

PARISH HOUSES.

THEY point to a new departure in which the duty of the Church to touch all sides of complex humanity with its manifold gifts of light and healing, has been recognized as never before, and they indicate a recognition of our manifold opportunities which is full of promise for the future. Undoubtedly there is a danger, and it is preeminently a danger here, that work such as that for which parish houses and seaside houses and the like largely stand, shall be allowed in our estimates of the mission of the Church, to take the place of that other work which touches the springs of character, which transforms the aspirations, and ennobles the affections and the will. But the true value of that which we are trying to do to-day, not alone in this metropolitan centre, but in many towns and villages throughout the diocese, is that in which it is seen as multiplying our points of contact with lives that cannot be redeemed by being dealt with *en masse*. "And Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up." I think if I were building a Parish House to-morrow I would engrave that legend over its door as expressive of all that you and I are trying to do for our fellow-man. I am expected to say something on this occasion of the recent Conference of Bishops at Lambeth. Shall I anticipate in one particular the little that I can contribute for your information and edification under that head by saying that in connection with my own visit to that historic centre, a fact, if not of greatest, certainly of most significant interest of which I learned, was in regard to a daughter of the great prelate, who ten years ago presided in Lam-

beth palace; who, to-day, with gifts and accomplishments that might grace any station, is dedicating her young womanhood, her personal means, and her unsparing energy to a work like that of Miss Octavia Hill, for the reform of the tenement house life, amid which she herself has taken up her abode, in one of the most crowded districts of London! Such a woman, working in such a way, is a type of what is already, thank God, being attempted among ourselves wherever with the parish priest at their head, laymen and laywomen are gathering in our parish houses and seaside homes, those whom a hand may touch and a smile may quicken out of the death of dull despair into faith, courage and hope. And this is very often the only possible first step in getting access to hearts chilled and embittered, or inflamed by the false and godless teaching which has filled with envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, many a breast in our day, and which has been fomented, I grieve to say, by those whose knowledge of the plain teachings of Holy Scriptures, though they profess to be its commissioned expositors, is apparently as imperfect as their knowledge of the simplest principles of a sound social and political economy. Now, as of old—but especially now, when as never before, there is in the air a sentiment which teaches men to despise authority, to disown restraint, to hate and resent all social or material inequality—but which, with all its noisy championship of the poor, touches no one of their burdens with so much as the tips of its fingers—now, as never before, it behoves the Church of God to translate to men the spirit of Christ's religion as the one force in all the