"break away every one from his master." And the "missuses," I believe, report the same melancholy experience.

ARTHUR C. JENNINGS.

ART. IV.—ARCHDEACON BLAKENEY.

"HIS administration of Sheffield was a model to all England." These words were used by a dignitary of the Church of his brother Archdeacon who had just passed away. It is true; and to anyone who is at all acquainted with the inner life of the great Northern city, the admiration and the respect that the looker-on feels will be more than doubled. For let us examine the facts. Here were, roughly speaking, thirty-three parishes, moulded, with but isolated exceptions, into one conception of Church life and one opinion of Church doctrine by a clergyman who did not graduate with any brilliance, who was not in the ordinary sense of the word eloquent, and who had not been in his youth brought up in England. Here was a zealous Churchman, of a family of Churchmen, revered by the great body of Protestant dissenters as if he had been one of their own spiritual heads. Here was one who, whatever else he was, would not be gainsaid as an unflinching advocate of active Reformation principles and who never tried to hide his opinions, lamented by the head of the Sheffield Roman Catholics in perhaps the most touching terms that fell from any pulpit in the city. Here was one whose intense personal devotion to his Saviour can hardly be measured even by those who knew him nearest, and who was yet, as one of them said, "as much to the Jews as he was to his fellow-Christians." These are wonderful facts, even in this age of charity. Was the Archdeacon, then, one of those men who are tolerant because they have nothing to tolerate, and whose forbearance issues from the source of indifferent opinions? Anything but that. Principle and public profession were ingrained parts of his character. He never swerved from what his deliberate opinion had marked out as his course, but from the very fact that his own cherished convictions were so deeply rooted, he was ready to make every allowance for those of his opponents.

So much for the religious affairs of the great city. Let us examine its social side. This reveals a control on the part of the Archdeacon which is even more wonderful. The characteristics of Yorkshiremen are well known and clearly marked. Nowhere, perhaps, are they more rigidly defined than in Sheffield. The rugged determination that sometimes lapses into iron obstinacy; the outspokenness that

from pride in its own vigour sometimes degenerates into regardless rudeness; the suspicion of strangers that, when it has once been overcome, passes into the most generous affection on the face of the earth; the hatred of priestcraft that is so complete as to be hostile even to ordinary clericalism —who does not know these characteristics of the sturdy South Yorkshiremen? Surely if these iron natures were to be won and bent into obedience, it would be by some great man who rose from their midst and was versed in their ways? Well, to this smoky, stubborn city came an Anglo-Irishman who for thirty years had it at his feet, influenced personally all classes of society, was loved by the toiling masses with an affection almost amounting to idolatry, and at his last end was carried to his grave amidst the mute agony of a probably unparalleled display of mourning. It was not affectionate exaggeration, but bare matter-of-fact, that led the leading newspaper in the city to style him "the best-loved man in Sheffield."

It is not the purpose of these pages to give any sort of biographical sketch of the late Vicar of Sheffield. A very admirable *brochure*[1] has been issued from the office of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, which recounts the salient facts of his life and gives a most graphic description of the wonderful funeral. A fuller and more rounded biography[2] has been published, compiled by a well-known Sheffield incumbent. It contains a delightful chapter from the graceful pen of Mrs. Blakeney, and an introduction from the Bishop of Ripon. We may be pardoned for saying that this volume, interesting as it is to the Sheffield reader, contains a good deal that is not so attractive to the outside public. In our opinion, a sketch of the Archdeacon as a leader of the Church, and a man pre-eminent for his goodness, has yet to be written. The biography before us shows him merely as Vicar of Sheffield.

Let us, however imperfectly, try to recall some of the features which made Blakeney what he was during his long years of work.

A marked characteristic was the Archdeacon's knowledge of, and tact in dealing with, human nature. Both experience and intuition contributed to this. It is of fundamental necessity, surely, for those who have to deal largely in common concerns, and have to influence their fellows, not by books or pamphlets, but by word of mouth and action, often to be called up and prompted by a swift sagacity on some

[1] "Memoir of the Ven. John Edward Blakeney, D.D." *Telegraph* Office, Sheffield. Price threepence.

