’t think he suits them, they will leave him,—as also in similar circumstances they leave their baker and their dentist. If he can fill his church he will live well and become sleek. If his gifts in preaching are small, or if his piety be unrecognized and his labours disregarded, he will live badly and his outward man will become rusty. Among town incumbents the rusty greatly exceed the sleek in numbers.

The town incumbent of whom we are here speaking generally finds himself located among the growing outskirts of a manufacturing town. Here he sees the world increasing around him with wonderful rapidity, and sees also much of the success of the world. The man who began his struggle in life as a manufacturer, when he, the incumbent, also began his struggle, soon rises from step to step, adding chimney to chimney, and buys his villa residence and sets up his carriage. In his career, failure was, of course, possible, but the road to success was open to him, and has been quickly reached. This his neighbour, the clergyman, sees, and tells himself, not without bitterness, that for him there is no such road. For him there must always be poverty and hard work,—that worst of all poverty which has to hide itself under a black coat, and work which is not only ceaseless, but too often thankless and apparently without adequate result! This must be his lot in life, he tells himself,—unless he can preach himself into a reputation. If he can do that, if he can be a M‘Neale or an English Ward Beecher, then, indeed, there will be a career open to him. Then he will be sleek, and people will ask him to dinner, and the wife of his bosom will hold up her head among other dames, and his name will become familiar in the columns of newspapers. This after all is what men want, town incumbents as well as others; and so the town incumbent sets himself to work to make a reputation for himself by pulpit eloquence. As he walks along the dull new streets of his district he fills himself with this ambition, and declares to himself that he will be great as a preacher. He will fill his seats, and draw men to him,—or, if not men, at least women. He will denounce sins with a loud voice and eager accents. And he will denounce not only sins, but heresies also, and lax doctrines. By denouncing simply sin few clerical aspirants have become noted among their neighbours, but the man who will denounce his neighbours’ opinions as well as his sins will become famous. And so the town incumbent settles himself to his desk and goes to work.

It will be said, no doubt, that a monstrous accusation is here brought against a body of men who are very eager in doing good works. It is not meant as any accusation. No charge is intended to be made against town incumbents, or against any clergyman, in the description here given. They endeavour simply to succeed in their profession, as every man blessed with activity will attempt to

succeed in his profession if it be one in which there is room for success. Given the church to fill, and the incumbency to be made valuable by filling it, and it is simply human nature that an energetic man shall endeavour to fill his church and make his profession valuable. He cannot fill his church by visiting the poor. He cannot earn for himself even a decent position in the district in which he lives by a careful performance of ordinary clerical duties. If he simply reads the services and officiates at the communion table, and preaches drowsy sermons, he will starve on some 200*l.* a year, and never get his head above water, either as regards money or reputation. Of course he will do his best for himself, and of course he will teach himself to believe that in doing so he is doing the best for the cause which he really loves in his heart. He is not a bad man, or a hypocrite, because he denounces heresies and lax doctrines in a loud voice, instead of endeavouring to teach his people simply that they should not lie, or get drunk, or steal. He is probably a very good man; but he is a good man who would like to have 1,000*l.* a year and a name, instead of 200*l.* a year and no name at all.

But he probably fails. It is sad to say it, and sad to think of it, but failure is the ordinary lot of man. A few among us do advance far enough in the accomplishment of their aspirations to merit the reputation of success, and they are heard of in the world; but the mass of men strive for a while to do something, and then sink down into the common ruck, finding the struggle to be too hard for them. They earn bread and live; and at last, perhaps, are contented. So it is with the town incumbent. He preaches for a while with all his force. He spends sleepless nights in the composition of his sermons. He becomes bolder and bolder in his denouncings. But it is of no avail. He has not the gift of pouring forth either honey or liquid fire from his lips, and his energy is all wasted. He throws himself in despair on the bosom of his wife, who alone has believed in him, and declares that his people have adders' ears and hearts of stone. From that time forth, with saddened spirit and heart all sick within him, he trudges on upon his daily round of duties, not cursing the day, but reviling the day with an asperity purely clerical, on which he became—a town incumbent.

But it is possible that he does not fail. There are, no doubt, town incumbents who succeed in preaching themselves into fortunes and reputations, and who become very sleek and very famous, who are able to mount higher than their pulpits, on to platforms, and can then enjoy the inestimable privilege of abusing their opponents without fear of reply. But, of all clergymen, the successful town preacher seems to be the farthest removed from those clerical excellences of charity and good-will among men, and the farthest also from those special clerical duties for which our clergy are most valued. They will preach;—yes, by

the hour together! Nine times a week we have heard of such a one preaching, and have then known him to speak of himself as a martyr in the service! But they will do nothing else.

For the unsuccessful town incumbent we all of us have sympathy. His work is hard, his payment is small, and his lines have fallen to him in unpleasant places. But for the successful town incumbent, for the clergyman who fills his church with prayerful, tearful, excitable, but at the same time remunerative ladies, few men can have any sympathy.

The position of the town incumbent is not, in truth, in unison with the Church of England as established among us. The glory of the English parson is that his position is ensured to him whether he satisfies those whom he is called upon to serve, or whether he does not satisfy them. Consequently he can be, and is, independent of his congregation. He will wish of course to be on pleasant terms with them, but it will not be for his pocket's sake. And it seems that such independence as this is essential to the position of a clergyman of the Church of England. It is doubtless true that the number of rural rectors and vicars among us will never be increased, whereas the number of town incumbents will continue to increase from year to year. As the population grows, so will their number grow. But it is to be hoped that the peculiar evils of their position may be remedied by altered arrangements as to their income. If this be not possible, or be not done, we shall hardly find that sons of English gentlemen will continue to seek the Church as a profession.

VII.

THE COLLEGE FELLOW WHO HAS TAKEN ORDERS.

IN speaking of a college fellow, a fellow of a college at Oxford or Cambridge is the fellow of whom we intend to speak. There may, probably, be other fellowships going in these prolific days, as there are other universities, and degrees given by other academical bodies; but we will claim, for the moment, to belong to the old school in such matters, and will recognize as college fellows only those who are presented to us as fellows by the two great sister universities.

