

cogged dice in the hands of the gamester; where is set up for the adoration of the faithful no altar of the Saviour, but the vulgarized statue of his Blessed Mother, often so disfigured by the vile taste of its worshippers, that, as recently in the case of the image at La Salette, the Pope himself had to interfere and thwart the tendency of its devotees to dress it up in all the finery of a Parisian Society leader! No wonder that the good staunch Roman Catholics of the staid old school are scandalized at such profanity, and that throughout the whole world the Catholic sense stands aghast at the blaspheming with which modern Mariolatry is full to overflowing.

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

No. 15.

LAY WORK IN THE CHURCH.

We continue in this number the paper of which the earlier part appeared in last week's paper:

THAT the Church in all times has recognised others as workers, besides bishops, priests, and deacons, is most clear. The Papal, Russian, Greek, and other churches have in their organization various minor orders.

That the reformed English Catholic Church had similar features is shown by an act of Edward VI., which directs the Bishops to issue a reformed Ordinal providing for the continuance of minor orders. "Be it therefore enacted, &c., that such form and manner of making and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons, and other ministers of the Church, &c., &c.,

A very singular fact correlative to the above is that to this day laymen read the litany in cathedrals, men who have not been "ordained to any holy function." Following upon this declaration by the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop of Gloucester ordained a layman, N., Esq., to the office of Reader.

Mr. N. issued a circular to his neighbours and friends, stating the circumstances of this novel step, of which, as it is very scarce and interesting, we will give a digest in as few words as we can. After stating the position of his residence as being in a hamlet two and a half miles from the parish church, and inconvenience arising therefrom to the poor, he goes on to state that "he undertook the school-room service at C., omitting Absolution and other parts (not particularised) that belong to the priestly office," and that he shortens the services by omitting certain portions. His social position is that of a landed proprietor, he is a M. A. of Oxford, (he intimates that his scholarship is getting rusty), is in the commission of the peace, is patron of livings, and holds certain Improprate Tithes, as he quaintly puts after this fact "so that I have necessarily a personal interest in Church matters." He writes, "My Vicar has assigned me a place just without the chancel rails, and I read the lessons there."

He continues, "My reason for having the approval of our excellent Diocesan was to feel for my own consolation and inward satisfaction that I have a recognised position, as, however anxious to be of use, I should never have thought of acting without special invitation on one hand and express commission on the other." The work done comprises visiting, reading to, and praying with the sick and infirm, inviting to cottage lectures (Mr. N. being both "Worker" and "Helper") where a service is held culled out of the Prayer Book.

Mr. N. points out that the sedilia in certain old churches is evidence of the existence of the order of subdeacon having existed in the ancient Church of England.

At the ordination of this gentleman the Bishop officiated with his chaplains in the presence of a large body of clergy, and he was presented by the Bishop with a New Testament.

This case is interesting and valuable, but its chief lesson is a warning.

That one of such social position, "a scholar and a gentleman," should accept so humble an office in the Church is of deep interest as a sign of the times. How changed from the days when the Church's ministers were not more honoured than butlers and footmen, when the good and brave Herbert took orders, setting his class a noble example, and teaching them by it that the true spirit of a Christian is the same as that which inspired the Psalmist to write, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to have honor in the tents of the ungodly."

His example is valuable too for this, that it will be a standing rebuke and answer to the vulgar, who are unable to recognise the true dignity of spiritual labour, and seek in their ignorance to put down to a low social rank those who would prefer poverty in God's service to any riches or rank the world could bestow. But the warning which this case raises is clearly that the wants of the Church cannot be supplied by this particular instrumentality, the revival of the office of Reader. That one man should by his falling in with the system proposed and sanctioned "by the whole of the Episcopate," and as the Bishop of Oxford said, draw on himself the attention of the country, and that he should deem it necessary to publish an apology to his friends for the step, is to condemn the system as utterly incapable of meeting the requirements of the Church. What is rather wanted is such an organization as will embrace naturally, with the smallest possible effort, a large number of laymen of all ranks, spread over and through every parish in the land.

