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OR,

A PLEA

FOR

THE CO-OPERATION OF THE LAITY

WITH

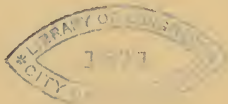
THE CLERGY.

17  
BY THE

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Sermons partly illustrative of the Devotional Services of  
the Church of England,—An Historical Defence  
of the Waldenses, &c. &c.



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TO

HER GRACE

**Charlotte-Sophia, Duchess of Beaufort,**

THIS VOLUME,

DESIGNED TO PROMOTE EFFORTS OF A RELIGIOUS  
AND BENEVOLENT NATURE,

IS,

BY PERMISSION, AND WITH SENTIMENTS OF  
CONSIDERATION AND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.





## P R E F A C E.

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DURING the time that has elapsed between writing and publishing this small volume, the state of alarm into which various parts of this kingdom have been thrown, by tumultuous assemblages of the people, and various public outrages, adds force and cogency to the arguments employed, in the following pages, in favour of the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, and confirms anticipations which I ventured to express in a former work.\* I therefore hope that the less reluctance will be felt to weigh those arguments, and consider with impartiality the expediency of adopting the measures recommended to attention. For though the effects of popular violence have of late exhibited themselves chiefly in rural districts, it is to be recollected that the spirit of insubordination, in alliance with the principles of infidelity, has its origin in cities and large towns, to which this subject is principally ap-

\* "Brief Memorials of Oberlin and De Staël," pp. 146—148.

plicable, and afterwards proceeds to taint the inhabitants of country villages. But even in the latter also, the principle of co-operation for which this small volume pleads may be adopted on a more limited scale.

The dangers to which the whole frame of society is exposed, by an increase of the principles of disloyalty and infidelity, are indeed such as may well urge those who are the friends of civil order and religious truth to use strenuous efforts to check and counteract them, conscious as they must feel, that the tranquillity of their country, the stability of the Church of England, and the happiness of their children, both here and hereafter, are menaced by the prevalence of such principles.

In former as well as latter ages the cause of religion has received a large accession of strength from both the writings and actions of the laity; and the names of Justin Martyr, Du Plessis Mornay, Grotius, Boyle, Nelson, Hanway, Howard, and others, adorn the annals of the Christian church:—names to which will be added hereafter those of individuals still living, whose efforts have contributed much to promote the extension of pious and charitable undertakings in the present day. Persons of the highest attainments, therefore, need not at any time

feel ashamed to consecrate their faculties and acquirements to the cause of religion; whilst those who engage in the more humble departments of exertion in that cause, may with the greatest propriety regard even those departments as honourable.

Although instances of the benevolent efforts of foreigners are introduced, to stimulate to greater efforts at home, I readily concede that there is a larger portion (though far too small) of lay-exertion in this kingdom at the present time than in any other: and I should add, that far higher motives than emulation, or worldly policy, ought to actuate those who aim to benefit their fellow-creatures. Gratitude for the blessings revealed in the Gospel, a desire to glorify the Redeemer of the world, compassionate regard for others, and similar sacred feelings should prompt to enlarged and constant endeavours to further the welfare of our fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians; and the deep conviction should be ever cherished, that whilst well-digested plans of benevolence may mitigate their sufferings and promote their temporal happiness, the powerful agency of God's Holy Spirit is further and essentially requisite to ensure a blessing upon attempts connected with their spiritual improvement.

I have stated that the table introduced at page 128, is not to be depended upon as perfectly correct; and will now cite other authorities for the purpose of comparison.

One writer in the "Morning Herald" states, that there are 11,342 benefices in England and Wales; another that there are 10,602. A writer in the "Kentish Gazette" describes the number as 10,661. There may be positive error in the statements of these writers, and the American editor alluded to at page 128; or those larger numbers may include lesser benefices, chapelries, &c. which are excluded from the smaller numbers. The following table of Congregations in England and Wales, unconnected with the Established Church, extracted from the "Kentish Gazette," may be compared with the table at page 128.

Roman Catholics	-	-	-	388
Presbyterians	-	-	-	258
Independents	-	-	-	1,289
Baptists	-	-	-	838
Quakers	-	-	-	396
Wesleyans	-	-	-	2,807
Calvinistic Methodists	-	-	-	424
Other Methodists, of different classes				689
Home Mission Stations	-	-	-	241
				<hr/>
				7,330

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# LAY-HELPERS ;

OR

A PLEA FOR THE CO-OPERATION OF THE  
LAITY WITH THE CLERGY.

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## CHAP. I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CO-OPERATION OF THE  
LAITY WITH THE CLERGY, SHEWN FROM THE GREAT  
INCREASE OF POPULATION AND OF CRIME.

SECT. 1.—*THE importance of the Co-  
operation of the Laity with the Clergy, shewn  
from the great increase of population.*

Whilst the cordial co-operation of the Laity  
with the Clergy, which the following pages are  
designed to advocate, is in every age highly  
conducive to the advancement of the interests  
of religion, the period in which we live, and the  
peculiar circumstances of our country, seem to  
shew its importance in a striking light. In  
proof of this assertion, a variety of particulars

will be adduced in the course of our argument ; the first step in which shall be a reference to the amount of our population. “ It is not by any means generally understood, as it ought to be,” observes a modern writer,\* “ that the present rapid increase of population is a new feature in our times. During the last century, or the greater part of it, the number of inhabitants in this country remained almost stationary. Adam Smith, writing in 1776, says, ‘ In Great Britain, and most other European countries, the population is not supposed to double in less than five hundred years.’ This was, indeed, no more than a probable estimate ; but it is abundantly confirmed by subsequent investigations, which afford us the means of determining the rate of population, both at that period and since, with considerable accuracy. In the years 1801, 1811, and 1821, enumerations were made, by authority of Parliament, of the number of inhabitants in Great Britain ; and at the same period returns were made by the officiating clergymen of every parish, of the number of births, deaths, and marriages, entered in the parochial registers yearly, since 1780. From 1700 to 1780, the registers of every *tenth* year only were given.

\* “ Statement of the Consequences likely to ensue from our growing Excess of Population, if not remedied by Colonization,” by John Barton.

By comparing these returns, Mr. Rickman, to whom was assigned the task of digesting and methodizing them, has been enabled to draw out the following statement of the population of England and Wales, from 1700 to 1820.

1700 . . . .	5,475,000
1710 . . . .	5,240,000
1720 . . . .	5,565,000
1730 . . . .	5,796,000
1740 . . . .	6,064,000
1750 . . . .	6,467,000
1760 . . . .	6,736,000
1770 . . . .	7,428,000
1780 . . . .	7,953,000
1790 . . . .	8,675,000
1801 . . . .	9,168,000
1811 . . . .	10,488,000
1821 . . . .	12,085,000

It will be seen from the table that the increase of inhabitants in the fifty years from 1700 to 1750, amounted to rather less than a million; whereas the increase in the fifty years from 1770 to 1821, amounts to more than *four millions and a half*." The above writer's principal object is to shew the dangers likely to ensue from so rapid an increase of population, unless a system of colonization be adopted, or an adequate increase take place in the annual growth of bread-corn. But if, in the one case, famine and fever, terminating, in numerous instances, in death, would be the affecting result; it may

with equal truth be inferred, that a dearth of religious instruction, and a disproportion of the means of imparting Christian knowledge to the wants of our numerous population, may be attended with consequences injurious alike to the individuals left in this state of moral destitution, and to the community at large.

It does however appear, that, notwithstanding recent efforts to a certain extent, provision for the spiritual necessities of those inhabitants of the realm who are members of the Established Church, does not keep pace with our increasing population.

When the subject of a grant of £1,000,000 sterling, for building new churches, was submitted to the House of Commons in the year 1818, the Chancellor of the Exchequer remarked, "About a century ago, Parliament thought it necessary to vote a large sum of money for the building several new churches, and that measure was carried into effect at a considerable expense, but in an imperfect manner.\* . . . In the course of the last century,

\* The Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded, of course, to the "fifty new churches built in and about the cities of London and Westminster, and suburbs thereof," by the Act of 9 Anne. The metropolis and its suburbs were supposed then to include 200,000 persons more than the churches of the Establishment could accommodate.

it was probable that our population had been nearly doubled; and independent of this, it had become concentrated in the metropolis and other districts, so that the accommodation afforded by many parishes for worship, was very inadequate to the wants of the inhabitants. . . . From the return upon the table, it appeared that there were 27 parishes, in which the excess of population, above those who could be accommodated, exceeded 20,000 souls. Of these, 11 were in the metropolis, the rest in the manufacturing districts. . . . In the next class there were 4 parishes, in which the excess of population was about 40,000. . . . It appeared by a work published by Mr. Yates, and which deserved particular notice, that the population of London and its vicinity amounted to 1,129,000 souls, of which 977,000 were unprovided for. . . . In the city of London, the accommodation of the churches far exceeded what the inhabitants required. This was the case in all our ancient cities; . . . but places that have risen into notice since the Reformation are very deficient. The House must be aware how many parochial duties there were to be performed, besides the celebration of divine service; and with the present increased population, a minister, however ably

assisted by his curate, could not attend to the whole of them. . . . In such a state of things, no time was left to the minister to visit his parishioners, and afford consolation to the dying."

The magnitude of such parishes at once strongly attests the expediency of adopting extraordinary measures to supply, in some degree, the lamented deficiency of attention to the various classes of the parishioners. Nor is the necessity for such measures materially diminished since the period when that statement was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for though an additional number of churches has been built in different parts of the kingdom, by means of a Parliamentary grant of one million and a half sterling, and additional accommodation, to the extent of 206,410 sittings, has been afforded by the Society for building and enlarging Churches; on the other hand, the population has been rapidly advancing, at the rate of one and a half or two millions of souls in ten years; whilst even the new churches are surrounded, for the most part, by a population far exceeding that to which the clergy can attend; and numerous parishes, besides these, overwhelm the stated ministers, by the number and variety of the duties they impose. On this

ground, we seem entitled to infer the importance of the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, in particular duties of benevolence.

In fact, such populous districts as those in question, unless stirred by frequent visits on the part of humane and judicious persons, will, like those stagnant pools which perpetually send forth mephitic exhalations, produce and diffuse a moral atmosphere of the most pernicious nature.

Whilst thus alluding to the increase of population in cities and large towns, and which partly arises from the resort of families and individuals who come up from the country, I must not omit to notice, that, besides an influx of ignorant and profane natives of England, an influx of Irish families\* also, to a prodigious extent, adds to the number of inhabitants in lanes, courts, and other abodes of those of the lowest class, who are living

\* It has been said that there are 90,000 Irish people in London. (*Anderson's Hist. Sketches.*) The town and environs of Manchester contain 30,000. In places like St. Giles's, London, the morals of the people are much corrupted by the residence of many families and individuals in the same room, where, still, a high price is required for beds. Persons of property, who would build courts sufficiently airy, let the houses at moderate rents, and require the tenants to accommodate families apart, would materially promote the moral improvement, as well as physical comforts of the lower classes.

in a state of squalid wretchedness. This circumstance necessarily contributes to swell the sum of ignorance, degeneracy, and crime, amongst the mass of the people in the inferior walks of life, and strongly enforces the expediency of visits from judicious and benevolent persons; who, whilst instituting search and inquiry in reference to humane objects, will have various opportunities afforded for promoting the moral amelioration of their respective districts. Neglect in this particular, can scarcely be otherwise than productive of the most deplorable results; and Dr. Chalmers has very pointedly remarked, “ When we contemplate the magnitude of those suburb wastes, which have formed so rapidly around the metropolis, and every commercial city of our land; when we think of the quantity of lawless spirit which has been permitted to ferment and to multiply there, afar from the contact of every softening influence, and without one effectual hand put forth to stay the great and the growing distemper; when we estimate the families which, from infancy to manhood, have been unvisited by any message from Christianity, and on whose consciences the voice of Him who speaketh the word that is from heaven has never descended, we cannot but charge that country which, satisfied if it neutralise the violence, rears no preventive



barrier against the vices of the people, with the guilt of inflicting upon itself a moral, if not a political suicide.”\*

SECT. 2.—*The importance of the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, shewn from the great increase of crime.*

In the present Section, I propose to argue in favour of the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, from that increase of crime which has been painfully conspicuous in modern days; and will endeavour to point out a few of the more obvious causes of that increase of crime: subjoining remarks on that counteracting influence, which judicious and benevolent persons among the Laity may exercise for the purpose of checking and diminishing the amount of local, consequently of national delinquency.

(1.) The fluctuation and uncertainty attendant on trade, have, doubtless, contributed in a great degree to the increase of crime in modern times; especially that affecting description of it, juvenile delinquency. For when particular branches of trade suffer even a temporary

\* Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy, vol. i. p. 112. Dr. Chalmers remarks, at page 239, “that in our large cities, one-half, at least, of the labouring classes are, in respect of the ordinances of the Gospel, in a state of practical heathenism.”

decline of prosperity, and a too improvident class of persons (those employed in manufactories) are thrown wholly out of work, or engaged at extremely low wages, the temptation to pilfering is soon yielded to, and crimes of different kinds follow in succession. As the deplorable fact, that crime, in general, as well as juvenile delinquency, has been greatly on the increase, for some years past, is universally admitted, it is unnecessary to enter largely into proof; yet, in order that a somewhat correct idea may be formed upon the subject, I will just state a few particulars.

Lord Chief Justice Best, in his charge to the grand jury of Somerset, in 1827, remarked, in reference to "the experience of the last twenty years," that "in that space of time the population had increased one-third, while crime had augmented four-fold."

A Report of the Committee of the House of Commons states, in fact, that the number of commitments for trial in England and Wales had increased nearly four-fold,\* having been as follows:—

\* "The main cause of the increase of crime in the agricultural districts," the Report states, "appears clearly to be *the low rate of wages, and want of sufficient employment for the labourer.*"

In 1806 . . .	4,346
1816 . . .	9,091
1826 . . .	16,147

Since that period, it appears by further Parliamentary returns, that there has been a fearful progression; chiefly in crimes against property; the commitments being,

In 1827 . . .	17,921
1828 . . .	16,564
1829 . . .	18,675

At the Quarter Sessions at Bristol, in January 1830, out of 47 prisoners, 21 were under 20 years of age.

The following table exhibits a fearful increase in the number of commitments for crime to the gaol at Leeds, during the last 14 years.

Year.	N <sup>o</sup> committed.	Year.	N <sup>o</sup> committed.
1816 . . .	434	1823 . . .	1,763
1817 . . .	815	1824 . . .	1,777
1818 . . .	903	1825 . . .	2,093
1819 . . .	1,223	1826 . . .	2,183
1820 . . .	1,301	1827 . . .	2,377
1821 . . .	1,223	1828 . . .	2,211
1822 . . .	1,315	1829 . . .	2,399

The Chairman of the Quarter Sessions at Gloucester, after stating that the calendar of the present year, was the heaviest he had ever known,—there being 123 prisoners—ascrived

the painful circumstance partly to the distress generally existing.

Here then is one case in which the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy may be of the most beneficial tendency; for when, in consequence of visiting the abodes of the wretched, they become personally acquainted with families and individuals; ascertain their distress at particular periods, when the fluctuations of trade most heavily press upon them; relieve their temporary necessities; and impart words of counsel and of consolation; great numbers, it is obvious, would be deterred from addicting themselves to pilfering, and other crimes for which multitudes are brought into courts of justice, in seasons of unusual adversity; and, instead of violating the laws, would be led to exercise industry and patience, and even if their former comforts should be unavoidably abridged, will abstain from excesses which can only be productive of injury to themselves as well as others.

(2.) It is lamentably certain, that one of the principal sources of the evils, by which cities and large towns are deluged, is the dram-shop, where intoxicating liquors, especially gin, sold at a cheap rate, suddenly inflame the minds, and gradually consume the bodies of those addicted to them. The pro-

digious increase of the number of such shops is an unequivocal and most unfavourable sign of the state of society. The increase of lunacy amongst the poor, as well as of crime, is attributed, in part, to that pernicious habit of dram-drinking, which now prevails so extensively. Within two years, the number of lunatics in the County of Middlesex has increased from 800 to 1,200, chiefly, it has been affirmed, from excess in the use of intoxicating liquors.

How vast and accumulating a mass of evil has resulted from the excessive use of ardent spirits, may be judged from the affecting circumstance, that the consumption of articles of that description has doubled in the last ten years.

If any advice be likely to avail in this instance, it must surely be that of kind and disinterested visitors; but whose admonitions, even should they fail with those habituated to drinking spirituous liquors, will, in all probability, operate very strongly to create a dread of the same vice in the younger members of households; induce them to attend Sunday schools, and places of worship; and thus, in a good measure, secure those who will hereafter come upon the stage of public life, (when their older friends and relatives have been carried off,) from the contagion of bad example.

(3.) Another evil of fearful extent and magnitude, in populous districts, is that profanation of the Lord's-day, which has a tendency to undermine the very fabric of society in Christian states; an evil, however, which the active co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, and the influence and persuasions of the former, when visiting the habitations of the lower classes, would very materially correct.

The seasonable and important letter, published by the Bishop of London, "On the present Neglect of the Lord's-day," contains many appalling pictures of the condition of the metropolis in this respect; and his Lordship has, with much candour, acknowledged his obligations to the "Christian Instruction Society," for many facts which he has adduced. As the statement of that Society is a very comprehensive delineation of the evil in question, a copious extract will not be unsuitable in this place.

"The earliest dawn of God's holy day is met by scenes of dissipation and riot, occasioned by abandoned characters, of both sexes, returning to their homes after a night of debauchery in those haunts of vice which are now to be found in every part of the metropolis, under the specious names of coffee, oyster, and liquor shops.

"As the sacred day advances, it is melancholy to know that the bustle of business commences in the various markets of this city, where, in defiance of the laws of the country and of God, an open traffic com-

mences, which continues with unabated activity till the hour of prayer arrives, when, in some instances, a veil is partially drawn, till, as the phrase is, the 'church hours' are over.

" Thus Covent Garden Market has for years exhibited, not only the fearless exposure of goods for sale on several hundred stalls, but also the assemblance of multitudes of the most abandoned characters, who indulge in language so filthy and blasphemous, as to make them the terror of every sober inhabitant or decent passenger.

" The other markets, in the west of London, exhibit congenial scenes. In the Hungerford, Newport, Fleet, and Carnaby markets, there are to be seen persons in almost every shop, ready to sell their various commodities, though in some cases, by the appearance of a few shutters, deceitful homage is offered to the hallowed day. But in Clare Market, near Drury Lane, no attempt is made to hide their iniquity; every shop is completely open, and every avenue is crowded by people, who are invited to purchase by the most public display of articles of every kind, and by the shameless importunity of those who sell them.

" Happy would it be if this unholy traffic were limited to the market-places; but it extends to the streets, and the number of open shops is truly appalling.

" Let any serious person walk through Rosemary Lane, Whitechapel, Spitalfields, Bethnal Green, Shore-ditch, and St. Luke's, on the one side, or by Drury Lane, Soho, St. Giles, Tottenham Court Road, Paddington, and the Edgware Road, on the other side; or by Clerkenwell, Saffron Hill, and Leather Lane, in the centre of this city, and he will behold scenes which must deeply afflict his mind.

