

will find an admirable help towards learning how to do so from this book.

I would end as I began—viz., by a strong commendation of this book to all who (1) would know what subjects are evidently interesting the more thoughtful young women at the present day, and who (2) wish to have some assurance of the excellence of the influence which the centres of the highest education are exercising upon them.

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.

ART. VIII.—THE MONTH.

THE joint meeting of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, with the Houses of Laymen of the two Provinces, resulted in fairly satisfactory conclusions, but served also to illustrate the unpractical elements which must at present attach to all such gatherings. The most satisfactory part of the proceedings was the conduct of the business by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which elicited the warm admiration of the whole Assembly. But one circumstance alone was sufficient to give a mark of unreality to the debates. After the opening remarks of the Archbishop, the preamble was moved by the Bishop of Salisbury in a speech of due comprehensiveness and consequently of due length; but after these opening statements all speakers were limited to ten minutes. Of course, such a regulation was imperative if the business was to be got through in two days; but if the constitution of a Council really representative of the Church of England had been seriously contemplated, its discussion in ten minutes speeches would have been absurd. A generation ago, a ten minutes Reform Bill was a matter of political ridicule; but to construct what was intended to be a governing body for the whole Church of England, which would practically supersede both Parliament and the Convocations, within two days, after a discussion in ten minutes speeches, would be at least reckless. A greater legislative operation than transforming the government and administration of the English Church can hardly be imagined. The reconstitution of the Irish Church, which occupied the best energies of Parliament for a considerable part of one Session, was a small matter in comparison. Fortunately, even if the construction of such a body were really proposed, the proposals when drafted by this scratch assembly would have to be submitted to Parliament before they could become effective, and we may be quite sure that the House of Commons

would give much graver and more prolonged deliberation to so momentous a matter.

Happily, however, the result of the morning session was to lead to a modification of the preamble by which the proposals were reduced to more modest dimensions. The preamble, as proposed, alleged that "it is desirable that provision should be made for the calling together of a council representing the Church of England, and consisting of clergy and laity of the provinces of Canterbury and York." Objections were at once raised to so ambitious and far-reaching an aim. It was pointed out that large numbers of laymen who, though generally silent, form a most important element in the Church, would find no real representation in the Houses of Laymen as at present elected, while practically, even if anomalously, the Houses of Parliament represent large and vital interests in the Church of England. The Bishop of Salisbury incidentally illustrated the impracticable character of the views by which many of the supporters of the scheme are actuated, by asking: "Why should we go to Parliament to reform our system of patronage? Why should we go to Parliament to alter our judicial and executive administration?" Why? Because, as was pointed out in the debate, every Englishman, or at least every English Christian, has a deep interest in such subjects. Patronage, in particular, is a matter in which not only great pecuniary interests are involved, but in which every Nonconformist has a practical concern. Upon the way in which patronage is exercised and controlled depends the character of the Christian influences at work in his village, and may depend the question whether he remains a Nonconformist. As long as the Church is established, the governing power in the country, which is practically Parliament, must keep a firm hand upon the methods by which the men are appointed in whose hands the chief spiritual influences of the country are placed. The case is even stronger with "the judicial and executive administration" of the Church. Upon its judicial administration depends the character of the teaching of the Church of England, and upon that character must ultimately depend the question whether Parliament will continue to maintain the Church in the sole enjoyment of the privileges it possesses throughout the country. One would think, from the manner in which some Churchmen discuss this question, that the Church was in possession, not merely of its endowments, but of its exclusive right to the use of the Cathedrals and parish Churches by some eternal decree. On the contrary, these privileges, of which that exclusive right is perhaps the greatest of all, depend for their legal effectiveness on the authority of Parliament. The Clergy of the Roman obedience, who were

originally in possession of them, are excluded by the authority of Parliament, and the same authority was once exerted, and might be again, to exclude Clergy of the Canterbury obedience. A Church cannot hold such privileges from a National authority without conceding great claims to that authority, or, we may add, without being under an obligation to treat it with great deference and consideration. Attempts to treat Parliament as an alien body are, therefore, both unwise and ungrateful; and it may be hoped that the Bishop of Salisbury did not represent the feelings of many of his episcopal brethren.

But the result of the morning's discussion was that when the meeting reassembled in the afternoon the most questionable terms had been removed from the preamble. The Archbishop announced that the words of the preamble would run as follows: "That whereas it is desirable that provision should be made for the calling together of a representative council, consisting of clergy and laity of the provinces of Canterbury and York." This avoids the supposition that such a council will represent the Church of England. A meeting of the two Convocations and the two Houses of Laymen will certainly be representative of a very important body of opinion within the Church, and the union of the Clergy and Laity of the two provinces in one deliberative body is no doubt desirable for the purpose of eliciting and forming that opinion. In direct negative of a motion which had been announced, it was further proposed "That the question of obtaining legal constitution and authority for such a council be reserved for consideration until after the council has, upon a voluntary basis, come into working order." This resolution places the whole matter upon a purely experimental basis, and provides the only safe method of entering upon so considerable a scheme. Obviously the first practical measure to be adopted will be, as a subsequent resolution proposed, to take steps for reforming the two Convocations, for it is manifestly unreasonable to attempt to form a representative Council out of Convocations which are confessedly not truly representative. Until some such reform of the Convocations has been effected, any attempt to enlarge their powers, either acting alone or with the Houses of Laymen, would be futile. The main result of the meeting would thus seem to be that all who took part in it are pledged to work for a reform of the Convocations. That will be a matter of no little time and discussion; and meanwhile the Council, when summoned, may perhaps be usefully exercised in discussing momentous matters in ten minutes speeches.