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Art. VII.—CLERICAL REMINISCENCES.

MY first curacy (writes "Senex"[1]) was in a large manufacturing parish; and, as a young deacon, I joined a young priest, and between us we had the sole charge of about 15,000 souls.

My second curacy was in London: and I had what might be called "sole charge" of 12,000 people! My rector was a good kind able and excellent man, but he could not face them; and, there being no rectory house, he had a right to non-residence, and lived in one of the West-end squares, with every comfort necessary for one who was a bachelor and had been a Senior Fellow[2]. . . . . The only serious and regular duty required from him was a sermon every Sunday morning. In the evening the church was served by a very able and popular lecturer chosen by the parish. In the afternoon, baptisms, churchings, and all parish duties were performed. These last fell on me. . . . . I do not think I preached ten times in the two years I served in this curacy; and it was a great mental relief after what I have gone through in that way. But the parish duty was tremendous. . . . . One incident is still fresh in my memory, and, as illustrating an important text of Scripture, seems worth recording:—

One evening, whilst engaged in study, a card was brought up, and a wish expressed to see me. My assent was followed by the entrance of a young person unknown to me. . . . . I soon learnt that he was desirous of going to College, and had come to me for advice. I was much pleased with his modesty and with the indications of talent that I discerned. Finding that economy was one necessity involved,

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[1] "Clerical Reminiscences," by "Senex." Pp. 260. Seeley, Jackson and Halliday. 1880.

[2] Here is a sketch of a "City" dinner. "In the hospitable and noble hall of the Goldsmiths' Company," says *Senex*, "a magnificent haunch of venison was served up; but, by some strange chance, it was only half cooked, and unfit to be eaten. Most of the company turned to other things; but one alderman, then well known, was not to be thus baffled. He called for a lamp and a stand, and a deep silver soup-plate; he cut four long, thick slices, with fat to correspond, from the haunch; he mingled two glasses of port wine with the gravy, and then placed all above the lighted lamp. Bubbling soon began; a steamy column arose, and everything indicated that eating-time was come. I happened to sit near, and naturally thought that, as a visitor—I will not say a clergyman, for clergymen never care about eating and drinking (?)—one slice at least would be offered to me. But no! When all was ready, the alderman evidently thought that—not virtue, but cookery was its own reward, and ate all the four slices, nourished with fat, gravy, and port wine, himself! The way in which he afterwards joined in the standing toast of 'Church and Queen' was a sight worth seeing."

I . . . . advised a Sizarship at St. John's, Cambridge, when I found that mathematics was his forte. Our conversation then assumed a religious tone . . . . and we parted with mutual goodwill.

About twelve years afterwards, I was vicar of a large northern parish, and was earnestly called to give a vote on some important contested election at Cambridge. Stipulating, as was then legal, that my expenses should be paid, I went and voted. For the payment of my expenses I was referred to a Fellow of St. John's, and went at once to his rooms. Several persons were present; and he came to me, having received my card, and asked if I was in a hurry, or would wait till his business visitors had left, as he wished to speak to me. I was in no hurry, and waited till we were alone. He then came to me and said that he knew me well, though I evidently did not remember him. I might, however, remember a visit I once received from a young man at Mr. Bumpus', the bookseller. He was that young man. He had acted in every particular on the advice then received. He had entered at St. John's. He had watched and been careful. He had obtained scholarships. And the result was that he had passed safely through his course—that he had been Senior Wrangler—that he was now a Fellow and Tutor of his College—that his aged parents were living in ease and comfort near to him at Cambridge—that he had all that heart could wish. "And," he added, "I owe it all to you." This almost took away my breath; and, after I had listened with silent wonder, I could only say, "Not to me, but all to God's 'goodness and mercy.'" "I meant all to *your instrumentality*," he explained. And then we shook hands, as friends for life. And we have been friends for life . . . ." "A word spoken in due season, how good it is" (Prov. xv. 23).

And now came a change, unsought but serious. Eight times such-like changes have occurred in my life, but always unsought:—

When a letter came from a newly-appointed Indian bishop, saying, "Come to me as soon as you can; I want to speak to you," of course I went at once. The words spoken were these, "I am going out to India as bishop; will you go with me and be my chaplain? If so, I can nominate you as an East Indian Company's servant."

I thanked the spokesman gratefully and said I would ask my father and mother and medical advisers and let him know. They all gave willing assent and encouragement. I accepted the offer promptly, was nominated, went to the India House, signed my name in a great folio, and got down from the stool an East Indian chaplain, entitled to a travelling allowance of three hundred pounds and a prospective income of nine hundred pounds per annum—a serious change, as I have said, for a young curate!