When a man becomes a fellow various possessions and privileges are conferred upon him, such as a certain income, a certain rank in his college, a residence within his college, and a place at the high table in hall; and among these privileges and possessions is the great privilege—of a title to orders. In respect to some fellowships this privilege may be enjoyed or neglected according to the will of the individual fellow. In respect to others the fellow must avail himself of it, and must become a clergyman, if not absolutely at once, then within a short period of his election. And there is a third condition, such as that which prevails at the greatest of all our colleges, namely, Trinity, Cambridge, in accordance with which certain years of grace are allowed, and a fellow may remain a fellow for a period of years without taking orders. But, as we believe, at all these colleges a fellowship confers a title to orders,—the right, that is, on the part of the fellow to demand ordination from the bishop; and, as a rule, this privilege is enjoyed. As we are dealing in these sketches with none but clergymen, the fellow who has availed himself of this title is the fellow whom we will keep in view.

All our readers will know what is meant by taking orders,—the process by which a layman becomes a deacon or a priest under the bishop’s hands; and most of them will understand that a title to orders is the possession in prospect of such sacerdotal position as will justify a bishop in turning a layman into a clergyman. Thus, for instance, a man has a title to orders who can show that there is a living waiting for his enjoyment and for his services. The offer of a curacy confers a title, and this is the title by which the great body of aspirants to the sacerdotal profession claim their right to admission. Such claimants the bishop is bound to ordain, providing that they show themselves to be fit;—but without a title, or recognized place of clerical duty ready for the candidate as soon as he shall

become a clergyman, no bishop will ordain any one. And among other titles there is the title conferred by a college fellowship. The fellow of a college goes before a bishop demanding to be ordained simply because he is a fellow,—and the bishop ordains him. It is a great privilege, for that man is Reverend from that time forth for evermore. In all future ages he will be written down as having been Reverend.

There can be no doubt that when this pleasant arrangement became a portion of college law there was good reason for it. The colleges were ecclesiastical bodies, generally if not entirely under ecclesiastical governance, and a fellow not an ecclesiastic would have been very much in the way at most of them. Men who were clergymen, and men who were not, differed much more strongly then than they do now, both as to the inner life of the man and the outward appearance of the man. And it was then recognized as a part of the great Church system of the day, that in many places ecclesiastics, who were of course unmarried, should live together, passing their time in that state which was then considered to be for them the most salutary and to others the most useful,—saying prayers for the laity which the laity could hardly be got to say for themselves, and maintaining by their continued presence at the universities something of the result of their education, and some show of learning and piety. In those days the fellows of our colleges were monks of a favoured order,—especially favoured because they were, or were presumed to be, especially learned. Looking at our Church, our colleges, and our religion, as they then existed, we shall feel little doubt as to the propriety of fellows having been clergymen in those days. But now,—now that things are so much altered in our Church and in our colleges and in our religion,—sometimes a doubt does creep upon us as to the expediency of this title to orders which a fellowship conveys, and the use which is made of this title.

In the Roman Catholic Church worship seems to have been ordained for the gratification of God. The people were, and indeed are still, taught that God and his saints like prayers and incense and church services, and will reward those who are liberal in bestowing them. It is, therefore, natural that in the Church of Rome there should be,—or, more natural still, that there should have been when this idea was more prevalent in Roman Catholic countries than it is now,—legions of priests whose church administrations were performed with a view to their effect on the Creator, and with no view to any effect on man. But in Protestant countries worship is used, as we suppose, simply for the use of man. It is the duty of the clergyman, as clergyman, to assist other men in worshipping rather than to achieve anything by worship on his own part. If such be the case,—and such appears to be at any rate the existing theory of our own Protestant

Church,—it is difficult to conceive how any man can become a clergyman of the Church of England who has no intention whatsoever of helping others to worship,—who has not before him any prospect of performing the duties of a clergyman.

It will be said, doubtless, that the statement here made is wrong and untrue, because the clerical fellow of a college has always before him the prospect of succeeding to a college living, and does generally end his days as the parson of a parish to which he has been presented by his college in the regular order of good things accruing to him. It is quite true that the clerical fellow does in this way become a real clergyman, or a parson proper if I may so call him, in the latter half of his life, when at forty or forty-five he begins to feel that he would like to have something softer near to him than his gyp or laundrywoman, and bethinks himself of some Eliza whom he has long half loved, but would never before allow himself to love altogether,—because of his fellowship. The fellow then drops his fellowship, and takes a living, and goes to his parish and becomes a real clergyman. But the fact that he does so offers only another and a stronger objection to his original ordination, while it does not, in truth, at all invalidate that already stated. It is true that the fellow becomes a clergyman at last; but who will maintain that any man has fitly used a profession to which he has never applied himself during those years of his life in which his energy was the strongest, and which he embraced without any view to using it at all? The fellow of a college is ordained in order that he may hold his fellowship,—because in old days, when the fellowship was instituted, fellows were supposed to live the life of monks. We do not think that any existing fellow of a college at Oxford or Cambridge will declare that he has undergone ordination with an express view to the living to which he may succeed after ten or fifteen years.

And now we will venture to say a few words as to that stronger objection to the practice of ordaining fellows which we maintain is to be found in this practice of their succeeding to college livings by rotation. When we employ a doctor or a lawyer or an architect, we select a man who knows his profession, and who has proved that he knows it by his practice. Young men entering these professions make their way upwards to that reputation which will bring them practice by attaching themselves to those who are older and more experienced, or by consenting to practise for a while, as it were, experimentally, without much view to income. And in the Church generally the same order of things prevails. It is admitted on all hands within the church, by bishops, by archdeacons, by all working parish clergymen,—by all men who have interested themselves on the subject,—that the only fit education for a parish parson is to be found in a parish

curacy. As a man to be a good bishop should have been a parish parson, so to be a good parson a man should have been a curate. That we take to be good clergyman's law; but that law is infringed on every occasion on which a college living is taken by a resident college fellow. A college fellow may, of course, become a curate, and when such a one succeeds to his living all is well. But the man who does so should have been ordained on the title of his curacy, not on the title of his fellowship.

