

visit their friends in the country; hence, from Saturday evening to Monday morning, the greatest part of the City is uninhabited. There are, indeed, in some of these parishes a few courts or alleys tenanted by the poor, but the number of such poor parishioners is very small. The result naturally is, that the clergy of the City of London have little or nothing to do on week-days, and on Sundays their Church services are attended by such scanty congregations, that a feeling of hopeless inefficiency is apt to benumb the preacher's energies; and the work would in truth be far more effectually done if there were fewer clergymen to do it, and fewer churches. Add to this, that the City parsonage-houses, in a great number of instances, have disappeared. It is very difficult, sometimes impossible, for the clergy to procure other residences in their parishes, or even within an easy distance of them. It follows that a great many of the City clergy, as by law entitled, avail themselves of the liberty of residing any where within two miles of their church—a distance which, in London, as may be supposed, altogether isolates their residence from the parish. Several of these incumbents are very valuable, and the opponents of the present state of things urge that that thus, in an age which cries out against non-residence and sinecures in the Church, you have the worst kind of non-residence, and one of the worst kinds of sinecure upheld by law, as the normal state of our ecclesiastical arrangements in the very centre of that diocese which might reasonably be expected to set an example to the whole Church. As to residence, it is urged that elsewhere, if the incumbent is non-resident, you have a resident curate in his place; but here the incumbent being really non-resident, nominally resides, and is therefore under no obligation to supply a resident substitute; while as to the office of the City clergy being a sinecure—whereas, in sinecures properly so called, there is no cure of souls at all; and therefore, e. g., no one suffers from the clergy of a cathedral not attending to parish work—here, on the contrary, there is a nominal cure of souls; certain persons, however few, are in each parish placed under their own incumbent, and therefore withdrawn from the pastoral care of any other clergyman; and yet circumstances make it very difficult for anything like efficient pastoral supervision to be exercised, and the incumbent is encouraged, by all the circumstances with which he finds himself surrounded, to look upon his pastoral work as by no means the chief part of what the Church requires of him, indeed as scarcely worthy of his attention. The result, it is urged, is, that—first, there is great dissatisfaction amongst those who do live in the City—and I can testify that complaints have been sent to me, that if a man is taken suddenly ill in the City, or a child requires immediate baptism, you may go half over London and look for a clergyman before the emergency can be met—and, secondly, there is great dissatisfaction, also, amongst those who are interested in the condition of the parishes in the immediate vicinity of the City, where, perhaps, a parish of some 15,000 poor comes close to another with 150 poor at the most; and whereas one clergyman receives some £800 a year for nominally looking after the small parish, there is no endowment at all, and only a few hardly-collected fees to remunerate him who is charged with the laborious oversight of the 15,000; while another parish close at hand may be returned as having no poor at all and a net income of upwards of £1,300 a year. What I have now given is the statement of the case, as urged against the continuance of present arrangements.

As you all know, this condition of things occupied much of the attention of your late Diocesan. Schemes were suggested to him, perhaps, somewhat

too sanguine in their expectations, and rather rashly devised—which seemed to many likely to lead to the pulling down of churches wholesale, selling the site of church and burial-ground, and carrying off the proceeds of such sales and the endowments of the churches to meet the spiritual wants of teeming parishes elsewhere. As there were many vested interests concerned, it was not unnatural if a clamour was raised. Exaggerations had probably been made on the one side, and they were, not unnaturally, met by exaggerations on the other. It was represented as if the Bishop, in his eagerness to build new churches in populous places, would respect no scruples, religious or secular; was prepared at one blow to desecrate the tombs of thousands, and set a widely-spread example of turning churches into common buildings, such as had no parallel even in the days of revolution and anarchy. The best answer to any such over-statements would be to look at the bill which was actually introduced. It might be that this bill went rather too far. It was considerably altered in passing through Parliament. We are bound to believe that some improvements were introduced into it; but some other changes were made also, which have hitherto caused the law founded on this bill to be wholly inoperative; and I fear it is scarcely to be expected that by the act as it at present stands, we shall be able to get rid even gradually of the most acknowledged abuses.

THE PRESENT LAW AS TO THE UNION.

