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ART. V.—A SCHEME FOR THE AID OF THE CLERGY  
IN VERY POOR PARISHES.

MANY of the clergy of the Church of England are in real want. The question is, how to raise a fund which would be annually sufficiently large to grant a considerable alleviation, by adding to the money for one minister in a certain number of the very poorest parishes in every diocese. The suggestion is, to organize help by inducing every member of the Church of England to give *one penny per annum*. This would impoverish no one; it would take in all—even children above twelve years of age, even the really poor among us—those who gain their bread by hard work. It need not impoverish other large and noble charities; the donor of £100 to a great established fund would yet be able to contribute his penny to this. It would unite peer and peasant in a grand work of mercy, and that simple fact would make the Church more to the masses than it now is. We think the collection should have some clear, telling, popular name—such, perhaps, as “The People’s Gift,” or “The Parson’s Penny.” Grand and difficult names do not suit our lower classes; few would understand or remember a word (for instance, we may say “Sustentation” Fund) which they very seldom hear or use.

There should be some very simple yet safe means of paying in the penny. This is a matter which, I am told, a clever man of business could easily arrange. Perhaps one week in each year, or in six months—the first week in June and the first week in December—might be called the penny week, and collections be made *every* day in those seasons in every church family, in schools, factories, workshops, etc.; or it has been said some sort of pillar might be used into which the pence might be dropped, in a public spot easily accessible. This is only a matter of detail. The money would, when collected, be made over to the Bishop or to the Archdeacons, or other ecclesiastical authorities, and at their discretion it would be distributed among the five or six most needy of the clergy in the least endowed parishes in each diocese. It would seem better to give substantial satisfactory help to a few parishes, than to fritter the money away, so that the aid given to any of the clergymen would be utterly inconsiderable. Three years ago, in 1894, it was estimated that the Church people in England numbered about 13,750,000; one penny from each would amount to £57,291 13s. 4d. Church sittings were, it is said, provided for about 6,255,000 people; a penny from each of these would come to £26,062 10s. Then many would give

sixpence or more in the year. Travellers might drop in a penny, and from large towns and seaports *very* considerable sums might be gathered. We should fancy that not less than £100,000 might be at the disposal of the Church *every year*—the voluntary small tax, self-imposed, and willingly given to the National Church by its thirteen or fourteen millions of loyal sons and daughters.

ANNE W. FANSHAWE.

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ART. VI.—SLOTH.

**A** POWERFUL enemy of true or spiritual life is Sloth, Sluggishness, or Idleness. The broad facts about this vice have been well put by an economical writer, Karl Blind: “The idle man is a sponge upon the world, and a curse to his fellow-creatures. Every man that remains idle, or gets his living without work—that is, without doing anything in return for such a privilege—is adding to the misery of the world, is really injuring the morals and happiness of the human family, and should be held responsible for it. None can be happy without employment, mental and physical; the idler becomes a fit subject for the penitentiary or the gallows.”

Our blessed Lord, both by precept and example, set the virtue of strenuous work and the vice of wilful laziness in the very front of the contrasts belonging to the Christian life. “He went about doing good.” The number of kind and beautiful actions crowded into one day was extraordinary. He never allowed fatigue to interfere with opportunity. As if to emphasize the dignity of labour, He was born in the family of an artizan, and spent thirty years of His life in a carpenter’s shop. At twelve years old His one idea was to be about His Father’s business. He thought not of food: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work.” Whenever occasion offered He was ready: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.” “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works.” “Go work to-day in My vineyard.” “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” “O thou wicked and slothful servant!”

It is obvious, of course, that listlessness in the case of that great majority of mankind who have to earn their daily bread and provide for their families is something very like insanity. On that point no lesson needs to be enforced. There are only two classes who do not acknowledge it: the drunkards and the thieves, and neither of them are we likely to reach by