

prayers, morning and evening, on their knees, reading the Scripture, catechizing, singing of psalms at their work and on holy-days, who can read and who not, and sometimes he hears the children read himself and blesseth. . . . If the parson were ashamed of particularizing on these things, he were not fit to be a parson, but he holds the rule that nothing is little in God's service." Probably most country priests have found that when men, and even women, are "wallowing in the midst of their affairs," in this busy nineteenth century, they are not quite so ready to listen to admonitions and enquiries as their progenitors of the seventeenth century were; the crucial difficulty arises from change of circumstances, and the method by which I propose to meet it will be the subject of this paper. The great object to be kept in view is to bring to practical acceptance and realization the Christianity which the Church presents among all those classes of our population who are living without any true recognition of Christ and of His claims upon their hearts and lives, and thus to bring all the people into living and active relations with Christ in and through His Body the Church, leading all the members of the Church up to that standard of Christian living in which there shall be "no place left for error in religion or for viciousness of life." No object less exalting and thorough than this can lead to the most satisfactory results. The parish priest must have a full consciousness of what was meant when it was said to him, "receive the Holy Ghost," or "take thou authority." Nothing can be more productive of good feeling, united action, warm friendship, mutual respect and love; nothing is more calculated to keep away all bitterness of feeling and misunderstanding; nothing can better enable the minister to know his people and them to know him; no opportunity can be better devised for the purpose of getting hearts, and for quietly instilling deeper thoughts and more complete teaching than is possible in the publicity of the pulpit, than house to house visitation. 1. Success in visitation depends—firstly—upon the power of sympathy; some possess this naturally more strongly than others, but no doubt it may be acquired like every spiritual gift—by prayer and a spiritual life. How beautifully has Mrs. Hemans expressed it:

"We pine for kindred natures
To mingle with our own."

Or Pope:

"Never elated while one man's oppress'd,
Never dejected while another's bless'd."

Or Goldsmith:

"He watch'd and wept, and pray'd and felt for all."

2. Success in visitation depends—secondly—upon the power of inspiring confidence. The parish priest must not be merely a kind and sympathetic friend, but must speak and act with such firm dignity that his office may be apparent, and that he may appear worthy of the confidence of his parishioners. In his visitations among the people, he must go not merely as a friend with the ordinary sympathy which every Christian heart must feel for ignorance, spiritual insensibility and physical or mental suffering. He must go officially, he must go as sent, in the fulfilment of the functions divinely given; such a consciousness of ministerial character will give him confidence and courage; when he thinks of himself, he will say, "who is sufficient for these things?" But when he considers that he is the representative of Christ Himself, he will say, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." The chief difficulty of an ordinary pastoral call is to make it pastoral. In too many cases it has been said, "the parson called to-day, but he said nothing to do one any good, so he might as well have stayed away." When such a statement is made before a whole household, confidence in the sincerity of the parson will be sadly lacking. "The people must know him to be a man of God, must on all his life and habits be such an one as his people would care to send for. A secular habit, or manner, or dress, anything which could give the impression of frivolity or of unreality, is a sad bar to that confidence on the part of the people, without which it is hard to do much." 3. Success in visitations depends—thirdly—upon much prayer. Prayer is the secret of success in this as in every division of his work. The ember seasons should be used as a special opportunity of moving his congregations to ask gifts and graces for himself, for those already in the ministry, as well as for those about to be ordained.

"[Prayer] moves the hand which moves the world."

"They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

4. Success in visitation depends—fourthly—upon it being done systematically and with regularity. I advise a definite and systematic visitation of each farm house twice a year. Due notice should be given of the day and hour you purpose making the visit. I submit for inspection my last autumn's list

of pastoral calls, which was tacked up on the notice board in the vestibule of the church some two weeks before I began my rounds. Such a list should not be arranged suddenly. It must be the result of mature reflection, in view of all the conditions of his flock; without it his success, even with this system, can only be partial and temporary. The day and hour for the visitation having been arranged, the priest should gather the household together, and after a friendly intercourse, hold a short service, carefully avoiding anything which may give the least warrant for suspecting that they are being specially attacked. My own practice is to read the Epistle and Gospel proper for the day, a short comment followed by the Apostles' Creed, all standing and repeating it as in church, with suitable prayers, from "Pastor in Parochia," by Hume, then taking my departure immediately. This system and practice I have steadily and consistently acted on during the past nine years. I believe the man who may follow me in my present charge will per force be compelled to adopt this scheme if he would desire to please and hold his people. Without this systematic mode of visitation there is a danger that the Church's system might become grandmotherly. Under the old system or lack of system, who are the people who usually receive you? They are almost always the women. The men are always at work, but the pre-arranging for your visit will enable all the members of the family to so order their engagements as to keep themselves free for that hour. At all of my visitations this autumn, with but two exceptions, I had the men of the house present, and I may just say here, if we meet the men in a simply manly, unpretending way, studiously avoiding either lecturing on the one hand, or patronizing on the other, they will respond to our friendly advances. Working men are not mealy-mouthed in their way of talking about things, and do not approach a subject in velvet slippers. One factor for effective work is, then, a plan or policy to be steadily held, and on which to act consistently. Some clergymen are apparently very earnest and unremitting in labours, and yet they lack in effectiveness. They are constantly busied in hurrying from place to place, visiting here and visiting there, yet their work does not tell, they see no permanent results. It is but a treadmill sort of labour; they spend much of their strength for naught.