" The following description of one of these neigh-

bourhoods is supplied by a gentleman connected with the Society:

“ “ In walking from Pentonville to the Minories, I had observed numerous persons lounging about the public-houses and wine-vaults, and many others offering various articles for sale at the corners of the streets. This I was in some measure prepared for, having witnessed such things on my former visits to London. When going down the Minories, however, toward the lower end, I was astonished to perceive many of the clothes shops partially open, the door-ways within and without hung round with various articles of wearing apparel, having the prices marked on tickets in glaring characters, and the pavement occupied with salesmen inviting the attention of the populace to the quality and cheapness of their merchandize. I went on from hence, through Rosemary Lane, to St. George’s Road, and here (in the Lane) the guilty scene obtruded itself upon my notice, without any attempt to cover its deformity, or conceal its shame. The shops of grocers, butchers, bakers, coal and corn-dealers, salesmen, and others, were *wide open*; while stalls and benches were arranged throughout the street, and covered with articles for food and clothing of all descriptions, and, what I took to be, when looking on them in the distance, a mob collected to witness a quarrel or a fight, I found was a dense mass of persons engaged in all the interest, and bustle, and confusion of worldly traffic. I had heard of Sunday markets in the West Indies, and of the benevolent attempts of Government to abolish them, but who ever heard of a Sunday market in London! I blushed for my country—I sickened at the scene, and would fain have turned away my eyes, and supposed myself deceived; but I could not,—the *facts* were too appalling and apparent. *Here* were garments of all sorts, and attire of all descriptions, for young and



old, male and female, hung up in the open street row upon row; *there* were carcasses, and sides, and joints, and cuttings exposed to the view, and thrust upon the notice of every passer-by in the most tempting manner; while scores were crossing and re-crossing the street, laying hold of any who seemed disposed to look and listen, and inviting all to examine and cheapen, to fit on and buy. In one part of the street, a number of poor creatures were arranged before and around as many boards covered with boots, and shoes, and slippers, busily employed in blacking and polishing their several wares; to avoid whose elbows and filthy sprinklings, I turned into the cart-road, and then I narrowly escaped being required to interfere by a busy butcher, who, finding the quality of his meat arraigned by some of his customers, turned to the crowd, and darting his eye toward a tall Irish labourer on my right, appealed to him, with horrid oaths, whether the meat was not equal to any in London, and was answered by blasphemies equally revolting and offensive. I had scarcely passed by the swearing butcher, when my ears were assailed by the cries of those, who in announcing the qualities and prices of their fruit and vegetables, evinced their anxiety to secure customers, and empty their baskets. To their noisy din was added the quarrellings of drunken men and women of the lowest description,—the choppings, and bargainings, and reckonings, and cursings of buyers and sellers, while the loud vociferations, and disgusting gestures of the ragged crowds surrounding the gin shops, occasioned the most horrible discordances, and completed the frightful picture. And this is London!—London in the nineteenth century!—London on the Sabbath day!—London, between the hours of ten and eleven on the morning of that hallowed day,—while the bells of the several steeples were calling to worship and announcing the hour of prayer!'

“ Another gentleman, who is an active and liberal friend of this Society, has supplied the Secretaries with the results of his personal inspection of various streets, and other public avenues in the north western out-parishes of this metropolis, and it is affecting to know, that in twenty streets, &c. he numbered no less than four hundred and seventy-three shops, of different trades, open for business on the Lord's-day, besides multitudes of fruit and other stalls, crowds of squalid and profligate persons standing around the liquor shops, and many places exhibiting rather the bustle of a fair than the quietude of the Sabbath.

“ Happy would it be, could we believe, that this is the extent of the evil; but the half is not yet told. For whilst the streets and markets present these scenes, the fields and banks of various canals in the environs of the city, exhibit the same wanton neglect of God's holy day, though in other forms. The fields of Mile End, Stepney, Bethnal Green, Hoxton, Islington, Somers Town, Chelsea, and Southwark, are the resorts of young and abandoned persons, who are engaged in the fights of dogs and pugilists, the shooting of pigeons, the hunting of ducks, and in various knavish games: while multitudes of others are employed in the Surrey, the Regent's, and the Grand Junction Canals, and the New and Lee Rivers, in fishing and bathing.

“ It has been given in evidence by several Magistrates, before the last Police Committee of the House of Commons, ‘ that in the parks and out-skirts of the town, numerous gangs and parties of young persons assemble on the Sabbath-day, for the express purpose of indulging in the vice of gambling.’

“ If we turn from these scenes to the banks of our noble river, we shall find that they also are crowded by those who are seeking ‘ their own pleasure on God's holy day.’ The passage of steam-boats to Margate,

the Nore, Gravesend, and Richmond, on every Sunday during the summer months, affords an opportunity of Sabbath breaking, which multitudes always embrace, but which the unusual cheapness of their fares, during the last season, greatly increased. Thus the walls of our city were covered with placards, announcing 'Sunday excursions to sea;' and it has been boastfully declared by a notorious Sunday newspaper, that six thousand persons were thus engaged on the several Sabbaths in the month of August. The town of Gravesend alone has witnessed more than two thousand Sabbath-breakers land on her new pier, and spreading through her streets and fields the folly and crime of a London population. Nor do the upper parts of the river present a more satisfactory scene; for beside the steamers which run to Richmond, many hundred wherries are known to pass through Putney Bridge, filled by thoughtless multitudes, who, regardless alike of the sin and the danger, madly pursue their imaginary pleasures.

"The parks have always presented attractions to Sabbath-breakers of every rank, from noble senators, who display their brilliant equipages in open defiance of the laws they are bound by every obligation to uphold, down to the humblest pedestrians, who can reach those agreeable places of resort.

"Nor can we omit to notice the scenes which the evening of God's holy day presents, when the public-houses and tea-gardens are thronged with noisy Sabbath-breakers; when the cattle, which have been purchased at the various lairs in the suburbs in the morning of that day, are crowding through the streets towards the public market, and when Smithfield itself exhibits a scene of uproar and confusion equal to its annual fair; when oaths, shouts, execrations, and cries are heard on every side.

"These facts form but a feeble outline of the picture

which might be drawn of the public state of this metropolis of Protestant Christendom on the Sabbath-day.”

Here the momentous question immediately presents itself—what remedy can be applied,—what barrier raised? Sermons containing a reference to the subject will avail to some extent; but most of those who profane the Christian Sabbath absent themselves habitually from places of divine worship. The example of the higher classes, if more generally prominent, might have some influence; yet, still comparatively little, since profane persons in the lower walks of life do not usually reside in their neighbourhood. Our chief reliance, I conceive, must be on the persevering efforts of active and kind-hearted individuals among the Laity, who, penetrating the abodes, and approaching the persons of those who neglect religious duties, may succeed in persuading many to attend places of divine worship—their parish churches for example,—and especially in inducing them to send their children to Sunday schools, that, acquiring a measure of Christian knowledge, they may escape the contagion of the present generation, and become the ornaments of the next.

There is, without doubt, a very numerous body of persons of rank and opulence in England, as well as in the sister kingdom, who,

not having reflected much upon, nor investigated accurately, the actual state of the lower orders, would willingly persuade themselves that there are such improvements taking place, in consequence of the establishment of National and Charity Schools, that no apprehensions need be seriously entertained as to the future prospects of society, and the immoveable stability of its institutions. It is, however, certain, that even if new churches were built in proportion to the wants of the population, (which is not the case,) they will often remain unfilled, unless active visiting, added to a useful style of preaching, should induce people of the lower orders to attend. It is no less certain, from experience and facts, that without the efforts of the laity, in canvassing overstocked towns, great numbers of children will remain destitute of education, even if schools were (which is not the case) commensurate with their wants. Consequently, no surprise should be felt that the very partial religious efforts hitherto made, should have failed to arrest the progress of crime. Dr. Chalmers has well explained the reason, in part, in the following passage.

“This is an age of many ostensible doings in behalf of Christianity. And it looks a paradox to the general eye, that, with this feature

of it standing out so conspicuously, there should also be an undoubted increase of crimes, and commitments, and executions, all marking an augmented depravity among our population. A very slight degree of arithmetic, we are persuaded, can explain the paradox. Let it simply be considered, in the case of any Christian institution, whether its chief office be to attract or pervade.\* Should it only be the former, we have no doubt, that a great visible exhibition may be drawn around it; and that stationary pulpits, and general Sabbath schools, and open places of repair for instruction indiscriminately to all who will, must give rise to a great absolute amount of attendance. And whether we look at the streets, when all in a fervour with Church-going—or witness the full assemblage of children, who come from all quarters, with their weekly preparations, to a pious and intelligent teacher—or compute the overflowing auditory, that Sabbath after Sabbath, some free, evening sermon is sure to bring out from among the closely-peopled mass—or, finally, read of the thousands which find a place in the

\* Dr. Chalmers alludes to attracting to churches or schools, persons already disposed to attend, as contrasted with pervading a population of negligent and ignorant persons, by forming local schools, and inviting their attendance.

enumerations of some great Philanthropic Society; we are apt, from all this, to think that a good and a religious influence is in full and busy circulation on every side of us. And yet, there is not a second-rate town in our empire, which does not afford materials enough, both for all this stir and appearance, on the one hand, and for a rapid increase in the quantum of moral deterioration, on the other. The doings to which we have adverted, may bear with a kind of magnetic influence, on all that is kindred in character to their own design and their own principle. They may communicate a movement to the minority who will, but leave still and motionless the majority who will not. Whole streets and whole departments may be nearly untouched by them. There is the firm and the obstinate growth of a sedentary corruption, which will require to be more actively assailed. It is certainly cheering to count the positive numbers on the side of Christianity. But beyond the ken of ordinary notice, there is an out-numbering, both on the side of week-day profligacy, and of Sabbath profanation. There is room enough for apparent Christianity, and real corruption, to be gaining ground together, each in their respective territories; and the delusion is, that, while many are rejoicing in the symptoms of our country's reformation, the

country itself may be ripening for some awful crisis, by which to mark, in characters of vengeance, the consummation of its guilt.”\*

(4.) Another source of rapid demoralization in the present day, is that vulgar sort of infidelity which is too easily produced in half-informed minds, by deistical books and tracts, replete with daring falsehoods, blasphemous insinuations, and coarse ribaldry; and even by those Sunday Newspapers, which contain condensed and amassed descriptions of the vilest occurrences of the week. The effect of such newspapers, (that is of about 40,000 copies sold at 300 shops, † and probably read by 200,000 persons) in detaining people, and consequently alienating them from the ordinances of divine worship; and ultimately favouring, even if they do not directly infuse, scepticism—not to say bold infidelity—cannot be too deeply regretted.

Many persons may be disposed to urge enforcing the penalties of the law with rigour, for

\* Chalmers' *Christian and Civic Economy*, vol. i. pp. 65, 66.

† If the Churches and Episcopal Chapels of London amount to about 250, and the congregation, on an average, consists of 800 persons, the number of hearers is only 200,000 at a church service at one part of the day.



the purpose of checking the prevalence of such flagrant evils as those enumerated. The general character of the present age, however, renders it more than doubtful whether punishments would succeed as well now as formerly, in repressing public disorders; and whilst their inefficacy is thus questionable, it follows that the policy of inflicting them, except under very peculiar circumstances, cannot be well sustained. To the very principle of repressing evil in some of the instances referred to, some would even object. It is consolatory under such circumstances to recollect, that the most efficacious mode of correcting the evils in question, is at the same time the mildest, the least repulsive to offenders, and the most conformable to the spirit of Christianity; namely, that of visiting the abodes of the wretched and profane, inquiring into their necessities, giving salutary advice, offering means of instruction to adults and children, inviting them to resort to a place of worship, supplying Bibles, Prayer-books, and other useful books and tracts, and thus introducing those who were ready to perish, into a moral atmosphere, by the renewing influence of which, as the means of spiritual health, they may be afterwards enabled to live and move as active Christians, and proceed onward in their course to a better

world.\* The efforts of prudent and humane individuals among the laity for such an object, are the more urgently required, on account of the “notoriously and lamentably inadequate number of the parochial clergy,” which has been lately alluded to by the Lord Bishop of London; and it may be reasonably hoped, that the activity and benevolence of such individuals, will not only afford timely aid to clergymen in doing good, but render it less frequently necessary for magistrates, constables, and police men, to proceed to the often-called-for extremity of punishing evil.

\* Whilst the temper of the times may preclude in a great degree coercive efforts to repress evil, as just remarked, it may be interesting to review the almost forgotten exertions made at a former period. I have, therefore, inserted in the Appendix, (No. I.) an abridged account of the once celebrated “Societies for the Reformation of Manners.”

## CHAP. II.

THE NATURE OF CLERICAL AND LAY CO-OPERATION,  
AND OF PAROCHIAL AND DISTRICT VISITING AS-  
SOCIATIONS DESCRIBED.

THE heavy responsibility attached to the care of a parish, rests unquestionably upon its appointed pastor. The address delivered by a Bishop of the Church of England to clergymen who receive the order of priesthood, contains several weighty injunctions. As "messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord," they are exhorted "to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world." The Bishop adds, "See that you never cease your labour, your care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be, committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no

place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life." With such important duties incumbent upon him, the clergyman who has the charge of a very populous parish, will require considerable assistance. Like the Apostles, he will feel the necessity of committing "the serving of tables" to others, that he may give himself "to prayer and the ministry of the word." Experience will teach him, that the aid given by churchwardens and overseers of the poor, schoolmasters and catechists, although it justifies the principle of the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, is still insufficient. Even the deacon, ordained partly with a view "to instruct the youth in the catechism," and "to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell," will not be found an assistant adequate to the urgency of the case, in such a parish as that alluded to; especially now that the change of situation incident to persons of various trades and occupations,—the inhabitants of a highly civilized commercial country,—and the facilities for removal from place to place provided by modern ingenuity, occasion a frequent influx of new families into cities, large towns, and manufacturing districts. Whilst, then, the circumscribed limits of parishes in ancient cities,

studded, so to speak, with churches and conspicuous spires, rendered the pastoral care far from overwhelming, even at a period long subsequent to the Reformation; the vast increase of houses and families in the suburbs of several cities and towns, and even in country villages where manufactories have been established, (alluded to in a former chapter,) has superinduced a demand for strength, time, talent, and laborious occupations on the part of the parochial clergy in such neighbourhoods, to which they are totally unequal, and to which no corresponding supply has been yet furnished by our national church.

In such a state of things, it has naturally occurred to many minds to inquire, "How shall this deficiency be, at least to some extent, met? What remedy can be devised?" To many such inquiring and compassionate persons, clergymen and laymen, residing in some of those overstocked parishes, it has appeared, that associations composed of lay members, willing to visit and investigate the condition of the poor in their own houses, would render essential assistance towards diminishing the existing evil. Accordingly, such societies have been partially established, and have been for a longer or shorter time in activity, accelerating in their progress the religious instruction of the lower classes,

checking mendicity, fostering habits of industry and economy, and contributing to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the sick, the afflicted, and the indigent.

Such associations, when organized in conformity with the genius of the Established Church, seem to imply, not merely the approbation of the parish minister, but respectful deference to him as a person invested with ecclesiastical authority. He naturally becomes the president of such an association, whether dignified with the appellation or not; the mainspring of the whole machine. His counsels and exhortations become the directory of the visiting members, and thus mould them into his authorized assistants, his genuine representatives among his parishioners. By such means his parish resembles a well-disciplined regiment, or a well-ordered ship of war. The parishioners, professedly members of the "church militant on earth," expressly devoted at the font to the arduous duties of "Christ's soldiers and servants," to "fight manfully under his banner," will be marshalled under officers of various grades, whilst the pastor exercises that control in his parish, which the colonel does over his officers and men. Or, if adopting another metaphor in the baptismal service, the minister's anxiety be, that the people under his charge

should be so “steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity,” as that they shall safely “pass the waves of this troublesome world, and come to the land of everlasting rest,” the same distinction of ranks, due subordination, and persevering activity in the discharge of assigned duties appear requisite.

When the clergyman thus finds himself surrounded by friends as his willing assistants, and appoints their several appropriate spheres for investigation; the plan of visiting the abodes of the poor with full effect will require a variety of minute inquiries; the answers to which will appear in a table expressly arranged for the purpose. Such a table will naturally include such particulars as the following:

Abode.

Name.

Occupation.

Whether a baptized Member of the Church of England? \*

Whether accustomed to attend Divine Service?

If able to read?

If he possesses a Bible?

If he possesses a Common Prayer Book?

What number of children—whether boys or girls—and of what age?

\* It is too probable that many persons in large parishes have never been baptized.

Whether they attend at a Daily School—or a Sunday School?

To these and similar inquiries, arranged in a neat tabular form, may be added, likewise, inquiries to this effect :

Whether members of Friendly Benefit Societies ?

Whether in the habit of placing out money in Savings Banks ?

These inquiries, if proposed with affectionate interest in their welfare, and not with the harshness of prying curiosity, are likely to be received, as are counsels that might succeed those inquiries, with feelings of gratitude; and I would briefly suggest, that the inquiries respecting Bibles and Prayer Books may be made an important means, in the hands of those clergymen and their lay friends who are attached to the “Society for promoting Christian Knowledge,” of establishing a connexion between parishes and district committees throughout the kingdom; and of both creating and fully supplying a demand for Bibles and Prayer Books among members of the Established Church.

It is a strong recommendation of the system of Parochial Visiting Associations, that every such Association produces, not only its direct, but collaterally, various other beneficial results. Like the large wheel in a manufactory, it brings



into activity other wheels, conspiring, each in its sphere, to one great effect. When, for instance, prudent and discreet persons, of not less, we may suppose, than 30 years of age, undertake to investigate the condition of a district, and institute a variety of inquiries, like those just mentioned, the answers elicited are likely to lead to the formation of evening schools for adults, and of daily schools for children, and the appointment, not only of Sunday school teachers, but perhaps of Scripture readers, to read the Word of God to the aged, the sick, and the infirm, at their own homes.

Nor will it be difficult, I think, in the generality of cases, to procure very efficient persons for these benevolent occupations, if care be taken to select them from suitable classes of society. Thus Sunday school teachers for the poor may be found amongst the sons and daughters of tradesmen, from the age of 15 and upwards, who may act under the direction of superintendents of the schools; and the number of such teachers may be increased from time to time from amongst the well disposed elder scholars, after confirmation, and who, being thus usefully employed, will also be preserved, it may be hoped, from deviating from the paths of religion as they grow up. Young ladies and gentlemen, above the class of tradesmen, may un-

dertake the instruction of the younger children of tradesmen, rather than of the lowest poor.

Such Sunday school teachers are virtually catechists also, who inculcate upon the children, in a preliminary form, that system of instruction in which the diligent clergyman will afterwards examine them, and which he will more fully explain.

With respect to Scripture readers, I may observe, that the ignorant population of many overgrown English parishes, urgently require that such agents, who have been already so successful in Ireland, and whose efforts have obtained the sanction of the Lord Primate of the Irish Church,\* should be employed in this country, also, under the superintendence of the parochial minister.

Such Parochial Visiting Associations, though peculiarly adapted to the overgrown parishes of cities, towns, and manufacturing districts, are not wholly inapplicable, on a more limited scale, to other parishes of moderate size in cities, and to country parishes of considerable extent, which include hamlets in different spots. There are two extremes, however, which must, undoubtedly, be guarded against; namely, a

\* See Report of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, 1828, pp. 21, 22.

disposition on the part of a clergyman to rely so entirely on lay assistants, as to omit a personal attention to sick persons, or to young persons under catechetical instruction; and, on the other hand, a disinclination on his part to avail himself of those services of the laity, which present circumstances appear to render indispensable.

However ably assisted by the members of a Visiting Association, the clergyman will be still solicitous to receive their reports and returns, perhaps monthly, and to ascertain the actual state of families and individuals under his charge. He will then be able to judge what cases seem to require, as far as his time will permit, his personal attention, and what cases may, after judicious suggestions, be committed to the attention of his friends.

So also, with reference to the instruction of youth, whilst grateful for the help of Sunday school teachers, the clergyman will consider that such teachers are but instructing those young persons on various points of Christian knowledge, in a preparatory form, that they may be the better able to answer the questions he may afterwards propose, when, as enjoined by the canons of Edward VI., the Constitutions of Elizabeth and James I., and the Rubric, he, as minister of the parish, catechises from time

to time in the church, and explains, illustrates, and practically applies the subjects introduced into the catechism.

If, however, the clergyman entrusted with a large parish, should discountenance, rather than adopt the agency of the laity, he will deprive both himself and his parishioners of services, the value of which it is not even possible to compute.

“ Though,” Dr. Chalmers well observes in his *Christian and Civic Economy*, “ ecclesiastics should be accomplished in the whole lore and scholarship of their profession, they should not discourage the effort and activity of lay operatives in the cause. They may inspect their work, but they should not put a stop to it. When they discover a union of intelligence and piety in an individual, even of humble life, they should patronize his attempts to spread around him the moral and spiritual resemblance of himself. They else may freeze into utter dormancy the best capabilities that are within their reach, of Christian usefulness : and thus it is possible for a clergyman, by the weight of his authority, to lay an interdict on a whole host of Christian agency, whom he should have summoned into action.”

“ According to our *beau ideal* of a well going and a well constituted church, there should be

among its ecclesiastics the very highest literature of their profession, and among its laymen the most zealous and active concurrence of their personal labours in the cause. The only check upon the occasional eccentricities of the latter should be the enlightened judgment of the former: and this, in every land of freedom and perfect toleration, will be found enough for the protection of a community against the inroads of a degrading fanaticism. It is utterly wrong, that because zeal breaks forth, at times, into excesses and deviations, there should, therefore, be no zeal, or, because spiritual vegetation has its weeds as well as its blossoms, all vegetation should, therefore, be repressed. The wisest thing, we apprehend, for adding to the produce of the Christian vineyard, is to put into action all the productive tendencies that may be found in it. The excrescences which may come forth will wither and disappear, under the eye of an enlightened clergy; so that while, in the first instance, the utmost space and enlargement should be permitted, for the manifold activities of Christian love, upon the one hand, there should be no other defence ever thought of, against the occasional pruriences that may arise out of this operation, than the mild and pacific, but altogether efficacious corrective of Christian learning, upon the other."

