

light of past experience, we must feel more than doubtful. I only hope that the wise counsels given by Mr. Burns may become widely known, and that workers among the poor may see the necessity of bearing them in mind.



## The Parson and his Flock.

A REPLY.

BY THE REV. F. ST. JOHN THACKERAY, M.A.

**I**T was wisely said by Epictetus, "Everything has two handles—one by which it may be borne, the other by which it cannot. If your brother be unjust, do not take up the matter by that handle—the handle of his injustice—for that is the one by which it cannot be taken up, but rather by the handle that he is your brother."

Let us endeavour, in meeting the indictment brought by Lieutenant-Colonel Pedder<sup>1</sup> against the Church of England, to do so in the spirit of this maxim. Let the answer come, not from an attitude of irreconcilable aversion or uncompromising hostility; rather, we will try to take up the question by the handle of kindly appreciation, readiness to learn our own faults, and a resolve not to impute evil where evil is not meant.

The Colonel begins with deprecating abstractions. He desires above all to arrive at a practical basis in things ecclesiastical, as in things electrical and commercial. The influence of the Church on conduct is his test of efficiency. And no one can doubt that this is essential. But we must ask, What are the authorities for his conclusions, and how is efficiency to be measured? Not by quoting a letter from the Bishop of Salisbury to his laity, in which he laments the vices that still stain our age, though we may believe they do so far less deeply than they did that of our fathers and grandfathers. To call on

<sup>1</sup> *Contemporary Review*, May, 1906.

laymen to do their part is surely not a confession of failure on the side of the Church. Nor is the inefficiency of the clergy proved by broad statements and question-begging appellatives, labelling them as belonging to "the gentry" as opposed to the common people, and denouncing their "aloofness" as a class. We admit without reserve that the Colonel has laid his finger on a point which the clergy will do well not to neglect, and that in some—we trust not many—parsonages may be found instances of a patronizing behaviour, such as to cause a natural irritation. When we come to "typical and common instances" and expect to see definite facts brought forward, it is hardly possible to refrain from smiling at the authority adduced by way of proof. For what is it? "One of Miss Lily Dougal's delightful novels!"

As far as the present writer's experience goes, he can assert confidently that in his own and in neighbouring parishes neither the schoolmaster nor schoolmistress, nor the school-teacher is treated other than as a friend. He could tell of concerts and glee-singing and Shakespeare readings, in which teachers and servants and labourers all take their part in the winter evenings, without the slightest hint of social distinction. All feel at their ease, all enter into the performance, contributing to and enjoying the entertainment with unaffected pleasure.

"An ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory." The good work done in East London of late years by the University Settlements is too well known to need detailed description, but it should not be ignored in this connection. Is it nothing that night after night young men of culture and education, who regard all they have learnt as trusts held for the good of others denied those advantages, may be seen sallying out, either singly or two at a time, not only or chiefly to lecture, but to hobnob with the artisan in the places which he frequents, and by meeting him on equal terms, work upon and mould his character for permanent good? And we clergy do require constantly to set before ourselves the object on which Colonel Pedder so rightly lays stress. We do need to be drawn more and more near to

our people. A lady once lost a ring in a mud-heap in Regent Street. A crowd collected round her, and everyone tried with sticks and umbrellas to recover it. She pushed back her sleeve, and baring her arm, plunged it in and found the ring. We must not shrink from contact with what may at first sight repel us.

Where our estimate of what the efficiency of the clergy should be differs from that of Colonel Pedder is not so much in principle as in the degree in which he conceives it to be applicable. What he regards as characteristic of them at large we venture to think is the exception rather than the rule. It does little good to pit the Salvation Army against the Church of England. They have their methods, which are not ours, though the work of the Church Army is not so very different, and not less fruitful of results. We do not want to minimize the value of what has been accomplished by General Booth, but if perfection is not to be found in the clerical sphere, is the escutcheon of the Salvation Army free from blots? A number of young people just out of a camp meeting, shouting and laughing in the road, "Oh! don't I love my Jesus?"—is that really an edifying spectacle? Again, the influence of the Salvation Army, as the writer can testify, is at times very transient. They got hold of a cast-away man, got him a place in a carpenter's shop, and then very soon lost him again, with the result that Church people who were disposed to second the efforts of the Salvationists found by experience, that these efforts sometimes ended in froth. Nor is it always the case that their adherents belong to the class which they profess to help. In Marylebone it was found by close inquiry that those who flocked to the Salvation Army were not the lowest dregs, but decent chapel-going people.

We confess to a regret that the Colonel has shown so little sympathy with or appreciation of parochial work, which is quietly going on. The writer of this article could mention more than one vicarage where through the past winter every evening in the week but one has been devoted to purely

voluntary work, such as drill, choir-practising, glee-singing, needlework, or basket-making or carpentering, quite apart from Church services and Confirmation classes. These are only a few samples of services freely rendered by the clergy and their families, distinctly helping to the formation of conduct. For the multifarious calls on a Rector's time we may refer to a passage too long to quote, in Escott's "England," Chapter II. The description of them occupies five pages. Recently his labours have been very largely increased by his being correspondent for the school. It is unfair to the parson to say his work "is just as easy as he likes to make it," the insinuation being, of course, that it is nothing but easy.

We cannot resent being well braced up to our duties, nor should we wince at the faithful wounds of a friend; but here, as elsewhere, our censor seems to generalize from a few unfortunate examples. What if the same measure were meted out to his own profession? How loud would be his indignation if, from the late instances of ragging in the Scots Greys and the 2nd Life Guards, the inference were drawn that no officer in those or in other regiments could be a gentleman?

