

served his God, his country, and his Church in his generation, and then was gently taken to the sphere where he is to serve God day and night in His holy temple.

FRED. R. WYNNE.

ART. III.—WORK AMONG THE HOP-PICKERS.

LAST year THE CHURCHMAN allowed me to have a little say about the Hop-pickers. And some of the readers of THE CHURCHMAN were so kind as to tell me that my little say interested them. There is more to say, and THE CHURCHMAN gives me a little space to say it. It ought to be interesting; and if it be not found so, I shall have to own that it is my own fault.

Last November I was only able to say very little about our evangelistic addresses, though in these we work the most directly and the most widely, for the spiritual good of the poor people. These are sometimes given in the hop-gardens at the dinner hour; sometimes in the midst of an encampment, from a waggon or coach-box; sometimes in a Church tent, or, in wet weather, in the oast-house (building for drying the hops) itself. Generally we have very fair order and quiet—the more so the more the people get accustomed to being thus addressed. Sometimes there is an earnest and riveted attention—touching and hopeful.

Our most disturbed evenings are when unfortunately the people may be on strike, having fallen out with their employers over the “tally,” or number of bushels to be picked for a shilling. If the crop and the picker are both good, twenty-four bushels may well be picked in a day, and if the “tally” be *eight*, three shillings will be earned, which is a good average wage. The pickers would naturally prefer to have “sixes” or “fours,” which would give respectively four shillings, and six shillings, for twenty-four bushels picked. When the hops are very bad and few, I have heard of the “tally” being as low as *two*.

The strikes are generally organized by a few of the rougher sort, and the rest give in like frightened sheep. Then we have hungry children and weeping women and cursing men, and the time is bad.

If a few of the ringleaders come to our service we are almost sure to be interrupted, and hopelessly so. At the close of each period of one's address, we get from our audience “Fives or fours!” “No sixes!” “Fives!” “Fours!” “Ain't they ashamed of themselves?” etc., etc. We give out the hymn “Shall we meet

beyond the river?" We have, "We'll meet you to-morrow at the garden gate," which being interpreted means, "We shall stand at the gate of the hop-garden with our bludgeons to break the head of anybody who will dare to pick any more at six bushels for a shilling." Our time is best spent then in a little calm talk about the tally (if we can get it), and an effort to organize a representative body who may talk reasonably with the employer. But, as I said, we are generally free without interruption to proclaim the blessed Gospel to these very poor.

I think that *system* in the addresses is highly desirable. I have often noticed evangelists one after another, and time after time, do nothing but reiterate the freeness of mercy, and the call "Come to Jesus, and come now"—indispensable teaching indeed in its proper proportion. But many of these poor people are perfectly ignorant of their real need of the Saviour, and know next to nothing of what He has done to supply the need. Hence I think it well to aim at a series of subjects, such as an "Outline of the Ten Commandments;" the "Sabbath and means of grace;" "Passages of our Lord's life." Not, indeed, that I would announce them in so many set terms, but I would try to have such a plan before my mind, and work up to it night by night as far as possible. However, with everybody strenuously engaged, with very unusual circumstances, with constant emergencies of weather, temper, speaker's voice, etc., it is difficult to carry out system perfectly, and necessary to take the work by the hour as God may be pleased to give it.

I have found most satisfactory of all, addresses on our Lord's life and death, or on His parables, illustrated by magic lantern views.¹ This draws the people, instructs them in facts they need to know, and impresses these facts on their minds and memories. Even here some difficulties will arise. "Pass them on quick, governor; we likes to see the pictures," bawls out one of my audience, when I am trying to press home the picture lesson. One night I saw the group on the screen perform a very remarkable gyration. In an instant there was a crash. The lantern had gone over; the oil was streaming about in flames. We had to beat them out as best we could, and as quickly as possible to turn up a lamp and show ourselves before the screen. By a merciful Providence accident by panic or fire was averted. But our exhibition was stopped, and our audience vowed vengeance against the mischievous boy who

¹ Lanterns and slides, or either of them, can be hired readily and cheaply from various houses in town. I get mine from E. J. Wood, 74, Cheapside.

had pushed the canvas wall of the tent against our table and upset the whole thing!