Does any man believe that that very pleasant fellow whom he has known at college, and who has sparkled so brightly in common room, who has been so energetic in the management of the college finances, and in the reform of college abuses,—who has gradually succeeded during his fifteen years of residence in putting off all those outward clerical symbols which as a novice he found himself constrained to adopt, and who during his annual visit to London has become a well-instructed man of the world,—can any one, we say, believe that such a one at the age of forty can be fit to go into a parish and undertake the cure of the parochial souls? There are, we fancy, some who do so believe; but they are those who think that nothing is necessary to make a parson but orders and a living,—that the profession of a clergyman is unlike any other trade or calling known, requiring for the due performance of its duties no special fitness, no training, no skill, no practice, no thought, and no preparation.

The Reverend Joseph Brown stands senior on the list of the fellows of St. Lazarus, within the walls of which happy institution he has lived as fellow and bursar for the last thirty years. No man understands better than the Reverend Joseph Brown the proper temperature of port wine, or the amount of service which a college servant should render. But at the age of fifty-five he falls into unexpectedly tender relations with an amiable female, and on that account he undertakes the pastoral care of the souls of the parish of Eiderdown! What if Eiderdown got its doctor in the same way, or its butcher? What if the ladies of Eiderdown were bound to employ a milliner sent to them after some such fashion? But no man or woman can conceive the possibility of any workman presuming to attempt to earn his bread by his work after such a fashion as this,—excepting always a clergyman. In the Church, because it is so picturesque and well-beloved in its old-fashioned garments, we can put up with anomalies which elsewhere would be unendurable. A bishop uses his patronage as personal property, and college fellows become clergymen and succeed to livings by right, as though in this business of the cure of souls, and in this business only, there were no necessity for that progress in skill and efficiency which all other callings demand! There was a time when men became captains of ships and colonels of

regiments in much the same way; but the picturesque absurdities of the army and navy were less endearing than those of the Church, and they therefore have been made to succumb.

It will probably be admitted that the Reverend Joseph Brown, much as he was liked by all who knew him at St. Lazarus, and much as he was respected by those who were brought into collegiate relations with him, was not the very best pastor whom the Church of England could have given to the people of Eiderdown; but many who will admit this will still think that in being ordained as a young man on the title of his fellowship, he did that which was becoming to him as one who had passed through his university education with honour and success. Fellows of colleges always have been clergymen, holding high characters as such in their profession, and why not the Reverend Joseph Brown? Is it not also known to us that such a man, located as a bachelor in his college, is more likely to lead a good and sober life as a clergyman than he would do as a layman? Such, probably, would be the arguments used in defence of clerical fellowships; and we will admit that the Reverend Joseph Brown has throughout his whole career given support to such arguments by his conduct. But yet he has never in truth been a clergyman. Though an ordained priest, he has done no priestly work, and has always been somewhat angry when any one has suggested to him that he should take a part in any clerical duties. At first, indeed, he was somewhat careful in maintaining outward clerical symbols, and was occasionally anxious to feed himself with inward clerical thoughts, having been moved thereto by the terrible earnestness of his ordination,—by the solemnity of a ceremony which, though he had determined to regard it simply as the means of placing him in the possession of certain temporal advantages, so impressed itself upon him as being personal to himself, that he could not at once escape from its bonds. But gradually he overcame that weakness, and found himself enabled to live, as any other gentleman might live, an easy pleasant life, with nothing of the clergyman about him but the word Reverend attached to his name on his cards and letters. The colour of his lower vestments approaches perhaps nearer to black than it would have done had he not been so encumbered, and men in the world at large are perhaps a little less free in their remarks before him than they would be before other men. This he regrets painfully; but it is all that he has to regret. The fellows, his predecessors in the old days,—who were, in fact, monks as well as fellows,—were called upon to live in accordance with certain monastic and ascetic rules, which they either obeyed to their supposed glory, or disobeyed to their supposed peril. Matins, lauds, nones, vespers, complines, and what not, were their lot,—and came upon them heavily enough, no doubt, if they

did their duty; but now-a-days we do not care much, even at our universities, for lauds and complines. Undergraduates indeed must “keep” so many chapels a week, but the clerical fellow is under no such bond. Even if he were under such bond he could say his prayers in his college chapel as well as a layman as he can as a clergyman. And one may suppose that as a layman he would abstain from doing so when the opportunity is provided with an easier conscience than he can have as a priest. But his conscience is easy, because he knows that in fact he is no clergyman. He has simply undergone a certain ceremony in order that he may enjoy his fellowship,—and hereafter take a living should the amiable and tender relationship of matrimony fall in his way.

VIII.

THE CURATE IN A POPULOUS PARISH.

WOULD that it were possible to enforce upon the bishops, as a part of their duty, the task of furnishing annually a statistical return which should show what proportion of the clerical duties in their dioceses was done by curates, and what proportion by other clergymen; and also what payment had been made to the curates for the work so done, and what payment to those who were not curates. Such statement might show us for instance, in a tabulated form, how many morning services and how many evening services had been performed by each curate, how many sermons preached by him, how many children baptized, how many dead men buried, how many marriages celebrated, and, above all, how many cottages visited. Then, if we could see, together with all this, what amount of the payment received could be justly appropriated to each task performed, we should have some clear idea of the manner in which the revenues of the Church are divided among those who do the work of the Church. We all know that no such statistical information is within our reach. The bishops are altogether beyond our power, and cannot be ordered by any one to do anything. The idea of comparing the work done with the payment given for the work would be horrible to the imagination of every beneficed clergyman in the Church of England. It would be horrible even to the imagination of the curates themselves, who, like the needy knifegrinder, have no adequate conception of the injustice they are themselves suffering; and who are, as a body, so well inclined towards the rules and traditions of the profession to which they belong, that they have not as yet taught themselves to wish for a change. No clergyman in our Church has, as yet, taken it into his head that there should be any analogy, or any proportion, between work and wages in his profession, as there is such analogy and such proportion in all other professions. There is a something of revolutionary tendency in the suggestion that clergymen should be paid in accordance with their work, which is almost profane to the mind of a clergyman, and which vexes him sorely as being subversive of that grand position which he holds as the owner of a temporal freehold. The very irregularity of the payments still made to parish parsons, and formerly made to bishops, half justifies a latent idea that clergymen, though they work and receive payment, are not labourers working for hire. A second son inherits his living as the elder son inherits his estate;—and the

rector who receives his living from his bishop is equally firm in his possession. He may be blessed with 1,000*l.* a year for doing very little, or have 200*l.* a year for doing a great deal; but in either case what he receives has no connection with what he does, and therefore no such statistics as those of which we have spoken can be supplied. No revelation will be made to us tending in any degree to give us the information for which we ask.

