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having been first collected; when the Versions have been all properly edited; when the quotations of the Fathers have been well indexed and authenticated; when the Lectionaries have been all gathered and collated, with regard paid also to the quotations in the old Liturgies. Till then, do not touch with a hand that may be profanely stretched out what the providence of Almighty God has preserved in His Church notwithstanding human sin and infirmity. Here is work for a long time, not such as may satisfy those whose ambition is to settle questions, but humble, conscientious, useful work. Meanwhile, discussion will adjust itself, and there will be no danger from a sudden tempest or an unforeseen earthquake. What is done will thus be well done. The impatience of men may chafe, but the blessed gift of the Holy Scriptures will be treated with a loving reverence which will only venture to handle them when preparations have been made with all possible care and completeness.

Who can doubt which teaching Churchmen should follow, or which from the nature of things must ultimately prevail?

EDWARD MILLER.



ART. II.—CHURCH WORK IN SOME POOR PARISHES OF "OUTCAST LONDON."

THE purpose of the present writer is to endeavour to place before the readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* a plain, brief statement as to the work of the National Church in certain portions of what has been styled "Outcast London," to show what have been and are the efforts put forth by the clergy in the poorest districts of the Metropolis to reach those for whose pastoral care they are responsible. So much has been written on the physical and moral condition of the London poor and their surroundings, that it is not necessary, and would be wearisome, to repeat afresh what has been so frequently described. Two remarks, however, we take leave to make at the outset, based upon personal investigation and supplemented by general and authoritative testimony. Firstly, the general condition of the lower classes in the Metropolis is not to be gauged by the accounts which have appeared—accurate enough as far as they go—of special localities; and secondly, the evils which have been so fully described of late have long been known and more or less grappled with by the clergy and their various helpers, and have, both actually and relatively, of late years steadily diminished. It is important to bear these facts in mind in considering this question, for several reasons; not

the least of which are that they encourage to redoubled energy and they point to the existence of bodies of experienced workers who have learnt to temper zeal with discretion, and whose hands it would be far wiser to strengthen than to establish new agencies.

Another fact worth mentioning is this: Church attendance in very poor parishes is not by any means to be relied upon as an absolute test of the moral tone of the people, nor can it be considered an altogether conclusive index of their spiritual condition. There are many reasons to account for this; but in brief it may be said that extreme poverty, the ceaseless struggle for mere existence, sickness and family cares, a certain shyness and fear of profession beyond practice (which is not altogether to be condemned), all operate to deter even the more seriously inclined of the working-classes from regular attendance at the house of God. And what we have said as to Church attendance applies, with few exceptions, with even greater force to Nonconformist places of worship in these localities; it could hardly, indeed, be otherwise, dependent as they are upon the contributions of the seat-holders for their maintenance, and without any strictly defined sphere of work.

We cannot here omit recording our conviction that the undue subdivision of parishes and the erection of churches in these districts has been a mistake of the first order. Experience is daily teaching that shortened services with plain homely addresses in unpretending mission-rooms are far more really attractive to the people, and far more likely to reach and influence them, than services in the Church itself. Better far that the Mother Church of the parish should remain the active centre from which radiates a body of workers, each with an allotted district in which is established a mission-hall. However, it is of no use crying over spilt milk, though it is permissible to regret the policy of the past in this respect, whilst fully recognising the good motives and intentions which prompted it.

In referring to the question of Church attendance we would venture to express our regret at the disposition which exists in some quarters to multiply Church services, and more particularly the celebration of the Holy Communion. We take leave to think that energies are wasted on these services which would be more usefully employed in individual visitation and general parochial organization. We have been told of cases in which daily services are held, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper frequently administered to two or at most three persons who are practically required to be present, and at an hour when it is not possible for working-people to attend. Surely it were better to look facts in the face, and

adapt means to circumstances by discontinuing services which, however valuable they may be in other localities, are of necessity both useless and discouraging in working-class neighbourhoods. Church services are but means to an end, and if they fail in their object, other plans must be tried by which their sole purpose may be realized, viz., to bring sinners to the Saviour and to build up believers in our holy religion.