I am assuming that the visitor has tact; it is the one great gift for which he must not neglect to pray, if he undertakes visitations. Wisely conducted, I cannot help believing that such a visitation as I have outlined would be found of immense value in most country parishes—first to the priest himself, who would gain clearer insight into the ways and thoughts of his people, and make his general work more objective, and therefore more inviting. The drawback to country life is its indistinctness, its want of spur, its lack of stimulating novelty, the tremendous strain upon the resources of the solitary priest, who yet finds but apparently small returns for the personal effort, the deadly sameness of meeting the well-known faces week after week, unrelieved by the fact that no sooner has acquaintance begun to ripen into friendship, than intercourse is broken by removal in a certain percentage of cases. All these are factors in country work of which the city parson knows next to nothing. None the less do they make it advisable that the subjects of them should seriously endeavour to minimize their evil effects. The people also would gain: the trouble taken to reach them, the attempt at dealing with particularly local circumstances, the fellowship spiritually, now alas! but too frequently conspicuous by its absence, which we vainly hope would result, would in time impress the rural minds, and lead them to think seriously about the highest things of life. One benefit I am certain would accrue to parson and people, the cultivation of a common speech: no small gain when we remember how much of an ordinary sermon is lost upon average congregations because the preacher and the people employ different vocabularies in towns and country places alike. If my brethren were to take the trouble now and then to examine some of their less cultured hearers as to the meaning they attach to simple theological terms and Biblical phrases in frequent use, I rather think the result would be a revelation, and not at all a pleasant one. Sermons are accounted dull, very often, only because the hearers have no exact elementary knowledge of the subject matter or of the terms used. Interest may be quickened by novelty, by methods of presentation or arrangement of argument, and by illustration; but even these will not create interest, nor will interest consort with ignorance. It does not matter how little the knowledge may be; given its existence, and it may be increased and encouraged by diligent cultivation of that knowledge; the educational method which fails to realize the fragments of information possessed by the hearers will meet with no return. We must always proceed from the known to the unknown; a veritable common place but this, how often entirely forgotten by would-be

teachers. The visitation I have in view ought to enable the parson to gauge the known in substance and form, and proceed accordingly. The occurrence of some points, too long for detailed explanation at the visitation, might be advantaged by inviting those present to attend church next Sunday and hear something more about it; but I need not labour the suggestion; I have said enough. Men learn best by experience and failures; twelve months' trial of visitation will amply suffice to show whether they are worth continuing or not, and if they fail to work, something worth the knowing will have been learnt, and the time not altogether wasted. There is but one point more I should notice, and that is the visitation of the sick. As my predecessors doubtless will have dealt fully with this important feature of our work, I will merely pass it over by saying that it is the most difficult part of the parish priest's office, because he must depend almost entirely upon his own resources in doing it. In public services he has clear and sufficient guides in the forms appointed by the Church; in parish organization he may gain advice, but in the sick room he stands alone, and is called upon day by day to deal with a great variety of cases, many of which are of distinct peculiarity, and all of which need different handling if his work is to be successful. Suggestions.—Use all legitimate means to "hold" your people. Here (show card) is one effective means, confirmation reminders sent to them through the post on the anniversary of their confirmation day; this will keep an avenue open for you to write and affectionately bring home to your parishioners from time to time the need perhaps of a more consistent life, or a word of encouragement which often makes the man. Let the pastor on all occasions, when he visits his people, maintain the most absolute politeness and decorum, taking no kind of liberty, nor what is called "making himself at home," smoking, drinking, playing cards, etc., etc., with those into whose houses his office gives him entry. There is no greater mistake than to imagine that such familiarity makes friends, or that roughness or an off-hand manner are acceptable to any, whether rich or poor; as a matter of fact, the rural mind is singularly sensitive in matters of this kind, and no clergyman should attempt to enter a house, however humble, without knocking at the door, or take a chair without being invited to do so, or remain with covered head. Precautions and warnings.—There are some families on whom the parish priest naturally leans for counsel and support in his work, but be on your guard lest you should be a burden to them, or lest you should occupy too much of that time, which to many is their means of living, or lest you should thrust yourself upon them on those occasions which may be called the reserved or closed times of a household; and let it be said by all of his parishioners that he "owes no man anything." Above all, let him never, on any pretence whatever, lay hand on the other sex, however old or however young; and lastly, beware of controversy. Take heed—it is a serious matter—that when the people listen to us, we do not sow seed of sectarianism within the Church, create suspicion, and by inflammable words and sentiments, make them war-like instead of Christ-like; many a thoughtless youth and old fool have in their own parishes sown the wind and reaped to themselves the whirlwind. We are ministers of Christ not of Satan, who is the author of confusion. Let us see to it that it is the gospel of peace, unity and glad tidings we talk about, or else we may be as guilty as was Nero the tyrant, who, when Rome was starving, sent his ships to Alexandria where there was corn in plenty, not for wheat, but for sand to scatter in the arena for his gladiators. Ah, there be some who seem to do so, scattering the floor of their sanctuary not with the good corn of the kingdom, upon which the souls of God's people may feed and grow thereby, but with sand of controversy, which no child of God can ever receive to his soul's profit. In conclusion, let me say it becomes all our clergy to be alive with the life of the Church; to let it call forth and determine their activities to help to increase its mighty volume and power, and thus to have their own part in bringing on the glorious days which are in store—if she is faithful—for this Canadian branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Home & Foreign Church News

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS.

NOVA SCOTIA.

FREDERICK COURTNEY, D.D., BISHOP, HALIFAX.

PARRSBORO'.—Rev. J. Ambrose, B.A., D.C.L., has been appointed *locum tenens* in this parish.

GLACE BAY, C.B.—The Rev. A. E. Andrew, B.A., commenced his work in this parish the first of the year.