That there will come an adjustment between work and wages in the Church, as in all other professions, is certain. Indeed, much has been done towards this adjustment already, though not after the fashion above proposed. The incomes of all bishops have been arranged on such an idea,—to the great detriment, as has before been explained, of episcopal magnificence. Deans and canons have fallen beneath the levelling hands of ecclesiastico-political economists. And out of the funds which have been acquired by these adjustments and curtailings of ecclesiastical wealth, certain incumbents working in populous parishes have received augmentations of pay, making their incomes up to the very modest stipend of 300*l.* per annum. But nothing in all this has touched the great body of the clergymen of the Church of England, or has as yet shown any general recognition of the principle that the hire of the labourer should be proportioned to the labour done.

In speaking of the work and wages of curates, it must of course be admitted that in all professions and all trades the beginner should be contented to work his way up, taking at first, and being contented to take, a modest remuneration for the very best that he can do. The young barrister does not get fifty-guinea fees at once, nor does the young medical practitioner jump at once into the good graces of the old ladies and gentlemen who make the fortunes of mature doctors; but at the bar, and in the profession of physic, there is at least some proportion kept. The man who gets the most money is generally the hardest-worked man;—or if, in some cases, it be not so, the lower man who works harder than him above him receives something like a fair share of the spoil. If he be successful in work he is successful in pay also. Being successful in work, he will not work without success in pay. But the curate, let his success in work be what it may, does not even think that he has, on that account, a claim to proportionate remuneration. If he can get to the soft side of his bishop, if he have an aunt that knows some friend of the Lord Chancellor, or a father who has means to buy a living for him, —and he be not himself of too tender a conscience in the matter of simony,— then he may hope to rise. But of rising in his profession because he is fit to rise he has no hope. The idea has not, as yet, come home to him that he has a positive claim upon his bishop because he has worked hard and honestly in his

profession.

It is notorious that a rector in the Church of England, in the possession of a living of, let us say, a thousand a year, shall employ a curate at seventy pounds a year, that the curate shall do three-fourths or more of the work of the parish, that he shall remain in that position for twenty years, taking one-fourteenth of the wages while he does three-fourths of the work, and that nobody shall think that the rector is wrong or the curate ill-used! All the world,—that is to say, the rector's friends and the curate's friends also,—have been so long accustomed to this state of things, the bishops have had it so long under their eyes, the idea of a temporal freehold in a living being a good thing for the parson instead of a good thing for the parishioner has got such a hold of us all,—that we none of us see the injustice of the present practice, or stop to inquire how it grew up among us, originating in a practice that was not unjust. When the rectors and vicars were very many among us in comparison to the curates, when a curate was needed in but few parishes,—the ordinary tenure of a curacy was, of course, short. There have been instances, no doubt, since the earliest years in which curates were employed, of curates who have remained curates till they were old men; but the succession from the smaller number of the inferior grade to the much larger number of the superior grade was, of course, rapid, and a clerical babe would be contented to take a curacy even at seventy pounds a year, who might reasonably expect to be raised from that humble position after a service of two or three years. But now-a-days, since the immense increase of population has forced upon us an increase of curates,—any increase in the number of endowed rectors and vicars being out of our reach,—the clerical babe must become a clerical old man on the same pittance, and it is coming to pass that young men whose friends have been at the trouble of giving them a good education, do not like the prospect of becoming curates, without any prospect of rising from their curacies to the glories and comforts of full-blown parsondom.

And in considering this matter we must remember that the curate of to-day is deprived of a great advantage which belonged as a matter of course to the curate of yesterday. The latter was presumed to be, by virtue of his calling, a gentleman, and as such possessed almost a right to be admitted into society which neither his fortune nor his own abilities would have opened to him. He was a gentleman as it were by Act of Parliament, and it was understood that he might receive where he could not give, and so enjoy many of those good things which a liberal income produces, though such things were beyond the reach of his own purse. Thus the pains of his position were mitigated. And in this way the poor clergyman mixed with men who were not poor, and received a something

from his status in the world, to which no disgrace was attached, though it was something which he could not return. But we may say that all this is now altered. A clergyman is no longer a gentleman by Act of Parliament. Till the other day he was admitted into all families simply because he had a place in the reading-desk of the parish church;—but he is no longer so admitted. Things have become changed within a few years, and mothers are becoming as chary of admitting the curate among their flocks—till they know exactly what are the curate's bearings —as they have ever been in regard to the new young doctor till they have known his bearings. Under these circumstances, all men who care for the Church of England are beginning to ask themselves how the race of curates is to be continued.

Let us for a moment look at the life of a curate of the present day. We will suppose that he comes from some college at Cambridge or Oxford. We will so suppose because Cambridge and Oxford still give us the majority of our clergymen, though we can hardly hope that they will long continue to be so bountiful. He enters the Church, moved to do so by what we all call a special vocation. During the period of his education he feels himself to be warmed towards the teaching of the English Protestant Church, and as he finds the ministry easily in his way he enters it—and at about the age of twenty-four he becomes a curate. He is at first gratified at the ease with which are confided to him the duties of an assistant in the cure of souls, and does not think much of the stipend which is allotted to him. He has lived as a boy at the university upon two hundred a year without falling much into debt, and thinks that as a man he can live easily upon seventy pounds. Hitherto he has indulged himself with many things. He has smoked cigars, and had his wine parties, and been luxurious; but as a curate he will be delighted to deny himself all luxuries. His heart will be in the service of his God, and his appetites shall be to him as thorns which he will make to crackle in the fire. To eat bread without butter and to drink tea without milk is a glory to him,—and so he begins the world.