But we have almost unconsciously wandered somewhat from our immediate purpose, which, as we have intimated, is to give a few examples of Church work in poor and populous parishes as illustrative of the efforts which, almost without exception, have been and are being made in "Outcast London." We propose to refer to parishes in various parts of London which differ somewhat in the character and occupation of their inhabitants, but all of which include within their boundaries some of the saddest and most degraded localities in the metropolis. We should add that we are indebted for most of the details that follow to the kindness of the parochial clergy, and also to the Scripture-readers of the Church of England Scripture-Readers' Association, a society which for over forty years has been supplying a large number of earnest and faithful men to assist the clergy in poor and populous parishes in the metropolis.

Our first case is that of a parish of over 8,000 inhabitants in Newington.

We enter a street (Tabard Street) which is said to be much improved of late, and is not positively dangerous to walk down unless a very moderate display of jewellery should tempt the not too robust morals of the natives. This was exemplified some time ago, when the then visiting superintendent of the Scripture-Readers' Society was robbed of his watch and chain on passing down this street to meet the reader on his rounds. Of the courts on either side it is not too much to say, that whether from a moral or sanitary standpoint, they present a dreadful picture. Let us glance at one of these courts, in which vice and misery find a hiding-place. Here are ten habitations—they cannot be styled houses, much less homes—one of which we enter, after making our way through women engaged in the vilest conversation at the door; and as we pass through we are amazed and grieved that precious lives should have to run their course under such sad conditions. In one room—small, dark and dirty—seven persons of both sexes live and sleep; another room is occupied by two or three of the most degraded class of fallen women. In another apartment is one who gets her living by the vice of others. Paying a visit here one day, the Scripture-reader finding the woman was out, seized the opportunity of speaking of the Word of God and love

of the Saviour to four young women, with the result that two of them met him the same evening at the church, and were helped back by the Vicar to their former position. The reader, however, has never been forgiven for thus robbing of her prey the wretched creature who maintained herself and others by vice; and her malignity was not softened when, through his continued exertions, a third young victim was rescued and reclaimed. Another dweller in this court, a man too idle to work, sent out his two daughters for immoral purposes; but the reader and a brother missionary robbed him of one of the daughters by reclaiming her to better things, and she is now a respectable married woman.

People who are influenced by Christian truth and love do not, as a rule, remain in these courts. As soon as individuals or a family are benefited, they remove from such a neighbourhood at the earliest opportunity; and their places are filled by others of the same degraded type as they were. Thus the evangelistic work in these courts is continually one of prayerful, hopeful sowing. The Church is doing her utmost by means of living agents, prayer-meetings, mission-services, and the like, to reach and reclaim those dwelling within these borders.

Still continuing our inspection on the south of the Thames, let us take a glance at naval Deptford, and once royal Greenwich. The parish of St. John, Deptford, contains over 13,000 inhabitants, of whom a very large portion are very poor, and include workers in wood-yards, laundries, rag-and-bone shops, besides dock labourers, hawkers, etc. Under both the present and the late Vicars aggressive efforts have been actively put forth to humanize and Christianize the lowest classes in the parish. A large staff of workers are thus engaged, and the Scripture-reader of the district—a most experienced and devoted man—has furnished us, by permission of his Vicar, with some deeply interesting and encouraging accounts of labour for God in this large parish.

As an illustration of the cheerlessness of life among the poor, which, alas! is so little realized by any of us—the reader tells us of an underground cellar, the ceiling of which is on a level with the pavement, and in which a man and his wife reside. Visiting here one day, a thin ray of sunshine managed to struggle into the cellar; this was a sight so unusual that the man exclaimed to the reader, "Look, look! the sun is shining into the *room*!" His wife is a Christian woman, and a regular attendant at Church, notwithstanding her surroundings. She teaches a lesson of contentment from which all may profit.

A few years ago, in a court of twenty-six houses, built back to back, so that no current of air could pass through, an out-

break of fever occurred. The Vicar met all the workers, and it was arranged that only one should visit these cases to avoid spreading the infection: the Vicar nobly undertook this duty himself. But so many persons were attacked that the workers agreed together not to report all the cases to him, and these the Scripture-reader undertook to visit. The parish doctor, the relieving officer, and two workhouse nurses took the fever and died, as also did the wife of the devoted clergyman, through infection doubtless carried home by her husband, after his self-renouncing work, but he and the Scripture-reader were graciously spared to be the means of speaking words of hope and comfort to the dying and the bereaved in this time of sickness.