But as men of the humblest social position may become valuable labourers in a parish under the watching and teaching of those of higher gifts and culture, it would be of great service if laymen of position would follow the example thus set, and undertake the supervision of humble workers. With this object in view, suitable persons for this office of Reader would be more likely to be forthcoming than if their functions were simply to do those things which are being done in so many parishes by unrecognised laymen.

The following case seems to us most suggestive on this point as others:

In a parish in the Midlands a work has been organised and carried on of singular interest and significance. I will quote the description given me by a gentleman of high social position, who is now its chief promoter, to whose pious zeal its success is largely owing. "The parish contains within it several distinct villages containing a large working population, in a district of which we gave a description in our paper 'A visit to three priests.' Our staff of Lay Agents is composed of eleven worker and twelve helpers. The former conduct school-room and cottage services and visit the sick, the latter go amongst the cottages and shops, etc., to invite the people to the meetings. These helpers are of great value: they save the worker the unpleasantness of inviting people to his own meeting; and the office of helper gives room for the employment of earnest young men who have not had sufficient Christian experience, or lack the necessary gifts for conducting a service. We have sixteen stations, i.e., school-rooms and cottages in which eighteen Lay Services are held each week, besides Sunday Schools. The services are very

simple: the first part comprises prayers, collects, and the general confession taken from the Prayer-Book, hymns, reading of Scripture and a short extempore address, after which the service is closed with extempore prayers. The Cottage Service is restricted to one hour; the School-room Services one hour and a-half. The workers are restricted from dealing with doctrinal subjects other than those taught by the Church as necessary to salvation. The result of this system has been to call out many of those engaged in it to a clear and decided testimony of their Lord, and to encourage those engaged in it to press onward in this good work. Besides periodic gatherings to receive Holy Communion together at the Parish Church, fortnightly meetings are held for the strengthening and furthering of the work by taking counsel together." We may here remark that this work was organized and supervised by a clergyman who is known throughout Christendom as a very High Churchman. Here, then, is a proof that the Church can utilise those powers she possesses in her laymen, and thereby not only remove a deserved reproach and scandal and weakness, but strengthen the love and attachment and loyalty of those whom she has roused from supineness into active Christian labour. There is, however, against all this a serious objection; it is too isolated and eccentric, we use this word in its proper sense, as opposed to concentric, which expresses the idea we are anxious to make the feature of the organization we wished to see instituted. It is most satisfactory to know that those engaged in this work have had their attachment to the Church deepened and confirmed by the privilege of labouring in Her name and interest.

—Show this paper to your neighbors and get them to subscribe for it.

Diocesan Intelligence.

NOVA SCOTIA.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

The qualifications of the Clerical Secretary are such that the appointment of that officer will doubtless prove a financial success. The Boards of Home and Foreign Missions both greatly need funds and if the work of the Secretary lately appointed should not succeed in bringing in more than \$1,000 a year over and above his travelling expenses, those Boards will, to say the least, be no better off than before, though the minds of many may have been aroused to future action. It is to be hoped that those who admire will prove the reality of their admiration in a substantial way.

P. E. ISLAND.—The Bishop confirmed 19 in the parish of New London last month—the Incumbent writing to our Halifax contemporary—says: "We all enjoyed the Bishop's visit very much. The time he was here passed quickly. The general feeling is: 'We want to see him again; and as soon as the time comes for the visitation, we will gladly welcome his appearance.'"

MONTREAL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

Mission Work.—It was once seriously proposed at a meeting of our Executive Committee and the matter has again been recently discussed, that in country places where the church and one or more of the various sects are "competing" for the people, a poll should be taken, and the sense of the community obtained as to whether or not they desire the ministrations of the church amongst them, or whether they prefer those of the sects! I am happy to say that this most extraordinary proposition received but little encouragement. Fancy St. Paul taking a pull at Athens before he should go there to preach "Jesus and the