Whilst Associations composed of gentlemen are obviously requisite, Associations of ladies are not less so. Those plans of beneficence, which the circumstances of many parishes demand, require female aid in a variety of ways.

“Such schemes,” observes an eminent prelate and divine, “can, in very few places, be carried into execution, unless the assistance of female agency is called in. That women should not, in large towns, be the only visitors, is evident; but there is no prospect of finding men in any number sufficiently disengaged for the purpose: and frequently they would be less proper agents, and less likely to succeed. The persons who are to be found at home, and with whom, therefore, the visitors would be chiefly concerned, are themselves women: the men are employed abroad in their various occupations. And further, a great step will be gained towards all that we are anxious to accomplish, if these, the mothers and mistresses of the family, be brought under the influence of religion.”\*

\* A Charge by the Right Rev. John Bird, Lord Bishop of Chester. Appendix, No. III, p. 36.

## CHAP. III.

THE CO-OPERATION OF THE LAITY WITH THE CLERGY  
IN PAROCHIAL AND DISTRICT VISITING ASSOCIA-  
TIONS, SANCTIONED BY THE SPIRIT AND PRACTICE  
OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND.

SECT. 1.—*THE co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in Parochial and District Visiting Associations, sanctioned by the spirit and practice of the Primitive Church.*

“There never,” says Lord Bacon, “was any philosophy, religion, or other discipline, which did so plainly and highly exalt that good which is communicative, and depress the good which is merely private and particular, as the Christian faith.” In fact, the religion of the Gospel is pre-eminently one of active beneficence. Amongst other duties of active charity which it inculcates, is that of relieving the sick and needy; and “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,” is expressly said to constitute “pure and undefiled religion.” Indeed, the majestic description of the last judg-

ment, by our Saviour himself, in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, gives the highest sanction for unwearied exertions in benefitting our fellow-creatures ; and plainly discovers that such exertions, accomplished or neglected, will be the evidence of the reality, or unsoundness of the religious profession made by his disciples. “ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand. . . . I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Those on the left hand will, at the same time, stand condemned, inasmuch as neither visiting nor caring for the poor, the sick, and others, they “ did it not to Christ.”

As such expressions strongly enforced the duties of his disciples ; the example which our Redeemer furnished during his lifetime, taught them likewise to become benefactors to the wretched, whilst his love to their souls, evinced by dying upon the cross, furnished the highest motive to exertion.

The primitive Christians were careful to follow such sacred injunctions as those implied



both in their Saviour's words and actions. Accordingly, the early constitution of the church at Jerusalem included the appointment of deacons, to engage in the "daily ministrations," which took place for the relief of the indigent widows, and, doubtless, other necessitous persons.

In other primitive churches, the same tender solicitude for the welfare of the suffering poor was manifested; and the salutations addressed by St. Paul to his Christian friends at Rome, with various epithets of commendation, prove how diligently those lay-friends, male and female, as well as those ordained to holy offices, endeavoured to promote the happiness of the poor amongst their fellow-citizens. It was with real pleasure I re-perused, when at Rome, amongst other chapters of the Epistle addressed to the primitive Christians of that city, that chapter,—the 16th,—in which he mentions Phebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea; Priscilla and Aquila, helpers in Christ Jesus; Tryphena and Tryphosa, who laboured in the Lord; the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord. It was delightful to reflect upon the disinterested benevolence of these and other excellent Christians, whose names are there recorded;—members of a church once renowned through the world

for its faith and charity—for its martyrs to the faith, and its patterns of charity;—but which, in after ages, dishonoured Christianity by the ambition and covetousness of its prelates and clergy, the ignorance and superstition of the laity, and the prevailing degeneracy of all classes. To these evils the page of history bears fearful, but faithful testimony, and the memory of which, no edifices raised for charitable purposes, by the munificence, superstition, or humanity of the founders, however numerous or gorgeous these structures may be, and whatever embellishments they may add to modern Rome, can ever erase.

A remarkable instance of the kind attention of the primitive Christians at Rome to the destitute, occurs in the account of the distinguished martyr, Laurentius the Deacon, who suffered in the reign of the Emperor Valerian. The Prefect of the city supposed, as the heathen often did, that the Christian church, since its charity to the poor was so extensive, possessed much accumulated wealth, and therefore authoritatively required Laurentius to show him those treasures, which, perhaps his rapacity might lead, as his power enabled him, to appropriate to his own use. The Deacon produced the blind, the lame, the widows, the orphans, and others dependent upon the

sacred fund, and pointed them out to the enraged Prefect, as **THE TREASURES OF THE CHURCH.**

In seasons of unusual calamity, the charity of the primitive Christians became still more conspicuous; and, necessarily obtruded upon the notice of their pagan fellow-citizens, excited their admiration and applause. Thus, when the plague prevailed at Alexandria, in the reign of the Emperor Valerian, the Christians of that city displayed peculiar kindness towards the suffering. Acting in the very spirit of the good Samaritan, whom their Saviour had proposed as a pattern, they supplied the hungry with food, and watched the couch of the sick and dying.

Similar kindness in visiting the afflicted, was exercised by Christians of the primitive church, when, in the reign of Maximin, in the year 313, drought, and its attendants famine and pestilence, desolated the eastern provinces of the Roman empire: and whilst these dire calamities seemed to extinguish, in a great measure, feelings of humanity, and even the natural affections, amongst their pagan fellow subjects, the compassion and active beneficence of the disciples of Christ exemplified, in a striking manner, the excellence of their religion, and the sincerity of their attachment to it.

So fully convinced was the arch-apostate Julian of the tendency of such acts of benevolence to procure honour to the religion whose professors practised them, that his hatred to the Gospel, and zeal for paganism, induced him to attempt a reformation of paganism, in imitation of the methods adopted to promote Christianity; establishing alms-houses and hospitals for the poor and crippled; and reluctantly acknowledging the "singular humanity and charity" of those whom he contemptuously denominated "Galileans."

In discharging those offices of a tender charity, we learn that females rendered very essential aid in the first ages. There were even deaconesses, regularly constituted, for the purpose of visiting, and administering relief to persons of their own sex; and for instructing them in Christian knowledge, by repeating and inculcating the lessons of the catechist. These benevolent women, who chiefly applied to the charitable task of visiting the poor and the sick at their own houses, and pious confessors when cast into prison, were married persons, and especially widows, who were not encumbered with the care of children.

Thus have we ample evidence,\* that the co-

\* In Appendix, No. II. still further evidence is adduced of the practice of the Primitive Church.

operation of the Laity with the Clergy, in parochial and district visiting associations, is strictly conformable to the spirit and practice of those earlier Christians, who, living in ages of persecution, were most likely to imbibe and to exhibit genuine Christianity, and whose actions, in fact, principally adorn the annals of the primitive church.

SECT. 2.—*Parochial and District Visiting Associations sanctioned by the ancient practice of the Church of England.*

It appears that some of the earliest members of the “Society for promoting Christian Knowledge,” were distinguished supporters of societies for visiting the sick and needy, formed above a century ago, by lay-members of the Established Church; and thus afford the sanction of their example to those who may be disposed to countenance similar associations in the present day.

The Rev. Dr. Woodward published an account of the “Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies” to which I allude, and which, though on the list of the “Society for promoting Christian Knowledge,” appears to be now out of print. It is so instructive, as well as interesting a document, and so powerfully sustains my arguments in favour of visiting associations, as

peculiarly appropriate to the present day, that I have pleasure in transcribing an abridgment of it.

“Several young men, who had attended the sermons preached by Dr. Horneck, and “the morning lectures on the Lord’s day, in Cornhill, preached by Mr. Smithie, (chiefly designed for the instruction of youth,)” were advised to “meet together once a-week, and apply themselves to good discourse, and things wherein they might edify one another. And for the better regulation of their meetings, several rules were prescribed them, being such as seemed most proper to effect the end proposed. Upon this they met together, and kept to their rules; and at every meeting (as it was advised) they considered the wants of the poor; which, in process of time, amounted to such considerable sums, that thereby many poor families were relieved, some poor people put into a way of trade suitable to their capacities, sundry prisoners set at liberty, some poor scholars furthered in their subsistence at the University, several orphans maintained, with many other good works.” : . . “It seemed proper, for the better management of their common stock for charitable uses, to choose two stewards, as the managers of their charity. And the two first stewards that I find, (after diligent search,)

were in the year 1678, whose names I have by me, with a recorded succession of them to the beginning of the reign of King James the Second." In this unhappy juncture, the face of the reformed religion began to be clouded, and all private meetings were suspected. And now, alas! some of these persons, not having digged deep enough to have a firm root in religion, began to shrink and give back, like the seed in our Saviour's parable, which had no deepness of earth. They were afraid of the jealousy of the state against them; especially when they saw the bloody and merciless executions, in city and country, with which that reign began, which dyed it of such a crimson colour, as rendered it frightful to many, particularly to these young proselytes. Upon which some of them forsook their wonted assemblies, and, getting loose from their strict rules and good society, they grew cool in religious concerns, and some of them grew vain and extravagant. But, through the grace of God, there was not a total tergiversation among these young disciples of our Lord; but, on the contrary, some of them being encouraged by others, who till then had not been of this society, being also grieved at heart to see some of their brethren turn their backs in the day of battle; and being animated with holy zeal against the growing interests of

Popery, which then appeared, not only open, but in armour; they took a more vigorous resolution than ever, to do what in them lay towards the maintaining and increasing the purity and power of religion in themselves and others. And seeing that the Popish Mass was then publicly celebrated, not only at the royal chapel, but in other public places, they set up, at their own expense, public prayers every evening, at eight of the clock, at St. Clement Danes, which never wanted a full and affectionate congregation. And not long after, they set up an evening monthly lecture in the same church, to confirm communicants in their holy purposes and vows, which they had made at the Lord's table. And by this lecture, which was greatly frequented, many were confirmed, both in the profession and practice of the true principles of primitive religion. For they were preached by the most eminent divines about the city, from whose lips and pens Popery received such wounds, as all her art will never be able to cure." . . . .

"This their constancy, piety, and good service to the public, in so hazardous a juncture, made them more known, and much esteemed, at the beginning of the reign of King William and Queen Mary; those instruments of God's providence, for the restoring of our religion and liberty, when the public enjoyment of both were just expiring.'



“ It is the practice of all these societies to partake of the Holy Supper of our Lord, as frequently as they may, thereby to devote themselves afresh to their good Master, and to confirm their purposes of perpetual service to him, and as a means of receiving spiritual strength from him so to do. And in order to their more advised preparations for so solemn a work, there is in some one church or more of this city, a sermon preached every Lord’s day, in the evening, (by the procurement of some of these societies,) on the important subject of due preparation for the Lord’s table, and a meet deportment after it; by which great good has been done, and a deep sense of religion wrought in many persons. And by this their care to acquit their consciences as to this last command of our dying Lord, many of them have, through the grace of God, attained to that excellent primitive temper of frequent communicating, without growing formal, not lessening a due reverence by the frequency of it.”

“ Their manner of disbursing their bounty to sick and distressed people, is such as renders it a double benefit; for they usually send their alms by the hands of two or more of their most serious members, who make a personal inquiry into their necessities, and usually introduce some seasonable discourse, suitable to the afflic-

tion of the person or family which they relieve, which many times proves the better charity of the two. For the poor afflicted persons, being partly awakened by the rod of God upon them, and being surprised by such a visit and bounty from persons unknown to them, and not a little pleased to hear such savoury speeches drop from the lips of such young persons; all these things together have sometimes been happily instrumental in propagating a sense of religion in some persons, who scarce ever before felt any thing of it; and of exciting it where it had before taken place."

The "Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland," contained the following description of the "Religious Societies." "There are about nine and thirty Religious Societies of another kind, in and about London and Westminster, which are propagated into other parts of the nation; as Nottingham, Gloucester, &c. and even into Ireland, where they have been for some months since spreading in divers towns and cities of that kingdom; as Kilkenny, Drogheda, Mannouth, &c. especially in Dublin, where there are about ten of these Societies, which are promoted by the bishops and inferior clergy there. These persons meet often to pray, sing Psalms, and read the Holy Scriptures together, and

to reprove, exhort, and edify one another by their religious conferences. They moreover carry on at their meetings designs of charity of different kinds; such as relieving the wants of poor housekeepers, maintaining their children at school, setting of prisoners at liberty, supporting of lectures and daily prayers in our churches. These are the societies which our late gracious Queen,\* as the learned Bishop† that hath writ an essay on her memory tells us, took so great satisfaction in, ‘that she enquired often and much about them, and was glad they went on and prevailed.’ . . . . . And these, likewise, are Societies that have proved so exceedingly serviceable in the work of reformation, that they may be reckoned a chief support to it; as the late Archbishop Tillotson declared upon several occasions, after he had examined their orders and enquired into their lives, that he thought they were to the Church of England.”

Dr. Woodward’s account contains the following further particulars. “Their religious fraternities grew and increased, even till they became conspicuous, and in some degree famous;

\* Mary II. Queen of William III.

† Bishop Burnet.

which still induced other young men, who were of sober inclinations, to join with them; and as they multiplied in distant parts of the city they erected new societies by the pattern of the old. This conspicuous advancement of these societies, in number and repute, gave occasion to some mistaken or ill-affected persons to misrepresent them to the bishop, as things leading to schism, spiritual pride, and many other ill consequences. And this made their names more public than ever they thought or desired to have them. For now they were obliged to appear and justify their undertaking: which they did in a very humble and solid apology addressed to the Bishop of London; wherein they humbly assured his Lordship, that their only design was to quicken each other's affections towards spiritual things, and to advance their preparations for another world; and to this end to assist each other to live in all respects as it becometh the Gospel: and that they desired to prosecute this Christian design in none but Christian methods; with due respect to their superiors in church and state, and without any cause of offence to any one. And, in fine, their vindication appeared so reasonable and satisfactory, their assemblies so regular and subordinate to the public worship, and their designs so truly

Christian and inoffensive, (all which was attested by several eminent divines on their behalf,) that his Lordship dismissed them with these words; ‘God forbid that I should be against such excellent designs.’”

## CHAP. IV.

BENEFITS RESULTING FROM THE CO-OPERATION OF  
THE LAITY WITH THE CLERGY, IN PAROCHIAL  
AND DISTRICT VISITING ASSOCIATIONS.

SECT. 1. *The alleviation of the wants of the destitute, and amelioration of their temporal condition, a benefit resulting from the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in Parochial and District Visiting Associations.*

Prior to the era of the Reformation, indiscriminate charity, in portions of food bestowed on beggars at the gates of monasteries, must have had the effect of multiplying the number of those, who, without attaching themselves to constant labour for support, were disposed to live dependent upon others. This mistaken charity became the root of many evils. It increased idleness and pauperism, and the fruit of idleness and pauperism was an increase of crime. The monasteries having been dissolved by Henry VIII. and the resource of the idle, as well as of the suffering and deserving poor,

in that quarter abolished; the miseries of a very numerous class excited the attention of the Legislature, and a legal provision for the poor, by rates levied on their respective parishes, was established in the reign of Elizabeth.

Accumulating facts have since proved, unhappily, that the legal provision for the poor thus instituted, though perhaps absolutely necessary from want of adequate charity on the part of the opulent, and of visiting distributors of alms, has been long the oppressive burden of England. Improvidence and other evils, the natural consequences of such a regularly authorized supply for the wants of destitute applicants, have been fearfully widened and enlarged by numerous abuses, by expensive litigation, and, in country villages, by the unjustifiable practice adopted by farmers of adding a sum from the poor's rate to the able-bodied labourer's low wages, instead of paying him that full sum to which he was entitled for his work, in the form of fair wages.

Now the establishment of Parochial Visiting Associations, promises to be one of the most effectual means of diminishing the evils which are thus found to flow from our Poor Laws. That investigation which visiting involves, will afford ample opportunities for stimulating the idle to exert themselves, instead of seeking

relief too readily from the parish; for persuading the improvident to economize, and place part of their money in Savings Banks; and not only for checking the tendency to crime from present distress, but of inculcating upon adults those Christian principles, and infusing the same principles into their children in Sunday schools which they may be urged to attend, which are among the best preservatives from a career of vice and immorality. Thus, whilst Societies for the suppression of mendicity are too much required in cities, Visiting Associations would, by degrees, operate to the prevention of mendicity itself.

Viewed under this aspect, is it possible to attach too great importance to the formation of such Visiting Associations? It may be added, that by the efforts of visiting members, modest unobtrusive worth will be, in numerous instances, discovered and relieved: and reduced persons, who would be exceedingly reluctant to apply to a parish, will partake of comforts of which they greatly stand in need.\* On th

\* An excellent specimen of the benefits which members of Visiting Associations may bestow upon aged and reduced persons, is afforded by a "Friendly Female Society" in London, of which Miss Vansittart is President, and which extends its care to widows and spinsters who have seen better days, and who are above sixty



other hand, many other persons, destitute of the good principles and conduct displayed by those just alluded to, yet equally in need of relief, equally averse to make their necessities known to parish officers, would meet with attentions, and consolatory counsels, peculiarly suitable to their condition ; whilst neglect would be too apt to produce in such characters a harassing discontent, a bold recklessness, perhaps a gloomy despair, which might issue in the most affecting and direful results.

It is, indeed, worthy of deep consideration, and fair and ample trial, by way of experiment, whether such Associations, prudently organized in particular districts, may not be able, ultimately, to obviate the necessity of continuing the relief of the poor, according to the present pernicious system of poor laws in England. With this view, I apprehend that the members of such Associations should afford relief to those persons only who, when in health, gained their livelihood by honest industry, and without receiving an allowance from the poor's rates ; and who are contributors to a Savings Bank, and members of a well regulated Benefit or

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years of age. The Visiting Members are ladies. Five hundred females are relieved with money. There is also an asylum for twenty, as resident inmates.

Friendly Society. The temporary relief afforded to such persons in seasons of distress, by a charitable Association, would enable them still to continue their little stock in the Savings Bank, and would be a very useful addition to the allowance in sickness from the Friendly Society; which allowance should be moderate in seasons of sickness, and principally reserved for the members when labouring under the infirmities of advanced life.

“The truth is,” observes Dr. Chalmers,\* “that there is a far greater sufficiency among the lower classes of Society than is generally imagined; and our first impressions of their want and wretchedness are generally by much too aggravated: nor do we know a more effectual method of reducing these impressions, than to cultivate a closer acquaintance with their resources, and their habits, and their whole domestic economy. It is certainly in the power of artificial expedients to create artificial desires, and to call out a host of applications that would never have otherwise been made. And we know of nothing that leads more directly and more surely to this state of things, than a great regular provision for indigence, obtruded, with all the characters of legality, and certainty,

\* Christian and Civil Economy, pp. 271—273.

and abundance, upon the notice of the people. But wherever the securities which nature hath established for the relief and mitigation of extreme distress are not so tampered with; where the economy of individuals, and the sympathy of neighbours, and a sense of the relative duties among kinsfolk, are left, without disturbance, to their own silent and simple operation; it will be found that there is nothing so formidable in the work of traversing a whole mass of congregated human beings, and of encountering all the clamours, whether of real or of fictitious necessity, that may be raised by our appearance amongst them . . . . . We know not, indeed, how any one can be made more effectually to see, with his own eyes, the superfluousness of all public and legalized charity, than just to assume a district, and become the familiar friend of the people who live in it, and to do for them the thousand nameless offices of Christian regard, and to encourage, in every judicious and inoffensive way, their dependence upon themselves, and their fellow-feeling one for another."

Such are that able author's remarks on the means of affording relief to the distressed poor.\*

\* In the Appendix, No. III., I have inserted remarks on the advantages that may be expected from Visiting Associations in Ireland,—a country where poor's rates are not established.

Even should it happen, as it sometimes will, that comparatively few persons possess sufficient leisure, or will take sufficient pains to benefit their fellow-creatures in the way described; still even small associations, composed of few persons, may, by judicious arrangements and cheerful perseverance, effect much in the large parishes of a populous city. Dr. Chalmers has well argued this point in reference to the metropolis.