And for a year or two, if he be not weak-minded, things do not go badly with him. The parson's wife sees far into his character, and is kind to him, stirred thereto by a conviction of which she is herself unconscious, that the money payment made by her husband is insufficient. The dry bread and the brown tea are still sweetened by reminiscences of St. Paul's sufferings, and the young man consoles himself by inward whisperings of forty stripes save one five times repeated. To be persecuted is as yet sweet to him, and he knows that in doing all the rector's work for seventy pounds a year he is being persecuted. But anon there grows up within his breast a feeling in which the grievance as regards this

world is brought into unpleasant contact with the persecution in which he has a pietistic delight. He still rejoices in the reflection that he cannot possibly buy for himself a much-needed half-dozen of new shirts, but is uncomfortably angry because the rector himself is not only idle, but has bought a new carriage. And then he gives way a little—the least in the world—and at the end of the year owes the butcher a small bill which he cannot settle. From that day the vision of St. Paul melts before his eyes, and he sighs for replenished fleshpots.

But he still works hard in his curacy,—perhaps harder than ever, driven thereto by certain inward furies. What will become of him,—of him, with his seventy pounds a year, and nothing further to expect as professional result, if he be deserted by his religious ecstasy? But religious ecstasy will not permit itself to be maintained on such terms, and gradually there creeps upon him the heart-breaking disappointment of a soured and an injured man. In the midst of this he takes to himself a wife. It is always so. The man who is most in the dark will be the best inclined to take a leap in the dark. In the lowest period of his despondency he becomes a married man—enjoying at the moment a little fitful gleam of shortlived worldly pleasure. Then, again, he is a male saint for a few months, with a female saint beside him; and after that all collapses, and he goes down into irrevocable misery and distress. In a few years we know of him as a beggar of old clothes, as a man whom from time to time his friends are asked to lift from unutterable depths of distress by donations which no gentleman can take without a crushed spirit—as a pauper whom the poor around him know to be a pauper, and will not, therefore, respect as a minister of their religion. In all this there has been very little, we may say nothing, of fault in the curate himself. As a young man, almost as a boy, he placed himself in a position of which he knew the old conditions rather than those then existing around him—and through that mistake he fell.

But young men are now beginning to know, and the fathers of young men also, what are at present the true conditions of the Church of England as a profession, and they who have been nurtured softly, and who have any choice, will not undergo its trials—and its injustice! For men of a lower class in life, who have come from harder antecedents, the normal seventy pounds per annum may suffice; but all modern Churchmen will understand what must be the effect on the Church if such be the recruits to which the Church must trust.

IX.

THE IRISH BENEFICED CLERGYMAN.

THE difference between an Irish and an English parson is greater, perhaps, than that which exists between Irishmen and Englishmen of any other special denomination, and is of a nature exactly contrary to that which generally marks the distinctive character of the Milesian and the John Bull. The normal Irishman is a jolly fellow; but the normal Irish Protestant clergyman is a severe, sombre man, one who speaks of life in sad, subdued tones,—unless when he is minatory in the pulpit,—one who looks at things around him with a continual remembrance that life is but a span long, that men are but grass of the field, that the sickle is ready and the oven heated, and that it is worth no man's while to be comfortable here on earth. He is preaching every moment of his life, preaching in his gait, preaching in every tone of his voice, preaching in every act that he does, preaching in every turn of his eyes. Find him asleep, and you will find him preaching with a long-protracted, indignant, low-church, Protestant snore, very eloquent as to the scarlet woman. But an English parson, let him be ever so much given to preaching, preaches only from his pulpit. He may scold, advise, or cajole in the school, the cottage, or the drawing-room; but he keeps his sermons for his Sunday work. An Irish clergyman does not shake hands with you without leaving a text or two in your palm,—with his own special comments on their tenour as regards the Pope.

The reason of this is not far to seek. The Irish clergyman does not live in the midst of Protestants with whom he sympathizes, but is surrounded by Roman Catholics with whom he cannot sympathize, and against whom he is driven to feel almost a personal enmity, not only by reason of their creed which he sorely hates, but by reason also of the anomalies of his own position which are so hateful to them. He is always in a state of feud,—in a state of feud, not only against the devil, as should be the case with all of us whether clergymen or laymen, but against Antichrist on the Seven Hills, against the scarlet woman who goes about devouring, against the Pope who is to him a ravenous old woman as to whom he cannot say whether he is most ravenous or most old-womanish, against a creed which has for him none of the attractions of Christianity,—in which he sees only the small points of divergence from his own, and which is, therefore, worse to him than the creed of Mussulman or of Jew. He is therefore

always serious, as is a soldier who is ever buckling on his armour, and somewhat sad, as is a soldier who cannot get his enemy down so that he may take away his standard and trample on him. The Irish Protestant clergyman is ever longing to lead troops of the Roman Catholics of Ireland in triumph to the top of the Tarpeian rock of conversion; but they succeed in bringing thither but one and another, and these one and another are such that they hardly grace the chariot wheels of their victors.

The popular idea of an Irish clergyman in England is, we think, somewhat incorrect. He is often supposed to be an idle man, listless for want of occupation, given to self-indulgence, ill-educated, eager only in defence of his temporalities, and warmly attached to the party politics of Protestants, rather than to their religion. Such men may doubtless be found among the holders of livings in Ireland, as they may also in England; but such is not the general character of the Irish clergyman. He is a man always active, though unfortunately his activity has but small field of usefulness. His air is not the air of a listless man, but of a man disappointed,—as it may well be. As he goes on in life he may come to love too dearly his slippers and his armchair, and perhaps to feel, as disappointed men will feel,—will feel but not acknowledge,—that the consolations of the dinner-table are, and that none others are, reliable; but such is not his normal condition of body or mind. I will not say that he is generally well-educated,—because the word means so much. But the Irish clergyman has generally read as much as his brother in England, though his reading has been of a different nature. Of reading applicable specially to his own profession he has probably endured more than his brother in England. In short he is more of a clergyman and less of a man of the world than the English parson,—with this misfortune, that his clerical activities are always at work against enemies and not on behalf of friends.

