

ART. VI.—CANON JACKSON'S "RECOLLECTIONS."

A Pastor's Recollections. By Rev. Canon JACKSON, St. James's, Leeds. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row. Leeds: W. Brierley, 2, Bond Street.

THESE "Recollections" are a collection of short tracts written in former years, and now republished in their present form, giving experiences of ministerial work in the town of Leeds. Canon Jackson was ordained in the year 1844, and served his apprenticeship in the ministry under Dr. Hook, having been curate and clerk in orders of the Leeds Parish Church during the twelve years from 1844 to 1856. In 1846 he became incumbent of St. James's—a proprietary church without any assigned parochial district, and within a stone's-throw of the Parish Church of Leeds—a post which he held for ten years without severing his connection with the Parish Church. In 1856 he left the Parish Church, and devoted himself exclusively to the work at St. James's—exclusively, that is, as far as the work in the Parish Church was considered, but not in any other sense, for he has been connected with almost every effort of philanthropy and Christian usefulness which has been started in Leeds during his long ministry. There is hardly a public institution in the town that does not count him among its friends. When the history of the town of Leeds comes to be written, his name will hold a prominent place in the record of the last half-century. It is not, however, with his general philanthropic work or religious influence that the present "Recollections" are concerned. They are reminiscences of the pastoral side of his ministerial work, and refer mainly to his experiences amongst the people who were brought into connection with that church, which, through his strong personal influence, has come to occupy a remarkable place in the religious life of Leeds as a centre of evangelical religion. St. James's Church was originally a Lady Huntingdon Chapel, which passed by purchase into the hands of Church people in the beginning of the century. Canon Jackson's connection with the place commenced in 1833, when he became a Sunday-school teacher in the church of which he afterwards became incumbent. His work at St. James's has been continuous since that time. He still occupies the pulpit, and preaches to a large congregation, and directs the movements of a devoted body of workers. It is no uncommon sight at St. James's to see as many as 500 communicants assemble at a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Of the kind of work and the spirit which has made St. James's Church, Leeds, what it is, these little reminiscences will give the reader a good idea. They are twelve in number, and an

enumeration of some of their titles will give the best general idea of their contents. "The Quaint Couple," "The Snowdens," "The Old Shoemaker," are titles which suggest their contents. These tracts are simple narratives of actual experience of some of the persons with whom the writer was brought into contact in the course of his pastoral visitation, and are illustrations of the kind of materials of which the congregation of St. James's has been gradually built up. "The Germany Man" is the title of another tract, and the very name is in itself an evidence to the discerning mind that these are not fancy sketches, but are drawn from real life. The touching story of "The New Curate" obviously belongs to the life of the Leeds Parish Church rather than to St. James's. "The Hard Request," "Ash Wednesday, or the Wages of Sin," "Put by," are other titles. "Esther Raine and her Teacher" is a vindication of Sunday-school work in narrative form. "The Fiddle's Best Tune," "The House on Fire," and "The White Hat," describe the miscellaneous contents of another of these tracts. Their lively titles will remind those who are personally acquainted with the venerable Canon that the earnestness of his life-work has not destroyed his power of appreciating the lighter aspects of life. He is a man who in the hours of relaxation can tell many a good story, and can exchange a joke with the quickest and most light-hearted companions.

"The Quaint Couple" is No. 1 of the series. It is perhaps as good an example as we can select as an illustration of these "Recollections." It is a story, simply told, of two simple and lovely lives. John and Mary were, indeed, lovely in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.

"What did you say you wanted?" I asked, and so putting my writing on one side, to have a fuller look at my visitors. They were a man and woman, both in advanced life. Let me first describe him. Imagine, then, reader, a little old man, thin and wiry-looking, with a countenance wrinkled and puckered up, and strong, grizzled hair and whiskers. He was attired in an old-fashioned blue dress coat, with brass buttons, and very narrow tails; a yellowish waistcoat, and trousers that fitted so tight they looked like pantaloons; gray stockings, and particularly well-blackened shoes. To complete the figure, you must conceive him with a hat that scarcely covered his head, and yet both hat and clothes all as clean and evidently carefully brushed as they possibly could be, and you have John Pallister before you.