There seems to be a very general ignorance as to what is the law as it now entirely stands; I shall therefore here enumerate the provisions of the Act 18 and 19 Vic., cap. cxxvii., by which this matter is regulated. The operation of the act is limited to five years from the date of its receiving the Royal Assent (14th of August, 1855). Referring in the preamble to the Acts 1 and 2 Vic., cap. 106, and 13 and 14 Vic., cap. 9, by which authority had been given for the union of benefices in contiguous parishes under certain restrictions, it provides that contiguous benefices may be united without regard to the aggregate population or yearly value. The mode in which this union may be effected is by a representation being made to the Bishop of the diocese by the inhabitants of the parishes in vestry assembled. This is the first step required. The Bishop is, on such representation to make enquiry into the circumstances, and if it shall appear to him that the union is desirable, and that the patrons are consenting, and that the patronage of any new church or churches proposed to be erected under this act, is to be vested in such patron or patrons as is provided in the act, then he is to submit a statement to the Church Building (i. e. now the Ecclesiastical) Commissioners; who, if they see fit, are to prepare a scheme for the union, and for carrying out the other purposes of the act. If the endowment of the consolidated parish appear unnecessarily large, the commissioners are empowered, with the consent of the patron or patrons of the parishes to be united, to transfer a portion of such endowment to another benefice in the same diocese. Public notice is to be given, that parties interested may have opportunity of showing cause why the scheme proposed should not take effect; but if no objections are raised, or the commissioners overrule such objections, then the scheme shall become law on its being sanctioned by order of her Majesty in Council, the rights and interests of all existing incumbents being preserved. As part of such scheme, it is lawful for the commissioners to provide for the pulling down or removal of any existing church or parsonage-house in either of the benefices proposed to be united, and for the sale of the materials, furniture, and site of the same, with this restriction, provided they do not sell the communion plate, and neither

sell nor let any burial-ground, nor the site of any church in which interments have taken place.

This act I have stated has, in no instance that I am aware of, been as yet put in force. We may be surprised at this: for at first sight it seems to meet most of the difficulties complained of: but there is a great obstacle in the way. The movement must in each instance originate with the vestries of the parishes to be united; and experience seems to show that the vestries are scarcely sufficiently interested in the contemplated improvements to make them take upon themselves the responsibility of initiation. Some change in the law in this respect is required before any thing effectual can be done, an opportunity for fresh legislation is obviously presented by the limit as to the time of its operation, which will cause the present act soon to expire.

THE REAL AMOUNT OF EVIL.

And, now, before we go further, as I have said that there certainly has been exaggeration on this subject on both sides, I should wish to state calmly what I consider to be the real amount of the evil thus calling for a remedy. I am by no means of opinion that it would be a good state of our ecclesiastical arrangements, if all the parochial cures in London were equally onerous. Nay I should consider any change by which every incumbent amongst us was obliged to have the oversight of several thousands of souls, to be a real calamity. In London, of all places in the kingdom, we require a learned as well as a laborious clergy. A learned clergy can never be maintained in any Church in which every clergyman is to be overburdened with laborious practical work. The changes which have taken place in our ecclesiastical arrangements of late years (ready as I am to allow the great benefits that have on the whole resulted from them) have, to my mind, been made without sufficient attention to these principles. Some have seemed to think that the perfection of our Church will be found when the whole country is subdivided into parishes with two or three thousand souls, and every clergyman is so occupied by the pastoral oversight of his flock, that he cannot possibly, without neglect, secure half an hour a day for the study of theology, still less of general literature. I totally differ from all such Church reformers. I believe the influence of the Church will sink rapidly if amongst its clergy we do not number many names of men who can move the age by their literary and intellectual, while others move it by their direct pastoral, influence. Sitting in this cathedral, and speaking as comparatively a young man of one advanced in life, I may be allowed, without any appearance of flattery, to point to our Deaconal chair as a proof how valuable are posts of comparative leisure provided for our clergy, that those amongst them whom God has blessed with high intellectual powers may produce great works of theological literature. I am not satisfied that all such men should be collected in our Universities; neither, indeed, do I see that our Universities, with all their late improvements, have as yet provided a sufficient number of posts for such men; and if they had, I should by no means be ready to surrender them all to two sister dioceses, and leave this centre of the Church of England, and of our social and political life, where learned men of all other professions congregate, without its fair share of learned clergy. I am aware that you cannot make men learned by giving them leisure for study, but it is certain that it is very difficult for them to become learned without it. Now, since the principal part of the revenues of this cathedral has been appropriated by Parliament to other purposes, we must be contented if we find any where amongst us such situations as may advantageously be held by clergymen of studious habits without their neglecting any direct calls of practical duty. We