There would not be space for me to say much, in this short sketch, of the now acknowledged anomalies of the position of the Church of England as established in Ireland; but I will endeavour to describe the outward form and bearing of the clergyman whom these anomalies have produced, begging my readers to believe at the outset that the Irish clergyman may be regarded, nine times out of ten,—ninety-nine out of a hundred I think we might say,—as a sincere man, as a man with strong convictions, who has no shadow of doubt in his own mind that the surest road to heaven, if not the only one, is by that special pathway of which he professes to have the clue. There is no reservation within his mind, as to his religion with its intricacies being good for the ignorant, for instance, though perhaps not altogether needed for the educated. He has no doubts. The Eureka with him is a certainty. That men will be saved and will be damned as they live

remote from or attached to papistical teachings is to him a reality. Now it is something that a man should be capable of a sincere belief, and that he should succeed in attaining to it.

The Irish beneficed clergyman has almost always been educated at Trinity, Dublin, and has there been indoctrinated with those high Protestant principles with which he has before been inoculated. He is, of course, the son of an Irish Protestant gentleman, and has therefore sucked them in with his mother's milk. He goes before his Protestant bishop and takes his orders with a corps of other young men exactly similarly circumstanced. And thus he has never had given to him an opportunity of rubbing his own ideas against those of men who have been educated with different proclivities. He has never lived at college either with Roman Catholics, or with Presbyterians, or with Protestants of a sort different from his sort. In his cradle, at his father's table, at school, at the university, in all the lessons that he has learned, in all the games that he has played, in his converse with his sisters, in his first soft, faint, whisperings with his sisters' friends, in his loud unreserved talkings with his closest companions, the same two ideas, cheek by jowl, have ever been present to him,—the State ascendancy of his own Church, and the numerical superiority of another Church antagonistic to his own. When we consider all this, and look at the training which the Irish clergyman has undergone, how can we wonder at his idiosyncrasies?

Irish clergymen are thus bound together more closely than clergymen in England, chiefly from the want of opportunity for divergence. Not only education goes always in the same course, but the circumstances of professional career attach themselves very closely to one form. The livings are more generally in the gift of the bishops than with us, and the Irish bishops, perhaps, are more inclined to give promotion solely on the score of merit than are the English bishops. There is, we believe, less of Church patronage,—or rather of the exercise of Church patronage for the furthering of private ends; and if this be so, the Irish Church in that respect is superior to our own. But as the Irish curate is to get his living from the Irish bishop, and is to receive it as a reward for his clerical zeal, and not because he is his father's son, it is absolutely incumbent on him to work as a curate up to the established diocesan mark. And this mark or standard will not be the standard fixed exactly by the bishop himself. Bishop's predecessors and bishop's chaplains, and the very air round the bishop's residence, will have been for years impregnated with high Protestant principles. And even a bishop who may himself be lacking in that fiery Protestant zeal which is regarded as Church of England orthodoxy in Ireland, will not find

himself able to subdue the strength of the atmosphere in which he is called upon to live. There have been bishops sent to Ireland,—nay, there still are bishops in Ireland, placed over dioceses there because they have been considered to be,—we will not say anti-Protestant, but liberal in their tendencies towards Roman Catholics and Presbyterians; but the clergymen who come forth ordained from under the hands of the liberal Whatelys are nearly of the same form as those who, from time out of mind, have been given to us by the orthodox Trenches and the orthodox Beresfords. The stream runs too strongly to be stemmed by any bishop;—so that the Irish clergyman who desires to swim must, almost of necessity, swim with it.

The clerical aspirant becomes first a curate. One would be disposed to think that there could be no great need for curates in Ireland,—that as the population of the country is chiefly Roman Catholic, and as not much above one-half even of the Protestants conforms to the Church of England,—so that the proportion of even nominal church-goers is less than one in eight,—and as there is a beneficed parson in every parish, whether there be much, little, or nothing to do,—curates could not be needed in addition to rectors and vicars; but curates seem to be as common in Ireland as they are in England,—the souls of men requiring, we must suppose, more surveillance, and the work, we must presume, being more closely done. The young clergyman almost always becomes a curate, and then looks to his bishop for a living. Depending thus on the bishop, he lives strictly, works with energy, is constant in his adherence to all the exigencies of his cloth, and in the ripeness of time is blessed with a living of, we will say, two hundred and fifty pounds a year with a glebe. Irish livings are thought to be very good, but the value here named is above the average. In the rich diocese of Meath, perhaps of all the Irish dioceses the richest, the endowment of more than one-half of the livings is less than the sum above named. Then begins the real battle of his life. Of course our Irish clergyman marries, and of course he has a family, and, even in Ireland, the support of a wife and family upon two hundred and fifty pounds a year is not easy. His glebe is probably remote from any town, and far removed from the houses of other gentry. The parish squire is a personage who, as such, hardly exists in Ireland. Here and there a resident landowner is to be found with a large house and a wide demesne; but the parish squire who has interests in the parish almost identical with those of the parson does not exist. The clergyman, therefore, located in the country lives alone, and his nearest neighbours are the rectors and vicars of other parishes. He lives alone, and the solitude of his life does not tend to make him jovial, or even satisfied with things around him. But he has his religion, and he tells himself that that should suffice for him;—that

that should be all in all to him. He has his religion, and he endeavours to make the most of it. It is to be not only his guide through life to things spiritual, but his chief comfort in things temporal. He must abide by it in every phase under which it has been presented to him; he must hang to it as the politician does to his party; he must trust to it,—not merely for the God and Saviour whom he knows through its assistance, but for his very politics, thoroughly believing that all its doctrines and all its formularies are essentially necessary, and that they must be taken with the exact tenets and with all the twists which have been given to them by his side in church disputes.

Of all men the Irish beneficed clergyman is the most illiberal, the most bigoted, the most unforgiving, the most sincere, and the most enthusiastic. He is too often an unhappy man, being poor, aggrieved, soured by the misfortunes of his own position, conscious that something is wrong, though never doubting that he himself is right, aware of his own unavoidable idleness, aware that when he works he works to little or no effect, feeling that prayers said and sermons preached to his own family, to three policemen and his clerk, cannot be said to have been preached to much effect. It is a life-long grief to him that in his parish there should be four hundred and fifty nominal Roman Catholics, and only fifty nominal members of the Church of England. But yet he is staunch. There is a good day coming, though he will never see it. He consoles himself as best he may with the certainty of the coming triumph; but cannot refrain from sadness as he tells himself that it certainly will not come in his days.

