

mass of the people. Moreover, during the preceding centuries a vast and widely beneficial system of charitable organizations had been founded and endowed, such as hospitals, almshouses, and parochial and monastic free schools, all for the benefit of the poor. Besides, there was everywhere the right of use to the public common lands in every parish, which the poor enjoyed. There were monthly and weekly doles of food, clothing, or money, which proceeded from endowments and such like pious benefactions to the poor, and were distributed by the parish priests or the Monks. The monasteries themselves expended a large portion of their incomes in charity. The monastic lands and revenues, and a vast amount of Church lands proper passed into the hands of a few greedy and rapacious courtiers, either of the old nobility, or of those who succeeded in becoming ennobled. The ancient landmarks were removed, field was added to field, and the possession of much only whetted the appetite for more. The new nobility were as hard landlords as they were greedy gatherers of spoil. They extracted from their great estates all that they could compel them to yield. The hand of one great lay lord was heavier upon the poor than that of the church corporations. We wonder at the vast increase of paupers, 'sturdy beggars,' and vagabonds in the days of Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth. The revolution of the rich against the poor explains it clearly. The common lands, often the chief dependence of the weary poor, were enclosed by these landlords, to the untold hardships of the people. Canon Dixon gives several lists of Abbey and Church lands bestowed upon these leeches, and one cannot fail to remark how few were the beneficiaries and how numerous and valuable were the 'donations.' The parishes suffered severely in the spoilation of the monasteries, for the tithes of many parishes had been impropriated by the monasteries. When the monasteries were despoiled their new possessors were careful not to restore the tithes to the parishes but retained them, appointed a 'cheaper' vicar, often from among their own servants, and pocketed the difference. When the bill for the suppression of chantries and colleges was before the Parliament of Edward VI., Cranmer himself endeavored to save their lands to the Church to devote them to increasing the many livings which had been reduced to poverty in the course of the revolution. His efforts were of no avail; not only chantries but hospitals also, which were not included in the bill at all, fell into the capacious pockets of the hungry crew which held the reins of government. There seemed to be no power to stay the tide of spoilation.

"But the most remarkable thing in this act was that it contained clauses which condemned to destruction all corporations whatever, not only clerical but lay; all guilds, fraternities, companies, and fellowships of mysteries and crafts, and all the lands and possessions belonging to the same. All were made over to the crown, and commissioners were to be appointed to examine and take possession. The

true nature of the revolution of the rich against the poor was now clearly manifested. It was designed to have been a universal reversion into private ownership, and an utter abandonment of the old principle of corporate holding, which has always been at the bottom of the institutions that make nations great. Corporate holding has ever been the safeguard of poverty. It has ever enabled men to profess poverty, and yet be great."

How little the mass of mankind know of the facts of history! Instead of the Church of England being endowed at the Reformation, she was thoroughly disendowed and plundered. This is true of the Church proper, excluding from consideration the Church's monastic possessions.—*Am. Church Quarterly, April*

RURAL DEANS.

BY REV. JOHN CARRY, D. D.

IN a neighboring diocese lately has arisen some disputation as to the appointment of Rural Deans, whether they should be of Episcopal nomination or of clerical election. The friend who informed me of this is himself a Rural Dean in that diocese, and requested me to favor him with any information on the subject which I might possess; and on my sending him the substance of this communication he expressed himself as "much interested and pleased," and encouraged me to send it to your columns for wider use. I do this more readily as the small amount of information attainable on the subject is not always accessible. The principal, if not the only, work on the subject in English is the Rev. Wm. Dansey's *Horæ Decanica Rurales*: 1885. This work, which I read some years ago, I have no copy of, but while it contains a great deal of curious and now somewhat useless matter as to the duties of Rural Deans, it has not much on the present subject of dispute; perhaps because there was little dispute formerly about it, the author informing us that Rural Deans were "originally chosen by the clergy of their own Deaneries," though there are some authorities that took the other way. I shall simply set down what I find.

1. In *Field "Of the Church,"* Bk. v.c. xxix., that learned divine says: "The Bishops in former times for the better governing of their churches, chose out certain of their presbyters to assist them in the supervision and direction of the rest, whom they first named Arch-presbyters and afterwards Deans. They were of two sorts, *Urbani* and *Vicani*, that is, such as lived in the great church in the city, and such as lived abroad in the country, and were therefore named rural Arch-presbyters or rural Deans." These "had the oversight and direction of the presbyters that were placed in the lesser titles or meaner churches abroad in the country."

2. His first authority is Decret, Greg. 9 ex-Synod, habit. Ravenæ i. i. Tit. 25, which he then translates: "That each division of the people of God in their several limits have their Arch-presbyter, who may not only take care of the rude and ignorant multitude, but may also

with continual circumspection observe and look unto the life and conversation of the presbyters which dwell in the lesser titles, and show unto the Bishop with what diligence each of them performeth the work of God. Neither let the Bishop contend and say that the people committed to his charge need no Arch-presbyter, as if he himself were able sufficiently to govern the same, because, though he be exceedingly worthy, yet it is fit he should divide his burdens, that is as he is over the Mother church, so the Arch-presbyters may be over the people abroad, that the ecclesiastical care stagger not, or be not too weak in anything. Yet, let them refer all things to the Bishop, neither let them presume to order anything against his liking and decree. These rural Arch-presbyters were to be chosen by the clergy and confirmed by the Bishop, and being so placed might not be removed without the consent of the clergy." For this he quotes the Council of Tours, Can. 7, (A. D., 580.) "Let not the Bishop presume to remove or put an Arch-presbyter from his place without the consent of all the presbyters; but when the negligence of any one of these maketh him worthy to be rejected and put out, let him be rejected with the counsel and advice of all the presbyters." This is all that Field has on the manner of appointment, though he has much as to the duties of the office.

3. Dansey says that Rural Deans were so elected in the diocese of Kilmore, referring to Bishop Burnet's *Life of Bishop Bedill*, p. 184, which I am not able to consult.

4. In Chas. II. "Declaration concerning ecclesiastical affairs," it is said of Rural Deans, "these deans, as heretofore, to be nominated by the Bishop of the diocese." Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, vol. ii. page 245.

5. In the Canons of 1571, (Parker, Abp; Elizabeth, Queen), Archdeacons are to inform the Bishop at the visitation which of the clergy are the fittest, for learning and judgment, and "ex illis episcopus potent delectum facere, quos vellet decanos rurales." Cardwell's *Synodalia*, p. 117.

6. In the Petyt collection, Mss. 9, is a paper partly written by Abp. Parker, entitled "General notes of matters to be moved by the clergy in the next Parliament and Synod," the act of 1562. In Cardwell, p. 505, it reads, "That in every deanery in the country there may be constituted by the Bishop one grave and discreet priest to be arch-presbyter, or *decano-ruralis*."

7. In Queen Ann's license and heads of business to the consecration, 1710, Cardwell, p. 731, is this; "The establishing rural deans, where they are not, and rendering them more useful where they are."

8. The report of the committee of both houses on this head is the most interesting public document we have in reference to Rural Deans. It fills twelve pages of Cardwell. The Upper House reports, sec. iv. "That the clergy of every deanery, or the greater part of them, shall choose a person thus qualified, who shall be presented by the Archdeacon or other ordinary to the Bishop for his approbation for three years," &c. The Lower House desires