And now for his companion, who by the manner she holds his arm must be a person in feeble health, and his wife. She ought to have been seen to be fairly appreciated. Was there ever old age more sweet and peaceful! Like her husband, neat in the extreme, and clean beyond what our smoky atmosphere and dirty streets would seem to allow, her brown stuff dress, and her simple shawl the pattern of other days, her close black bonnet, and her snow-white muslin cap; but above all, her face so calm, so gentle, with her flaxen hair yet without the least tinge of gray, parted meekly over her forehead; such was Mary Pallister, as dear and

true in her inward character as her outward appearance was signally prepossessing.

Mary answered my inquiry, not John; and I at once understood who was the presiding genius of my two visitors. "We want to see if we can get a hymn-book, sir, such as are used in your church."

In due course the hymn-book was provided and paid for. "No, sir, we do not wish to have it given; we came here to buy it; John has the money in his pocket." The book was carefully folded in a clean blue cotton handkerchief. "Take care thou dost not drop it, John," and the visitors departed. Their visit was of course returned.

'As might be expected, I was heartily welcome. Mary was sitting in a tall, box-like chair by the fireside. John was toasting bread for the tea, and the cups and saucers were all ready on the table.

I must be seated, they both exclaimed. I should not at all interrupt them; and if I did stop their tea a little bit, what did that matter? Would I have a cup?

And then Mary said, "And I should like you, sir, to hear John play; he has learnt ever so many of the tunes in the hymn-book." John blushed, and said something about being "nought of a player where a player came," and rather seemed to wish to avoid the exhibition of his abilities. But Mary was not to be denied, and so her husband had to put down his toasting-fork; making this compromise, however, that he "should nobbut play T'old Hundred now, not being quite at home with t'new tunes yet."

It certainly was a strange performance! The instrument was itself a most rare one; and it would be vain to describe the kind of harmony which John educed from it, as he thrummed with his old fingers on the keys, and worked duly through the well-known tune.

Mary listened with evidently great satisfaction, saying with more animation than her usual quiet manner exhibited, as John rose up to return to his bread-toasting: "Ah, sir, would you believe it? he made the piano himself only a year or two since, and he has since then learnt to play on it too, all by himself."

Yes, John was a wonderful genius. Not only was the piano his manufacture, but the cottage showed marks of his ingenuity and handiwork everywhere. The pictures were framed by him; the books on the shelves received their somewhat cumbrous bindings at his hands; he always repaired both his own watch and the American clock, which stood on the drawers; he mended his own clothes, which no doubt accounted for their extended term of existence and use; he did the larger part of the washing on washing-days, as Mary was not very strong. In fact he could do anything; make bread, cook, clean the house, make all sorts of wooden watch-cases and nicknacks; and really well deserved, what I used to say jokingly of him in after-days, that over the house-door there ought to be a signboard, with the inscription—

JOHN PALLISTER,
UNIVERSAL MAKER AND MENDER,
LIVES HERE.

The room of the good old couple became the place of a weekly cottage meeting, and a little centre of light and goodness in the neighbourhood.

But in the course of years both John and Mary became more and more oppressed by the infirmities of age. Mary had always been feeble, and

frequently very ill with spasms. Then John was her tender woman-like nurse. They had a store of simple medicines, and were both, but especially Mary, amazingly clever in regard to "herb tea," "real, good mint-water," and the virtues of "paregoric"; and so they for awhile did without the doctor. But this was not always to be so; Mary's attacks would not always yield to the nostrums in the corner cupboard; and John after awhile began to display the more serious symptoms of chronic bronchitis. And then Mary was nurse; forgetting her lameness, and her great debility, she hung over her husband with unabating care, as, struggling for breath, he sat up night and day in bed.

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At the beginning of 1867, however, John passed away—in peace, but with great penitence of spirit—relying wholly, as he said, "on the blood of Jesus." He was seventy-five.

Everything that kindness and thoughtfulness could do was willingly done for the widow. But her widowhood was not for long. We read:

And so time passed on, More visits of Christian friends, more communions, more weakness, the same sweet placidity of face and deportment, the same trust in the Lord, "for I *know* He will never leave me nor forsake me. He says He won't; and He can't break His word." And then in the fearfully hot days of July, 1868, just sixteen months after her husband, we laid her beside him.

And there they rest together in the cemetery, a quaint old couple; but very good, very gentle, and very Christ-like!