But we are permitted to have our encouragements. Night after night we see the rough gipsy men (in the midst of whose encampment we pitch our Church tent) come in and listen all through till nine o'clock, when they go to bed with admirable punctuality. They are ignorant and careless about spiritual matters as a class. The first year in which I commenced inquiries for unbaptized persons, I found more among the gipsies than any other class. I suppose that the baptism of their children is much overlooked on account of their migratory life. On one occasion I baptized ten or twelve of them. The group around the font was picturesque in the extreme. Big dark men in fustian, with bright ties, tall handsome women all decked out in bright colours and beads. Not one of them could read. I could only explain to them the service all along as I went through, and teach them their parts. Probably this made the service more useful to the whole of the uncultured audience.

By the way, let me remark that the gipsies are great hop-pickers. Some of our own women who have grown up in the midst of hops have been known occasionally to pick thirty or forty bushels in a day; but the gipsies beat them for all that.

We have, for *our* work, encouragement among the denizens of the squalid courts of London, similar to that which I have described among the gipsies. It is touching and it is cheering to see the bright eyes of pale children fixed upon us, and to recognise poor wretched men and women in rags, coming again and again to drink in the Gospel. Sundays are of course the days of greatest opportunity, though they are not left to us for processes of moral cleansing only.

Whatever the hoppers at Farnham may do (the inspector gave evidence that they do not wash the whole time they are there—three or four weeks!) no one can contend that they do not wash here at least once a week. For myself, if I have happened to be out among them *any* day of the week before six a.m., I have seen limited processes of washing *sub Jove frigido*, and have seen them comb their hair too! But Sunday morning is the general wash, and our fences then give anyone a fair opportunity, if desired, of taking stock of a hopper's wardrobe. In the afternoon, too, I believe many of them are in our river Medway! I have never been down to see, but have been told that the scene is of the same description as that at a French bathing-place, with the exception that *peignoirs* are notably conspicuous by their absence.

On Sunday mornings, some of our workers go out to encampments far from any church or centre of work. Outside the public-

houses, and in front of distant "hop-lodges," they have found large companies of generally attentive listeners. At one spot where 500 or more congregate, they have found the hop-grower himself distributing tracts, and all ready to welcome and assist their efforts. The well-known open-air preacher Mr. Kirkham spent a Sunday in my brother's parish, where the habitations are scattered along a circumference of three miles. He addressed the people at thirteen groups of huts. "I never," he said, "preached so many sermons on one Sunday in my life!"

Our Sunday evening services for our immigrants are just after our Church service, and only differ from the daily services in being more numerous attended. I find it attractive to march my choir singing from church to the tent. It is good for them, too, and others of my people to hear the evangelistic addresses. It is good for us all, in our usually quiet and placid lives, to have urgent calls brought before us to try to do spiritual good to less favoured brothers and sisters.

I find that last year, besides Church services, we were able to give 106 addresses in our twenty-four days, to congregations averaging 130. Eleven children were baptized. Scores of Scripture portions and hundreds of tracts were received; 1,065 pints of soup were sold, and reckoning purchases by half-pennies, 5,504 were made at our coffee-barrow. For the previous year the "Church Society for Missions to Hop-pickers" gives, as its summary, thirty missionaries employed in thirty-four parishes; four tents provided; sixty-seven children baptized; and religious assistance offered to 34,197 immigrant hop-pickers. With what result? God only knows fully, and our means of observing are necessarily small.

"One thing I have learned down here," said one, "is that it is possible to live a good life in the midst of wickedness." "I have found out," said another, "I can do without the drink. I have not tasted a drop all the while I have been down here." "If God could save such a man as he once was who spoke to us, I am quite sure He can save even me." The young lady who takes our children's service was challenged this year by one of her lambs for repeating what she had told them last year. She found that several of them could pass an examination in last year's lesson.

An evangelist came down at the head of a party of young men to help in connection with the "Christian Mission to Hop-pickers." He writes from London:

We have heard of several who heard the Gospel down there (in the hop-picking, that is) who have since become associated with the people of God. Walking through Kennington Park one day, I was stopped, and asked if I were the minister who had spoken down at Maidstone, as since then he (the speaker) had lived a better life. "I've given up my drink and tobacco, and am now serving the Lord, and I mean to continue so,

for He is the best Master I ever had. I've got better work now ; my old gal and children love me now, and I them.