We would fain hope that the Colonel, in his zeal for a golden future, has been carried away farther than his calmer judgment would have permitted. This is seen as to (a) facts, (b) special expressions. With a few remarks on each of these we will close this reply, into which much has had to be compressed, while a great deal that might be added is left out.

"The churches and cathedrals afford a vast advertisement." This term is a singularly unfortunate one, by which to describe our venerable heritage from past ages. It suggests the most recent devices for puffing Owbridge's Lung Tonic. It certainly would be more suitably applied to the corybantic religion of the Salvation Army.

"The success of the Church in obtaining worshippers is the justification she offers to England of her cost to the State. She attracts them by her 'pomp of worship.' And this needs money. It comes from the genteel classes, who support the

Church because she supports them by her practice and example in an insolence of exclusiveness which is making England hateful to the best of the English poor. But she cannot afford to alienate them by austerity, so she makes a compromise: 'Only worship—we do the rest,' as the Kodak Co. says." This extract bristles with misconceptions. By what handle, to use Epictetus' phrase, shall we take hold of it? By that of furious, passionate denial, or by that of meek submissiveness, or shall it not be rather by that of firm expostulation?

First a word as to "cost to the State." Not one penny does Parliament pay to the clergy, except to army and naval chaplains, and for services in gaols, asylums and workhouses, and to the Chaplain of the House of Commons. After all that has been convincingly set forth in detail by Lord Selborne and Freeman: it is needless to waste words on this subject.

Then, granted that in some quarters there is too much pomp of worship and a perilous imitation of Rome, would it not be fairer to put this down, in most cases, to a genuine desire to do proper honour to God's house and all belonging to it, rather than to sacerdotal pride? And as to the cost, in wealthy centres why should this be grudged? It is the old complaint about the ointment of spikenard very precious: "Why was it not sold and given to the poor?"

Not to dwell on the harsh words "insolence of exclusiveness," the insinuation that the genteel classes are supported by the Church and the Church is supported by them, if it were ever true, it is not so now. It represents a state of things that has past away. Of all the charges brought against us this would indeed be the gravest, *if it were true*. We firmly believe that such aloofness is fatal, and utterly alien to the followers of Christ.

"Socially speaking, the schoolmaster is a pariah." On the contrary, both as to emolument and status he has risen considerably of late years.

"To a casual observer, it looks as if the Church had better come down while she can." The Church has already come

down sufficiently, one would think, to satisfy the most exacting of her critics.

Between rebukes for the improvidence of their marriages on the one hand, and the cry of "Look at your poor clergy!" on the other, if they manage to leave enough to save their children from destitution, the clergy have a hard time. "Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?" They have not, and it is a pity they have not, the excellent system by which the Indian army provides for her officers' families. One of their chief problems is how to keep up with much self-denial their life insurances. But who, we may ask, would profit by their being ground down still further, or by encouraging, as Colonel Pedder does, their intermarriage with the members of the labouring class? *Cui bono?* At the present day, after the steady depreciation of tithe and glebe that has gone on for some forty years, there must be very few livings that can support their incumbents, unless supplemented out of private means. Colonel Pedder, after necessary outgoings (for repairs he gives £10! In the present writer's case this item often requires another cipher) allows the parson about as much as a butler; but the butler, at any rate, has his excellent board found him! And as to the education of his children, he says: "Let him bring up his boys to be country labourers!" An impoverished priesthood with a peasant family! Is that a panacea?

While, then, we thank our critic sincerely, and without any *arrière pensée*, for the salutary lesson he reads us on certain aspects of the clerical life that are sometimes forgotten, and are of the utmost importance, we hold that less than its due weight is attached to the work of the Church of England. Her services in the great regenerative movements of our age, in East London and other great cities, as well as in rural districts, in the cause of education and thrift, of temperance and sanitation, ought not to be quietly ignored, though they may escape observation because her ministers shun vulgar methods and are not loud and self-advertising.

No doubt the clergy must purge themselves of any remains

of sacerdotalism, illiberalism, antagonism to science, or any other of the terrible *isms* which have caused offence in the past. They will then, perhaps, be seen to deserve more credit for efficiency than that which is sometimes accorded to them. They will receive more sympathy in their uphill fight against evil, and in their dealing with problems far graver than any which confronted their fathers, in an age too ready hastily to condemn institutions without facing the alternative of supplanting them, too busy to look back or to look forward, and too prone at times to "judge according to appearance," in place of passing the true and "righteous judgment."



## Work among Children.

BY THE REV. R. F. DRURY, M.A.

**I**T is a mere truism to state that work in the interests of children and young people is of paramount importance in a parish. Our young people are the hope of the Church. They provide the clay in a plastic condition adaptable for any mould. They disclose the sources which control the issues. Theirs is the age of impression, of inquiry and assimilation; questions will be asked by the young inquiring minds, to which we are privileged to supply the answers. To them every path is a new path, they have not been this way heretofore. Every turn of the road adds zest to their search, since to them each day presents a new field for exploration.

The age of inquiry begins before the child can put a question in words: we cannot mistake the staring and questioning eyes of the babe of a few months old—eyes that are quick to detect the advent of a stranger, and that scan him from head to foot, and give their prompt verdict as to the desirability of cultivating his acquaintance.

Then, when developing intelligence is assisted by the ability to speak, the small child makes extensive use of the inter-