There is nothing more melancholy to a man’s heart, nothing more depressing to his feelings, than a doubt whether or no he truly earns the bread which he eats. The beneficed clergyman of the Church of England in Ireland has no doubt as to his right to his bread,—as to his right either by the law of man or by the law of God; but he cannot but have a doubt as to his earning it. He tells himself that it is the fault of the people,—that it comes of their darkness; that he is there if they will only come to him. But they do not come; and he has on his spirit the terrible weight of wages received without adequate work performed. It is a killing weight. To preach to three policemen is as hard as to preach to three hundred educated men and women,—nay, perhaps it is much harder; but he who so preaches feels that his preaching is nothing. He is as the convict labourer who moves sand from one hole to another;—and who can get no comfort from his work.

And he is daily told,—this Irish beneficed clergyman of the Church of England,—that of all men he is the most overpaid. Newspapers which he cannot but see, speakers on public platforms to whose orations he cannot entirely stop

his ears, are telling him constantly that he is a drone, growing fat upon honey which he does not help to make, threatening him with Parliamentary annihilation, and invoking against him all the ardour of all the Radicals. In the meantime, he knows that he and his are barely able to subsist on the pittance which the Church allows him. He has terrible temporal grievances in poor rates, charges for his glebe, deductions on this side and on that, till he knows not how to pay his butcher and his baker, and the wife of his bosom is driven to painful, stringent economies. He has not, he tells himself, half of that which a liberal Church in old days had intended for the parish, and yet they tell him that he is robbing the public! He is there to do his duty. Why do not the people come to him? For what he receives, whether it is much or little, he is ready to work, if only his work might be accepted.

But his work is not accepted, and there is no slightest sign in Ireland that it will be accepted. The anomalies of the Church of England in Ireland are terribly distressing, and call aloud for reform. But to none can they be so distressing as to the beneficed clergyman in Ireland; and in the behalf of no other class is that reform so vitally needed.

X. AND LAST.

THE CLERGYMAN WHO SUBSCRIBES FOR COLENSO.

WE have heard much of the Broad Church for many years, till the designation is almost as familiar to our ears as that of the High Church or of the Low Church; but the Broad Church of former times,—some twenty years ago, we will say, when the ecclesiastical world was all on fire because the then Prime Minister was minded to give a mitre to a certain professor of divinity at Oxford,—held doctrines very far indeed behind those to which the liberal parsons of these days have made progress. The ordinary Broad Church clergyman of that era was one who showed himself to be broad by his tolerance of the doubts of others, rather than by the expression of doubts of his own. He was not uncomfortably shocked at finding himself in company with one who was weak in faith as to the Old Testament miracles, and listened with placid equanimity to discussions which went on around him to show that our ancient Bible chronology was defective. But now we have got much beyond that. The liberal clergyman of the Church of England has long since given up Bible chronology, has given up many of the miracles, and is venturing forward into questions the very asking of which would have made the hairs to stand on end on the head of the broadest of the broad in the old days, twenty years since. There are bishops still living, and others have lately died, who must have been astonished to find how quickly their teaching has had its results, how soon the tree has produced its fruit.

The free-thinking clergyman of the present time is to be found more often in London than in the provinces, and more frequently in the towns than in country parishes. They are not many in number, as compared with the numbers of all parsondom in these realms; but they are men of whom we hear much, and they are sufficiently numerous to leaven the whole. There are many things, gone recently altogether out of date, which the meek old-world clergyman dares no longer teach, though he knows not why,—the placid, easy-minded clergyman who would be so well satisfied to teach all that his father taught before him,—the actual six days for instance, the actual and needed rest on the seventh; but the placid clergyman dares not teach them, not knowing why he dares not. He has been leavened unconsciously by the free-thinking of his liberal brother, and his teaching comes forth conformed in some degree to the new doctrines, although, to himself, the feeling is simply that the ground is being cut from under him, and

that that special bit of ground,—the actual six days,—has slid away altogether from the touch of his feet.

In London and in the large towns, where they most abound, these new teachers have their own circles, their own flocks, their own churches, and their admirers who have become familiar with them. And it is when so placed, no doubt, that they are most efficacious in operating on the education of laymen and of other clergymen. But it is when such a one finds himself placed as a parson in a country parish, out, as it were, alone among the things of another day, that he calls upon himself the greatest attention. He has around him antediluvian rectors and pietistic vicars, who regard him not only as a bird of prey who has got into a community of domestic poultry, but, worse still, as a bird that is fouling its own nest. They hate his teaching, as all teachers must hate doctrines which are subversive of their own—which, however, they can themselves neither subvert nor approve. But they hate more intensely that want of professional thoroughness, that absence of esprit de corps, which these gentlemen seem to them to exhibit. “He has taken orders,” says the antediluvian rector, speaking of his free-thinking neighbour to his confidential friend, “simply to upset the Church! He believes in nothing; nothing in heaven, nothing on earth,—nothing under the earth. He told his people yesterday that the Book of Exodus is an old woman’s story. And the worst of it is, we cannot do anything to get rid of him;—no, by Heaven, not anything!” To which the rector’s confidential friend replies that the rector has still the power left of preaching his own doctrine. “Psha!” says the rector, “preach, indeed! Preach the Devil as he does, and you can fill a church any day! What I want to know is how a man like that can bring himself to take four hundred a year out of the Church, when he doesn’t believe one of the Articles he has sworn to?” Now the special offence of the liberal preacher on this occasion was a hint conveyed in a sermon that the fourth commandment in its entirety is hardly compatible with the life of an Englishman in the nineteenth century. And the laymen around are astounded by the man, feeling a great interest in him, not unmixed with awe. Has he come to them from Heaven or from Hell? Are these new teachings, which are not without their comfort, promptings direct from the Evil One, who is ever roaring for their souls, and who may thus have come to roar in their own parish? There is mystery as well as danger in the matter; and as mystery, and danger also when not too near, are both pleasant, the new man is not altogether unwelcome, in spite of the anathemas of the neighbouring rector. What if the new teaching should be true? So the men begin to speculate, and the women quake, and the neighbouring parsons are full of wrath, and the bishop’s table groans with letters which he knows not how to

answer, or how to leave unanswered. The free-thinking clergyman of whom we are speaking still creates much of this excitement in the country; but in the town he is encountered on easier terms, and in London he finds his own set, and has no special weight beyond that which his talents and his energy can give him.