[2] "Memories of the Life and Work of John Edward Blakeney," by the Rev. W. Odom. London: *Home Words* Office.

startling crisis of the moment. It is a great thing to be prepared with an elaborate scheme, but a greater to confront hasty men, or involved intrigues, or conflicting interests, and by the sheer craft that comes of knowledge to rule them with an imperceptible triumph. The Archdeacon was never tired of urging on his curates that they should try to influence not only their own friends—those who were in the Church ring, so to speak—but even those who were, at all events, outside, if not hostile. "There is some credit in cracking one of those hard nuts," he used to say; "anybody can manage their friends, but give me a real tough customer." He could do it, too; and so, speaking for the moment under the aspect of Church defence, he might be regarded as a skilful general, who not only strengthened his own lines, but threw out earthworks into the enemy's country and sent out pickets and scouts, with this difference, of course, that his raids were pacific. For instance, a gentleman, well known in Sheffield for his advanced Socialistic views, and who was in consequence a great power with a certain section of the people, got together a committee, with the object of helping the town authorities to enforce the Act for the better housing of the working classes. The committee as it was formed constituted a most curious amalgam. There were two or three clergy, two or three Roman Catholic priests, several strong Socialists, several representatives of the Nonconformist conscience, including a very able and very political Unitarian minister, a Conservative, and two or three Radical town councillors, and other heterogeneous elements. Speaking generally, such a body would be excessively chary of undergoing any kind of dictation from a parson. Yet the Archdeacon joined the committee, was elected chairman, insensibly ruled its deliberations, and welded the incongruous elements into an engine which did real good in the city. It was a privilege and a lesson to watch his deft handling of a body which it is not uncharitable to suppose might have either exasperated the landlords or inflamed the tenants if its energies had not been wisely directed. Perhaps this was one of the "hard nuts" which he gloried in setting himself to crack. But the Archdeacon's skill in dealing with men was conspicuous in many ways. Disputes were frequently referred to him: between owners and employés, between parents and children—nay even, let it be whispered only, between his clerical brethren. The Vicar of a large Northern town, one who is not only head of the parish clergy, but shares with the Mayor and Master-Cutler the virtual dominion over its concerns, must be no recluse, no mere man of letters; he must be prepared, on occasion, to "hang theology," and deal with men not as he would wish

them to be, but as he finds them. If one lived with "nice" people only, one would live in a wilderness.

We have said that the Archdeacon had a wonderful knowledge of the world; but no one who knew him would forget to think of another point in his character, which yet is usually thought to be incapable of existing side by side with the first. For surely it is the common feeling of "men of the world" that experience nurses distrust. But with him experience was the mother of sympathy. Nobody had a wider range of acquaintance with men or a deeper insight into human nature; nobody had a firmer belief that every man was innocent until he was proved guilty; and the Archdeacon was, in that regard, a very obstinate juryman. It was impossible to quote any case of an erring clergyman, or a hypocritical Church worker, or a respectable rogue, which he could not cap out of the vast stores of his recollection. One sometimes wondered how he could maintain such a fresh belief in the purity of people's motives and acts as he undoubtedly held. He was, of course, a rigid opponent of the confessional, and yet he was a confessor to all sorts and conditions of men and women. Even before his position as Archdeacon and Rural Dean brought him officially into contact with evildoers, his kindly nature and reputation for spirituality brought shoals of anxious sinners to his side. He sought no confidences—rather discouraged them; his rebukes to women who ostentatiously offered an explicit act of confession were often severe. But, from the very nature of the man, he viewed, as few others could, a long vista of wrongdoing and unhappiness that had fallen beneath his gaze. The most marvellous point to be noticed in connection with all this is that his sympathy and confidence seemed to gain freshness instead of bruises from each disclosure. He was never tired of urging on his curates that sympathy should be the keynote of every minister's life. Indeed, it is true; for if God is love, God's religion must be the expression of love. A clergyman's ability, intellectual attainments, or vigour of character cannot count for their full worth in the sum total of his usefulness unless they are informed by the spirit of devotion to his fellow men. If it is true that he who loves God loves his brethren also, is it not equally true that he who does not love his brethren cannot completely love his God? There is no need for maudlin sentiment in this; it is simply a plain matter of fact that love covers a multitude of imperfections. It was this that led the Archdeacon to remark, when he was accused of indiscriminate generosity in his benefactions, "I would rather be imposed upon twenty times than refuse to help one deserving person." Over and over again the man

who must have frequently been beguiled by a specious story would yet have the cheery confidence in true human nature to declare his belief that the next claimant might be genuine: may we not rather say that he had the Christ-informed courage to forgive his brother for the seventieth time? This was the recklessness of religion, the optimism of the Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps the woman in the Crofts partially realized this truth when she said: "There's nobbut wun gentleman i' Sheffield, and that's t' Archdeacon!" though she certainly need not have limited the range of her application!