St. James's Church has a hymn-book of its own which contains, in addition to some of the standard evangelical hymns, a large collection of Canon Jackson's own composition. Most of these hymns were written for special occasions in the life of the congregation, and are associated in the minds of its members with past events of joy or sorrow. Two of these hymns appropriately find a place at the end of the story of the quaint couple. We venture to print one of them. It illustrates a truth which is often overlooked by modern hymn-writers and hymn-collectors, that it is on simplicity and directness, and on a capacity for individual application, more than on other qualities that are sometimes more highly thought of, that the success of a hymn depends. The hymn is entitled "They Sleep in Jesus":

WHERE are the old, old faces,
Those that we loved to see?
How sad the vacant places,
Where dear ones used to be.
Where is the cordial greeting,
The warm affection's glow,
That marked each happy meeting
With comrades now laid low?

And yet for dear ones sleeping,
Who rest beneath the sod,
There is no cause for weeping,
If that they rest in God;

They now behold the Saviour,
 Their Bridegroom, Lord and Friend,
 Enjoy His love and favour,
 A love that cannot end !

But whilst, without repining,
 We leave them with the Lord,
 In faith and hope reclining
 Upon His certain word,
 That they who sleep in Jesus,
 We soon shall meet again,
 When Jesus shall release us
 From sin, and grief, and pain.

Yet still each sweet reunion,
 Brings back the dear ones gone,
 And fond hearts seek communion
 With the departed one,
 We miss the old, old faces,
 Those whom we loved to see,
 We mourn the vacant places
 Where dear ones used to be !

We have said that "The New Curate" does not refer to life at St. James's. It will interest many readers, as giving a view of the working of Leeds Parish Church in the time of Dr. Hook, as well as for the pathetic story which it contains. The time was the time of the Irish famine and the fever that attended it. The new curate was himself an immigrant from the Church of that distressful country, which, in spite of her faults and misfortunes, of which her English brethren are often not slow to remind her, sends a large contingent of men to recruit all parties in the English Church :

The Church affairs of a large parish are quite a world in themselves, and often a very absorbing world. What with services in church—which in the parish I am about to speak of came four times every day, along with the administration of baptism and churchings and the burial of the dead, the care of large day and Sunday schools, the visiting of the numerous sick and the relief of the poor, together with the part to be taken in the various religious societies—the minds of those officially connected with the church were kept in a continual occupation, and their time always found too little in comparison with the duties to be performed.

Let us take an ordinary day. Several of us who were curates lived together, in a very simple way, near to the church with which we were connected. We lived together for the sake both of economy and of Christian fellowship and support; for we wanted any money which was not needed for our absolute sustenance to meet the various calls from the sick and poor around us, and we were often greatly tried and perplexed with the cases with which we had to deal, so as to make the counsel of the more experienced a valuable common benefit.

We rose at six, and within a few minutes were assembled for a short service, wherein we blessed God for our preservation through the night, and dedicated ourselves afresh to His service for that day. At half-past seven two of us were at church beginning the early morning service,

which was regularly attended by a number of earnest souls, both young and old, rich and poor, some of whom came from a considerable distance. Before breakfast we had our own family worship. At nine the day-schools had to be opened with prayer, and afterwards religious instruction given to the elder scholars. From school the transition was naturally to the district, where the anxiously-expected visits were made until half-past ten, at which hour those of us who had not already been to morning prayers had to hasten to church to take the ordinary forenoon service, preceded by marriages and followed by baptisms and churchings, while the others continued to visit in their districts. In the afternoon at three came baptisms again, with churchings and burials and full choral service; the latter to be repeated at half-past seven, but now only read, for the convenience of working people and others who could not attend earlier. At the last service in church only one curate was usually present, the rest being otherwise fully occupied—some with classes of candidates for confirmation, or of communicants, others at evening schools, but all in one way or other. It was usually ten o'clock before we had wearily reached home to eat our simple supper, have our night devotions, and go gladly to rest. Such was the life of a curate in the large parish of —, as I knew it nearly thirty years ago; and such, doubtless, is it in many places now. Every day, as it has been shown, had its full share of work, and Sunday, however sacred, was no Sabbath, being the day least of all the seven a day of rest.

It was one day at the beginning of the year 1847, when most of the curates had already assembled in the vestry to be ready for the afternoon service—a service at which all of us made a point of being present, and which was largely attended also by the laity—that the vicar entered, accompanied by a gentleman of very striking appearance. He was above the usual height, strongly made, and of good figure, apparently about five-and-twenty (though really not quite so old as that), dressed in the mode then adopted by young men of fashionable life, and with somewhat of a foreign air, which latter was accounted for by his having just returned from a lengthened tour on the Continent.