It is very hard to come at the actual belief of any man. Indeed how should we hope to do so when we find it so very hard to come at our own? How many are there among us who, in this matter of our religion, which of all things is the most important to us, could take pen in hand and write down even for their own information exactly what they themselves believe? Not very many clergymen even, if so pressed, would insert boldly and plainly the fulminating clause of the Athanasian Creed; and yet each clergyman declares aloud that he believes it a dozen times every year of his life. Most men who call themselves Christians would say that they believed the Bible, not knowing what they meant, never having attempted,—and very wisely having refrained from attempting amidst the multiplicity of their worldly concerns,—to separate historical record from inspired teaching. But when a liberal-minded clergyman does come among us,—come among us, that is, as our pastor,—we feel not unnaturally a desire to know what it is, at any rate, that he disbelieves. On what is he unsound, according to the orthodoxy of our old friend the neighbouring rector? And are we prepared to be unsound with him? We know that there are some things which we do not like in the teaching to which we have been hitherto subjected;—that fulminating clause, for instance, which tells us that nobody can be saved unless he believes a great deal which we find it impossible to understand; the ceremonial Sabbath which we know that we do not observe, though we go on professing that its observance is a thing necessary for us;—the incompatibility of the teaching of Old Testament records with the new teachings of the rocks and stones. Is it within our power to get over our difficulties by squaring our belief with that of this new parson whom we acknowledge at any rate to be a clever fellow? Before we can do so we must at any rate know what is the belief,—or the unbelief,—that he has in him.

But this is exactly what we never can do. The old rector was ready enough with his belief. There were the three creeds, and the thirty-nine articles; and, above all, there was the Bible,—to be taken entire, unmutilated, and unquestioned. His task was easy enough, and he believed that he believed what he said that he believed. But the new parson has by no means so glib an answer ready to such a question. He is not ready with his answer because he is ever thinking of it. The other man was ready because he did not think. Our new friend, however, is debonair and pleasant to us, with something of a subrisive

smile in which we rather feel than know that there is a touch of irony latent. The question asked troubles him inwardly, but he is well aware that he should show no outward trouble. So he is debonair and kind,—still with that subrisive smile,—and bids us say our prayers, and love our God, and trust our Saviour. The advice is good, but still we want to know whether we are to pray God to help us to keep the Fourth Commandment, or only pretend so to pray,—and whether, when the fulminating clause is used, we are to try to believe it or to disbelieve it. We can only observe our new rector, and find out from his words and his acts how his own mind works on these subjects.

It is soon manifest to us that he has accepted the teaching of the rocks and stones, and that we may give up the actual six days, and give up also the deluge as a drowning of all the world. Indeed, we had almost come to fancy that even the old rector had become hazy on these points. And gradually there leak out to us, as to the falling of manna from heaven, and as to the position of Jonah within the whale, and as to the speaking of Balaam's ass, certain doubts, not expressed indeed, but which are made manifest to us as existing by the absence of expressions of belief. In the intercourse of social life we see something of a smile cross our new friend's face when the thirty-nine articles are brought down beneath his nose. Then he has read the *Essays and Reviews*, and will not declare his opinion that the writers of them should be unfrocked and sent away into chaos;—nay, we find that he is on terms of personal intimacy with one at least among the number of those writers. And, lastly, there comes out a subscription list for Bishop Colenso, and we find our new rector's name down for a five-pound note! That we regard as the sign, to be recognized by us as the most certain of all signs, that he has cut the rope which bound his barque to the old shore, and that he is going out to sea in quest of a better land. Shall we go with him, or shall we stay where we are?

If one could stay, if one could only have a choice in the matter, if one could really believe that the old shore is best, who would leave it? Who would not wish to be secure if he knew where security lay? But this new teacher, who has come among us with his ill-defined doctrines and his subrisive smile,—he and they who have taught him,—have made it impossible for us to stay. With hands outstretched towards the old places, with sorrowing hearts,—with hearts which still love the old teachings which the mind will no longer accept,—we, too, cut our ropes, and go out in our little boats, and search for a land that will be new to us, though how far new,—new in how many things, we do not know. Who would not stay behind if it were possible to him?

But our business at present is with the teacher, and not with the taught. Of

him we may declare that he is, almost always, a true man,—true in spite of that subrisive smile and ill-defined doctrine. He is one who, without believing, cannot bring himself to think that he believes, or to say that he believes that which he disbelieves without grievous suffering to himself. He has to say it, and does suffer. There are the formulas which must be repeated, or he must abandon his ministry altogether,—his ministry, and his adopted work, and the public utility which it is his ambition to achieve. Debonair though he be, and smile though he may, he has through it all some terrible heart-struggles, in which he is often tempted to give way and to acknowledge that he is too weak for the work he has taken in hand. When he resolved that he must give that five pounds to the Colenso fund,—or rather when he resolved that he must have his name printed in the public list, for an anonymous giving of his money would have been nothing, —he knew that his rope was indeed cut, and that his boat was in truth upon the wide waters. After that it will serve him little to say that such an act on his part implies no agreement with the teaching of the African bishop. He had, by the subscription, attached himself to the Broad Church with the newest broad principles, and must expect henceforth to be regarded as little better than an infidel,—certainly as an enemy in the camp,—by the majority of his brethren of the day. “Why does he not give up his tithes? Why does he stick to his temporalities?” says the old-fashioned, wrathful parson of the neighbouring parish; and the sneer, which is repeated from day to day and from month to month, is not slow to reach the new man’s ear. It is an accusation hard to be borne; but it has to be borne,—among other things,—by the clergyman who subscribes for Colenso.

THE END.

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