Let me give two specimens of letters received from some of our friends on their return :

SIR

i now rite these few lines to thank you for that butefull book hoping you Will Excuse me for not riting before hoping that you and the Lady is Well likewise the Cureate and Daughter i oftimes think of the happy tims We had Wile in teston our cleagerman and Wif has ben away 5 weeks the work dose not seam to go on much hear every few att service yesterday and every few on Whensday Night it wants some to preach to the poor ther is nobody to tend to them

i must Conclud with best wishes to all

from you humble servant

Mrs. ———.

Excuse bad riting.

Camberwell.

DEAR SIR,

I write to thank you for the magazine you were kind enough to send to me. I find it very interesting. I assure you I prize it very much because it was sent by you. I have read it and will read it again.

Allow me to remain,

Yours respectfully.

Some of the cases in which we have felt hopeful interest we are able to report to the clergy of their own neighbourhood. From these busy brothers I have received kind and satisfactory replies, and have also been very glad to get letters of commendation from them on behalf of some of their people when down for temporary sojourn here. This illustrates the advantage of our parochial system.

Our Master ever combined works of benevolence with teaching the truth. Doubtless it is our duty to follow His example and, while avoiding all bribery to a hypocritical profession, to recommend the Gospel we preach by showing and offering its loving fruits. Hence I must say something on the subject of the sad circumstances in which these poor people used to come to their occupation, and the efforts which have been made to ameliorate them. The journeys are one source of trouble. Not to gipsies or costermongers, indeed. Where a whole family, and furniture for a month, comes down behind a pony or a donkey there *is* trouble, but it is to the quadruped. For those who had no caravans or carts, there used to be nothing for it but the trudge down on foot. Men and women, children pick-a-back or in arms, one man carrying a kettle, others the inevitable sack which brings the pots and pans, bedding, and change of clothes (if such luxuries are possessed), walked along all the roads into Kent, begging for their food, sleeping under the hedges if they could not creep into sheds, and arriving wearied and worn out. Many walk the whole way still, and we see them when they

have arrived, sleeping by the hour under our trees, unless they are immediately set to work. For twenty years past, however, they have had an alternative to walking the whole way. The Kentish railways run special trains for them at low fares. Or steamboats bring them as far as Gravesend for sixpence a head. In 1865, 11,090 travelled into Kent by special trains. In 1885, 13,193 came, and 16,229 returned, by rail. The money earned is doubtless the reason of the greater number who ride back. In 1877, 21,334 rode down and 24,012 rode back. I fear that the diminished number of 1885 must be ascribed to the increase of depression and poverty. It is not due to a smaller cultivation, for the number of acres under hop-cultivation in Kent has steadily increased since 1879, and is within 1,000 acres of what it was in the largest year, 1877. The whole number of acres in the United Kingdom was in 1875, 69,203, and in 1885, 71,328.—a complete answer to the wild assertions that have been recently made that the hop cultivation has been grievously impeded by the “iniquitous impost of tithe”! An effort was made in 1883 to ascertain the number of pickers who migrated into Kent; and the returns amounted to 50,896, exclusive of children below six years of age. Of these only 18,126 travelled by special trains, so that it is probable that 25,000 at least (after allowing for carts and steamboats) had to walk.

Much pains has been taken by the railway companies in organizing these special trains, and much patience is needed and displayed by their officials in carrying out the organization. For the numbers are vast, the people are little used to travelling, and are decidedly rough in their ways. On a recent occasion the barriers of the S.E.R. station at London Bridge were forced by the impatient mob, and the station and carriages taken by storm. I have heard that unless a sharp look-out is kept, the travellers who have gone through the barrier pass their tickets over the railings to their pals outside, who present them at the barricade for the second time. All children become “children in arms” for the five minutes of entrance, as such are “not charged for.” I have heard that on one occasion a stalwart Irishwoman was passing through the barricade with her sack over her shoulder, which appeared so remarkably loaded that the police opened it, and found the *great Irishwoman’s little husband*, who was thus trying to do the company of his 2s. fare!

But there is the other side. When the intending pickers have found by the papers, or by posters, that hopping is imminent, and have also seen the hopper trains advertised, they pack up (if there is anything to pack) and betake themselves to the station at a late hour of the night. Many of

them have given up their lodgings; and, wet or fine, they must squat about in the vicinity of the station till the train starts. I have been told that they often have long to wait, and I wish some kind Christian effort could be made to soothe, to guide and help them under such trying circumstances.

