

THE VAGABOND.

There, too, is the vagabond. In six years 18,838 nights' lodgings have been given at the Hartford police station, an average of over three thousand a year, and this is probably not far from the record of other towns of its size. How many of our clergymen have ever looked in at the temporary home of these people, seen its sights, smelled its smells? How many have seriously pondered what is meant by that ceaseless procession of misery more hopeless and more pitiable because for the most part so needlessly and so complacently indulged in. Those men are mostly in the prime of life; and apart from ailments the result of intemperance, and disease the result of licentiousness, are perhaps above the average in vigor. Might they possibly be so wisely punished as to be brought back to industry and productiveness from their present parasite condition? Have they peradventure souls worth saving and capable of salvation? Cities build new police stations, and the sketch plans include a room for tramps. Is that room to be only a new and improved edition of the old, or will it include at least the two elements now so generally prized in dealing with the idle and the criminous, the discipline of labor and the discipline of cleanliness? Here is practical politics! Has the clergyman no business with it?

THE SOCIAL EVIL.

A word about the social evil. I have in my possession a detailed statement of the streets, numbers, and names of proprietors of 12 houses of prostitution now or lately known to exist in Hartford, thought to average eight inmates each. Besides this the street and number of 42 lodging houses or apartments where a total of 56 abandoned women ply their trade. In a number of other buildings, of which four are specified by name, the same authority * estimates that there are 75 sporadic cases, making a total of 237 cases of the more orderly sort. Besides, there is a considerable contingent of this unhappy tribe of women who have reached, or are fast reaching, the lowest round in their ladder, that deeper depth which, alas! is possible to all degradation. They are disgraced members of a degraded profession, frequently before the police court as common drunkards or common prostitutes. I make no mention now of the probably still more formidable number of those who lend themselves with more or less frequency, but under circumstances of less publicity, to the work of prostitution. I only refer to the professional class. What is to be done with them? There is no lack of knowledge of their habitat at police headquarters. Only, the officers are embarrassed with the problem what is best to be done. And it is not so simple as it seems to be to some. If you merely "break up" one of these houses the inmates go somewhere else. Is it not possible there may be something in the contention made by members of the force who have had long experience, and whom I at least be-

* Mr. Thayer, Superintendent of the Organized Charity Association.