

## BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW WORK IN THE COUNTRY.

NOTES BY A COUNTRY PARSON IN "ST.  
ANDREW'S CROSS."

It goes without saying that "certain faults and defects"—I quote from an excellent book on Parish Problems, edited by Dr. Washington G. Ladden—"are largely peculiar to country churches. If we of the country are called to the confessional we must confess that we, very possibly more than others, have failed to entertain a sufficiently high and true conception of the Church—what is it for. And this is our great inclusive need, to gain in this respect a true ideal. We have perhaps regarded the Church too much as a safe receptacle for the quiet repose of souls rather than as an engine for the accomplishment of a purpose—a combination of personal energies in order to a vast and ever widening work. Accordingly we of the rural districts are too apt to think of our churches as something to be kept in existence rather than to be kept on the increase. We hardly realize that every Church of Christ has a legitimate right to win a noble and increasing predominance in the community to which it ministers; that Christ has a right to every soul in that community and that the Church is His appointed agent to win every soul. We are too prone to view the Church as a humble pensioner upon the community, hat in hand, begging to be supported. What we need is to see in the Church the divine institution which is to bestow upon men the greatest of gifts and which lays men under obligation, which seeks not honor from men, but which rather confers honor."

As I am on the ground I can say that this problem of country Church work and country Brotherhood work is a difficult one to solve. It sometimes refuses, like one of those old-fashioned but interminable problems in "partial payments," to be solved either by the United States Rule, the Connecticut Rule or any other rule. Yet I know from actual experience that good work can be done by the country Chapter. Our men of Christ Church, Bethany, Conn., 12 miles from a railroad, have done a good deal in this—that they have at least brought town sinners in touch with the Church as an organized visible institution, who, until the Brotherhood took them in hand, had for years been strangers to the sanctuary of God, had hardly, so to speak, had a bowing acquaintance with it.

Every country Chapter must in a measure learn a good deal by experience. Trials of different methods of "running" country Chapters will teach some very valuable lessons. We have tried about everything. We ran the whole gamut of Brotherhood experience at our regular meetings. We tried the social plan. We did the interesting, the entertaining, up handsomely. Then we brought in the literary scheme. We were on the point of converting our Brotherhood into a reading club. We read everything, from selections about Benedict Arnold scaling the heights of some place or other, to Ralph Waldo Emerson. But we didn't seem to fire up. So we finally determined to hold a family council. We held it. "Some things were said," and the result was that Mr. Shakespeare, Mrs. George Eliot, Mr. Browning, Mr. Dickens and several others, were politely asked to leave the room, and were in addition informed that for the future their services would be dispensed with. Other aids were brought into service. That book that tells so eloquently of the "old, old fashion," and "the rest that remaineth," and that other book, the Book of Common Prayer, which has, like the Church of God, "approved its worth amid persecutions and prosperities," and still another book, "The Imitation of Christ, which, according to George

Eliot, helps men "when expensive sermons and treatises newly issued leave all things as they were before."

Since the family council we have been doing better. We meet now not to amuse one another, not to study elocution, not to read Emerson, but to learn humbly how to serve the Church and her ever-blessed Master. We devote some time to the discharge of business, but most of the time is spent in the study of God's Word, a talk from the Director, and in devotional exercises. We try to recognize that men are like "dull, unlighted candles" all about us, and that here in the Brotherhood Chapter we must kindle the fire, and that each Brotherhood man must become a blazing firebrand and go out into the community and carry himself, his consecrated personality to where it can touch and light these hitherto unlighted candles. Only so can the Brotherhood of St. Andrew burn out the dens of sin and skepticism and indifference and do its noble part for God and His Kingdom.

Too much stress cannot be placed upon the absolute necessity of making the meetings of country Chapters religious meetings. They must be of an instructive and devotional nature through and through. Of course, this means work for the Director, extra work, particularly if he is the rector. But if the Director would have the Brotherhood serve him and the parish, he must serve the Brotherhood. He can gather his men about a table or in a small room and counsel with them, and talk to them informally, and mould them and stamp them as he could mould and stamp them in no other way. He can teach them what it won't hurt a good many Brotherhood men to learn, and that is something about the Bible, about the Book of Common Prayer, about the Church and the Blessed Eucharist. Of course, this mode of dealing with a Brotherhood Chapter might not be considered quite as intellectual as milk and water talks based on "current topics," and so forth; it might not even be considered "strong," but then the result might be good, and if our conception of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew is not a misconception, it exists for exactly this—for results. Our Chapter meets once a month. We believe that it might be killed by too many meetings, good as they are. We meet at the rectory, and always in the same room—not too large a one so that we can get close together.