There are those who make efforts to help them when they arrive. This is very generally at three or four o'clock on Sunday morning. They are tired and hungry, and have certainly very little in their pockets. Friends have coffee-barrows ready, and a large amount of warming beverage is bought by the poor things in halfpenny or penny purchases. *Giving* is impossible. It would be sure to end in a very ugly rush. Once at my own coffee-barrow, whilst a free distribution was going on, the crowd jammed my man up against the boilers, and he could neither escape from their heat, nor get at the cocks to draw. The barrow went over; eighteen of our mugs went away, to which I alluded once or twice in referring to the eighth commandment. In the dark night my brother's barrow was once beset in the station yard by roughs. The man in charge promptly threw all his money into the boiler full of scalding coffee. He was up to his work.

Before leaving the point of journeys I must say something of the return journey. The people want a good deal of help. They get very excited, and what with their sacks full, and their children, they hardly know how to stow themselves in. A little kind guidance and assistance is then very helpful. I am sorry to say that another cause of their helplessness is their resort to the public-house, when they have got their earnings and on the way to their station. Numbers of men and women come up woefully drunk, and, in their drunkenness, pouring out their awful depravity. It is by far the most sickening and terrible scene of wickedness I have ever witnessed. I have seen men stripped and fighting; I have seen a son kicking his drunken mother to get her money from her; I have had words addressed to me which I could not have conceived.

Of course nothing but change of heart and life can wholly remove such displays of evil, but the occasion for them may be minimized. It requires a careful arrangement between the employers and the railway companies, so that the interval between paying off and packing off may be as brief as possible. This is not so simple as might be thought. The hop-grower cannot always calculate to two or three hours when his hops will all be picked. Then his accountants have to make up all the books with the scores of separate accounts, and to deduct in each case for advances. The actual payment of so many parties must take a considerable time. Hence it is difficult

for the employer to calculate within an hour of the time that his special will be required.¹ The arrangements are not simple, either, for the railway authorities. With all the regular traffic, it is a matter of nice calculation to fit in the specials. Sometimes it happens that the train is ready at the appointed time, but the passengers do not turn up. Sometimes the passengers are in the station yard at the time, but have to wait hour by hour for their train. There is no shelter for them, and no refreshment-stall. As the police have said to me, "Sir, there is nothing for them to do but to go to the public-house." I have described the consequences. I believe the railway authorities are anxious to meet the difficulty, and I know there is the same feeling among the employers. So I do not despair of seeing the difficulty overcome. I have heard of an employer not only nicely calculating his time, and wiring for his train accordingly, but going to the station to see his people off, an example most admirable. For the parochial clergy, some of them do the best they can by arranging for the sale of buns and coffee at the station; by helping the people in, saying kind words, and giving some good books.

In this parish we take leave of our friends by a parting gift of coffee, tea, and cakes. We extemporize our counters and barriers just outside the pay-office, and dispense to each payee as he or she comes out. Others of us stand beyond, and supplement the eatables with gifts of little books, flowers, and bags of lavender. Thus they most of them leave us grateful and pleased, and we diminish the temptations to the "public." Last year I and our missionary saw them off from the station, and encountered *no case* of manifest intoxication, and we parted amidst smiles and kindly farewells.

My brother, who has had much longer experience in this work than I have, says that now, instead of a very small minority going away sober, most trains have almost, if not quite, *half* a sober company. We would thank God, and take courage. It will be not a small thing if by our final efforts we can help them to save their money for their many wants when they get back. "Look'ee, master," said two burly gipsies to me after the payments, "can ye give us change for these?" each holding out a five-pound note! "No. I am too poor, I am afraid. You must go to the bank for that." Many a woman comes, after the payment, to our coffee counter, with a handful of silver, and one or more pieces of gold besides. We do not want this to be lost in beer, or through beer! The Post-Office

¹ I venture to suggest to any hop-growers who may read this, t they should not be too nice about what margin they may leave, to picked by their home people after the foreigners are paid off and gon

authorities (to whom I applied through Sir Arthur Blackwood) have cordially helped us in our efforts to get the people to deposit their earnings at once in the P.O. Savings Bank. They sent agents to stand by the farmers' pay-table. It has not yet answered. "Perhaps they will nip us of it," said a youth to me, probably speaking the prevailing impression. I do not think such efforts are yet exhausted, but a public opinion in favour of thrift has to be born and nurtured among this class, before we can get on.

