Miscellaneous.

DEACONS IN THE CHURCH.

We hail the late movement of our Church in the matter of the Diaconate, as one of the best signs of our times. It is an indication of a conviction on the part of Churchmen, that they are not doing what the Church was designed to do, and what it is capable of doing, in the work of 'preaching the Gospel *to every creature*;' while it affords the most gratifying evidence of a disposition to return to the practice of Apostolic times, in the due employment of every order of an Apostolic ministry.

Here, in this country, as in other parts of the world, there are multitudes who must be reached by immediate personal efforts, if they are ever to hear the Gospel. They are to be sought for—the Word of God is to be presented to them as they are to be found in the haunts of pleasure, or sin, or in both—amid the engrossing cares of that daily toil, which monopolizes the powers of both mind and body. Such are multitudes in our cities and thickly-populated towns; they are to be found in the dense population of our manufacturing villages, and throughout the sparsely-inhabited regions of country where many seem to live as if the offices, duties, and enjoyments of religion, were matters which did not concern them. The almost countless numbers of foreigners who are peopling the West, together with the black population of the South, present to the Church classes of men that need the Gospel as much as any—who will perish without it—and yet rarely receive the tidings of salvation, in the ordinary ministrations of the Gospel, as they are maintained in regular organized parishes. Yet *for these* Christ died; for these, He has provided abundant means of grace in His Church; and *to* these He has commanded His Gospel to be preached, without any exception whatever. Nowhere do 'all sorts and conditions of men' more fully abound than in this New World, where towns and cities spring up as if by enchantment, and sovereign States, even, come into being without asking leave of 'the rest of mankind.' Here and now, in the broadest sense, is the Church's opportunity. But she cannot improve it, without employing that instrumentality, which infinite wisdom ordained to this end, when a three-fold ministry was established, as the ministry of the Christian Church.

Diocesan Bishops and Parish Priests have their appointed spheres of duty, where, if true to their calling, they may do great good to a great number; but, however faithful and devotedly laborious they may be—however exemplary in their lives, and untiring in their efforts to preach from the pulpit, and to warn the people from house to house, yet a vast multitude of precious souls will, nevertheless not hear the truth from their lips.

Under the conviction that there was in our Church a great lack in this particular, the General Convention at its session, in 1847. passed a canon, providing for the ordination of a class of persons, who with much less literary and theological qualifications than were required by the general Canon, were allowed to be admitted to the Diaconate, without being eligible to the Priesthood. This was intended for a class of pious laymen, who with respectable talents and limited learning, might be very useful to the Church as Deacons, and who did not intend to be advanced to the second Order of the Ministry. The demand for this new measure came chiefly from the South and the West. The Canon was passed, and was regarded by many as the beginning of a better state of things. But the measure was a failure. Very few were ordained under it. It had a two-fold defect, and that was enough to nullify the good it was designed to accomplish; it virtually created a fourth Order of the Ministry—a sort of sub-deacon—since a broad distinction was made between those ordained under this Canon, and such as were ordained under the old Canon, with the intention and expectation of being advanced to the Priesthood; there were thus created two distinct classes of Deacons. Now, there is not, and is not to be in the Apostolic ministry *sub*-Deacons, any more than there is to be *sub*-Priests and *sub*-Bishops. The people asked for *Deacons—Apostolic* Deacons, and the General Convention authorized the Bishops to answer this call by ordaining and sending them a supply of *sub*-Deacons. But besides this, it was provided that before the Canon could go into effect, in any Diocese, the Diocesan Convention should first give its sanction to the measure, before the Bishop could act under the Canon; and when this permission was granted, the Bishop had a right to refuse to admit any one to this sub-Diaconate. So that, however urgent the demand of the people—however willing the Convention—however pressing the necessity of the circumstances of any particular case—and however fit and well qualified the candidate—the Bishop had the power of his own will to frustrate the whole matter, and, in some instances, we are well aware, that our Rt. Rev. Fathers were not very backward in exercising this prerogative.

In 1853, the General Convention repealed this Canon, and enacted another, by which both errors which distinguished and extinguished the Canon of 1847 were rectified by being excluded altogether

This Canon provides that every person hereafter to be ordained Deacon, shall be examined by the Bishop and two Presbyters, whose duty it shall be to assertain that he is well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures and the Book of Common Prayer; and who shall inquire into his fitness for the ministrations declared in the Ordinal, &c. Such person is required to be a candidate for one year. He is not allowed to be settled over a Parish or congregation, until he shall have satisfactorily passed the three examinations prescribed in the Canon 'of the preparatory exercises of a candidate for Priest's Orders,'—and cannot officiate in any parish or congregation, without the express consent of the Rector, and the Bishop.

The Diaconate is thus placed upon its primitive foundation, and if it be not used with primitive success, it will be our own fault.

The door is now open for every pious layman who has the ability and the disposition to serve the Church as a Deacon, to do so. There are many men of talent and piety, whose early opportunities did not admit of their studying for the ministry, and who are engaged in some secular calling, not wholly incompatable with faithful service as a Deacon, who are desirous of improving the talent which their Divine Master has committed to them, but hitherto they have been compelled to stand at a distance from a duty which they would be glad to perform, whereby they might be instrumental of great good, in extending the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

But it has been objected, that such a lowering of the qualifications for the Diaconate, will flood the ministry with a multitude of unlearned men. We have no reason to believe that there is any ground for serious apprehension in this particular. If a tent-maker, or tax-gatherer, or a fisherman or two should obtain Deacon's Orders, under this Canon, we have no fears that the Church would be turned upside down,' or that there would be any sensible loss of that dignity which belongs to true godliness and real greatness.—*Boston Christian Witness.*

SIEGE OPERATIONS.