"What are the men doing?" They are trying to keep their Brotherhood pledges. They pray well and consequently work well. For example, they make an earnest effort to bring each week at least one young man to the services of the Church. Sometimes the "one young man" is nobody but the Brotherhood man himself. It is something sometimes for a Brotherhood man just to bring himself through rain or snow or slush over country roads to church. In places where the evening service is about extinct a fine field is open to Brotherhood men to influence themselves. Country folks sometimes live a magnificent distance from the church. All do not keep teams. One of my men occasionally takes the trouble to drive an extra team for the purpose of bringing to the church those in his neighborhood who otherwise would not come. Another did not consider it beneath his dignity to pump the organ for a year without salary. They are on hand at all parish entertainments, and as individuals do whatever they can that all may have a pleasant time. If any little thing happens to go as it should not they make an effort to preserve "smooth-faced peace."

Then, too, they greet people cordially in church, particularly if a strange young man happens to drop in. It was remarked that one of our Brotherhood men shook hands last summer with some "Eyetalians" who had "dropped in" minus the latest thing in neckwear and gloves. They have organized and maintained a Bible class in Sunday school. They have done what they could toward getting subscribers for

*St. Andrew's Cross.* There are opportunities in the country for inviting and bringing men to church, though the effort may not always be successful. This talk on the part of some of our country Chapters about "not being able to find opportunities" has the ring of the shirk about it. Wherever a human soul which knows not God is found, there is an opportunity to do Brotherhood work.

And how to do it? How do we get a man to attend a concert? We invite him. We show a friendly spirit; we tell him that it is going to be good and it is going to do us good. We take an interest in it and in the man, and secure his interest. The children of light must be wise in their generation, and in dealing with men not despise so small a thing as taking an interest in them.

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## WOMAN'S QUEENSHIP: AN APPEAL.

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"God's Ten Words," etc.

Why should I beat about the bush as if uncertain of the truth on which I gladly take my stand? I am not in doubt, and therefore there is no need of hesitation. It is simple truth, to which every true heart will immediately assent, that home is woman's kingdom. It is there she most truly reigns. Her throne is on the hearth. There as beloved wife or mother or daughter she embodies that deep pathetic blessed something for which wearied hearts crave, and without which life comes to feel as if it were a sad exile outside a palace gate.

"Midst pleasures or palaces though we may  
roam,

Be it ever so humble there's no place like  
Home;

A charm from the skies seems to hallow us  
there,

Which sought through the world is ne'er met  
with elsewhere.

Home! Home! sweet, sweet Home!

Be it ever so humble there's no place like  
Home."

How true we have felt that to be when a mysterious longing, as we heard it sung, forced the tears to our eyes. But some woman's face, I feel quite sure, is always in the wistful vision. Something like this:—

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!"

The heart of home is a woman. The sweetness of home is a woman. She breathes its tender perfume; she makes its pathetic poetry. She is its uniting centre. The old Indian proverb is very true—the heart is a woman.

Being then so great a truth, let it be acknowledged. By whom? It is the man who ought to say it, to confess it, and proclaim it. It is man who should delight to put the crown of her beautiful queenship upon woman's head. For when the true woman reigns at home, man is blessed; and, indeed, man is never his true best self except woman reigns, except some woman, or some being who is womanly, queens his soul. If man would be a king, it is certain he must have his queen. Justice is his noblest passion, but love and pity soften, beautify, and complete him.

Do you smile, as if I spoke amiable exaggeration? You are welcome to the smile, but there is no exaggeration. It may seem so viewed from the cold standpoint of poor commonplace. But poor commonplace is not true. The true life which rules, and urges on, and makes history, dwells in those depths of the soul where emotion craves for the ideals of love, for woman's queenship, and heaven's perfectness.