“ It is rash to affirm of the local system, that it is totally impracticable in London; while most natural, at the same time, that it should appear so to those who think nothing worthy of an attempt, unless it can be done *per saltum*,— unless it at once fills the eye with the glare of magnificence, and it can be invested, at the very outset, with all the pomp and patronage of extensive committee-ship. A single lane, or court, in London, is surely not more impracticable than in other towns of this empire. There is one man to be found there, who can assume it as his locality, and acquit himself thoroughly, and well of the duties which it lays upon him. There is another who can pitch beside him, on a contiguous settlement, and, without feeling bound to speculate for the whole metropolis, can pervade, and do much to purify his assumed portion of it. There is a third, who will find that a walk so unnoticed

and obscure, is the best suited to his modesty; and a fourth, who will be eager to reap, on the same field, that reward of kind and simple gratitude, in which his heart is most fitted to rejoice. We are sure that this piece-meal operation will not stop for want of labourers,—though it may be arrested, for a while, through the eye of labourers being seduced by the meteoric glare of other enterprises, alike impotent and imposing. So long as each man of mediocrity conceives himself to be a man of might, and sighs after some scene of enlargement that may be adequate to his fancied powers, little or nothing will be done; but so soon as the sweeping and sublime imagination is dissipated, and he can stoop to the drudgery of his small allotment in the field of usefulness, then will it be found, how it is by the summation of many humble mediocrities, that a mighty result is at length arrived at. It was by successive strokes of the pick-axe and the chisel, that the pyramids of Egypt were reared: and great must be the company of workmen, and limited the task which each must occupy, ere there will be made to ascend the edifice of a nation's worth, or of a nation's true greatness."\*

\* Christian and Civic Economy, pp. 353, 354.

SECT. 2.—*The consolation of the sick and afflicted, a benefit resulting from the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in Parochial and District Visiting Associations.*

Amongst the various classes of the poor, the sick have an obvious and urgent claim upon the attention of members of Visiting Associations. Their tenderest sympathies will be excited by the condition of suffering fellow-creatures, perhaps soon about to leave the present for the future world. In small parishes the Clergyman visits, of course, every sick individual; but in large parishes, it is evident, that neither his time nor his strength permit him to accomplish this task, consistently with his various other duties. The resource that remains, is to invite the co-operation of those of the laity, ladies, gentlemen, respectable tradesmen, &c., who have sufficient leisure, good judgment, and piety to assist him. With such assistance he may hope that no cases of sickness will escape notice; that adequate religious instruction and consolation will not be withheld from any; and that the more affecting cases, requiring his personal attention, will be laid before him by his assistants.

The service of thus visiting the sick appears obviously to require riper age in the Laity who undertake it, than that of teaching

children in Sunday schools. Sunday school teachers may often consist of young persons, from the age of fifteen or sixteen, and upwards, whose personal knowledge and piety may be increased, and their best feelings drawn forth, whilst engaged in the benevolent task of instructing those younger than themselves; but visitors of the sick ought to possess maturity of judgment, and an age that implies solemnity of deportment, suitable to the affecting circumstances of the chamber of sickness and of death.

The good effects of reading to the sick poor, will greatly depend upon the choice of passages of Scripture adapted to the condition of the sick, and the state of their minds.

The passages that have appeared to me peculiarly appropriate, I venture to subjoin for the consideration, and adoption, if approved, of members of Visiting Associations; and shall be happy if they should be found useful as a guide in their truly Christian enterprise, of attempting to instruct and console their fellow-creatures in the season of sickness and at the approach of death.

(1.) The following passages shew *for what purpose and end the Almighty afflicts the children of men*

Job, chaps.	v. and xxxvi.
Psalm	cvii.
Ecclesiastes	vii.
Isaiah	lvii.
Jeremiah	xxxvi. verses 18, 19, 20.
Lamentations	iii.

(2.) The following passages allude to *the frailty of our mortal nature; and sin as the source of all our sorrows and pains.*

Genesis	iii.
Job	xiv.
Ecclesiastes	xii.
Isaiah	xl. ver. 1—11.

(3.) The following passages, which *describe the power displayed by our Saviour in healing all manner of sickness,* may be read with profit, although no miraculous interposition can be now expected.

St. Matthew	viii. ver. 1—17.
St. Mark	ii. ver. 1—17.
	v. ver. 25—34.
	vii. ver. 24—37.
	x. ver. 46—52.
St. John	iv. ver. 43—54.
	v.

(4.) The following passages relate to *the sufferings and death of Christ to purchase forgiveness of sins for mankind.*



Isaiah	liii.
St. Matthew	xxvii.
St. Luke	xxii. ver. 39—46. xxiii.
St. John	x. xix.

(5.) The following passages *strongly urge persons to avoid wilful sin, that they may escape from the punishment due for transgression.*

Psalms	l.
Ezekiel	xxxvi. ver. 22—27.
St. Matthew	iii.
St. Luke	x xii. ver. 15—21.

(6.) The following passages *display the willingness of the Almighty to receive penitent sinners into his favour.*

Job	xxxiii.
Isaiah	lv.
Ezekiel	xxxiii. ver. 1—19.
Micah	vi. vii.

(7.) The following passages explain *how God can be just, even when he justifies and forgives penitent offenders.*

Jeremiah	xxxix. ver. 31—34.
Acts	xiii.
Romans	iii. v. x.

Galatians	iii.
Ephesians	ii.
Titus	iii.
Hebrews	ix.
	x. ver. 1—25.
1st Ep. St. John	i.

(8.) The following passages are calculated *to relieve the minds of truly penitent persons, who are fearful that they shall not obtain forgiveness.*

St. Luke	vii. ver. 36—50.
	xv.
St. John	iv.
Acts	ii.
	iii.
	xvi.
1 Timothy	i.

(9.) The following passages shew, *that sanctification and obedience are inseparably connected with a well grounded hope of forgiveness.*

Ezekiel	xi. ver. 14—21.
St. Luke	xi. ver. 5—13.
2 Corinthians	vi. ver. 11—18.
Ephesians	v. ver. 1—20.
Philippians	iii.
1st Ep. St. Peter	i.
1st Ep. St. John	iii.

(10.) The following passages *exhibit the aggravated guilt of those who neglect the salvation revealed by the Gospel.*

St. Mark	xvi.
St. John	iii.
Romans	ii.
Hebrews	iii.
	iv.
	x. ver. 26—39.
Revelation	ii.
	iii.
	xxii.

(11.) The following passages *represent that awful day of judgment which awaits every human being, and should, therefore, rouse the thoughtless from their slumbers.*

St. Matthew	xxv.
1 Thessalonians	iv.
	v.
2 Thessalonians	i.
2d Ep. St. Peter	iii.
Revelation	i.

(12.) The following passages prove, *that sickness is a blessing, and that sufferings are pledges of love, to the true servants of God and disciples of Christ.*

Isaiah	xxv.
	xxvi.
2 Corinthians	iv.
	v. ver. 1—9.
Hebrews	xii.

(13.) The following passages *are proper for the perusal of those sick persons who wish to receive the sacrament.*

Exodus	xii. ver. 1—28.
St. Luke	xxii
St. John	vi.
1 Corinthians	x.

(14.) The following Psalms are *suitable for sick persons, as occasional prayers.*

vi.	lxxvii.
xxv.	lxxxviii.
xxxii.	xc.
xxxviii.	cxxx.
xxxix	cxliii.
li.	

(15.) The following passages are *proper for use during the progress of recovery from sickness.*

Isaiah	xxxviii.
St. Matthew	xiii.
St. Luke	xvii.
Hebrews	x.
And Psalms	xxx.; ciii.; cxvi.;* cxix.

I close this head by remarking, that the domiciliary visits of benevolent persons, acting as the assistants of their Clergyman, are likely not only to convey a fund of religious knowledge to many sick persons, previously ignorant, and, by God's blessing upon their efforts, pre-

\* The 116th Psalm is well adapted for use, as at other times, so especially on the first Sunday that a person recovered from sickness attends a place of worship.

pare some before death for eternity; but to induce many after their recovery to attend regularly at their place of worship, and thus bring them under those public, and more effective means of grace, which they may have too habitually neglected.

SECT. 3.—*The instruction of the ignorant of the adult population, a benefit resulting from the co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in Parochial and District Visiting Associations.*

Although the present age has been characterized by no ordinary degree of zeal in the education of the children of the poor, the instructing of the adult poor themselves, whose education had been neglected in early life, has engaged comparatively little attention. It is, however, an object of incalculable importance; involving as it does, in a great measure, not merely a higher degree of rational enjoyment in the present transitory life; but their eternal happiness also in that world to which they are hastening. Nor can I forbear adding, that the zeal with which missionaries in foreign lands instruct, and pagan adults receive instruction, reprove, in a stronger manner than language can, Clergymen and people in many parishes of this Christian country.

Where this great object has been taken up in good earnest, and vigorously prosecuted, the efforts of those who engaged in it have been often crowned with the happiest results. Thus, when a Clergyman of Wales, the Rev. Griffith Jones, and another Clergyman more recently, the Rev. T. Charles, cherished the benevolent enterprise, it was followed by ample success.\* In reference to a Protestant district in France, which I once visited,—that of the Ban de la Roche,—I can also state, that whilst it comprises 4000 souls scattered in five different villages, such was the assiduity of the pastor, M. Oberlin, and his predecessor, M. Stuber, that not one adult individual, M. Oberlin's son-in-law assured me, could be found, who was unable to read the Holy Scriptures. Such an example presents a fine model for imitation; but it may be feared, that no parish containing an equal number of souls exists in England, where every adult individual has been so completely instructed; indeed, it is probable, that in the majority of those villages which contain only 400, education has not reached

\* Their efforts were chiefly amongst the poor in country villages, who are not so immediately the objects of attention to members of visiting associations: but as a further account of those efforts may be deemed interesting, and cannot but be highly encouraging, I have inserted it in the Appendix, No. IV.

this point.\* The subject now in hand, however, refers to thickly-peopled parishes, not small country villages; I therefore forbear to enter into a full discussion of the means of improving the condition of the latter; and observe, that the following classes of adults require peculiar attention.

(1.) *Prisoners*.—The great increase of crime within the last few years, has been already alluded to. It appears to me, that the attention of members of Visiting Associations may be very properly directed, with the permission of the magistrates and chaplains, to the inmates of our gaols, whether adult criminals, or debtors, or juvenile delinquents. If members of such associations† should succeed in establishing a system of Christian instruction amongst the unhappy male inmates of our prisons during the time of their confinement, as Mrs. Fry and other benevolent ladies have done amongst women; teaching the ignorant to read; mildly explaining the principles and precepts of Christianity; and exhorting the prisoners to submit

\* In Appendix, No. V. will be found an easy method of teaching adults to read.

† On the 4th May, 1830, the Bishop of Quebec, addressing the Diocesan Committee, stated that a gaol association had been formed for promoting education, industry, and moral improvement among prisoners.

to their influence; the happiest consequences might follow; and it is probable that many, when again thrown into the mass of society, would avoid those vicious courses for which they had already suffered in some degree, and which, if persisted in, might expose them to the heavier penalties of the laws.\*

2. *Sailors*.—Whilst describing the benefit that in this respect may be conferred upon adults, I ought not to omit to notice a valuable, but much neglected class of men, to whom the attention of visitors ought, in some instances,

\* In order to deter prisoners from a repetition of crime, two of the most effectual methods, next to the due classification of prisoners, appear to be (1) the accustoming them to work at a trade, (reserving for them part of the profits of the work to encourage them,) that when they leave prison they may be the more readily induced to pursue a course of industry; (2) the teaching the ignorant to read the Scriptures, and persuading them to pay deference to the doctrines and maxims they reveal. The preaching of a suitable chaplain at proper seasons should, of course, be a regular source of religious instruction. There is, however, a pernicious and delusive practice, (founded on a mistake in religion, and derived apparently from the Church of Rome,) that of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to criminals before execution. All the promises of forgiveness to the truly penitent should be stated to them; but the participation of that Holy Sacrament, whilst it cannot save, may deceive their souls, and be regarded as a passport to heaven, and a seal of salvation.



to be especially directed. I allude to the sailors on board of merchant ships.\* They are entitled to attention, because their laborious efforts largely contribute to the prosperity of Great Britain as a maritime country. They are entitled likewise, because the very nature of their occupation exposes them to frequent, indeed almost constant privations in respect to public religious privileges and ordinances,—to peculiar trials and temptations on the score of morality,—and to imminent perils of life, however unprepared for eternity, on their own boisterous element.

Of late years an honourable solicitude for the welfare of this important class of men has induced many charitable persons to establish “Floating Chapels,” for seamen on the Thames, and on a few other rivers; and in the port of London the following humane establishments have been formed for their preservation from the snares of the profligate and designing.

1. The “Destitute Sailor’s Asylum,” near the London Docks.

\* Seamen in the Royal Navy are under the more immediate care of chaplains, and men of war are therefore apparently out of the sphere of Lay visitors. The numerous class of watermen, and bargemen, on rivers and canals, however, claim, on various accounts, that attention which is urged above in reference to seamen in merchant ships.

2. The "Sailor's Home, or Brunswick Maritime Establishment."

The "Prayer Book and Homily Society" likewise frequently sends a Visitor to supply the sailors of merchants' ships with Prayer Books and Homilies.

By means of such humane and religious Institutions, (if liberally supported,) many unhappy sailors will be protected, in some degree, in future, from fraud and distress, and raised from degrading ignorance to a moderate share of Christian knowledge. Still, all this forms but the commencement, on a small scale, of that great attempt which a Christian maritime nation should make for the religious benefit of seamen: and more especially does it seem incumbent upon clergymen, who have the care of parishes which include a sea-faring population, to provide that men of suitable age and discretion shall, from time to time, visit vessels when in harbour, ascertain what should be done to advance the temporal and spiritual benefit of the crews, furnish such clergymen with reports, and act under their advice and superintendence. By such kindness, many in the harbours around our coasts, may be supplied with suitable books of devotion; many, if unable to read, induced to attend an adult sailors' school; and many who

have habitually neglected divine worship, successfully urged to come to church.

(3.) *Miners*.—Another very numerous class of men to whom the offices of Visitors are particularly applicable, is that of miners, in those districts of the kingdom where iron, coal, and other minerals, have brought together a large body of workmen, and their families. To the disadvantages which attend these persons, in a religious view, in those hilly districts of South Wales which lie within the diocese of Llandaff, the Lord Bishop of that diocese (now Bishop of Winchester) has referred, in a very striking and affecting manner, in his Charge of 1827. The subject is one that has a direct bearing upon various other parts of the united kingdom. In many instances, the mineral wealth of a tract of country has led to the formation of populous villages, so remote from the ancient parish church as to be wholly precluded from the official attentions of the incumbent, and where, consequently, the erection of new churches or chapels of ease is imperiously required without delay. In other instances, the great increase of a mining population may have taken place in the immediate neighbourhood of an ancient church and village; where, according to circumstances, a new chapel of ease may or may not be required. In all such instances, however, the

effective labours of a Visiting Association must be wanted as auxiliary to the personal labours of the clergy. The activity of such benevolent assistants to the parish minister will be found one of the best means of preserving adults within the pale of the established church, persuading them to avail themselves of its ordinances, and inducing them to send their children to imbibe the elements of Christian knowledge in daily and Sunday schools, in which its principles are inculcated. For these reasons, as well as on account of the various benefits, temporal and spiritual, attendant on so charitable a ministration, it appears to be of the highest importance, that the claims of miners and their families should be met by energetic efforts on the part of the members of Parochial and District Visiting Associations.

(4.) *Manufacturers.*—It remains that I allude to a fourth class of persons, that of our manufacturers, who, like those classes already described, sailors and miners, have risen, in connexion with the vast commercial enterprise which has become a principal national feature of this realm, into a population extremely numerous; collected into dense masses in particular districts; exposed in consequence to peculiar temptations; less easily managed than if scattered; and, at the same time, for want of an adequate

number of churches, deprived in part of religious privileges, and withdrawn from the control of the parochial clergy.

The manufacturing population of our country, whether in prosperity or adversity, stands in urgent need of that vigilant attention which can only be administered effectually by members of Visiting Associations; in prosperity, to correct their improvident and careless habits of life, and the strong temptation to consume in pernicious inebriating liquors much of the wages earned by industry; in adversity, to meet and supply their wants, and reduce that tone of discontent which often assumes even a form of disloyalty and turbulence. Instead of expatiating, however, at any length on this topic, I shall do more justice to the subject, by extracting a few paragraphs from the Charge of a Prelate,\* whose diocese includes so large a portion of the manufacturing class of our fellow subjects, and whose pastoral solicitude has been therefore directed to their relief.

Pourtraying, in contrast, the misery attendant on an individual destitute of religious principles, yet, from external circumstances, in the greatest need of them; and the same individual

\* A Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, at the Primary Visitation in 1829, by the Right Rev. John Bird, Lord Bishop of Chester.

when, by divine grace, brought under the influence of religion; the Bishop writes—

“ Compare the ignorant and unreflecting peasant, who moves in the same dull, and too often sinful track, with no ideas beyond the ground he treads upon, the sensual indulgences which he gratifies, and the day that is passing over his head: compare him with his enlightened neighbour, nay, with himself, if happily he becomes enlightened, when he follows the same path of active industry, but makes it a path towards his heavenly Father’s kingdom: and then perceive, by a visible example, what the grace of God effects through the agency of man. Or . . . . take a case, too common, alas! . . . . take the case of those who see their occupation sinking from under them; their means of support annually decreasing, and little prospect of its melioration. Suppose that the views of these, and such as these, are bounded by this present world, what can they be but unhappy, restless, discontented: defying God, and murmuring at man: distressing the philanthropist, because he sees no comfort left to them; distressing the statesman, because he can devise no remedy for their relief; above all, distressing the Christian, who sees the future prospect far darker than the present gloom. Suppose the

case of one thus circumstanced, having no hope beyond this world: and then contemplate the change which would be produced, if any of the means by which grace is communicated to the heart, should inspire the same person with the principles and the faith of the Gospel; converting him from whatever is evil in his ways, and thus removing all the accumulation which sin adds to poverty; reconciling him to hardships and privations, as the intended trial of his faith, the lot of many of God's most approved servants: and lighting up the darkness of this world by the rays which precede that which is to come, the earnest of a brighter dawn: compare, I pray, these two pictures, and then admire with me, for what can be more worthy of your admiration, the blessing which God designed for man; and deplore with me, for what more deserves your lamentation, the blindness of man, who refuses the good and keeps to himself the evil; and resolve with me, for there is need of your resolution, that as far as in you lies, you will make the mercies of God available, and disseminate those principles which exalt the low, and enrich the poor, which teach men to 'rejoice even in tribulation,' and render a Lazarus the object of envy to a Dives."

Contemplating adversity as the probable lot of those engaged in various branches of trade, the Bishop proceeds :

“ Circumstances are at work in every part of this country, not more affecting its manufacturing than its agricultural population, which leave little to expect for a large proportion of its inhabitants, except hardships and difficulties. Religion is not more really necessary to these, than it is to every man. But those are more evidently destitute without it, who in this world ‘ have evil things.’ And further, it is the only remedy which we can offer. Mitigation there may be, assistance there may be : but effectual remedy there is none other. Whatever comfort can be bestowed, must proceed from religion ; whatever temporal improvement can accrue, must proceed from religion. For all the evils we lament, are increased by imprudence, intemperance, malice, violence ; and religion teaches foresight, moderation, patience, and contentment : and alas ! because it does so, as if the natural enmity of the human heart did not afford sufficient obstacle, it is opposed by the influence of all who make a gain of other men’s ungodliness. . . . My firm belief is, that if our beloved country retains its greatness and its comforts, they will be preserved to her by religion alone. And of religion, the



principal instruments must always be the parochial clergy.”

