

then—how each minister can recall experiences sad and sometimes even comic, of being deceived by specious pretences, artificial miseries, and non-existent want.]

The state of the poor in our city is a subject on which I do not claim to utter a general or decided opinion. Those that shall take part in the discussion will describe it from the ground of an experience which I cannot yet claim. But one thing I have ascertained and verified, when I came to this city, three years ago, I was told, and doubtless on sound foundation, that every industrious labourer could always obtain work. What causes have changed this state of things for the worse, I cannot say, but this is no longer the case now. An able willing man, capable and desirous of earning a day's wages in any direction, may have to wait days and even weeks before he can get it. When much building is going on, doubtless the demand exceeds the supply. If the old industry of wooden shipbuilding could be revived, as some have hoped, or the labour of factories extended, all such need—the need suffered by the industrious, would be removed and only the aged and infirm would remain to demand our help.

What are the supplies at our disposal? There are our communion alms, supplemented by other subscriptions; there are bequests in charge of our mother church of Trinity, such as the Swinny and DeWolf funds, of which the daughter churches (I speak from a grateful experience), are allowed to share liberally. Then, in the background, there is an admirably managed Almshouse. The parishes where the congregation is fairly prosperous, these resources are ample; but they need still be supplemented, we may assume, where the givers are few and those that should receive, many.

The one parish which I here describe sufficiently, demands at the present time, the earnest sympathies of us all. The responsibility, the moral responsibility, if any further need is experienced in the parish I refer to, belongs to my own church, and we are at present considering in what practical way that responsibility shall be more effectually shown. But there are wealthier sources than my own congregation, which I am assured will not be appealed to in vain.

When, some 40 years ago, St. Mark's parish, like Hagar of old, was dismissed into the wilderness, she was left to the care of Providence, and no bread and water was given her for the way. The poor of the north-eastern district were made her poor by law, but they still are the poor of the whole Church of England. Perhaps already in the plans for the worthy celebration of a century's history in that mother church of which we all are proud, it has already been determined to mark that epoch by an act that indeed would be a worthy memorial of a historic place of worship. Perhaps we shall hear that, from her well-filled treasury she will grant, and no better and fitter time could be chosen, a sum which could be made a nucleus of endowment for the poor congregation and the hardworked minister of St. Mary's parish.

But as to our own methods of work. Each parish must have its own, measured by circumstances, needs and resources. But the *crux* is found not in the regular poor of the church, persons who attend our services, and send children to our

Sunday Schools, but in the non church going residents of our legal districts, and above all in wandering strangers. The latter, indeed, form the lesser difficulty. The St. George's Society ever gives bountiful and prompt aid to any wandering Englishman stranded at St. John: I doubt not that the sister association of St. Andrews would be equally liberal, if one could conceive the possibility of an unprosperous Scotchman. Far the tramp, unvouched for and unknown. I suppose there is the usual conflict between our reason and our good nature, ending in the usual manner.

The real difficulty arises in the cases where the applicants are residents in the city, but not attached to our organization in any way. The law, whether wisely or unwisely, (I have a strong opinion on the matter), has borrowed from England that parochial system, which in England represents not only an ancient historic development, but certain parochial forces, entirely absent here. Strictly, when such a person applies to one of us, and we find the address given is outside our limits, we refer them to the legal authority. But, in practice, the rule must by necessity be frequently broken. The danger lies in the possibility of the same person making application successively, or even simultaneously, to different churches, of course concealing the fact that such other applications had been made. One striking, I might almost say "classical" instance, will occur to several memories in this room. We recollect a Mrs. Cleveland, a lady whose name may claim to enjoy an equal celebrity with that of Henry More Smith, or other famous traders upon their wits in this province. Every religious body in turn received her broad sympathies, and her unwearied applications for help. I dare not think how often (if report be true), she must have brought her children for baptism. I know that one of my own church-wardens was reduced to a state of abject terror at her very name. At last she left the city for fresh fields and pastures new, and at least we are indebted to her for some very obvious hints in the matter of our practical methods.

For many years in England, a charity organization society has existed, the function of which is to investigate claims for assistance, and put on record the results, for the benefit of whom it may concern. A paid secretary makes all needful enquiries, and the result is communicated in confidence to the clergyman from whom aid is sought. I speak from some experience, having served on local committees in east and west London, when I say that this society fills a want which could not otherwise be supplied.

The practical suggestion which I have long nourished in my mind, and which, in concluding this rather discursive paper, I now submit to my brethren, is derived from the acknowledged benefit of this society. We do not need, in this city of associations, another president, treasurer and secretary, to increase an innumerable horde, but we could appoint a committee, which must embrace all religious bodies, and cause a record to be kept of all persons not regularly belonging to a church, and who have received help in any form. There will be no need for a special office; the record could be kept at a store in any central position. Naturally it