No one not conversant with Sheffield history can properly appreciate the difference between the St. Paul's parish of to-day and of thirty-five years ago. Hundreds of dwelling-houses have been pulled down; the present handsome Pinstone Street replaces an old lane; the beautiful new City buildings replace old courts; the Midland Station covers the area of what was probably the worst part of the parish, called the Pond Islands. Into this populous and poor district the Vicar of St. Paul's, and she who has always been more than his helpmeet, threw themselves with an energy and love that ask the utmost admiration. Archdeacon Blakeney's system has probably always been the same. In the forefront he put pastoral visitation. Schools were of the utmost importance, elementary, Sunday, and ragged, which we believe he was the first to start in Sheffield. All organizations that knit together the Churchpeople of a parish were worked with unflagging energy—mothers' meetings, communicants' unions, teachers' meetings, and so on. The whole system was intended to make the Churchpeople as much like one large brotherhood as possible: Christian people, even in our days, can have many things "in common." The Church services were modelled so as to be bright, cheerful, and hearty. Singing and choral services are not in the North so much a party badge as in the South. The Archdeacon enjoyed a good *short* anthem, but was not fond of elaborate "services" set to morning and evening canticles. He was strongly attached to evening Communion. Indeed, to see the furrowed faces and hardened hands of those who toil bent reverently over the communion rails at eventide was in itself an answer to those who ask why the Supper should be celebrated then. As a supplement to the Church, he carried on the work of the Mission Hall, which he always insisted was a necessity in some parishes. It is interesting to remember, however, that he was not an enthusiastic believer in open-air preaching. He did not discourage it, even practised it himself frequently; but it was not one of his most cherished methods. It is impossible to enumerate here the different exploits in Christian warfare

that the Vicar of St. Paul's performed; but one may be noticed —the manner in which he influenced the thought of young men. At the time of his death there were in Sheffield alone four clergymen, at one time lay workers under him in St. Paul's parish, who had the spiritual charge of an aggregate of more than 40,000 souls. This, not including many others who are working elsewhere, would alone show the extent of his influence. Naturally, when he became Vicar of Sheffield, and again Archdeacon, the conditions of his work were altered. Not so his energy and success. There was still the same fervour without fussiness; the same sunny geniality combined with shrewdness; the Catholic sympathy without compromise of principle. One look at the buoyant upright figure, with the umbrella thrown soldier-wise over the right shoulder, and the bright eyes glancing alertly in all directions, would convince an onlooker that there was a master of men. All who came within his range owned the fascination of his magnetic personality. If it is true that a man's influence consists of his ideas multiplied by and projected through his personality, then it is impossible in this world to estimate the import of his benign sway.

Through all the Archdeacon's strenuous work he was greatly aided by his innate cheerfulness. He was Irish, and therefore humorous, quick to appreciate and laugh at comic points, and with a strong fund of drollery in himself. In that year when the diocese of York was held by three successive Archbishops, at a meeting in the Cutlers' Hall convened to enable the Sheffield clergy to greet Dr. Magee, it was interesting to note the two eminent Irishmen sitting side by side, convulsed with laughter at different pauses in the proceedings, merry, ringing, and infectious, as they capped each other's stories or fired off witticisms. The Archdeacon believed in a good laugh as a good medicine. It is sometimes said that the poorer classes have an imperfect appreciation of humour. To a certain extent this is possibly true of the tillers of the soil, but not, certainly, of the keen-witted craftsmen of large cities. No audience is quicker to grasp a subtle allusion or a droll incident than one composed of Sheffield working-men, and their Vicar knew well how to play upon this faculty. They themselves have a great power of dry, caustic humour.

Space necessarily prevents us from touching on many points in the Archdeacon's character. But no memorial of him would be in any sense complete which did not allude to the deep personal piety which was so marked in him. Simple and unaffected devoutness were never proclaimed, but always perceptible. It is no exaggeration to say that he lived in an atmosphere of prayer. Like St. Francis of Assisi, he thought

nothing too unimportant to be referred to the great Source of Strength, and such a habit, though, as we have said, as far removed from ostentation as possible, could not but make it apparent that here was one "whose face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." Hence, it may, without any irreverence, be said that he was intimate with God. And as in our conversation with intimate friends we are seldom at a loss for words, so, without trenching on the sanctity of his inner life, it may be said that he was never at a loss for words in his praying, which is conversation with God.

This faculty for extempore prayer was the only respect in which the Archdeacon could be truly called eloquent. His public speeches, while attractive, could not be so designated, nor his sermons. These latter were always written, and read from manuscript. An extempore sermon, so-called, was never, to the writer's knowledge, delivered by him, and this is remarkable, considering that the Irish clergy of the Church of England have generally this gift in a marked degree. He would playfully tell his curates that he expected them to give a better sermon than he did. But "the gift of the gab," as it is called in Yorkshire, is not everything: the gift of sincerity is far better. No one could listen to his sentences without catching the reality that rang through them. They were deeply interwoven with Scripture, and arrested the attention, from their very faithfulness and earnestness, far more than any pretentious displays are wont to do—and, after all, that is the province of the preacher. In one respect, moreover, the Archdeacon was unsurpassed. Whenever any purely practical point, such as Roman Catholic claims, or the Lincoln judgment, or the destiny of Voluntary schools, or others of that nature were touched upon, his remarks were worthy of the closest attention, and his opinion almost invariably correct. His vast knowledge of affairs, and deep sagacity, gave his verdict an intellectual common-sense which is not always conspicuous in the pronunciations of all high dignitaries. No one was less prone to hysterics, or more full of the sanity of public life. He knew men, and his people too well, and in return his people would always rather listen to him than to a stranger, however fluent. Above all, his life was a sermon.