Lastly, describing the great importance of employing the Laity as co-operators with the Clergy, in improving the condition of the poor, the Bishop observes: “Certainly in our larger parishes, it is not possible for the strength or activity of the clergy alone to provide for such individual instruction. But there is a resource at hand; when the population is moderate, nothing is wanting but resolution and contrivance; and in the case of a denser population, the bane and the antidote, the evil and the remedy, are found together. The same population which presses so heavily upon the clergyman, affords also the variety of ranks, and degree of superior education, that many fellow-workers may assist the minister, and diminish his labours. In this manner the Apostles were enabled to execute the manifold concerns which lay upon them. . . . We find that there were persons, who, though not apostles, not commissioned to preach the Gospel, were yet employed in many ways connected with it. St. Paul speaks of them as his ‘helpers in Christ Jesus;’ as ‘labouring much in the Lord;’ as ‘labouring with him in the Lord.’ . . . . The Apostles then, however above succeeding ministers in their endowments, were like them

in other respects; and because, in bodily strength, they were but men, and their day, like ours, was limited in its duration, they embraced such means of assistance in their various labours as came within their power. They have left us an example. Let the minister of a populous district, using careful discrimination of character, select such as 'are worthy,' and 'of good report,' and assign them their several employments under his direction; they may lessen his own labour, by visiting and examining the schools, by reading and praying with the infirm and aged, by consoling the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and pursuing the many nameless ways by which it is in the power of one Christian to benefit and relieve another. . . .

What image more exemplifying the reality of pastoral care, what more truly Christian picture can be presented to our contemplation, than that of a minister uniting with himself the best disposed, and the most competent portion of his parishioners, and superintending counsels, and directing plans which have God for their object, and the eternal welfare of his people for their end; seizing every opportunity of general and individual good, correcting mischiefs at their first rising, providing for the spiritual wants of every different age and class, and thus striving, as far as may be allowed, 'to present every man per-

fect in Christ Jesus.' . . . Nor is this any visionary notion; pleasing in idea, but impracticable in reality. Numerous parishes, of different degrees of population, have been brought under such discipline, with more or less success. And I feel convinced, that whoever is anxious to promote the glory of God, to assist the most important interests of his fellow-creatures, to confirm the security of his country, or maintain the stability of his church, can ensure none of those great objects more effectually than by means like these. Without them, in some of our crowded districts of dense and extended population, the church is lost sight of, parochial distinctions are obliterated, and the reciprocal charities and duties of the pastor and the flock are forgotten by the people, because it is physically impossible that they should be satisfactorily discharged."

SECT. 4.—*The furtherance of the Education of Children, a benefit resulting from the Co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy, in Parochial and District Visiting Associations.*

It has already, I hope, appeared that a Parochial or District Visiting Association becomes readily the instrument of effecting many important purposes. It is a current of beneficence that at once reminds me of that copious stream,

or small river, which, issuing from the bowels of the earth in prodigious quantity, at Holywell, in Flintshire, no sooner begins to flow, than it confers important benefits, and in its short and unambitious course, turns first the wheels of one manufactory, then those of another, afterwards those of several others in succession, before it ceases to be a distinct stream, and loses itself in the river Dee. It is not easy, in fact, to assign limits to the utility of such well-regulated associations; and under the present head, I shall attempt to prove that they may be of essential service towards promoting the education of children—the children of the lower classes.

I fear that benevolent clergymen and their lay friends, too often feel satisfied with a comparatively flourishing daily and Sunday school, when diligent investigation would convince them, that the number of children in such schools by no means corresponds with that of the children in the parish who ought to be under instruction, but who are still immersed in ignorance, and in low, perhaps vicious habits. When a system of accurate investigation has been prosecuted, great numbers of children have been often collected into Sunday schools, who had been previously overlooked. I will adduce the following instances in proof.

The town of Wigan having been canvassed, 1,000 children (of whom 507 were members of the Church of England) were found, who went to no Sunday school. The towns of Kendall and Preston having been canvassed, an accession of 272 Sunday scholars in the former, and of 700 in the latter, was the result; and of these, 300 were in connexion with the Church of England.

I think, then, I may assume, as an unquestionable truth, that the efforts of members of Visiting Associations would eventually contribute, in a very high degree, to the augmentation of the number of children in both daily and Sunday Schools. The questions they will propose, always bearing upon the welfare of families, will, as a matter of course, include some reference to the number of children in a family, their ability to read, and their attendance at school; and the advice consequent upon the answers, will usually be found an effectual persuasive to the mind of a parent to send the children to be educated. This remark is of general application, to people of the lower class; and as respects two of the peculiar descriptions of persons already adverted to, namely, prisoners and sailors, it must be obvious, that, since their children are almost wholly destitute of parental care, the intervention of visitors

may be of the utmost importance in preserving them from surrounding contamination, and directing their steps to schools where lessons of Christian wisdom may be acquired.

But the benefit bestowed by the visitors of associations upon children, does not stop here. They may be the means of not only introducing them to school, but of retaining them in communion with the Church of England. After remaining some years at school, young persons will be exposed, on quitting it, to the danger of forgetting the sacred obligations they have been taught, and of absenting themselves from church. They may not do this wholly, or at once; but the occupations of life, or the invitations of pleasure, will be too apt to alienate them, by degrees, from religious duties they once scrupulously adhered to. But that acquaintance with, and influence over families, which the members of Visiting Associations obtain, will afford them opportunities of watching over young persons as they grow up, and of prevailing upon them, personally, if at home, or through relatives, if gone to service, to continue steadfastly attentive to the public duties of religion.

The visits of such members will thus practically illustrate that principle of which Dr. Chalmers is so strong an advocate, in his "Christian and

Civic Economy"—LOCALITY. Hitherto it has been too little weighed and acted upon by benevolent clergymen and laymen, especially in reference to schools for the children of the poor; but as their welfare, and that of the community at large, and the religious prosperity of the Church of England, are essentially interwoven with the adoption of plans founded upon that principle, I will transcribe several important paragraphs from that able author.

Contrasting the usual method of setting up schools without visiting to seek for scholars, with that of instituting diligent search in a given district, he remarks :

“ The schools, under a general system, are so many centres of attraction for all the existing desire that there is towards Christianity ; and what is thus drawn, is, doubtless, often bettered and advanced by the fellowship into which it has entered. The schools, under a local system, are so many centres of emanation, from which a vivifying influence is actively propagated through a dead and putrid mass. It does not surprise us to be told, that, under the former operation, there should be an increase of youthful delinquency, along with an increase of public instruction for the young. Should the latter operation become universal in cities, we should be surprised if there were still an

increase of youthful delinquency; and it were a phenomenon we would be unable to explain.

“The former, or general system, draws around it the young of our more decent and reputable families. It can give an impulse to all the matter that floats upon the surface of society. It is the pride of the latter, or local system, while it refuses not these, that it also fetches out from their obscurities, the very poorest and most profligate of children. It may have a painful encounter at the outset, with the filth, and the raggedness, and the other rude and revolting materials, which it has so laboriously excavated from those mines of depravity, that lie beneath the surface of common observation. But it may well be consoled with the thought, that, while much good has been done by its predecessor, which, we trust that it is on the eve of supplanting, it holds in its own hands the materials of a far more glorious transformation.”\*

Proceeding, afterwards, to describe the disadvantages of the common mode of conducting Sunday schools, compared with the superior advantages obtained on the local, or visiting system, (which Sunday school teachers, as well as members of Visiting Associations may act

\* Chalmers' *Christian and Civic Economy*, vol. i. p. 64.



upon,) Dr. Chalmers, with his usual eloquence, observes :

“The families that furnish children to the same teacher, may lie at a wide physical distance from each other; and it is therefore seldom that he holds any week-day intercourse at all, with the few and scattered houses, out of which his scholars repair to him, or that he maintains any common understanding with the parents about their young, or that he joins his guardianship with theirs, in calling the absentees to account for their acts of non-attendance; or that he forms acquaintance with them upon that most gratifying and welcome of all intimations, that their children are doing well. The close and oft-repeated influences, in virtue of which, a local teacher may incorporate his school with the habit of all the families that are allotted to him, are wanting to the general teacher. The latter may still, however, head a most numerous and respectable school; but this is more in virtue of a pre-existent desire for Christian instruction, than of any desire which he himself has excited among the families. Attendance upon a general teacher, in spite of distance and other disadvantages, generally argues, and is indeed the fruit of a certain value and predisposition for the lessons of Christianity. Attendance on a local teacher is oftener the fruit,

not of an original, but of a communicated taste for his instructions. It is a produce of his own gathering. It is the result, not of a spontaneous, but of a derived movement, to which he himself gave the primary impulse, by going aggressively forth upon a given territory; and which he perpetuates and keeps up by his frequent calls, and his unremitting vigilance, and his oft-repeated applications, brought to bear upon one and the same neighbourhood.

“Under a local system, the teachers move towards the people. Under a general system, such of the people as are disposed to Christianity move towards them. To estimate the comparative effect of these two, take the actual state of every mixed and crowded population, where there must be many among whom this disposition is utterly extinguished. The question is, how shall the influence of a Sabbath school be brought most readily and most abundantly into contact with their families? Which of the two parties, the teacher, or those to be taught, should make the first advances to such an approximation? To meet this question, let it ever be remembered, that there is a wide and a mighty difference between the wants of our physical, and those of our moral and spiritual nature. In proportion to our want of food, is our desire for food; but it is not so

with our want of knowledge, or virtue, or religion. The more destitute we are of these last, the more dead we are as to any inclination for them. A general system of Sabbath-schooling may attract towards it all the pre-disposition that there is for Christian instruction, and yet leave the majority as untouched and as unawakened as it found them. In moving through the lanes and the recesses of a long-neglected population, will it be found of the fearful multitude, that not only is their acquaintance with the Gospel extinguished, but their wish to obtain an acquaintance with it is also extinguished. They not only have no righteousness, but they have no hungering nor thirsting after it. A general teacher may draw some kindred particles out of this assemblage. He may bring around him such families as are of a homogeneous quality with himself. Those purer ingredients of the mass, which retain so much of the ethereal character as to have an ethereal tendency, may move towards a place of central and congenial attraction, though at a considerable distance from them; and, even though, in so doing they have to come separately out from that overwhelming admixture with which they are encompassed. But the bulky sediment remains untouched and stationary; and, by its power of assimilation too, is all

the while adding to its own magnitude. And thus it is both a possible thing that schools may multiply under a general system, and that out of the resources of a mighty population, an overflowing attendance may be afforded to each of them, while an humble fraction of the whole is all that is overtaken: and below the goodly superficies of a great apparent stir and activity, may an unseen structure of baser materials deepen and accumulate underneath, so as to furnish a solution of the fact, that with an increase of Christian exertion amongst us, there should, at one and the same time, be an increase of heathenism.

“It is the pervading operation of the local system, which gives it such a superior value and effect in our estimation. It is its thorough diffusion through that portion of the mass in which it operates. It is that movement by which it traverses the whole population, and by which, instead of only holding forth its signals to those of them who are awake, it knocks at the doors of those who are most profoundly asleep, and with a force far more effective than if it were physical, drags them out to a willing attendance upon its ministrations. In this way, or indeed in any way, may it still be impossible to reach the parents of our present generation. But the important prac-

tical fact is, that, averse as they may be to Christianity on their own account, and negligent as they often are, in their own persons, of the Christianity of their children, still, there is a pride and a satisfaction felt in their attendance upon the Sabbath schools, and their proficiency at the Sabbath schools. Let the system be as impotent as it may in its efficiency upon the old, still, it comes into extensive contact with the ductile and susceptible young; and, from the way in which it is fitted to muster them nearly all into its presence, is it fitted, in proper hands, to wield a high and a presiding influence over the destinies of a future age.”\*

I will not weaken the arguments of Dr. Chalmers by attempting to add any thing in support; but there is one topic to which I deem it advisable to advert very briefly at the close of this chapter,—that of Parochial Lending Libraries. A clergyman who thinks proper to adopt this powerful engine of moral improvement in his parish, may receive much valuable help from the Laity as visiting members. In populous districts it seems also necessary that the Lending Libraries should be chiefly under the management of such persons, and of the

\* Chalmers' *Christian and Civic Economy*, vol. i pp. 60—63.

teachers of Sunday schools. When the former visit in their respective districts, the books lent will often furnish matter for interesting conversation with the sick and aged poor. Clergymen will naturally select the books and tracts they wish to constitute such Libraries for their own parishes.\* Many of the Homilies well deserve to form a part. Two circumstances render the establishment of such Libraries peculiarly necessary in the present day; first the general spread of education among the children of the poor; secondly, the danger arising to those who can read, from the extensive diffusion of infidel and other pernicious publications. The proper antidote consists in interesting publications, possessing a tendency to promote true religion in the minds of the young. Such libraries should contain works adapted to convince Roman Catholics of their errors, if persons of that communion reside in the parish, and to fortify Protestants against

\* To the Reports of the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge," are annexed Rules for the formation of Parochial Lending Libraries. "A Letter addressed to the Lord Bishop of London, on the expediency of establishing Parochial Libraries in the Metropolis," by a Subscriber to King's College, contains some important remarks respecting books of popular literature, adapted to different classes, and to the progress of knowledge in the present day.

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the errors of the Church of Rome. Lending Libraries were found of inestimable advantage towards raising M. Oberlin's parish, in Alsace, to the high degree of moral culture which it attained. Each of the five schools, in five several villages which constituted his charge, possessed a Lending Library; and the books passed in succession from one library to another in the different villages.

## CHAP. V.

ADDITIONAL MOTIVES FOR A MORE GENERAL CO-OPERATION OF THE LAY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WITH THE CLERGY IN PAROCHIAL DISTRICT AND VISITING ASSOCIATIONS, FROM THE ZEALOUS EFFORTS AND ACTIVITY OF MEMBERS OF OTHER CHURCHES.

SECT. 1.—*The zeal of members of the Church of Rome, a motive for establishing Church of England Visiting Associations.*

The Church of Rome, for more than twelve centuries past an apostate, and now a falling Church, approaching the period of its dissolution, has been in a great measure sustained in public estimation, among Roman Catholics, notwithstanding the enormous corruptions by which it is disfigured, by the magnificent institutions of beneficence that adorn many European cities, and by that spirit of active benevolence which has characterized some of the religious orders within its pale. A veil has thus concealed, in a great degree, its hideous deformities from the eyes of the undiscerning.



Having made it my particular object, when travelling through France, and Italy, not only to make inquiry respecting philanthropic establishments of every description, but to visit the interior of the edifices, and converse with those who bore office in them, I am able to adduce a few instances in reference to the very object which I would wish strenuously to recommend, namely, the formation of Church of England Visiting Associations; and venture to hope, that the details I am about to communicate will be neither fatiguing to the reader, nor without their use in stimulating the members of a purer Church to fresh activity in their career of beneficence.

There are various confraternities in the Church of Rome, established for the purpose of assisting the *decent* poor and *debtors*; and for visiting *prisoners* in gaol, and *sick* persons, &c.

At the Cathedral of Brescia, I noticed that Cardinal Barbadicus had instituted an association which "*utriusque vitæ alimenta præbet*," has for its object, to impart bodily and spiritual food to the indigent.

At the Church of the Twelve Apostles, at Rome, Clement VIII. established the "confraternity of the Twelve Apostles," the members of which provide physicians and medicines

for the sick poor, pay house rent for twelve widows, *assist the modest poor who cannot beg*, and give dowers annually to several poor girls.

Amongst the statues to the founders of celebrated institutions which decorate the interior of St. Peter's, at Rome, is one with the inscription, "*S. Camillus Cler. Reg. Ministr. Infirm. Fundator.*" This extraordinary man, Camillus de Lellis, was a dissipated military man until his twenty-fifth year, then became a penitent, went to Rome, attended the sick in the "Hospital of Incurables;" at thirty-two years of age learned to read, was afterwards ordained priest, and at length, with a few others, laid the foundation of a congregation, or order of clergymen, who were specially designed, and take a vow to visit the sick, even in cases of an infectious nature. They are called in Italian, "*Chierici Regolari Crociferi, Ministri degl' Infermi.*"\* Camillus died at Rome in the year 1614, aged sixty-five. Young persons are educated at S. Maria in Trivio,—a small religious college, with a church, and passing through various steps of

\* The Crocigeri who had Hospitals, or rather Hospices, for the entertainment of strangers, were a totally different order.

probation, are admitted, (1.) to minor orders; (2.) to the sub-diaconate; (3.) to the order of deacons; (4.) to that of the priesthood. They complete their studies at S. Maria Maddalena, and, without being required to attend the larger colleges, are ordained, after the examinations deemed requisite. There were two priests and eight students when I saw the Institution. The funds had been diminished by French rapacity. At the church of S. Maria Maddalena, eighteen priests of the order hold themselves in readiness to attend the sick and dying, at any time of the day or night, one of them being always awake and dressed. At Florence and Naples the same order exists, and Novices are trained. It is not my province now to inquire whether an order of inferior clergymen, who shall not be required to take University degrees, would be desirable in large cities, chiefly for the purpose of visiting the sick, burying the dead, reading the liturgy, and preaching in Hospitals and Workhouses. But even if such an order were countenanced by Ecclesiastical superiors, and especially if not, voluntary visitors, the members of an Association of the Laity under the direction of the parish minister, cannot but be desirable, I think, and even necessary. In any case, the zealous attention to the sick and dying, which the

Church of Rome has thus exhibited, remains as a stimulant to excite members of the Reformed Churches.

I proceed to mention another order, "The Order of Charity," founded by Johannes de Deo, (St. Johannes de Deo, as he is styled by Roman Catholics,) for the relief of the neglected sick poor. This humane individual lived a few centuries ago in the Province of Granada, in Spain. His employment was that of selling wood at market; and having with the profits hired a house for the sick poor, he attended them in person, and on one occasion saved them from the flames when his house, or little hospital was on fire. In these humble exertions originated this order, which now includes 14 monasteries, with hospitals annexed, in Romagna, and 20 in the kingdom of Naples. Before the French Revolution there were, I have been told, about 500 in France. That hurricane swept them away. There are now only three. Indeed, as far as my own observation has extended, I am compelled to consider the well-endowed institutions of this order lamentably abused; being rather the means of supporting the idle, than of conferring considerable benefit on the sick poor. At Perugia, for example, I found that the monastery and hospital of this order contained three priests,

four medical attendants, (when required,) several servants, and 16 incurable old men; from which it is evident that unless a system of visiting the sick in the city was also pursued, the whole asylum could be little more than a retreat for the indolent. At Rome, the members of this order are denominated “Buon Fratelli di S. Johanne di Dio.\*” The general of the order resides there. The hospital contains 74 beds, many of which were empty when I saw it. Here members pass their novitiate. Several laymen attend the sick, and four priests give spiritual instruction, and officiate at the annexed chapel, which is decorated with a profusion of the richest marbles. The funds arise from rents, and legacies bequeathed. Here also I perceived with regret, that there were many attendants, and only a few persons sick. This establishment, and the various branches of the order existing in different places, however ill-managed, attest the strenuous zeal, and great liberality of those opulent members of the Church of Rome, who, in past times, bequeathed sums for their support. I

\* Wadham College, Oxford, was a friary of Bonhommes, and Dr. Bush, the first Protestant Bishop of Bristol, was one of them; whether allied to the Buon Fratelli I have not the means of ascertaining; I imagine not.

am happy, however, to add, that very enlightened views with regard to the most economical manner of providing for the relief of the sick and needy, have been of late years gradually diffused over many parts of Italy. Gioja is a writer of high renown on that branch of political economy which regards the maintenance of the poor, asylums, houses of industry, &c.; and I have before me a work on similar subjects, entitled, "*Pensieri Economici*," by Count Folchino Schizzi, an author who has also translated into Italian a book, called "*Il Visitatore del Povero*, the Poor Man's Visitor, published in French, by Baron Degerando. In mentioning this circumstance, I cannot but express a feeling in which the reader will participate, that of pleasure at finding that amongst the literary men, and even noblemen of the present age in France and Italy, there are some who dedicate their thoughts and pens to that painfully intricate and perplexing, but deeply affecting subject, interesting to the community at large, as well as to religion and humanity,—the best means of supplying relief to the distressed.

Notwithstanding that proverbial levity which is attributed to the French people, and which seems particularly hostile to the cultivation of the finer sympathies of our nature, France has certainly produced Associations and Institutions

of a very noble description for the alleviation of human suffering. Of these the most remarkable derive their origin from the humane interposition of Vincent de Paul, a very extraordinary character, who, born a peasant's son, in the Diocese of Acqs, in 1576, became a priest, and after returning from the condition of a slave at Tunis, on the Barbary coast, to which he had been carried by pirates, became the founder of some of the most useful as well as magnificent philanthropic institutions that ever adorned France. I will now only introduce a few particulars relative to those connected with visiting sick persons, and others in a state of misery, leaving the more extended details for insertion in the Appendix.

Vincent de Paul established the first of those "*Charités de Paroisse*," which were afterwards extensively adopted in France.

