

## MONTHLY NOTES

### OUR VISIT TO THE HILL-CREST CONVALESCENT HOME.

Any one standing on the corner of Bloor and Howland Ave. will if looking northward, perceive that the ground rises rather abruptly at a distance of about half a mile, forming a ridge that seems to extend east and west almost as far as the eye can reach, offering unrivalled facilities for our wealthy citizens to build their mansions, in positions that are to a great extent free from the noise and bustle of the city, and at the same time command a view of both the Queen city of Ontario and the great lake that washes its southern border.

On this elevated ridge directly at the head of Howland Ave. will be seen a white house that has for many years been a familiar sight to the people of upper Toronto, and is now the residence of the priest-vicar of St Alban's Cathedral. Looking a little further west just north of the point where Bathurst St. crosses the Davenport Road, may be perceived on top of the hill a red-brick building, that ought to be obscured (but is not at present) from the view of the before mentioned observer by the tall spires of St. Alban's, and is known as the Hill-crest Home; this is a spacious modern building erected in one of the most delightful spots to be found in the vicinity of Toronto, and devoted to the purpose of furnishing to all who desire the pure air, the home comforts, and the assiduous attention, that are so essential for the full recovery of those sick people who having progressed so far in overcoming their maladies as to be able to leave our hospitals, still find themselves unequal to undertake the full duties of healthy manhood or womanhood.

With a view to keeping in touch with such Church of England men as may be found staying there, St Alban's Chapter of St Andrew's Brotherhood appointed a committee of three to make weekly visits at this home, and prove by christian sympathy and cheerful conversation with these men, that the Church they love did not neglect their people whose lot was cast among strangers, but was ever ready under all circumstances to look after the welfare of her children. Keeping this object in view we will now give a short outline of some visits made and impressions received during a period of about a year.

It was in the early part of January '99 that we were appointed to this duty and our first visit was made on the following Friday evening. In order to guard against a possible refusal to admit us (for we found that we could not arrange to get to the home before eight o'clock) one of us telephoned to the matron, to know if that hour was too late for visitors, and finding that it was not, we agreed upon a convenient meeting place so that we could walk up together.

Now perhaps some of our congregation may at some time or other, have undertaken to make a call upon people whom they have never seen before, for a purpose that is not business-like, and is not altogether social, and that may or may not be acceptable to those upon whom they were to call; if so they will understand something of our feeling, as we walked together towards the Hill-crest Home. Arriving in due course we timidly rang the bell and were ushered into a small reception room, where in answer to inquiries we stated our desire to have a friendly chat with the men; we were then told to wait until the matron came and so to her we also gave the nature of our errand, and added that if agreeable we would like to make weekly visits. To the untutored mind it would seem that nothing could be more simple and free from perplexities than our proposition, yet so complex is the mechanism of our intellectual nature, and so averse are we all, even the best and noblest among us to accept a simple fact merely as a fact and nothing else, that it required a lengthened conversation before we could

make it quiet clear, that we were not looking out for men who would work for small pay when they left the home—that we were not authorized to find out who were in needy circumstances so as to report such cases to the relief committee of the House of Industry that we were not men who had private means and intended to use them in providing for the indigent when the two-weeks maintenance that the city authorities granted them had expired—and that we were not bent on making proselytes of the men in the home for the benefit of St. Alban's; when these points had been cleared up, we were given a hearty welcome to visit as we proposed.

Behold then our committee flushed with its first victory, being ushered into a larger room and introduced to about half a dozen of our fellow-men, as visitors who had come to talk to them. Now came the crucial test, the moment that would decide whether we could or could not win the confidence of those to whom we were sent; whether our mission was to be a success or failure. Advancing then under the concentrated gaze of six pairs of eyes, each exhibiting a large note of interrogation, we heartily shook hands with every man in turn, and after making a few perfectly safe remarks about the weather proceeded to settle ourselves among them; it would be tedious for us to detail our conversations during this and other visits, so we will only say that in the course of three or four weeks we had almost entirely eradicated any lingering doubts that either matron or men might entertain, about any of the before mentioned subjects.

Of the men who make their stay here a few may be regarded as permanent, the majority as transient boarders.

It has been our good fortune to make staunch friends of one or two of the permanent ones, and they have proved their friendship by removing any mis-apprehension that has arisen from time to time in the minds of new boarders as to our object in coming regularly to see them.

One of the pleasing results of this is to be found in the fact that our visits are almost always welcomed not only by those of our own Church but also by Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and men of all other denominations; so that it has become an unwritten law of our meetings, that the feelings arising from a replication of the brotherhood of man, shall prevail over the sectarian feelings that have so long served to separate from each other the different members of the great human family for whom Christ died.

We will now touch upon some of the representative characters that have come under our notice. All human beings appear to be moved to a greater or less extent by impulses founded upon likes and dislikes; and the man who can always rise above that level, is very rarely to be met with among the sons of our fallen race. Our committee do not claim that they are always free from these feelings, and therefore ask that due allowances be made for any mistake of that nature in the remarks that follow.

During our earlier visits we met with a young man suffering from some nervous affliction that made it necessary to abstain as much as possible from reading or study, but who was possessed by such an ambition to shine as a book-keeper or in some similar office capacity that we felt quite interested in him and just before the termination of his stay he asked us to let him know of any opportunity if a situation came under our notice, telling us that he was a good writer and felt quite able to do book-keeper's work; of course we gave the necessary promise and asked what address would find him, at the same time handing him a slip of paper and a pencil; where upon he took the paper and proceeded to write, with the conscientious and painstaking labor that would be creditable to a school-boy