Those who occasionally visit with the readers must not be squeamish, or they had better stay at home. On one occasion the reader in this parish, accompanied by a gentleman, was making some evening calls, and knocked at a door in which a man and woman were quarrelling, as it turned out, over a supper of sprats, of which they were partaking in a most primitive fashion. The entrance of the reader and his companion put an end to the quarrelling, but with a view to show that there was no ill-feeling, the man insisted on shaking hands all round, with hands of an odour and in a condition that can well be imagined.

In this parish at a recent confirmation service were cases in which candidates were over forty years of age, and in one case over sixty-five; these had all been living in a pitiable state till the Word was brought into their dwellings, and received to their comfort. Among those brought into the sanctuary through the instrumentality of the reader were infidels, prize-fighters, drunkards, and such like. One illustration of his work is very significant of God's over-ruling providence. The reader was conversing with a person in a little room, when a lodger from another apartment came to the door to borrow a saucepan in which to make arrowroot for his brother. Always on the look-out for an opening to say a word for his Master, the reader made inquiry and said he should like to visit these lodgers, but was advised not to do so, as they were "very fast," and he would only get insulted for his pains. He went upstairs, however, and on gaining admittance found two young men sitting by the fire, one with a ferocious bull-dog by his side. On introducing himself by saying that he had called as he understood that there was some one very ill, one of them pointed to a wretched bed behind the door and said, "It is my brother, there." Turning round, the reader saw a young man with hollow cheeks and hectic flush, which told only too truly of deep decline. The reader tried to say a few words and quoted a passage of Scripture, but was repulsed; and on calling

the next day he was refused admission. The young men soon after left the parish. Some months later the reader was asked to go to a lodging-house to see a man who was ill and who had asked for him. He went, and found it was the young man in consumption. "Read me," said he, "my father's chapter; I think it is Isaiah xxxiii." The reader commenced to do so. "No," said the young man, "that's not it." Chapter liii. was then commenced. "Yes, that's it," said the young man. On the sixth verse being read, he said, "Yes, that's me; that's poor Bill turned to *his own way*." The reader read on, and prayed with the poor fellow before leaving. He was called again one evening, and sat by his bedside all night watching and praying. He died shortly after, resting in Jesus, and pleading His merits. After the funeral the reader found that this young man was the son of the first master whose employ he entered after leaving school.

Passing on to Greenwich, with its inspiring and patriotic memories, not to mention its more present association with Ministerial and other riverside banquets, let us make the acquaintance of its lowest denizens, to whom the reminiscences of patriotism and statesmanship are alike a blank, and whose existence is passed under the most degrading conditions. In one of the district parishes, worked by a vigorous staff, consisting of the Vicar, Curate, Bible-woman, six voluntary helpers, one lay agent, and a Scripture-reader, the population numbers over 14,000, and is mainly composed of dock labourers, costermongers, woodcutters, etc., all very poor and many very degraded. We learn that 700 copies of the Word of God alone have been sold within a recent period by the Bible-woman, who also conducts a weekly mothers' meeting of 90 members. The Scripture-reader during the winter months has a mission service, adult Bible-class, children's service, etc.; but during the summer open-air work is undertaken, and only one weekly service held in the mission-room. This building is in the right place for its purpose, being situated in the lowest part, in which there is a terrible amount of vice of the most miserable type. The work of all the agents in this parish is well directed by the Vicar, who from time to time visits personally with his various workers, and frequently attends the little meetings which they conduct. How valuable it is that the spiritual head of a parish should thus encourage his workers! How desirable, where it is possible! He thus keeps "in touch" with the work by the sympathy of personal contact and help, whilst on the other hand he greatly assists the influence of his workers by the public recognition of their services.