These parochial Charity Associations originated in a very simple circumstance. At an early period of life, Vincent de Paul had the care of the parish of Chatillon-les-Dombes; and was about to ascend the pulpit to preach, when Mme. de la Chassaigne begged him to recommend to the charity of the hearers a poor family who lived half a league from the place, the children and farm-servants having been taken ill. The consequence of the appeal

was, that when he went to see the family, he met a crowd of people, who had taken bread, wine, and other articles for their relief. To his reflecting mind it instantly occurred, that where so much ill-directed benevolence existed, it was desirable, that instead of giving super-abundant relief on one day, to one family, who could not consume the food before it was spoiled, an association should be formed for the relief of the poor generally in times of need. Several ladies concurred in the plan, which, in seasons of famine and general sickness, became of incalculable benefit, long after Vincent de Paul had left the parish.

Vincent himself afterwards established associations in more than thirty parishes belonging to his illustrious patron, M. de Gondy, Count of Joigny; and similar associations gradually spread into Lorraine, Savoy, and Italy.

Particularly attached as he was to the country poor, as those who were generally the most neglected, he did not at first intend to introduce his plan of parochial charity associations into large cities; but the miseries of a particular class of persons, namely, respectable mechanics, &c. who were reluctant when they fell sick to seek relief at the Hotel Dieu, and whose illness threw their families into poverty, induced the priests at Paris to wish for charity



associations adapted to city parishes. Vincent de Paul, at their request, drew up the requisite regulations, and the plan was gradually adopted in almost all the parishes of that metropolis.

Deeply anxious, however, that the charity associations in country parishes should flourish, he wished that some lady of superior ability might be found to visit them occasionally, and to encourage the members to persevere in their attention to the sick and the wretched. Such a valuable assistant he found in Mme. le Gras. She requested Vincent de Paul to become her director; and expressed to him her wish to enter fully into his great plans for the relief of suffering humanity. Vincent, however, thought proper to try her charity and patience during four years; and then, finding her strongly and perseveringly disposed for humane offices, he commissioned her (being then a widow) to visit several of the associations in the country. She did so in the dioceses of Soissons, Paris, Beauvais, Meaux, Senlis, Chartres, and Châlons; addressing the females who belonged to these charitable associations; giving useful instructions; encouraging their attention to the sick by her own example; and replenishing their little funds from her own purse; whilst, besides relieving bodily wants, she made it

especially her object to promote a deep sense of religion in the persons she visited.

After a lapse of 17 years from the time when the parochial charity associations, already alluded to, were first established, circumstances led to an improvement of the system not originally contemplated. Many of the members of these associations were ladies of birth and fortune; but their husbands having often expressed anxiety lest they should be injured by breathing infected air in the chambers of the sick, servants were often commissioned to visit them in their stead. These servants being in general very unfit, for want of knowledge and sympathy, to fulfil a duty of this nature, M. Vincent cherished a wish that religiously-disposed young women of the middle and lower classes might be specially trained for this work of mercy. The benevolent Mme le Gras, anxious for the same object, undertook to train them in her own house; and she commenced the undertaking by receiving four novices. This was the origin of the noble establishment of the "*Filles de la Charité*," which has for almost two hundred years afforded shelter to the fainting and wretched inhabitants of the cities and provinces of France. How many millions have received benefit from them during two centuries,

or how many thousands of these excellent women have laboured until death in that service, I have no documents to shew ; but, whilst Mme. le Gras began to train so small a number as four, I can state on the authority of one of their superiors, who politely favoured me with the information, that there are now about 400 employed in the city of Paris, and about 4000 scattered over France, besides 300 in Spain, 600 in Poland, and a few in Italy.

The occupations of the Sisters of Charity comprise, not only 1, attending the sick poor at their own homes, and 2, attending the sick in several hospitals, but likewise, 3, taking charge of the asylum for foundlings ; and, 4, educating poor girls gratis.\*

Vincent de Paul was a principal instrument in forming two other institutions for visiting the distressed ; the “ *Compagnie de Dames*,” and “ *Assemblée de Seigneurs*.” The “ *Compagnie de Dames*,” originated in the humanity of a rich widow, Mme. de Goussault, who represented to M. Vincent that the Hotel Dieu, a hospital at Paris, deserved particular attention, since as many as 25,000 persons of all ages passed through it in the course of a year. M. Vincent was at first unwilling to interfere,

\* See further account in Appendix, No. VI.

because the Hotel Dieu was under the care of experienced directors, and nuns, but when the Archbishop of Paris, at Mme. de Goussault's request, urged him to form a society of ladies for the benefit of the sick in that hospital, his scruples were removed.\*

Events of a political nature, attended with a variety of disasters, afterwards led Vincent de Paul to establish an "*Assemblée de Seigneurs*," an Association of charitable noblemen, to relieve the necessities of noblemen and their families, who came as exiles to Paris. Many of the nobility of Lorraine had fled to that city, for refuge during the calamitous wars of Charles IV. Duke of Lorraine. The wreck of their property, which they had brought with them, being at last spent, and their distress becoming known to M. Vincent, he exhorted some French noblemen to associate for their relief. They did so, and supplied their wants from month to month, during eight years, until events allowed them to return to their own country.

During the time of the civil wars between Charles I. and the English Parliament, many Roman Catholic families fled to France; and

\* For details relative to this "*Compagnie*," see Appendix, No. VII.

they also were relieved, like the nobility of Lorraine, by the liberality of the "*Assemblée de Seigneurs*," one of whom, M. le Marquis de Renty, was the indefatigable almoner, who called upon them with the sums voted for their support. Whilst it is honourable to France to state that those charitable persons relieved their co-religionists from England; it is still more honourable to England to record, that when the tempest of the French Revolution threw Roman Catholic noblemen and Roman Catholic priests upon her shores, they experienced all the attention which politeness, humanity, and religious principle demanded, although members of a church deeply infected with superstition, and descendants of persons who had often imbrued their hands in the blood of those holy men, the Protestants of the Reformed Church of France.

There is another foreign order (of females,) occupied in visiting the sick, which I ought not to omit to notice: it is that of the "*Sisters of the Visitation*," or "*Sœurs de la Visitation de la Ste. Vierge*," originally established in Savoy in the year 1610, by François de Sales, titular Bishop of Geneva. That zealous Roman Catholic prelate, with the assistance of the Baroness de Chantal, instituted a congregation of women under the above appellation, which acquired such renown on account of the benevolent exer-

tions of its members, that in half a century there were about one hundred and thirty houses of this order in different parts of Europe. In forming this congregation, it was the particular object of François de Sales to afford a retreat for females, especially widows, of little or no fortune; and who, instead of practising the austerities common in convents, should chiefly aim to subdue the will and the affections into subjection to the Gospel, and occupy their time, in a great measure, in visiting and consoling the sick.\*

There was a very remarkable person connected with this order, living a few years ago at Besançon, an ancient city of Franche Comté, who devoted her time almost entirely to visiting sick prisoners of war, and performed singly, what, in most instances, would have required the efforts of many associated persons. I therefore think that no apology will be deemed necessary for introducing, at tolerably full length, an account of SŒUR MARTHE DE BESANÇON.

During the late wars, Besançon was one of the principal stations for English, Russian, Prussian, and other prisoners. I had heard, several years ago, of the benevolent Sœur Marthe, and most gladly availed myself of an

\* Some of the Sisters of this Order keep schools for the instruction of poor female children.

opportunity to obtain correct information respecting her on the spot. I was very kindly received by her nephew, M. Biget, who was so obliging as to give me the particulars I am now about to communicate. Her family name was Biget. She was born at Thoraize, a village two leagues from Besançon; her father possessed a little property in that rural district. Sœur Marthe, though she had taken vows, was not a cloistered nun, but a "Sœur du dehors," an out-of-door sister, attached to the Convent of the "Filles," or Nuns of the Visitation. It was her office to provide for the temporal wants of the convent. When the convent was dissolved at the Revolution, and annexed to the hospital of St. Louis, this worthy woman made it her occupation to attend at the hospitals, and succour the needy. The Russians, made prisoners at the battle of Zurich, were the early objects of her compassion, as were those of other nations afterwards in succession, and amongst them English sailors; for though the sailors taken in ships of war received an allowance from the British Government, those taken in vessels engaged in trade stood often in great want of assistance. By her kind interposition, she not only procured clothes and food from charitable persons in the city, but also the General's permission that they might work by

day in the town. The sick prisoners of other nations, however, were more numerous than the English. The kind attention which she had for many years given to the wants of the prisoners of war, procured for her so much respect from the Allied Sovereigns and Generals, after the peace of 1814, that she received several presents from them, and honorary decorations, as tokens of esteem. In her portrait, she appears decorated with various orders and medals, namely,

A gold medal from the Emperor Alexander :

A gold medal from the King of Prussia :

A medal from the Emperor of Austria :

A medal from the Agricultural Society, (homage à la vertu :)

A French Cross from Louis XVIII. :

The Lys de France :

The large Cross of her Order, (that of the Visitation.)

She also received presents of money ; 100 Louis d'or from the Duke of Wellington ; 50 Louis annually, from Louis XVIII. ; 50 Louis annually, from the Emperor Alexander, besides occasional grants for purposes of charity ; and 100 Louis from the King of Prussia ; besides other presents, accompanied with letters. She afterwards endured a protracted illness of four years. She had been



accustomed to read the works of François de Sales, and other pious books for devotional purposes ; and it may be hoped, that, though she abounded in good works, she had learnt, in the spirit of true humility, to rely for eternal life on the merits of the Redeemer only. In that case she will doubtless receive his benediction amongst those to whom he will say, “ I was sick and in prison and ye visited me.” In honouring such beneficence the Allied Sovereigns did honour to themselves ; and it might contribute much to the happiness of society, if instead of limiting honorary rewards to military men only, monarchs of a pacific character were, by distinct marks of approbation, to shew their esteem for those of their subjects, whether amongst the nobility, clergy, or laity, men or women, who have distinguished themselves by works of utility and labours of beneficence ;— not merely to reward such persons, who, probably, though worthy of recompence, have not acted for the sake of reward ; but to stimulate others to follow their example. In the efforts of Sœur Marthe we see a pleasing proof how happily the Christian religion, even under a very unfavourable and distorted form as in the Church of Rome, is adapted to mitigate the evils consequent upon war ; and if at any future time war should unhappily arise and

prisoners be brought to England, let it be hoped that fit persons, whether men, or women a little advanced in life, will not be wanting to act towards our enemies as Sœur Marthe did towards the English and their Allies.

SECT. 2.—*The efforts of Foreign Protestants a motive for establishing Church of England Visiting Associations.*

If the zeal and compassion of members of so corrupt a church as the Church of Rome, as exhibited in the last section, may well animate members of our purer and reformed church to fresh exertion; so also should the efforts of members of Foreign Protestant Churches, which, although from the paucity of Protestants, compared with Roman Catholics, and their comparative poverty, not on so splendid a scale as those of the latter, nevertheless furnish such proofs of wisdom and humanity as shed lustre on their faith,—or rather, were its genuine emanations and evidences.

I will first describe the efforts of a few individuals amongst the Laity, who concurred with the benevolent Pastor Oberlin, a Lutheran clergyman of Alsace, in relieving the wants, and improving the condition of his parish at Ban de la Roche. As that parish, though a country parish, comprised originally five vil-

lages, and contained 4,000 souls, it seems not unfit to be mentioned in this place, as my observations in the present work refer, not only to cities and large towns, but likewise to overgrown villages in our manufacturing districts.

The most respectable family in the parish, that of M. Legrand, not only rendered very efficient aid to their minister, by employing many of the children, and others, in their silk ribbon manufactory; but the elder M. Legrand, when he retired from the more disquieting cares of life, dedicated his time to the inspection of the schools, and thus became, as a superintendent, a very valuable coadjutor to his minister. In his attempts to promote industry, and rural and domestic economy amongst his parishioners, and in his extra-parochial efforts to benefit his country at large, M. Oberlin was assisted by members of that family.

Other parishioners had imbibed a portion of their pastor's benevolence, for when parents died, their friends and neighbours kindly took charge of their orphan children; the young people also cheerfully assisted the aged and sick in their field-work; and, if a cottage was to be built, fetched the materials. Again, if a poor man's cow died the people combined to help him to buy another. One young person refused to enter the marriage-state, that she

might dedicate her time and strength, and the surplus of her gains, after a moderate allowance for herself, to the relief of the necessitous, and the support of religious institutions. The most remarkable of M. Oberlin's lay-assistants were five females, of whom I will give an abridged account. Sophia Bernard, while unmarried, undertook, with the consent of her parents, the support and education of three helpless boys, whom their inhuman father had often trampled under his feet, and treated in a manner too shocking to relate, when, nearly starving with hunger they ventured to cry out for food. Soon afterwards she proved the happy means of saving the lives of three Roman Catholic children, who, without her assistance, would have fallen a prey to want and famine. Thus she had the management of six children, to whom several more were added, belonging to parents of three several denominations. She then hired a house and a servant girl, and supported the whole of the family entirely by her own work, and the little money acquired by the industry of the children, whom she taught to spin cotton. . . . . A fine youth of generous disposition made her an offer of marriage, and as she appeared unwilling to accept him, declared that he would wait ten years if necessary to gain her hand. She then

acknowledged that her motive for refusing him was the grief it would occasion her to part from her little orphans. "He who takes the mother takes the children also," replied the young man. On this condition the marriage took place, and all the children were brought up under their mutual care.

Maria Schepler lived at the opposite end of this extensive parish, where the cold is more severe, and the ground unfruitful, so that nearly all the householders are poor people . . . . . Though distressed and afflicted in her own person and circumstances, yet she was a benefactress, and teacher to the whole village in which she lived, and even to some neighbouring districts . . . . She also brought up several orphans without receiving the smallest recompense; and kept a free school for females.

Catherine Scheidecker, like the former, took care of orphans, and kept a free school. Another young woman, Catherine Banzet, visited all the schools, to instruct little children in such branches of industry as might render them useful members of society in their low sphere, especially knitting. It is worthy of particular notice, that the active benevolence of ladies in England, and still more recently in France and other countries, in promoting the interests of several Religious Societies by Auxiliary Asso-

ciations, and personal communication with the poor, appears, like some majestic river traced to a small rivulet in the mountains as its source, to have derived its origin from the humble efforts of these women in the Ban de la Roche, of whom a very affecting account was transmitted between twenty and thirty years ago by M. Oberlin to his friends and correspondents in England. I had the satisfaction of seeing Catherine Scheidecker, at Foudai in the year 1823. She left this world for a better in 1826. Sophia Bernard had died some time before my arrival. It was delightful even to look at the house pointed out as that in which she had resided, and unostentatiously exercised such genuine benevolence.

Among M. Oberlin's female parochial assistants, particular notice is due to Louisa Schepler, who resided fifty years in his house, and to whose friendly attentions other travellers, as well as myself, have been indebted. She had been received an orphan into his house in her 15th year. On the death of his wife in 1784, she undertook the management of the house and the care of his children, but would never accept a pecuniary remuneration. Her own little property she devoted to charitable purposes and her plain wardrobe. After M. Oberlin's death a letter was found addressed

to his children, and commending the faithful Louisa who had been their nurse, and their instructress, to their attention till her death. The venerable pastor informs them, that in former years, after having visited different villages to instruct children in religion, and teach them psalmody, she has, upon her return over bad roads, in inclement weather, though exhausted, wet, or chilled with cold, attended to them, when young children, and to household affairs. Fully sensible how much they owed to such a friend, M. Oberlin's children, upon his death, proposed to Louisa to give her an equal share of their father's little property; but this she refused, and only requested that she might remain an inmate in the family, and be allowed to add the honoured name of Oberlin to her own. She is still at Waldbach in the house of M. Rauscher, the present minister, who married a daughter of M. Oberlin.

It must be granted, however, that M. Oberlin's district stood *unique* amongst the villages of France: it was an oasis amid sandy wastes; for great exertions in connexion with religion and humanity have by no means characterized the French Protestant Church during the last century. In the present day a new effort is being made which promises extensive benefit to the Protestant cause in that country; and

I will adduce an instance of active benevolence in one layman, a young nobleman, the Baron de Staël,\* which well deserves to be referred to as a model, and amply shews what valuable aid clergymen may derive from the laity, even in countries and cities where ignorance and immorality have obtained the ascendancy. Copies of the Scriptures being comparatively scarce, the Baron de Staël assisted in the formation of a Protestant Bible Society, and became one of its Secretaries. With a view to promote its interests, he made a considerable journey through France, in the year 1825, visiting, in his progress, Lyons, St. Etienne, Annonay, Valence, Loriol, Orange, Marseilles, Toulon, Nismes, Alais, Anduze, Montpellier, Toulouse, Montauban, Bordeaux, Rochefort, La Rochelle, and Nantes. That Society has now above 300 Auxiliary Associations in the various provinces of France.

The degraded state to which France, inundated by popery in former, and by infidelity in modern times, had been reduced, induced M. de Staël to engage in noble efforts to raise the standard of morals. For this purpose he

\* The author must again refer to his own work, "Brief Memorials of Oberlin and de Staël," for a variety of details connected with the efforts of those extraordinary characters.



co-operated with the members, and was made President, of the "Société de la morale Chrétienne," instituted in order to oppose the slave-trade, gambling, and lotteries; and to promote the moral improvement of prisoners, and the care of orphans.

His regard for the temporal welfare of the lower classes led M. de Staël to take an active part in the "Caisse d'épargne," or "Savings Bank," an institution highly desirable on account of the improvident habits of the different classes of workmen in France. The instruction of children he naturally endeavoured to extend throughout that country,—a country where there were, very lately, as many as 14,000 villages, chiefly in the south of France and the interior, unprovided with means of instruction in the first principles of knowledge. He also became the Treasurer of a Society at Paris for printing and distributing small religious publications amongst the people, with which 67 associations, composed of Protestants, now stand connected in different parts of the kingdom. I will only add one more instance of the zeal and benevolence of this illustrious layman, the firm and cordial support which he gave to a Missionary Society established at Paris, and which, though still in its infancy, has lately sent out three missionaries to Southern

Africa. It could not well escape so comprehensive a mind as that of M. de Staël, that whilst such a society directed its attention to the distant heathen, it was also likely to be of great utility in France itself; having a tendency to revive the declining zeal, and to excite the dormant sympathies of members of the Protestant church, as well as to promote deeper research into, and widely diffuse more correct views of, the nature of the religion they professed. Nor will it be deemed objectionable, I trust, if I add, that if more strenuous efforts were made, than at the present moment, by appointing able clergymen to preach sermons throughout the several dioceses, with the permission of ecclesiastical superiors; and by forming active committees, composed of the Laity as well as Clergy in the several archdeaconries, deaneries, and parishes, on behalf of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," great results, inestimable benefits, might be anticipated, at home as well as abroad:—a circumstance which may be added to the benefits enumerated in another part of this volume, as flowing from the union of the Clergy and Laity in religious efforts.

I am unwilling to omit a short notice of other examples of compassion to the poor on the part of the Laity of foreign churches, as they have

fallen under my personal observation; for though of a very unostentatious, and the last of a very humble description, they may afford a hint to benevolent individuals, whether disposed to act singly or in union, for the welfare of others.

When travelling in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, I saw a very interesting establishment for children of both sexes and adults, founded by Count Von der Recke, a Protestant young nobleman, who has expended his fortune in purchasing an old monastery with the annexed lands. The two asylums. (that of Dusselthal, which I visited, and that of Overdyck,) contain 180 inmates, for whose support contributions are received occasionally from benevolent persons in other countries. The children consist of 1. Helpless orphans; 2. the children of confined or condemned criminals; 3. The children of profligate parents who neglect their offspring. They are well instructed in Christian knowledge, and taught a trade, that they may earn an honest livelihood. The institution includes a clergyman, teachers, superintendents, and matrons.

On my journey from Neûchatel to Basle (par l'Evêché) I saw a similar establishment formed by a benevolent female, Mademoiselle Calame, whose friends are respectable persons

in trade at Locle. It is at Billodes near that place, and called "Institut des Billodes," or "Asile des Enfants malheureux." It contained, when I was there, 180 boys and girls from Geneva, Neûchatel, and other places; orphans, foundlings, and the children of vicious parents.