From the journeys, I now turn to their accommodation in the country. They are lodged partly in barns and sheds roughly prepared for them, partly in rows of huts built specially for them, partly in tents, and the gipsies in their own caravans. In each of the last two years a "caravan baby" was born here, much to the interest of the female part of our population.

It is not very hard for gipsies to live in their caravans, especially if they have been born in them. But more must be said about barns, cattle-sheds, tents, etc. T. L. Murray Brown, Esq., reporting in 1867 on accommodation for hop-pickers to the President of the Government Local Board, says :

That on many farms in every district the accommodation is still seriously and often scandalously defective ; that overcrowding of the most serious description is common, and that the lodgings are often very filthy ; that internal divisions are constantly neglected, although without them, in the larger huts occupied by many persons of both sexes, decency is impossible and morality must be endangered.

About the same date the Hon. E. Stanhope instances one large room in which 133 persons were found. I do not wish to dilate on the terrible consequences of such a state of things. But I hope the readers of *THE CHURCHMAN* will pause a few minutes and consider them. I am thankful to say that there has been much improvement since the date of these reports. Still the evils exist, the same in kind if abated in degree. I *believe* that a gradual and general amelioration has taken place. I *know* that special buildings have been erected on many farms, and efforts have been made to meet at least the moral dangers. The farmers or agents who assign the habitations are bound to use every precaution and vigilance.¹ Still their efforts may be made nugatory by misrepresentation of relationship, or clandestine evasion, so that the real stay of the evils must depend on whatever religious influence we may be

¹ I suggest the employment of corrugated iron or zinc for separating screens. It cannot be cut through, nor used for fire-wood, nor is it costly. It does not blaze in case of fire, and it is useful for various purposes. Also it is clean. With zinc roofs leans-to may be easily and cheaply run up at the back of walls, and so the number of small separate tenements increased.

able by God's help to secure in the hearts of the people concerned.

As to tents, if we could insure four weeks of dry weather they would be well enough, and the camp-fires as satisfactory as they are picturesque. But you cannot; and a day's rain is bad; three days' rain is awful. I have seen women coming out of their soaked tents in the morning, blue in colour, and with chattering teeth. I have seen children in bronchitis lying on wet straw, with water dripping on to it through the canvas. One night a storm of wind and rain swept through the encampment about two a.m. Two or three of the tents were blown away, and the poor occupants left in a soaking condition with no shelter, and no dry things to put on. Nor can you get camp-fires to burn in the wet, despite the supply of wood liberally dealt out. It is hard for people when chilled not to be able to make a cup of hot tea; and dangerous for people with wet clothes not to be able to dry them. Many good-hearted hop-growers or landlords have of later years built, as cooking-houses, long sheds with eight or ten hearths and chimneys, and a roof. At least a zinc roof may be run out from a wall, under which fires can be lit without exposure to rain. And I venture to suggest that at no cost, and with very little trouble, most farmers can have a caldron or boiler ready, and can thus provide a supply of water hot for tea-making, when the poor things come off work on a wet day.

There is a difficulty in providing wholesome food for such an influx. It is hard for pickers to walk two or three miles for shopping, when they have stood ten or twelve hours at work. It is harder not to run in for a glass at the beer-shop close by the baker's. Itinerant vendors drive a good trade. Mr. Stanhope (1869) quotes the Rev. J. Y. Stratton witnessing that a dealer sold diseased beef to eighty people at twopence a pound! The kind and intelligent among the hop-growers and landlords, the clergy and other benevolent residents, have seen these various evils for years, and made efforts spasmodic and isolated to meet them. But it was not till 1866 that they combined together and worked on system through the society then formed for the improvement in hiring, conveying, and accommodating hop-pickers. Among the earliest donors to its fund was Charles Dickens. For several years this society simply endeavoured to rouse public attention to the subject, and exercise influence through the press. Still the worst cases of neglect remained untouched, and the society appealed for help to the Local Government Board in 1872. The result was that the Board put out a series of suggested by-laws with regard to proper accommodation and sanitary measures, and the inspection of the buildings as regards cleanliness, ventila-