In this district parish of Greenwich one or two of the houses near the mission-room under the guidance of the reader may

be visited. In a back room on the ground-floor of a filthy house we find a widow and her three grown-up sons, who maintain themselves by selling fruit in the summer, and hearthstone and salt during the winter months. Themselves and their surroundings are indescribably dirty. In a back bedroom is a man who sells fern-baskets; the room is wretched in the extreme—a box for a table, a three-legged stool, a broken chair, and a heap of straw covered with a sack comprise the furniture. Upon this pallet a few months ago lay the wife of the man, dying of cancer. She was regularly visited three times a week by the reader (though the effluvia in the room was well-nigh unbearable) till her removal to the Infirmary, where he continued to visit her until her death, which happened shortly afterwards. In a front bedroom is an aged man, a cobbler, whose best day's earnings seldom attain more than 10d. ! This poor man cannot read, and but for the visits of the Scripture-reader would never hear the Word of Life. In another filthy room in the same house lives a widow, who "minds" her neighbour's children for a few pence a day. In a back-yard attached to this dwelling is a donkey-stable, which during the summer is most offensive and dangerous to the health of the adjoining houses. In another court which the reader visits, the same or even worse conditions obtain. For instance, in a back bedroom is a woman with a large family and an adult male lodger, all of whom eat, drink, and sleep in this one apartment. On the other hand, the top attic in this house, though bare of furniture, is always clean and tidy, being tenanted by an aged man and his wife, who, amidst great difficulties, are striving to serve and honour their God and Father.

In the woodsheds there are large numbers of men and women employed, whom once a week the reader visits at their work, reading and explaining the Word of God to them as they follow their occupation of sorting and tying the bundles of wood. Some have been brought to attend church, many couples living together have been induced to marry, and the reader is constantly sent for by these people in the time of sickness or the hour of death. This reader is an active member of the Committee of a great Friendly Society, and never loses an opportunity of inculcating thrift among those whom he visits, whilst at his suggestion an annual church-parade of Friendly Societies was commenced five years ago with an attendance of 400, which has since increased to over 1000 on the last occasion. An opportunity has thus been afforded to the clergy in the neighbourhood, of which they have gladly availed themselves, of speaking a few plain and loving words to those who seldom or never attend church.

Before crossing to the north of the Thames, we must not omit to notice the condition of the people in Southwark and the neighbourhood, and the efforts made by the Church to reach them. In the parish in which the notorious Kent Street, and Lant Street (of Pickwickian fame), and numerous common lodging-houses are situated, much is done to attract and help the people. In this district, as usual, drink, with its attendant vices, is the principal cause of the prevailing squalor and poverty. An active work is carried on here; besides the clergy, there are several voluntary helpers as Sunday-school teachers, in addition to a Missionary Bible-woman, and two Scripture-readers.

Let us take a peep at the Vicar's journal. Under the head of "Faith in exercise," he writes :

Visited (together with Mr. T.) Mr. — and his family. This was our first visit : we found the man at home reading to his daughter, a young woman about sixteen years of age. The girl is a paper-bag maker ; and I was astonished to find that for making twelve dozen bags, each of which in process of making passes through her hands six times, she is paid *three-farthings* ! Working hard she is able to make about twenty-four gross, or 3,456 bags in one day, thus earning *one shilling and sixpence*. The father just now is out of work, owing, he says, to the masons' strike — the man himself is a watchman, and his wife is ill. I was much struck with the man, especially with his great knowledge of the Scriptures, and his evident spirituality of mind. After some conversation he said : "Sir, I have been much comforted to-day by reading the history of Elijah. I find that he went and prayed seven times before the Lord sent the answer. When I read this I went to my Father again and said : 'Oh, Father, I know Thou wilt not put any burden upon me more than I can bear ! Give me faith to trust and wait !' Yes, sir, it is more faith that we want." I left him thanking God for giving us this token of His love and power.

As an interesting sequel to the above visit, a quotation may be made from one of the visitor's reports. Referring to the above case, and speaking of the man's want of work and consequent straitened circumstances, the visitor writes : "Last week, being unsuccessful in finding employment, the poor man returned one day almost exhausted, and was obliged to lie down, too sad even to take his tea. No sooner had he lain down than his wife brought a letter from his employer, who had sent for him to commence work the following day. He arose immediately, and, with his family, knelt down and thanked God. His prayer of faith had been heard, perhaps after having been offered up, like Elijah's, seven times. It may also be added that in consequence of this man's Christian influence, two members of his family living near, who hitherto had been addicted to intemperance, signed the pledge, and now attend church and the various meetings connected with it."