We may be permitted to close this very inadequate notice by relating three scenes in the Archdeacon's career.

The first illustrates his promptness in rising to an emergency, and his tact in dealing with men. In the end of 1887, a large gathering of the "unemployed" was held in Paradise Square. This square—"Pot" Square, as it is affectionately

called—was in former days the great arena for political meetings in Sheffield. It is still, to a certain extent; but some of its characteristics have of late passed away. The occasion promised some danger; there was certainly a great deal of distress, and the meeting was engineered by some well-known Socialistic leaders. Under these circumstances, the Archdeacon took a bold step, and yet, as it turned out, he was eminently successful. He attended the meeting. Scarcely had he joined the crowd before he was descried by the leaders, and one of them called out for the Archdeacon to take the chair. Was he surprised when the Archdeacon did so? Anyhow, here was the Vicar of Sheffield presiding over a meeting of the unemployed. He made a good demagogue. His speech succeeded in allaying whatever discordant emotions existed, and he ended by inviting the chief promoters of the meeting to discuss the question of relief with him at the Vicarage. So what might well have been a dangerous occasion passed off in the tumultuous greetings of the thousands of working men who cheered the chairman as the meeting broke up. But what an exercise of calculating audacity! It is one thing to preside in a room over a comparatively calm meeting of workers on one side and employers on the other—a great thing—but it is very different when the sky is above you and men's fierce faces are in front, and one word may do the mischief.

The second event occurred in 1890, at the Albert Hall. It may be doubted whether a similar scene has occurred at any other time in England. The hall is a large one, and takes a good deal to fill it. Yet it was crowded with an enthusiastic throng of the workers of Sheffield, who had come because they were enthralled by the Archdeacon's personality and conscious of the nobility of his work. Thousands of them had subscribed for a gift of Sheffield silver-plate, to commemorate his thirty years' ministry in the town, and now about four thousand came to see it presented. On the platform were the Archbishop of York (Thomson), the Bishop of Hull, Earl Fitzwilliam, Archdeacon Straton (now Bishop of Sodor and Man), nearly all the Sheffield clergy, many Nonconformist ministers, and the large committee of working men. The speeches were characteristic. The venerable Lord Fitzwilliam spoke a few touching words; a Socialist bore witness to the Archdeacon's philanthropy; and a working man, one of those untaught orators who play upon the hearts of the people, stirred the meeting to its depths. It was a grand sight when the stalwart Archbishop, a king among men—the "working man's primate"—confronted his people, and held them absorbed with one of his noble speeches, logical, affec-

tionate, and convincing. He struck a true note when he described the meeting as an argument in Christian evidence, a fact which, in different phraseology, had been pointed out by his predecessor, the cutler. But the ovation that greeted the Archdeacon when he rose to acknowledge the gift was truly remarkable. With one consent the whole gathering rose to its feet, with the electric thrill that passes through great assemblies at a time of common emotion, and amid waves of tumultuous cheering, all eyes were bent on the sturdy form and kindly features that were so well known and loved in his adopted town. He spoke with deep emotion, nor can we wonder at it, for the love of a city was expressed in that roar of welcome.

The third scene was his funeral. Pageants far more splendid are seen frequently; there was no pomp about this one; it was unostentatious and quiet, even to simplicity. But the onlookers were brought by grief, not by curiosity, and the mourning was of fact, not in name. A "city in mourning" is a trite phrase, and very often unreal and meaningless, but if ever a town could be so described it was Sheffield on January 15, 1895. The attendance in the "old church" which the Archdeacon loved so dearly was remarkable; every public body and every religious denomination was represented; but so they might be at other public funerals. What could not be summoned by a man's mere rank and position was the look of dull sorrow on the faces of the thousands who lined the way from the church to Ecclesall Churchyard. Pitiless rain was falling, and the roads underneath were thick with snowy slush, yet all along the way the poor people stood, the grimy faces working, and the eyes instinct, not with the glassy stare of curiosity, but the keen pang of grief. The cortège passed through the avenue of sorrow to the dreary, snow-laden churchyard, where Archbishop Maclagan committed the dead body to the ground. All knew that they had lost a friend, and all lamented the friend they had lost. There they waited and waited, until it was all over, and the working people had said good-bye to the kindly man who loved them so well, and who would have asked nothing more than to be regretted as he was. What valour is to the soldier, what acuteness is to the lawyer, what skill is to the surgeon, sympathy and goodness are to the clergyman. In these lay the secret of the Archdeacon's greatness.

W. A. PURTON.