India is before us. . . . . The ship is anchored in the Hooghly, and two small steamers are in sight; the one sent to help the ship up the river, the other bringing Daniel Corrie, Archdeacon of Calcutta, and Dr. Mill, Principal of Bishop's College, with kindly greetings and good wishes:—

Daniel Corrie, as he stood on deck, was tall and stout, with a winning face, white hair, and genial smile, and we soon found that to know him was to love him. He had been the friend of Henry Martyn, and David Brown, and every good man in India, and the helper in all good works. In his character a little gentle humour mingled with deep seriousness, whilst true holiness and perfect disinterestedness walked hand-in-hand. He filled his office as Archdeacon efficiently, though not methodically, for I have seen his writing-desk, so crammed with papers that it would not be shut, tenanted by a mouse, with a comfortable and undisturbed nest full of young ones. . . . . Dr. Mill was in the prime of life, rather undersized, full of intelligence, but somewhat shy in manner. He was a High Churchman, but not then so extreme as in after years.

The friendship of two individuals so eminent for piety and for learning stands prominent amongst the pleasant reminiscences of my Indian life (p. 65).

One reminiscence may excite, perhaps, a smile. I call it "getting the legs down" (p. 81).

In the south of India we came across a chaplain, tall, handsome, young, and somewhat stiff-backed, who had come into very serious collision with the colonel commanding the station. A short official interview led the bishop to decline any active interference.

"I shall be able to do nothing with him personally," he said to me; "manage matters your own way." So that it became a question of brotherhood and not of authority.

"Now, tell me all about this turmoil," I said, when we were sitting side by side. And he told me all about it. The colonel was a godless man, profane, immoral, irreligious. He showed it in every way, but chiefly in church, when attendance was his duty.

"I have said what I could to check all this," the chaplain told me, "and have spoken my mind freely on the subject."

"To whom?" I asked, interrupting him.

"Why, to the young officers, of course," he replied, and then narrated the behaviour in church, which he considered irreverent and insulting.

"He sits in a corner of his pew, with folded arms, and a smile of ridicule on his face during my sermon."

"And what do you do?" I asked.

"Why, I preach about the reverence due to God's house. I take for texts such passages as 'Thou God seest me,' 'This is none other than the house of God," &c. I speak of Uzziah, struck with leprosy in the Temple, and such-like topics, after fixing my eye upon the Colonel's pew."

"And what is the result?"

"Why, would you believe it? For several Sundays past he has been sitting with his legs upon the ledge, amongst the Prayer-Books, laughing at me."

"Ah, well! very sad, very sad! But the problem now to be solved seems to be—how to get the legs down? You have tried one

way; will you promise me, as a brother clergyman, to try another?" He hesitated.

"I only ask for a six weeks' trial. If it fails, follow your own course." Then he promised.

"I have three conditions to make," I said. "First, you are never, under any temptation or chaffing, to mention this matter again to any of the young officers. Secondly, you are never, in church, to cast even a glance at the colonel or his legs. Thirdly, you have, no doubt, old sermons, preached in England, on grand topics, such as 'Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden,' &c., 'Him that cometh unto Me,' &c., 'This is a faithful saying,' &c., 'The Sermon on the Mount,' the love of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, the grace of Christ, &c. Preach these old sermons; and for six weeks never put pen to paper to write a new one. And then, fulfilling these conditions and keeping your promise, write to me six weeks hence and tell me the result."

At the end of six weeks I had a letter from him in the following words:—

"DEAR SIR,—The legs have come down, and all is well. Many thanks. Yours truly, '——— ———'"

His course in India afterwards was prosperous and useful; he obtained official rank and the general control over others, as the result, under God, of taking well-intentioned advice himself.

Now, the scene changes, and as in a dissolving view, the sunny plains of India, its heathen temples, and Christian churches, gradually fade, and give place to a pleasant town on the borders of the Wiltshire Downs. . . . . The vicarage was mine, valued at £90 per annum, and a house with four rooms and brick floors—rather a change from £900 per annum and a palace! But still it was a pleasant change, for I rejoined my wife and family. Sickness had driven me from India, and I was sent home on medical certificate for three years' furlough. . . . . The parish had been greatly neglected. This in 1840, when all was life in the Church, could only be excused by the fact that the vicar was very old:—

There was no service on wet Sundays; when a sick person wanted a visit the vicar sent a shilling, and said that would do him more good than his prayers: the Holy Communion had not been administered for eighteen months; and every one seemed to do what was right in his own eyes.

The machinery of this Wiltshire parish was at once set to work, and schools, Bible-classes, and parochial visitations, were carried on with good effect.

The time drew near for me to leave. All things were in order. . . . . The furlough granted me by the East India Company, with its allowance of two or three hundred per annum was nearly at an end. . . . . A letter was delivered to me from the vicar of a large parish in the North, saying he was about to

resign, and wished me to be his successor. . . . . I only followed, as God seemed to lead. I was invited to come and judge for myself. I consented. I then learnt how it all came about. One of his great friends was a Fellow of St. John's College. . . . . Now this Fellow had never seen me but once. He had been "best man" at a wedding which I had performed. That was all; and that, in God's overruling Providence placed me in charge of 55,000 people; gave me the patronage of seven incumbencies, made me Rural Dean of thirty churches, and kept me hard at work, through good report and evil report, for fifteen years! (p. 97.)