Referring to the common lodging-houses, we are glad to find

that they are now invariably fairly clean and wholesome, entirely owing to the provisions of the Act under which they can be visited and inspected at any time; and we cannot help thinking that an easy and efficacious means of improving the general sanitary condition of the homes of the poor would be found in extending the provisions of this Act so that they embraced within the scope of their operations all dwelling-houses in which tenements of not more than two rooms are let at a weekly rent to separate occupiers. If the inspectors fulfilled their duties with even moderate tact and judgment, we doubt if any difficulties of the "liberty of the subject" order would arise, whilst it is not improbable that the poor would soon look upon them in the light of protectors against the rapacity of landlords, and would welcome them accordingly. Before leaving the parish to which we last adverted, we cannot help inserting a short passage from one of the Vicar's annual reports, in which he quotes the words of a brother in the ministry as to the state of the district: "I did not think the accounts could be really true, so came to see for myself one Sunday evening, and I now think it is the worst parish in London." Nor can we omit a reference to the open-air services, which are regularly held during the summer. Some few months ago they were greatly interrupted by the conduct of some rough lads, with whom, however, the reader dealt kindly and lovingly; and the result was that four of them are now constant attendants at the reader's Bible-class, and the services of the Church.

The greatest difficulty in the way of all efforts to improve the condition of the labouring class is undoubtedly the overcrowding caused by high rents. The insufficient accommodation in so many poor homes drives the men to the public-house, which in its turn swallows up their wages and inevitably drags them and their families down to a besotted level and keeps them there. So also the immorality engendered by overcrowding, with an absence of the most elementary decencies of life, bids still further to degrade and pollute the lives of these poor people and their enfeebled offspring. This evil is specially alluded to in a description of another parish in Southwark supplied to us by the Scripture-reader, in which, after giving particulars of vice and incest too shocking to detail, he says:

The root of all this is drink and high rents. I feel sure that comparatively little can be done until better accommodation is provided, and at a cheaper rate. Our work sometimes seems to be in vain when grown-up sons and daughters, and adult lodgers of both sexes, occupy both night and day the same apartment. We are doing our utmost, however, to bring the people to better things. Many who have been living together unwed, have been married by the Vicar at a nominal fee. We are trying most of all to reach the young and save them, if possible, from

the depths of degradation. We seek to present them for Holy Baptism and bring them up with true notions of God. On one occasion, about 150 were brought to be baptized, at another 50, besides large numbers in the aggregate throughout the year. We have opened rooms for working girls and also for young men, to try and get hold, and keep hold, of them.

Such reports well illustrate the value of accredited lay agents in the pastoral work of the Church. Their one occupation it is to go in and out among the people, admonishing, comforting, and helping them, visiting from house to house those who, but for such workers, would live and die in practical heathenism.

Before briefly glancing at one or two districts in East and Central London, we must allude to a waterside parish in which is part of the notorious New Cut. Being thus situated, it is convenient for the working class population, of which indeed, with a few small shopkeepers, it is almost exclusively composed. The Vicar, in a recent conversation, assured us that the only two "aristocratic" members of his congregation were a commercial traveller and the resident manager of a certain business, the owner of which lived away.

Part of this district has frequently suffered from the periodical inundations of the Thames, which, if possible, intensify the wretchedness of the locality. The Church's work is being actively carried on under the superintendence of the Vicar, and well-organized efforts are made to reach the people, embracing regular house-to-house visitation by the Scripture-reader—of whose work the Vicar speaks most highly—open-air preaching, mission services, temperance meetings, Bible-classes, and mothers' meetings, in addition to the ordinary and special services in the church.