There are two houses; the one old, the other new. The boys leave the place at 14 years of age; the girls remain till they have attended to receive the sacrament at their first communion. The employments are various. Some children are tailors, some shoemakers, others lacemakers. Some knit; others pick stuffs to make beds. It is principally a school of industry, but each class has an hour's instruction daily. The children are taught to read the Scriptures; and they sing hymns very delightfully. They learn to sing by notes. This Institution or Asylum is, from its very origin to this day, dependent upon Providence and charitable benefactors for its continuance, having no fixed funds. The schoolmistresses and servants depend, in like manner, upon contributions to the institution, which have chiefly come from England, Russia, and Prussia. I saw a poor blind girl, teaching the little girls the catechism. The Holy Scriptures are read in the asylum; but books are still wanted, as well as tracts for reading in the winter evenings.

Such an Institution as that of Mlle. Calame, well deserves the support of opulent travellers who may pass through that part of Switzerland; as does that of Count Von der Recke the support of travellers near the Rhine. Surely the moral grandeur that invests such beneficent asylums, will afford more satisfaction to well principled and well regulated minds than even views of the sublime scenery which occasionally meets the eye in Swiss valleys, on Swiss mountains, and on the banks of that celebrated river. The simple inscriptions over the doors of the asylum at Billodes, at once appropriate and affecting, awaken the sympathies of those who pass by, whilst they explain the nature of the asylum. "When my father and mother forsake me the Lord taketh me up." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, &c." I may be permitted to subjoin, that I fear it is an error in our charitable schools and asylums in England, to devote an undue proportion of time to the instruction of children in reading, writing, cyphering, and fine needle work, whilst they are too little accustomed to those habits of industry, and even rather laborious occupations, which would so well prepare them for future usefulness in life. Nor are they taught to sing psalms and hymns well by notes, which would

be a delightful recreation, a recommendation of religion with its sacred pleasures to their hearts, and an important means of improving psalmody in the Church of England—still at a low ebb.

It naturally occurs to the reflecting mind, that if individuals among foreign Protestants, have with so much compassion, and at no small risk, ventured upon such a race of Christian beneficence, associated individuals may well be induced to act as visiting members in our English parishes, and give the clergy and their poorer fellow-subjects their less hazardous yet still very valuable assistance.

I close this section with simply stating, that at Latour, in the valleys of Piedmont, an association of seven ladies was formed in 1826, to visit and succour the poor, and lying-in women; and that Roman Catholics as well as Vaudois are partakers of their bounty. I only add, that whilst those humbler handmaids of our religion, foreign Protestant churches, exemplify the spirit of Christianity in establishing their benevolent associations, it is peculiarly incumbent upon the national Church of England, a princess among the reformed churches, to foster such associations in her bosom; nor rest satisfied until their number shall be so multi-

plied as to meet, to an adequate extent, the wants of our growing population.\*

SECT. 3.—*The activity of English Protestant Dissenters, a motive for establishing Church of England Visiting Associations.*

The time has certainly arrived when the wants of our population—I refer partly to their physical, but especially to their moral and religious necessities—can no longer be safely neg-

\* In the last year a very ingenious yet simple method of benefiting the poorer classes at New York has been devised and adopted on an extensive scale by the Laity. The population of the city is near 200,000, amongst whom 479 persons undertook to distribute one tract, monthly, and thus visit families willing to receive them twelve times in the year. Availing themselves of these opportunities, they persuade parents to attend places of worship and send their children to Sunday schools. In the course of eleven months the visitors (257 men, 222 females,) had visited 34,525 families, and distributed 370,000 tracts, or more than 1,000 tracts every day. Only about one family in sixty refused to accept tracts. Other distributors had visited the shipping, and steam-boats, the markets, the criminal and humane institutions, Sunday schools, &c. In consequence of these universal domiciliary visits in New York 1,371 families were found destitute of the Scriptures, and nearly all were supplied: and 566 children, previously neglected, brought into Sunday and Infant schools. The same system has been since adopted in thirty-three principal towns, and even in whole counties in the United States.

lected. If adequate means be not adopted by the Church of England to benefit her own nominal members, societies composed of voluntary agents, and connected with the various bodies of Protestant Dissenters, will attempt to supply the existing deficiencies. Whether in the progress of their zealous and benevolent efforts, multitudes baptized within the pale of the national church, may not be alienated from her communion, time and facts will shew. In the mean while, it is right that the present state of society in this respect should be disclosed, in order that measures bearing the stamp of religion and humanity may be adopted with the least possible delay. An American Editor, after consulting various sources of information, gives the following table as the result of his investigation with respect to the Ecclesiastical Statistics of England and Wales:

The population . . . . .	12,009,685
The number of parishes : . . . .	9,133
Roman Catholic Congregations . . . . .	391
Presbyterian and Unitarian Congregations . . . . .	217
Wesleyan Chapels . . . . .	2,811
Baptist Congregations . . . . .	981
Countess of Huntingdon's Chapels . . . . .	47
Independents . . . . .	1,414

Although this table seems by no means exempt from errors, it may not be useless, if a tolerably correct survey of the state of things in



this kingdom. If so, it appears that the congregations of Protestant Dissenters amount to 5,470.\* About a century ago, that is, in 1716, the number of dissenting chapels amounted to 1,107. During a period, therefore, in which the population has doubled, separation from the Established Church has increased very nearly in the proportion of 5 to 1.

In order that a clearer idea may be obtained of the probable progress of that separation during the present century, I will state what I have collected from authentic documents relative to the extended efforts and activity of different associations of Protestant Dissenters, who, whether they visit the sick, or instruct adults, or educate children in Sunday schools, come perpetually in contact with families consisting of nominal members of the Church of England.

“The Stranger’s Friend” Societies are composed of members of the Wesleyan connexion, who visit the sick poor, administer temporal relief, and instruct them in religious doctrines. The number of the persons who come under their notice is very considerable, and must greatly increase their influence.

The “Christian Instruction Society” for London and its Vicinity, formed in the year 1825,

\* It has been stated in the Whitehall Evening Post that Dissenting Congregations amount to 7,904.

comprises already under its care in the metropolis 29,000 families, who are visited and instructed by not less than 1,100 members, male and female, of different dissenting chapels.

The Bristol City\* Mission Society has within the last four years taken under instruction above 6,000 families, who are visited by 300 individuals weekly. The visitors have established Lending Libraries, and occasionally distribute coke, and soap, and dispensary notes, as well as clothes, entrusted to them. In the same city the Wesleyan Methodists occupy three large districts, and visit about 2,000 families.

The above though but a few, yet as principal specimens, will afford evidence of the prodigious strides which dissent is making in the kingdom, and which it cannot but make in unison with such efforts, however compassionate the motives of active dissenters may be, and even when untinged with the spirit of proselytism.

Whilst the adult members of families, unvisited by the members of Church of England

\* A Diocesan District Visiting Society has been recently established under the sanction of the Lord Bishop of Bristol. The District Visiting Society in London, conducted by members of the Established Church, comprised by the last Report 229 visitors and 3,470 families visited .

Associations, necessarily become more or less alienated from the Established Church, their children as naturally frequent the Sunday schools in which the visitors from dissenting societies, or their friends, give instruction in the art of reading, and impart religious knowledge. So rapidly have Sunday schools increased within the last few years, that the "Sunday School Union," comprehending the schools of various bodies of dissenters, lately calculated its numbers as follows :

	Sunday Schools.	Teachers.	Scholars.
In England, Wales, and Scotland,	6,627	72,508	776,863
Of which number there are in the Metropolis,	462	6,126	66,487

If this number be contrasted with the statement of the "National Schools' Society," the difference can scarcely be deemed otherwise than appalling.

By the Report of the National Society, for 1830, it appears that there are, in connexion with the Established Church,

Children.

2595 Daily & Sunday schools, containing 216,571  
 1083 Sunday schools, containing 129,207

To reason at any length upon this subject, in the present Section, seems superfluous. I

appeal to the facts now adduced, in proof of the validity of the arguments I have used throughout this volume, to shew the expediency of establishing, without delay, Church of England Parochial and District Visiting Associations; deprecating, at the same time, the cherishing any feelings of unchristian bitterness towards British fellow-Protestants, whose activity should indeed stimulate Church of England Protestants to renewed efforts, but whose compassion for the ignorant and the indigent entitles them to our sincere respect.

Whilst the subject, viewed in relation to the security of the Established Church, as intimately allied to the preservation of her poorer members within her communion, will not fail, I hope, to have due weight; I would also venture to add, that if the expediency of establishing Visiting Associations in large parishes be clear, from the great increase of our population, and from that increase of crime to which fluctuations in trade, dram-shops, the profanation of the Christian Sabbath, and spreading infidelity, so much contribute; if such Associations are sanctioned alike by the practice of the Primitive Church, and that of the Church of England; if they are calculated to diffuse such copious benefits, as the alleviation of human misery, the amelioration of the lot of the poor, and the communica-

tion of comfort to the sick and afflicted, and of instruction to ignorant adults as well as children; the Laity of the Church of England, co-operating with the Clergy of the Church of England, with the approbation of the Bishops of the Church of England, will not, surely, be remiss, when the circumstances of the times so urgently call them to action; but, throwing the efforts of the Church of Rome into the shade by efforts superior both in wisdom of arrangement, and purity of feeling; and rising above members of Foreign Churches in extent of exertion as they do in numbers and in opulence; will strive to imitate the zeal even of dissenters; not with unholy dispositions; not in strife and envy; still less in malice and uncharitableness; but with feelings of deep commiseration for the poorer members of the Church of England, hitherto, it may be feared, too much overlooked, but who themselves still look up to that Church as to a parent, and have therefore a right to expect that the parent should regard the welfare of her offspring.



## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

*Abridged Account of the " Societies for the  
Reformation of Manners."*

THE " Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland," of which a fifth edition appeared in 1701, had the following documents prefixed :

1. Approbation by a number of the Nobility, and Judges, as well as the Clergy, above seventy in all.

2. An Address of the House of Commons to the King, for the suppressing of Profaneness and Vice.

3. The King's Proclamation for preventing and punishing Immorality and Profaneness. (Feb. 20, 1697.)

" Even after the accession of his present Majesty \* to the crown," observes the account, " though Popery immediately vanished, immorality and profaneness still kept their ground, as if they expected an establishment with our liberties after so long and peaceable a possession. Reformation was indeed talked of by some persons, as an excellent thing, and as a proper way of expressing our thankfulness to Almighty God for

\* William III.

his mercies to this nation, and to procure a continuance of them to us and to our posterity; but vice was looked upon as too formidable an enemy to be provoked . . . . When things were in this dismal and almost desperate state, it came into the hearts, it seems, of five or six private gentlemen of the Church of England to engage in this difficult and hazardous enterprise, who, considering that the higher the tide of wickedness was, the more need there was of opposing it . . . . resolved, whatever difficulties they met with, to make their efforts for promoting the execution of our laws against profaneness and debauchery, and the suppressing of them by advisable methods. . . . Notwithstanding a furious opposition from adversaries, the ill offices of those from whom better things might have been expected, and the unkind neutrality of friends, these gentlemen, who in a little time began to add some others to their number, not only kept their ground but made farther advances; for our late excellent Queen\* having this affair laid before her in the absence of the King by Dr. Stillingfleet, she had just sentiments of it, and therefore thought it became her to give it countenance; she graciously condescended to thank those who were concerned in it, and afterwards upon this application made to her Majesty, she was pleased to send her letter to the Justices of Middlesex . . . . commanding them to put the laws against profaneness and vice in exe-

\* Mary II. Consort to William III.



cution with all fidelity and impartiality . . . .

“ There is a very large body of persons, composed of the original society before-mentioned, with the additions that have been since made of persons of eminency in the law, members of parliament, justices of peace, and considerable citizens of London, of known abilities and great integrity, who frequently meet to consult of the best methods for carrying on the business of reformation, and to be ready to advise and assist others that are already engaged, or any that are willing to join in the same design. This society is at a considerable yearly charge for the effectual managing their business; but takes no contributions of any but their own members, by whose endeavours . . . thousands of offenders in London and Westminster have been brought to punishment for swearing, drunkenness, and profanation of the Lord’s day; and a great part of the kingdom has been awakened, in some measure, to a sense of their duty in this respect, and thereby a very hopeful progress is made towards a general reformation. A second society is of about fifty persons, tradesmen and others, who have more especially applied themselves to the suppression of lewdness, by bringing the offenders to legal punishment. These may have actually suppressed and rooted out about five hundred disorderly houses, and caused to be punished some thousands of lewd persons, besides swearers, drunkards, and profaners of the Lord’s day, as may appear by their

printed lists of offenders. These persons, by their prudent and legal management of their business, have received great countenance and encouragement in our courts of judicature, and very particular encouragement and assistance, for several years past, from the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, who are sensible of the great service that is done by them, which they express upon proper occasions. A third society is of constables . . . . who meet to consider of the most effectual way to discharge their oaths, to acquaint one another of the difficulties they meet with, to resolve on proper remedies . . . .

“ A fourth rank of men, who have been so highly instrumental in this undertaking, that they may be reckoned a corner-stone of it, is of such as have made it part of their business to give some informations to the magistrate . . . . Many of these persons have given the world a great and almost unheard-of example in this corrupt age, of zeal and Christian courage, having underwent, at the beginning more especially of these proceedings, many abuses and great reproaches, not only from exasperated and hardened offenders, but often from their lukewarm friends, irreligious relations, and sometimes from unfaithful magistrates, by whom they have been reviled, brow-beaten, and discouraged from performing such important service, so necessary to the welfare of their country. And herein these brave men have acted with so great prudence, as well as zeal, . . . . that the world

may be challenged to make appear, that these societies have been so much as treated with, by any person whatsoever, to give informations with any promise of a reward, or that they have ever received the least advantage by any convictions upon these statutes against profaneness and debauchery, the money arising thereby being wholly appropriated to the poor, except the third part of the penalty upon the statute against profanation of the Lord's day, which, in some cases, the magistrate hath a bare power to dispose of, but was never, that we know of, received by any one of these persons . . . . .

“ There are eight other regulated and mixt bodies of housekeepers and officers, in the several quarters of London, Westminster, and Southwark, who differ in their constitution from those before-mentioned, but generally agree in the methods of inspecting the behaviour of constables and other officers, and going along with them, and assisting them . . . . .

“ I might now give an account of a society of ministers of the Church of England for carrying on of this work, and another agreement of justices of the peace; but . . . must content myself with saying, what will easily be allowed, that the stated meetings of such persons are as proper, and may be more useful for the promoting of this work, than any other I have described. For what might we not expect from the zealous endeavours of these orders of men in this affair? which, it is

obvious, will not be employed with so great effect, as when they form themselves into societies, or at least have frequent or stated times of meeting for the prosecution of this business.

“ The endeavours of those gentlemen have not been confined to this city and kingdom, but have extended as far as Ireland . . . . There are now several societies for reformation in the city of Dublin, which I am assured, . . . . are spreading into several parts of the kingdom, and are encouraged by his excellency the Earl of Galway, (one of the Lords Justices of Ireland) the Archbishop of Dublin, many of the clergy, and the best of the magistrates and gentlemen of that city : in one of which societies, most of the parish ministers of Dublin, several of the pious bishops, particularly the archbishop, and divers other persons of quality are members ; some of whom have shewn a zeal, which if it prevailed the three kingdoms over, might soon produce a glorious reverse of the state they are now in, and which in less than two years space hath succeeded, though not without such various oppositions as might be expected from combinations of bad men, to that degree in Dublin, that the profanation of the Lord’s day, by tipling in public houses, by exercising of trade, and exposing of goods to sale, is almost suppress ; that lewd women are so strictly enquired after, and severely punished, that they have transported themselves, as in England, to our plantations ; and that swearing is so run down, that an oath is rarely

heard in their streets; so that public disorders are remarkably cured, and, in short, vice is afraid and ashamed to shew its head, where within a few years past it was daring and triumphant."

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## No. II.

### *Co-operation of the Laity with the Clergy in the Primitive Church.*

THE following additional proofs of the co-operation of the Lay-members of the primitive Church with the Clergy in benevolent and religious offices, are extracted from Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church."

"It remains," says that valuable author, "that I say something in this place of Deaconesses, because their office and service was of great use in the primitive church. There is some mention made of them in Scripture, by which it appears that their office was as ancient as the apostolical age. St. Paul calls Phœbe a servant of the church of Cenchrea. Rom. xvi. 1. The original word is *diakonos*, a deaconess, answerable to the Latin word *ministra*, which is the name that is given them in Pliny's Epistle,\* which speaks about the Christians." Unmarried persons as well as widows

\* Plin. lib. 10. Ep. 97. "Quo magis necessarium credidi ex duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur, quid esset veri, et per tormenta quærere."

were admitted to be deaconesses. "Gregory Nyssen says his own sister Macrina, who was a virgin, was a deaconess." With respect to the time of their continuance, Bingham observes—"In the Greek Church they continued . . . to the latter end of the 12th century." From the Council of Worms, which was held in the 9th century, it appears, according to the same author, "that deaconesses were still retained in some parts of the Western Church."

Bingham describes a class of Lay-helpers, who had a humane rather than religious office assigned them, and were called *Parabolani*. The *Parabolani*, Bingham observes, "were to be chosen out of the poor of Alexandria," (by a law of Theodosius the younger,) and "deputed to attend upon the sick and to take care of their bodies in time of their weakness. At Alexandria they were incorporated into a society to the number of five or six hundred, to be chosen at the discretion of the bishop of the place, out of any sort of men except the *Honorati* and *Curiales*, who were tied to serve in the civil offices of their country, and therefore were not allowed to enter themselves into any ecclesiastical service. They were to be under the government and direction of the bishop."

Bingham proceeds to remark—"The Greeks were used to call those *Paraboloi* who hired themselves out to fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatre. . . . These *Parabolani* of the Primitive

Church . . . had their name from their bold exposing of their lives to danger in attendance upon the sick in all infectious and pestilential distempers." Those who were truly pious persons amongst them would of course endeavour to instruct or console the sufferers. There was, however, another class of Lay-helpers whose office was more expressly religious—that of Catechists. Having stated that on some occasions, bishops, priests, and deacons catechised, Bingham adds, "Nor was it only the superior orders that performed this office, but sometimes persons were chosen out of the inferior orders to do it. Optatus was but a reader in the Church of Carthage, and yet Cyprian made him catechist, or, as it is in his phrase, the *Doctor Audientium*, the master (teacher) of the hearers, or lowest rank of catechumens. Origen seems to have had no higher degree in the church, when he was first made catechist at Alexandria. For both Eusebius and St. Jerom say he was but eighteen years old when he was deputed to that office, which was at least seven years before he could be ordained deacon by the canons of the church." Catechists were sometimes called *Nautologoi*, or those whose office was to admit passengers to the ship (to which the church was compared) in which the bishop was pilot, the presbyters mariners, the deacons chief rowers.

I have alluded to catechists as properly Lay-helpers, since in the earliest ages, as in the present

day in England, the clergy consisted only of bishops, priests, and deacons. In the third century, however, readers, sub-deacons, catechists, &c. were considered as part of the clergy.

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### No. III.

#### *Advantages likely to arise from Visiting Associations in Ireland.*

I AM deeply convinced that the condition of Ireland is such as to present obstacles of a formidable kind to any improvements that may be attempted from the purest motives, and on the most judicious plans. Antipathies arising from the political and religious differences of its inhabitants have a tendency to thwart the most benevolent efforts. Still these efforts should be made with untiring patience and perseverance. The gradual diffusion of scriptural instruction, however checked occasionally by superstition, bigotry, or infidelity, will at length achieve the noblest triumphs and raise that country from its present degraded state. It remains to be seen whether the British Government will sanction three great measures which the poverty of a redundant and unemployed population may perhaps render indispensable—namely, Emigration to foreign countries on a large and well-regulated system, the establishment of Poor's Rates, and the formation of Home Colonies.



But whatever other measures may be contemplated, well conducted Visiting Associations cannot but be highly useful, and in order that it may be seen, by the statement of a few particulars, expressed in a concise manner, how benefits which Ireland urgently requires may be conferred, and existing or impending evils averted by means of such associations in cities, market towns, and villages, the following remarks are submitted for consideration.

1. Visiting members of Associations, by relieving the destitute at their own houses, will be able to check that disposition which prevails among poor Irish families to wander over the country, and depend on the precarious supplies which the bounty of others affords. Thus will the more industrious farmers, and inferior tenants be relieved from the painful alternative of giving indiscriminately, to those who have done no work, part of the food which they have obtained themselves by honest industry; or of sending them in a state of want from their doors.

2. The influence and counsels of Visiting Members will probably avail, to a great extent, to check that habit of contracting premature and indiscreet marriages, which has been the too fruitful source of a redundant population, and of much of that distress from want of employment which afflicts Ireland.