And now fifteen years began to tell, and health began to fail (p. 152). . . . . Extra medical aid was sought, and the decree was passed—"Lock up your desk and live; stay as you are and die." The desk was locked, and the parish left. . . . . Then through God's mercy, health returned, and my large northern parish, which had been well served in my absence, was exchanged for a small and quiet one in Kent.[1]

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The preceding extracts, abridged from "Clerical Reminiscences," will serve, we think, to commend the book before us, a book which is in some ways the most interesting work of its kind. Who "Senex" is, few of our readers, probably, will fail at once to discover. He has given us, in a series of chatty graphic sketches, a picture which will repay study. It is full of anecdote,[2]

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[1] On page 155, in an account of his parish in Kent, our author refers to a certain interesting document in the iron chest of the parish. This document "serves," he thinks, "to settle a question which many hold wrongly as to the meaning of the word 'oblations' in our service for Holy Communion. The document is signed by King Philip and Queen Mary; and gives to the rector of the parish the 'oblations' offered on four 'special Holy-days in the year for his own personal benefit' and increase of stipend. The meaning of the 'sentences' then read, which refer not only to the poor, but also to the workers in the vineyard and the feeders of the flock, is thus made clear. The alms are for the poor; and the oblations are not the presentation of the bread and wine, but a supply, when duly authorized, for the necessities of the minister." The observations of "Senex" on "Parish Terriers" are important. In a proper "Terrier" the "Table of Fees" is mentioned.

[2] From the last chapter, headed "The Resting Place," we take the following:—"I was getting worn and weary with nine years' hard work; and I was often, of necessity, left solitary. The kind Archbishop knew of this, and he sent for me, and offered an eligible rectory outside the diocese. I went to see it, and found a pretty country, and a pleasant-looking church and house. But whilst ascending the hill, on which they stood, I passed two immense dissenting chapels, which, in a small village, startled me. The curate was now the *locum tenens*. He was out, but his lady received me, and showed me over the house. Seventeen pairs of boots and shoes on his side; three babies, three laced cradles, and three well-matured nurses on hers, proved that there was no want in the house. I inquired about the chapels, and learnt that they were central

contains pleasing reminiscences of bishops and other eminent men, touches on many ecclesiastical points of importance, and, above all, shows in simply-told stories of real life the strength and beauty of Gospel truth.

Reviews.

The Foundations of Faith. Eight Sermons, preached before the University of Oxford in the year MDCCCLXXIX. By HENRY WACE, M.A., Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, and Professor of Ecclesiastical History in King's College, London. Pp. 390. London: Pickering & Co. 1880.

SEASONABLY has Mr. Wace come forward in the Bampton Lectures, not to show, as has often been shown of late years, that the truths and facts of "the Christian Faith" are consistent with the conclusions of Reason and Science, but rather to assert the positive grounds on which our Faith rests, and to enforce its authority. At the present day, in consequence of the prominence of scientific habits of thought, there is great danger of insufficient weight being allowed to the distinct and independent claims of the principle of Faith. Professor Wace has accordingly "endeavoured to illustrate the necessity and supremacy of this principle of our nature, and to vindicate its operation in those successive acts of Faith by which the Christian Creed as confessed by the Reformed Church of England has been constructed." The present work, therefore, properly speaking, is not of an apologetic character. It is, as the learned author remarks, an attempt to exhibit the supreme claim of the Gospel upon our allegiance; and it endeavours to show not merely that the Christian Creed may reasonably be believed, but that we are under a paramount obligation to submit to it.

The words of Hebrews xi. verses 1 and 2—"*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: for by it the elders obtained a good report*"—our author takes as the key for opening his subject. If these words, he says, do not amount to a definition of faith, they at least express its most striking characteristic in practice—its power of giving a substantial reality to the objects of hope, and a verification to the invisible. With singular truth and vividness they describe the spiritual life of Israel, the animating principle of the saints of the Old Testament. "It was a life based on the invisible and directed towards an obscure and improbable future. But that invisible world was more real to the elders of Israel than any of the visible things around them." Over and over again the course of Nature had been interfered with in their behalf; and to their view no physical order was unalterable. Though the earth was moved, and though the mountains were carried

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places of worship for all the neighbourhood around, and were well filled with worshippers. I inquired about the church, and was told that a 'faithful few' continued to attend. I asked what her husband had done, or was doing to amend matters. She said that he had tried 'Evensong,' and was going to try 'Mattins.' Doubting the efficacy of Mattins and Evensong, and seeing that by the acceptance of the charge I should almost have to begin life over again, I gratefully declined it. Another still more eligible offer quickly followed, and was accepted; and this has been the 'resting place' I spoke of, for seven years!"