We have been furnished with some very striking and encouraging cases of blessing resulting from the good work carried on here, but we must forbear, and, crossing the river, pay a hurried visit to a parish in the very heart of Central London, the personal acquaintance of which we recently made under the guidance of the Scripture-reader. We must confess that, much as we have seen in East and South London of poverty and filth, we were appalled at what we met with in this locality. Mainly owing to the age of the buildings, this quarter of London presents a scene of dirt and decay which we have not met with elsewhere, at all events as regards external appearance. There are many thousands in this parish; mostly poor. Many are sunk in depravity and crime. Unclean in their habits, and obscene in their conversation, their condition would appear well-nigh hopeless; yet there has been much to encourage, and that the efforts made are not

fruitless is proved by the reports of the police and sanitary authorities, and by the cheering fact that no less than seven public-houses have recently closed their doors for want of custom. One incident occurred in the course of our personal visitation of an amusing and significant character. The reader had been taking us round the parish, telling us of the efforts of the clergy to reach the people, and the many agencies set on foot for this purpose, and had shown us the school and mission room, when we turned up a filthy court, at the entrance to which were lounging two evil-looking youths. They no sooner saw us than they gave a shrill whistle, and shouted to some young and almost naked urchins farther up the court, "Look out! here's old Four Eyes and the School Board bloke!" with the result that these precocious infants—to whom the School Board officer is a terror—disappeared we knew not where, like a flash of lightning. The reader was, it seems, called Four Eyes, by those who had known him many years, on account of his wearing spectacles, and it was looked upon in the neighbourhood as a term of endearment rather than otherwise.

As we passed up this court we felt the deepest sympathy with the poor creatures condemned to live therein. In some rooms it was touching to see the efforts made to keep alive the memory of better things and earlier associations. In others, the inmates were of a very low type; overcrowding was everywhere apparent, and we heard with regret that, though model lodging-houses had been built in the neighbourhood, the rents were too high for this class of persons, as living in them generally involved the hire of two rooms.

In reference to this we venture to express our strong conviction that what is wanted in such buildings is a good supply of large single rooms, with a movable partition for the purpose of subdivision at night, and at other times. Until the fact is recognised and acted upon that large numbers of the poor can only afford one room, it will, we fear, be the case that these buildings, useful as they are, will not and do not reach the class for which they are most required, or even meet the wants of a respectable working man with a large family, and earning, say, 18s. a week. But we must take leave of this district, and hie us eastward; though so much has been said and written about this part of London that it is difficult to point out any features not already known and frequently described. In one deplorably poor parish at Bethnal Green we find from the Scripture-reader that the occupations of some of those whom he visits comprise plaited fish-bag making at the rate of twelve for 1d.; umbrella stitching $\frac{3}{4}$ d. each, and finding their own cotton; match-box making $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. per gross, and finding their

string and paste ; wood-carving ; lining work-boxes $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each ; selling clothes-props, etc. The old proverb has it that what the eye does not see the heart will not grieve for ; and we find comfort in this reflection when we learn that watercresses are washed in these filthy rooms and placed under the bed for the next day's sale, and that cocoa-nuts are bought and cut into slices in these dens, the unsold portions being afterwards thrown into a tub, and, when sufficient has accumulated, sold to confectioners to be manufactured into that delight of childhood—cocoa-nut ice ! Damaged haddocks are also purchased, "got up afresh," smoked, and retailed all over London.

The efforts of the Church in this parish are—as they should be in such a locality—distinctly aggressive, and include a Wednesday evening mission service, attended by several hundred persons ; and on Friday evenings in the summer, open-air meetings are held at various stations, commencing at 8.30, followed by a late service in the church at 9.30. The following account of an interesting service in this district has been furnished to us :—It seems the Salvation Army had been at work in the neighbourhood, and had met with much opposition from various quarters, but especially from publicans and others, who had organized what was termed a "Skeleton Army" to harass and annoy the Salvationists. The vicar of the parish determined to make a special and prayerful effort to put an end to the unseemly scenes of riot which had taken place, and deputed two of his workers—themselves converted from this class of persons—to wait upon the leaders of the movement, and invite them to the church. It required much tact to accomplish this, but the invitation was conveyed and accepted, and the day arrived for the service. Two policemen were in readiness in case of a disturbance, but kept in the background, and the doors of the church were thrown open. For half an hour no one came, and the promoters began to think they had been hoaxed ; but at length the "army" appeared, in full marching order, with banners on which were roughly sketched the traditional skull and cross-bones, and many of the men clad in old regimentals picked up in Petticoat Lane. Marching in an orderly manner into the church, which they and the attendant crowd completely filled, a simple service was proceeded with, in which they joined heartily, particularly in the special hymns, of which papers were distributed to all the congregation. They were then addressed by the vicar in a plain and earnest discourse, in which he alluded to the folly of their conduct in the streets, and spoke to them of the better life to which they were called. They left the church in the same order in which they arrived, and next day the leader and others brought the banners and decorations to the