3. The prudent advice of Visitors, who shall have acquired the necessary information, may induce the

poor, by careful attention to the most approved systems of cottage husbandry, to cultivate to much greater advantage than at present their small allotments of land; and thus guard them against exhausting the ground by an injudicious succession of crops, or using seed of inferior quality;—circumstances which might at a future time, especially in an unfavourable season, occasion scarcity of food.

4. Visiting Members of Associations will likewise have opportunities of encouraging habits of industry. Whilst endeavouring to stimulate the indolent to work diligently for their own livelihood, they will have it in their power, should their advice be contemned, more or less to withhold relief from those who remain incorrigibly idle, and who are desperately resolved to live, and to bring up their children, in habits of sloth, and in the midst of squalid misery.

5. Visitors will naturally inculcate economy as well as industry. Although custom and example have a pernicious tendency to diffuse and perpetuate the practice of drinking ardent spirits to excess, a counteracting force will attend the constantly repeated visits of benevolent members of Associations; who may be expected to acquire great influence over those who are not deeply sunk in the degrading habit of dram-drinking; and to succeed in inducing them to study prudence, foresight, and economy, and place the money they can spare in Savings' Banks or well regulated Friendly

**Benefit Societies.** And here it may be incidentally remarked, that the habits of industry, sobriety, and economy, now adverted to, are not only highly important in reference to the welfare of the families who remain in Ireland, but of those also who may hereafter emigrate to distant parts of the globe; since the want of such habits has often been a great obstacle to the prosperity of colonists, and may even cause a total failure of their enterprises.

6. Visitors,—who, no doubt, will in the majority of instances be Protestants,—by exemplifying the virtues which the Gospel enjoins, may largely contribute to dispel the prejudices and antipathies which exist amongst Roman Catholics against the Clergy and Laity of the Established Church. The happy consequences of this benevolent conduct of members of Visiting Associations would be, not only that the rancour attending religious and political dissensions will be gradually allayed, but that Roman Catholic parents will more willingly, than even hitherto, listen to the persuasive representations of those who visit their cottages, and send their children to schools for the purpose of receiving a useful and religious education. Thus will the friendly visiting members of Associations become a peaceful but powerful phalanx arrayed against the designs of the enemies of public order, who might be disposed to promote discord and disloyalty;—until, at length, the virulence of party-feeling shall be exchanged, in a great mea-

sure, for sentiments of gratitude to kind neighbours; of respect for landlords and other benefactors who may contribute to the funds of such Associations; and of fixed attachment to a paternal Government.

Whilst such a Society will be constantly useful in administering to the wants of the destitute, it may be added, that whenever a scarcity of food\* arises in Ireland through the prevalence of weather unfavourable to the crops, or any other cause, the members of established Charitable Associations will, from their acquired habits of experience, as well as humane disposition, be the fittest persons to distribute those larger contributions which the British Parliament or public may send to the sister country at so calamitous a season, and which, without due caution, may be diverted into channels not contemplated by the donors, nor most advantageous to the poor of Ireland.

\* The Author, unwilling to extend his remarks on Ireland in this place, may be permitted to refer to a volume which he has published—"Brief Memorials of Oberlin and De Staël"—in which he has introduced several observations relative to the means of preventing the occasional returns of famine, and of diminishing the general sum of misery and privation, under which the poor of that country labour. He now more particularly refers to pp. 50--58 of that work.

## No. IV.

*An Account of Schools for Adults in Wales and Scotland.*

IN a letter from Wales, dated 17th December, 1811, and addressed by the Rev. Mr. Charles to Mr. Christopher Anderson, he says,

“ The schools go on here with increasing success, and the effects of them in many parts of the country are visible, in the increase of the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and melioration of the morals of the plebeians in general.

I have of late turned my attention more than ever to the *aged* illiterate people in our country. On minute inquiries, I find there are very many who cannot read, and of course are very ignorant . . . . I determined to try what effect a school, *exclusively for themselves*, would have. I fixed upon a district where I had been informed that most of the inhabitants above *fifty* years of age could not read, and I prevailed on a friend to promise to attend to teach them. . . . Eighteen attended the first Sunday. He found them in a state of most deplorable ignorance. By condescension, patience, and kindness, he soon engaged them to learn, and *their desire for learning soon became as great as any we have seen among the young people.*

They had their little elementary books with them whilst at work, and met in the evenings of their own accord to teach one another. Their school is now increased to eighty persons, and some of them read their Testaments, though it is not three months since the school commenced. Children are excluded from this school; but we have another school for them. The rumour of the success of this school has spread abroad, and has greatly removed the discouragement which old people felt from attempting to learn, from the general persuasion that they could not learn at their age. This has been practically proved to be false; for *old persons of seventy-five years of age* have learnt to read in this school, to their great joy. Several other similar institutions have been set up since, and promise similar success."

At a still earlier period, namely, from 1737 to 1760, when the Welsh Circulating Schools established by the Rev. Griffith Jones were in full activity, the masters not only taught children by day, but kept evening schools for those adults, who, though occupied in the day-time in labour, yet attended in great numbers. It is even recorded that children, educated in these schools often taught their parents to read.

Mr. Christopher Anderson remarks,

"Schools for the education of our Highlanders, directly and in the first instance, to read their own language, were not established until 1811. . . . . After an acquaintance with the state of the High-

lands, all along the Western Coast of Scotland, in 1810, the writer could find nothing of the sort. The practice universally was, that of teaching English first; and no small prejudice was then discovered at the idea of teaching at once the vernacular tongue. . . . . The letter procured from Mr. Charles, of Wales . . . was among the steps preparatory. Now the prejudice is gone. His Majesty, on visiting Scotland, through Mr. Peel, with great cordiality became Patron of the Society for the support of Gaelic schools, and since that period the General Assembly have taken up the same idea . . . . . To these Gaelic schools have resorted, not only the child of tender years, but the old man and woman that stoop for age. Never, since education was promoted by any body of men, was it found necessary to supply assistance to the eyes themselves. Yet such has been the eagerness of certain aged scholars in the Highlands, that, in order to meet it, the Gaelic School Society have had placed at their disposal, during last year, 120 pairs of spectacles. But I must not enlarge, and shall simply advert to one school in the Hebrides, where 237 scholars were present at the examination lately, of all ages, from literally a great-great-grandmother down to the child of five years. And, . . why should not such a heart-stirring sight soon be seen among the long, long-neglected islanders of Ireland.\*

\* Historical Sketches of the Native Irish, pp. 136, 137.

I must add, that whilst it is pleasing to perceive the embers again stirred after a lapse of centuries, and the elements of knowledge again revived in the Hebrides, and in Ireland,\* it is to be deeply deplored that the past neglect of Christians to give instruction in the vernacular tongue has so long plunged both Ireland and the Western Coast of Scotland in ignorance : although of Ireland there are authentic testimonies that it abounded in schools of learning before the introduction of the English tongue ; whilst Iona, one of the Hebrides, Dr. Johnson truly and eloquently observes, “ was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion.”

\* Happily, efforts are now made to instruct the Irish adults as well as children, in their native tongue, by the “ Irish Society,” the “ Hibernian Society,” and “ Ladies’ Hibernian Society.” The work of Mr. Christopher Anderson contributed much to shew the importance of such efforts.

When last in Piedmont, I urged the importance of communicating instruction to the Waldenses in their own dialect, as well as in French, and the Rev. M. Bert kindly translated the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John into that dialect. The Bible Society have published those Gospels in French and the Vaudois dialect in parallel columns. I think that elementary books, or the Gospels printed in the same manner, in English and Irish, in English and Welsh, or English and Gaelic, would much facilitate the acquisition of English by the more ignorant inhabitants of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland. The remark equally applies to India, and other parts of the British empire.



## No. V.

*An easy Method of instructing Adults to read.*

THE chief object in instructing ignorant adults to read is to enable them to read the Scriptures. With this view I thought it might be useful to select and arrange all the words in the Sermon on the Mount (5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. Matthew) beginning with the alphabet, then proceeding to the monosyllables, and so step by step to the longest and most difficult words. Having published such a small introduction to reading the Scriptures in English, I afterwards, when at Paris, arranged the same chapters, for the same purpose, in French, for the use of poor Protestants in France, should the plan be approved, and of the Vaudois in Piedmont. To this latter piece, called "Le Premier Pas," a short address was prefixed, explaining an easy method of teaching persons to read; the substance of which is as follows.

The "Premier Pas," or "First Step to Reading the Holy Scriptures," calculated for either adults or children, is more especially so for those who live in remote villages, and thinly-peopled districts, where no schoolmasters or schoolmistresses can be supported by the peasantry.

The ability to read the Sermon on the Mount (after reading all the words in the ten pages of the "Premier Pas") may be soon acquired by those

who may be willing to give up one hour during the long evenings of a winter, and one or two hours on the Lord's day : and when able to read fluently the Sermon on the Mount, they will be able to read other parts of the New Testament with little difficulty.

Let us suppose that there are five persons in a small village who can read, and whose benevolence shall prompt them to teach their neighbours who cannot.

(1.) Let each of those five persons get about ten persons who cannot read around him, every one of them having the " First Step" in his hand.

(2.) Let the teacher shew them where the lesson begins, and then let him pronounce distinctly a letter or word. Then let the person at his right hand repeat the same letter or word ; and the next person do the same ; and so on till every one shall have pronounced it. Let the teacher afterwards repeat the same, and let the person at his left hand next repeat, and the next afterwards, till every one shall have repeated it. The letter or word will thus have been pronounced above twenty times ; and if each person has constantly looked at it in the book whilst it was pronounced by all present, it will be deeply fixed in the memory. If any one through inattention makes mistakes, he should yield his place to one more attentive to the lesson.

(3.) At the end of each lesson, in order to ascertain the reality and extent of progress, the teacher should question all the learners indiscriminately,

making them pronounce here and there, not in exact order, the letters or words learned during that lesson. He should do the same at the end of every week, with respect to the lessons learned during that week.

(4.) When the learners are able to read fluently all the words in the "First Step," they will of course read the Sermon on the Mount, either in or extracted from St. Matthew's Gospel.\* When that sermon has been read repeatedly, and with attention to the stops, they may proceed to read other parts of the Scriptures, in which only occasional difficulties will occur.

In this easy manner may the ignorant obtain access to the treasures of that sacred volume which is able, with the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, to make them wise unto salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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#### No. VI.

#### *Particulars relative to the Order of "Sisters of Charity."*

VINCENT DE PAUL drew up various general regulations for the "Filles," or "Sœurs de la Charité," as well as particular rules adapted to each depart-

\* For the National Schools the Sermon on the Mount is printed in the form of a tract. So it is by the Paris Religious Tract Society.

ment of service. He endeavoured to excite them to the pursuit of superior holiness, by enjoining them,

1. To make it an object to honour their Saviour in their attention to the poor.

2. To consider themselves, though not nuns, bound to equal nuns in virtue; and if they lived in hospitals instead of convents, or in a hired room instead of a cell, and walked through the streets instead of being cloistered, to substitute obedience for confinement, the fear of God for the iron grate, and modesty of deportment for a veil.

3. Consequently, to exercise constant vigilance, and aim at real purity of heart.

4. Therefore, to avoid levity and familiarity of manners, and improper conversation.

5. To pray to the Son of God before they left their room, for grace to turn away their eyes from beholding vanity and sin, and to give thanks on their return home if so preserved.

6. To guard against idleness at any time.

7. To rise as early as four o'clock in summer and winter.

8. To engage in mental prayer twice a day.

9. To live frugally, and, when in health, to drink only water.

10. To attend religious services at the church, but, whenever wanted, to make outward religious observances subordinate to the care of the sick.

11. To converse on subjects of religion with

the sick, as well as alleviate their bodily sufferings, but to talk to them *a little at a time and often*.

M. Vincent also held spiritual conferences on their duties, and the best means of fulfilling them ; and, after he had addressed a crowd of these benevolent women, invited them to converse openly at these conferences. The substance of about a hundred of these conferences has been preserved in MS. as a sacred treasure from which, even at this distance of time, the Sisters of Charity take lessons and rekindle zeal. Although generally of the middle class, ladies of high connexions have, in some instances, joined the Sisters of Charity in their benevolent efforts. Before they are received into the community they pass about eight months in the House for Novices, and are also five years under *probation* ; and, when admitted, take no perpetual vows, like nuns, but vows or promises for one year, which they renew yearly ; namely, the three ordinary vows, *obedience, chastity, and poverty*, and a fourth, *the care of the poor*.

These humble “servants of the poor,” are subject to the control of the “Congregation of priests of the missions ;” one of whom most kindly shewed me the house in which the novices are trained at Paris,\* the chapel and grounds attached to it

\* It is in the Rue du Bac. The original house was opposite the House St. Lazare ; but it is now a “Maison de Santé,” unconnected with Vincent de Paul’s community.

and the house and chapel appropriated by the French government to the use of the "Priests of the Missions." The former house contains about 100 candidates, as well as aged Sisters who are past the age of service. Their dress is a black gown and white cap, large and of a peculiar form. Those engaged in active duties lodge in private houses, or in hospitals, in different parts of the city. I have often seen, and sometimes conversed with, these excellent women in hospitals under their care,\* and cannot but express my deep conviction that after an abatement on account of their erroneous religious views as Roman Catholics, they are eminently fitted by their benevolence, humility, sympathy, and prudence, to accomplish the duties assigned to them. Whether a similar institution, wholly divested of what is peculiar to the Roman Catholic religion, whilst it retained all that was valuable in the system established by M. Vincent, would not be highly beneficial even to a reformed kingdom and to Protestant parishes, is a question which deserves to be entertained and fairly discussed. The sick in our hospitals, and the sick at their own homes, would, if such an Association upon Protestant principles of the Church of England were formed, derive advantages both as to bodily relief and spiritual consolation, far beyond

\* There is a manual published by M. Eymery, bookseller, Rue Mazarine, for the use of mothers, country clergymen, and sisters of charity. It is entitled "Art de Soigner Malades," and is probably worthy of translation.

what they now enjoy; and doubtless, such experienced and well disposed persons would be more desirable in the sick chambers of those who are in opulent circumstances, who might pay for their attendance, than ordinary nurses. Were such a Society of beneficent females once formed in England, under high patronage and adequate pecuniary encouragement, with members of different grades and employments, and suitable regulations; it might become, on account of the great extent of the British empire, not only useful at home, but the centre of similar establishments in Ireland, India, North America, &c.

The Sisters of Charity are always "Filles;" widows are not admitted into the institution; yet widows would, in many cases, be some of the best members of such a Protestant institution; the most efficient and the most suitable. Any similar community, founded on Protestant principles, should not comprise the education of poor children, but wholly confine its attention to the sick. No great singularity in dress need be adopted, nor vows that might entangle the conscience taken. And, indeed, if no separate community were actually formed, females of promising dispositions as to piety, temper, and prudence, might be trained as nurses to attend the sick either in hospitals or private houses, and to live in town or country, single or married, deriving support—not from the government, nor from a fund established by means

of charitable contributions, but—by fair remuneration for their services—from the directors of hospitals, from opulent persons in whose houses attendance on the sick may be required, and from the managers of parochial funds, if employed in attending the sick poor.\*

On one occasion a wide scene of misery presented itself to the humane notice of Vincent de Paul, and his associates, namely, when the Spaniards ravaged Picardy and Champagne. The soldiers reaped the corn, the people, consequently, were exposed to famine; the churches were despoiled, and many parishes deserted by the Curés. The Arch-

\* I noticed at Paris that there were male attendants, very properly, in the sick men's wards, although the Sisters of Charity also were present to fulfil the duties appointed to them. Nearly the whole of this chapter had been written, when a pamphlet was obligingly transmitted to me, entitled "PROTESTANT SISTERS OF CHARITY; a letter addressed to the Lord Bishop of London, developing a plan for improving the arrangements at present existing for administering medical advice, and visiting the sick poor," by a Country Clergyman. It describes the peculiar disadvantages under which the sick poor labour in country villages, and recommends the formation of an establishment, to which a Ladies' Committee, a General Committee, and a Medical Committee, as well as a Chaplain and Matron, shall be attached. It is proposed that persons duly qualified by piety, and slight but solid medical knowledge, should be employed to visit the sick in large country parishes, and receive about £60 a-year for their assistance--a larger sum, it may be feared, than could be generally obtained. There are many important remarks in this pamphlet worthy of the attention of the more opulent members of Society.



bishop of Paris, at Vincent's request, persuaded the clergy to collect alms in the churches. Missionaries\* and Sisters of Charity were sent without delay to those suffering provinces, which were for ten years subject to the vicissitudes and calamities of war. Above one million of francs were dispersed for their relief, in money, clothes, seeds, implements of husbandry, &c.

When civil war, fomented by the Prince of Condé, desolated the interior of France, there was a fresh call upon Vincent's humanity. Some Irish regiments, composed of refugees from Ireland in the time of Cromwell, received into the French army, were sufferers to a great degree, with their wives and children, at the town of Troyes. An Irish missionary was sent from St. Lazare to relieve and to instruct them. The above civil war was fruitful of calamity both in and around the metropolis itself. Vincent's Missionaries and "Sisters of Charity," were sent on that occasion to console the sufferers, whom the soldiers had injured. The sick were attended to, and the orphans were collected into a house and fed. At the suggestion of M. Duplessis-Montbart, Vincent established a storehouse for receiving cast-off clothes, and furniture, for the use of the distressed; and when Paris was besieged, and labourers were deprived of work,

\* The Missionaries instituted by Vincent de Paul were an order of Priests, trained principally as preachers to the poor in country villages, but having no fixed parishes.

those ladies who usually assisted Vincent in works of beneficence supplied 15,000 poor persons daily with soup, and placed 900 young women in houses where they might be safe from ill treatment as well as instructed. Meanwhile Vincent himself assembled the poor children of the neighbourhood of St. Lazare, formed them into 15 bands, catechised them himself, and gave them food twice a-day.

Next to those measures which individuals or associated bodies may be able to adopt, for the preservation of peace and the promotion of concord amongst nations, what measures can be more laudable than those just described for mitigating the evils of war by humane supplies and religious consolations? It can only be regretted that those of V. de Paul's associates were not of a more truly scriptural nature.

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## No. VII.

### *Details respecting the "Compagnie de Dames."*

WHEN the Archbishop of Paris encouraged Vincent de Paul to form the "Compagnie de Dames," Mme. Goussault was appointed Superior, another Assistant, a third Treasurer, and M. Vincent, Director. Within a few years this "Compagnie" comprised about 200 ladies, many of whom were of the highest rank. Fourteen were chosen once in three months, two of whom were to

attend one day in the week. They undertook to converse with the sick on religious subjects in a plain affectionate manner;—that is, with the women only;—and provided six priests to instruct the men. To help them to act prudently and successfully, Vincent enjoined them to follow these rules.

1. To gain the esteem of the nuns more immediately charged with the duties of the Hotel Dieu, and obtain their cordial consent to these visits.

2. To approach the sick without the splendid dresses usually adopted by persons of their rank.

3. To furnish little articles of comfort to the sick which were not allowed at the expense of the hospital, but yet were desirable for sick persons, by whom coarse food could not always be relished, and whose attention to spiritual advice would be more easily secured after such kindness.

4. To use as a text book for conversations a small religious book drawn up expressly for this purpose, and thus modestly avoid the appearance of spiritual pride in their manner of conveying instruction.

To fulfil the third rule prescribed, a house was hired close by the Hotel Dieu, in which Sisters of Charity prepared milk soup for breakfast, and white bread, biscuits, stewed fruits, &c., which the ladies presented with their own hands to the sick.\*

\* This act of kindness suggests to me the thought, that Charitable Associations ought to be formed near every large Hospital in our cities, for the purpose of receiving certain of

Although under M. Vincent's wise and comprehensive direction such associated and opulent ladies as those just described were prepared for various and extensive plans of charity; there can be no doubt that, generally speaking, *many* persons should not associate, as these ladies did originally, for the benefit of a single, especially a minor Institution; but either act in smaller separate companies for separate objects, or in various departments embraced by one great Association. And certainly, very often, as I have already had occasion to remark, ladies of rank may confer more important benefit by employing prudent and charitable persons to attend the sick than by attending themselves, whilst they devote their own time to duties in a higher sphere, and promote on a larger scale the interests of religion and humanity.

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the convalescents who have no friends at hand, and are far from home, when discharged from the hospital, and rendering the necessary aid till they become fit to work, or find places for employment. Many cases deserving of peculiar attention will thus present themselves for counsel and relief, and much suffering be obviated.

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