tion, proper dimensions, supply of cooking-houses, etc.; and also of food offered among them for sale. It was made permissive for any Union District to adopt and enforce these by-laws. They were sent, recommended by the Board, to all local sanitary authorities. But despite this recommendation, and the influence exerted by the society, the adoption was very slow and gradual. In the fifteen years since that time, thirteen unions out of the twenty-four in which hops are grown, have adopted by-laws. But I believe that all have omitted from the laws they have adopted several of the most important rules suggested. And I fear that beyond circulating the by-laws as a notice, very little has been done to enforce them. The matter was taken up by the Royal Commission on the housing of the working classes in 1884. The Commission recommended that these by-laws should in their entirety be made obligatory upon all the unions concerned, and a clause in the Bill on the subject was drawn to that effect. Alas! it was struck out. Further legislation may be hoped for. Meanwhile local voluntary efforts are made to meet the various emergencies. Of course the habitations must be left to the landlords and tenants, but we try to provide wholesome refreshment by our temperance coffee-barrows, and *al fresco* soup-kitchens.

This year has taken to her rest a lady of aristocratic birth and station, who went out into the hop-gardens with her tent and store, and sold good food to the poor people on the very scene of their labours. Lady Caroline Nevill soon found how much more her customers knew about good or bad potatoes than she did! But she meant good, and she did good, and her memory is fragrant.

A lady wrote to me from the West End wishing to help us. She came down and followed Lady C. Nevill's example. She got a license to sell tobacco! She also made her store our rendezvous for preaching. When the people were leaving she adopted our plan of a final free distribution. We had some difficulties, and the hobbledehoyes set themselves to tease us and give us a *mauvais quart d'heure* ere they left. "What does she get for doing it?" said one. "You ought to respect this lady," said I, "and take off your hat when you come here. She lives at one of the best hotels, and has only to ring her bell and half-a-dozen servants are ready to wait on her. And yet you see that out of mere kindness to you she comes and brings you good food to your very tents, and sells you even haporths of tobacco!" "What is he saying?" said the lady. "Does he think I get paid for coming here? It's only his ignorance. It's wonderful how little some people know."

"No doubt you've got all the sense, and it's no wonder there ain't none left for me," said the lad.

But I must have done. When you read this, kind friends, the work will be nearly upon us again. May we hope for your sympathy? May we hope that you will pray that in good report or evil report we may still persevere, and that we may be so helped by the Giver of all grace and power, that in the highest and best sense we may have large success in our work among the hop-pickers.

CLEMENT FRANCIS COBB.



ART. IV.—DR. BIGG'S BAMPTON LECTURES.

The Christian Platonists of Alexandria. Eight Lectures preached before the University of Oxford in the year 1886, on the foundation of the late Rev. John Bampton, M.A. By CHARLES BIGG, D.D., Assistant Chaplain of Corpus Christi College, formerly Senior Student of Christ Church, Oxford. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press. 1886.

AMONG the questions which might be commended to the serious consideration of whomsoever they may practically concern, is that of the comparatively small proportion of "Bampton Lectures" which can be regarded as forming a permanent addition to our theological literature, or which indeed, have proved of practical use to any one, except perhaps the Lecturers. It is of but small comfort to know that the same, if not worse, may be said of other richly endowed Lectureships, notably of the "Hibbert Lectures" which were introduced to the learned world with such show of promise and pomp of announcement. To the curious in such matters it may be an interesting speculation what proportion the sums yielded by the endowments would bear to the market-value of the volumes produced, from the publisher's point of view. This, however, would be of comparatively small importance, if we could believe that the cause of solid learning had been advanced by these publications. But, with the exception of a limited number of well-known "Bampton Lectures" which have taken a permanent rank in theological literature, such has notoriously not been the case. This, at least so far as regards theology in the stricter sense, holds even more emphatically true in respect of the "Hibbert Lectures," which have mostly yielded only a not very forcible re-assertion in more or less popular language of what had been previously stated in more scientific manner—and fully discounted. On the other hand, it must be admitted that any possible uneasiness on the score of the paucity of readers of such volumes,