vicar and left them, thanking him, and saying that from what he had told them on the previous evening, they had made up their minds to have no more of it. From this time onward a goodly number attended the church and other meetings. As it was found that many who had taken up this means of annoyance and riot had done so through being out of work, and having nothing better to do, a small fund was raised, by which some were assisted to emigrate and others to become costermongers, etc., to earn an honest livelihood, and with the best results.

The parish of Whitechapel has been blessed with a succession of earnest and indefatigable clergy, who, following and extending the lines laid down by the late Canon Champneys when rector of the parish, have faithfully and successfully endeavoured to grapple with the problems before them. A reference to the long list of agencies set forth in the yearly Report of the parish shows at a glance the number and variety of these organizations, all with one and the same object—the moral and spiritual welfare of the parishioners. The population numbers over 13,000, and so admirably is the work systematized, that by mapping out the parish into districts, each with its appointed staff of workers, the people are all brought under regular visitation. The Scripture-reader here has undertaken, in addition to his ordinary duties, a special mission work among the navvies who have been employed for some considerable time constructing the East London Extension Railway, and has been well received by the men, among whom he has found, we are glad to hear, some earnest and one or two veteran Christians.

Proceeding further east we note the same dismal monotony of squalor and misery—drink wrecking the home, and the home driving to the drink. The minds of many appear to be a total blank as regards the first notions of propriety. Thus a Scripture-reader in an East London parish informs us he was called to see a poor lad who was ill. Going one morning to pay his accustomed visit, the mother met him at the door with the words, "Johnny has gone: he died in the night." On going upstairs to have a word of prayer with the parents, he found the body of the boy laid out absolutely naked on the table at which they had been sitting at breakfast! The overcrowding in this district is fearful. In one small room in which the reader visits there lives a shoe-finisher in a deep consumption—no wonder, poor fellow, with such surroundings!—his wife, and seven children: for this apartment he had to pay four shillings and sixpence a week. In another the moral depravity is revealed by the spectacle of a woman and her daughter—a girl of sixteen—both confined

of illegitimate children! But, thank God, it is not all discouragement, for in this district is one of the most pleasing features of Christian effort, viz., voluntary help rendered in Church work by some who have been "brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Thus the reader here has a band of men who have been gathered in one by one, who help him greatly in the work he has in hand. On Sunday mornings they meet at seven o'clock for prayer and praise in the mission-room; after breakfast they distribute tracts and generally attend morning service in church; Bible-class in the afternoon; at six o'clock in the evening they go into the courts, singing and inviting the people to the mission service, where they welcome all comers, give out hymn-books, and sometimes engage in prayer. In the summer they assist at open-air services, and are of great help to the evangelistic work in this district, scarcely a week passing without some of their mates being brought to the mission service. All this is done without any parade under the general superintendence of the vicar, and with the church as a common centre.

Large numbers of children have been brought to Holy Baptism through the visitations of the reader, who often himself brings these poor little ones—frequently without shoes and socks—in his arms to the font, there to be received into the visible fold of Christ's Church. He informs us that over 1,500, between the ages of three and ten, have been brought, who, after the performance of the rite, are visited at their homes by the vicar or his wife, who take the opportunity of urging upon the parents to follow up what has been commenced by sending the children to the Sunday-school.