From the London Times.

The extraordinary character of the difficulties attending our present operations before Sebastopol is not likely to be fully appreciated without some insight into the nature of siege undertakings in general. In the present age it is received as a maxim by military engineers that the means of attack are superior to the means of defence, or, in other words, that if any fortified place, however strong, is attacked according to rule by a proper force of men and guns, it must inevitably fall within a certain time, unless preserved by some rare and singular advantage. Now, as the allied armies were disembarked on the shores of the Crimea in strength sufficient to conquer the enemy in a pitched battle, and as they have now for some weeks been besieging Sebastopol with a most powerful force of artillery, directed by some of the best engineers in the world, it may be asked what circumstances have retarded their success, or why the place was not sooner taken? To this inquiry we subjoin an explanatory reply.

When a siége is undertaken, the first operation is what is called the "investment" of the town—that is to say, the town is surrounded on all sides by posts of the besieging army, so that no ingress or egress is any longer practicable. This is not only the first step, but it is that on which all succeeding steps more or less depend; for the superiority of the attack of the defence arises from the fact that, whereas the means are unlimited in the former case, they are limited in the later. When a town has been invested, and thus cut off from communication with the adjacent country, its resources in men, munitions and provisions become at once confined to the stocks then actually within its walls, while the besiegers, on the other hand, being presumptively masters of the country, can make exactly such dispositions as they think proper. If they cease to be masters of the country—that is to say, if a superior force of the enemy approaches from without, the siege must in ordinary cases be raised and the town is relieved accordingly. Supposing, however, the necessary superiority to reside, at all events for the time, with the besiegers, than they select that point in the defences of the place which appears most favourable for their operation, and here the advantage of the attack over the defence becomes instantly apparent. Whatever may be the strength of the place in respect of artillery, it is obvious that only a certain number of guns can be brought to the defence of a certain portion of the ramparts, whereas the attacking force can concentrate upon this one point all the guns at their disposal. The defences of a town may mount 500 guns; but, if any particular front mounts only 50, and the besigers can attack this front with twice the number, they have the superiority of fire at the only point where such superiority is required. It is on this condition of operations, joined to the necessary limitation of resources in a place entirely excluded from external communications, that the ascendancy of the besiegers depends. Availing themselves of the protection derivable from trenches and covered ways, they gradually push their batteries so close to the place that a breach is made in its walls, and, as they are always presumed to exceed the garrison greatly in numerical strength they rush in and carry the town by storm as soon as its defences have been beaten down. It is considered that a town containing a garrison of 15,000 men requires an army of 75,000 men to besiege it, and, when therefore, the smaller force has lost the artificial protection of its ramparts, the contest seldom remains doubtful.

If these observations are applied to the case of Sebastopol, it will at once appear that none of the assumed advantages of a besieging force are there to be found. Sebastopol is not invested. The peculiar position of the town, combined with the limited strength of the allied armies, rendered it impossible so to surround the place as to cut off its communications with the interior, and the north side is left completely open. The consequence is, that there has been no limitation of resources on the part of the besieged; on the contrary, it is rather the beseging army which has stood in this predicament; for, whereas the allied forces have been gradually diminished by the casualties incidental to their operations, the garrison has received repeated accessions of strength from without. Provisions, too, and munitions of war may have been imported with equal facility, though so extraordinary in this respect were the resources of Sebastopol itself, that few additions could have been required.

It is next to be remarked that the Russians at Sebastopol are by no means in the position of a garrison inferior in numbers to the attacking force, but relying upon the protection of artificial defences, against which the besiegers advance. They are encamped to the south of the town in very strong intrenchments, which are armed, as Lord Raglan's despatch observes, "with an apparently unlimited number of heavy guns, amply provided with gunners and ammunition." They have raised batteries against our batteries, and earthworks against our earthworks; they return shot for shot and so far were we from establishing an advantage in this respect that on the second day of the cannonade, their fire was superior to our own. Their front of defence, instead of representing a confined space, exposed to all the concentrated fire of the attack, is actually, as Lord Raglan describes, "more extended" than our own, and they [the besieged force] are thus in the possession of the advantages ordinarily enjoyed by the besiegers.

In point of fact, there would really be little exaggeration in saying that one of the armies in the Crimea is as effectually "besieged" as the other. Both have their communications open—the Russians by land and the allies by sea; both have their strong positions—the Russians before Sebastopol, the allies on the heights of Balaklava; and, as far as operations have hitherto proceeded, it would be hard to say which party seemed to be the assailants and which the defenders. We are battering the works of the Russians, but they are also battering ours, and whereas we have not yet regularly assaulted their lines, they have attacked ours in such force as to occasion most sanguinary conflicts. The enterprise, in short, is not a siege, but a campaign. We have effected a lodgment on Russian territory, and we are encountering the armies which the Russians bring successively against us. One army, representing the garrison of Sebastopol, is encamped under its wall behind earthworks like our own, and is stronger than we are in artillery. Another is posted on our flank or rear, and has made at least one attempt on our position. Fortunately, although we want many of the advantages of besiegers, we are not without some of the advantages of the opposite kind: for such is the strength of our position in this angle of the Russian territory that we are enabled to repulse the attacks of an enemy numerically superior to ourselves. So far, therefore, although the actual siege of Sebastopol may have advanced but slowly, the events of that campaign are favorable to us.

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