Whilst speaking of the children, we must pay a flying visit to another part of London, viz. the north, in the large parish of Clerkenwell, for the purpose of describing, in a very few words, some Band of Hope work there, and to show how much may be done with the young, and how their influence in their own homes is not without its effect. The main occupation in this parish, where two readers are employed, is watch and clock making; but at the present time this industry is in a very depressed condition. Some portions of this parish are in a very unsanitary state, and there is a sad amount of drunkenness and consequent misery. A very successful Band of Hope is conducted by the Scripture-reader; the attendance at the meetings averages from 84 to 130. The members are instructed in the simple truths of Christianity, and attendance at the Church and Sunday-school is pressed upon them. We have been furnished with a touching incident bearing upon what we have alluded to as the reflex action of this teaching in the homes of the children. A little girl said to her mother, who

was in the habit of drinking, "Mother, don't drink any more." "Why?" "Because I want you to go to heaven; and teacher says those that take too much can't go there." About a month after the child was taken ill with fever, and the reader went to visit her at the Fever Hospital. The child said, "Please tell mother that she is not to fret. I am going to heaven, and will wait for her there; but do ask her to give up the rum." This was repeated to the poor woman, who found her own salvation in the death of her little one. Trusting in God's strength she "gave up the rum;" she can be seen a regular attendant at the Thursday night service, and is endeavouring to lead a consistent life.

But we must stop, or we shall weary our readers in recounting the sad similarity of large portions of the Metropolis, in nearly all of which, however, we are glad to know the Church is, and has been, bestirring herself, though naturally by somewhat differing methods, in the fulfilment of her Divine mission. The cases we have quoted, and the details we have given, are merely illustrative; and did space and patience permit we could go from district to district, in which precious Gospel truths and Church teaching are being sown broadcast, and in which self-denying clergy with their wives and helpers are living and working cheerfully, manfully, and unostentatiously amidst surroundings which, in their dull monotony of sin and squalor, would crush all hope and joy out of any but those who labour from the holiest motives and for the highest ends.

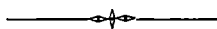
Notwithstanding all that has been written about the condition of the people, it is, we fear, too true that it is but faintly realized by many, and not at all by some who should help with their influence and their wealth, if not by their personal service.

It is not too much to say that but for the efforts of Christian workers during many years past the condition of the Metropolis would be a moral plague, as it would undoubtedly be a social danger. Looking over the list of contributors to the Church of England Scripture-Readers Association and those of kindred societies, we were grieved, though hardly surprised, to find how narrow was the circle of their supporters, and how inadequate to their needs. It is impossible, *absolutely so*, that the clergy of themselves can adequately minister to the poor in large and populous parishes, much less undertake aggressive missionary work without the help of qualified agents, whose special duty it is to go in and out among the homes of the people—to deal *individually* with them, and in the name of Christ and His Church to plead, and warn, and instruct.

Whilst, therefore, we are deeply thankful for the good

which has been accomplished, and for the great and increasing usefulness and influence of the Church in the Metropolis—and, indeed, throughout the country—we hope and believe that in the future yet greater blessings may be in store, when a far larger number of those who profess membership with her body shall give of their time and their talents, their means and their prayers, for the still further extension of her work in this enormous population of London, and to the glory of God. Thus shall the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour be increased, “and peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, be established among us.”

A LAY WORKER.



ART. III.—INCREASE OF DIOCESAN PROCTORS IN THE CONVOCATION OF CANTERBURY.

SINCE the action of the Convocations has been revived, complaints have continually been made that, in the Convocation of Canterbury at least, the parochial clergy were very inadequately represented. The great increase in their number, and still more in their activity and influence, seemed to demand a relative increase in their importance as a constituent part of the deliberative and consultative body of the Church. It appeared to be a preposterous thing, that while a Dean, however little he might understand of Church matters, might, by virtue of his office, vote in Convocation; while every Archdeacon, in whose appointment the clergy had had no part, might vote in matters affecting the whole presbyterate of the Church, the very large and active body principally concerned in working the machinery of the Church should have so small a voice in deciding questions. Hence an agitation early arose for the increase of the number of Diocesan Proctors in the Southern Convocation, and for the extension also of the suffrage in their election to all priests licensed in the diocese. This movement has always been favoured by the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation, which, conscious of its own weak point, has tried various ways to obtain an improvement. Its appeals to the Archbishop, as President of the Convocation, to enlarge the representation by his own act (which was thought by many to be quite within his power) having failed, a new method is being tried. The Lower House now appeals to the President to obtain for Convocation the royal license to put forth a Canon,