"Let me introduce to you, gentlemen," said the vicar, "one who is about to become a fellow-worker with us—Mr. —. He is to be ordained, all being well, in the coming Lent."

We looked again at the stranger, and wondered whether the handsome, fashionable young man had formed any correct idea of the life he was about to enter.

After ordination, and when the work was fairly tackled, the newcomer showed the stuff that he was really made of:

There was the same lofty, noble bearing; but otherwise all was changed. Never did anyone seek to realize the idea of the sacred calling more than he did. He was the first and the last in all our numerous and heavy engagements, and never appeared to think he had done enough. In our daily duties there was that which tried both mind and body, but he seemed to rejoice in labours which by others were felt to be trying and severe.

Then came the fever:

It was the year of the Irish famine. . . . The immigrants brought with them not only hunger, but death. In a very short time the frightful Irish fever was epidemic in all the lower parts of the town. It was a dreadful time. We then buried all the pauper dead from the parish church, and I well remember that, on one afternoon, *twenty-three bodies*

were lying side by side as I entered the church to read that part of the Burial Service which is there said.

As might be supposed, the time was an especially heavy one for the curates who laboured in that part of the town where these people had settled themselves, and where the fever was raging, and nowhere was this so much the case as in that district which was under the charge of our new curate, and the senior clergyman with whom he was associated ; a most earnest and devoted man, who has since gone to his eternal rest.

The young and ardent worker took the fever himself, and gradually grew worse. Everyone did his best for him. He was removed to a healthy and airy house in the country, but it was of no avail :

He always, however, appeared conscious when the prayers were said by his bedside, as they were several times daily, generally repeated the responses, and invariably at the conclusion asked, "Are the poor people all taken to the hospital yet?" Then at times he would be highly excited, wandering and talking about the sick people, and calling for help to get them out of the cellars, and exclaiming against the cruel manner in which they were neglected. At other times he was in church beginning the service, or wanting "to read the lesson, only that someone had taken the Book away." And then he would relapse again into the comatose state, as the doctors called it, and lie for awhile still, seeming wholly unconscious of everything around him.

But it ended. One evening his strength appeared much more prostrated than before, while his mind seemed to have recovered a good deal of clearness and vigour, and he asked the usual question after prayers with still greater earnestness. Having received an explicit assurance that the poor sufferers were now duly attended to, he murmured, "Thank God ! I am very weary ; I should like to die" ; and his head, which he had partly raised, sank down heavily on the pillow.

"The Old Shoemaker" opens with a description of a service in a church which we again recognise as the Parish Church of Leeds, after its restoration by Dr. Hook. At the old shoemaker's house, every Tuesday night, was held a meeting of tract distributors, all working men. We cannot quote at length from this interesting tract, but we give the concluding paragraph and the short postscript attached to it. The latter is especially worthy of notice as an illustration of really effective work bearing fruit to perfection. Canon Jackson says :

Who can tell what may have been, and what yet may be, the results of the quiet, consistent piety of those sixteen working men, most of them advanced in years, and yet willing to give their time, labour, and means, so far as they had means to spare, for the kingdom of God's sake—their own lives thus supporting their Christian profession, and giving examples so greatly needed amongst our working men, and also, let it be said, so highly appreciated by them.

The postscript runs thus :

It ought perhaps to be stated that, from the families of this little group of working men, no fewer than eleven duly qualified schoolmasters and four laborious clergymen were added to the working staff of the church.

In "Esther Raine and her Teacher" the narrative is prefaced

by some remarks on the controversy as to the value of Sunday-schools. They will be worth quoting, as giving the deliberate judgment of one who has had so large and successful experience :

To those of us who have long been engaged in Sunday-school teaching, nothing can sound more strange and startling than such expressions and statements as have of late been uttered concerning this blessed work. To hear professing Christians ask, "Are Sunday-schools of any use?" is a question we should never have expected.

Well may we ask, What do these opponents of Sunday-schools expect? Do they look for Sunday-schools bringing *all* the children belonging to them to be true and living Christians? What ground have they for expecting such a result? If the ministry of the Gospel itself has but in general such feeble results, why should the Sunday-school be condemned because it is not more successful?

The proper question to be asked surely is this: Are Sunday-schools, *when properly organized and worked*, producing that amount of good which may fairly be considered a compensation for the labour bestowed on them? Are they doing a work—a really beneficial work—for the masses of the population, which no other instrumentality attempts to do?

We might easily multiply these quotations did space allow; but we have given enough to indicate the general character of this interesting collection of reminiscences, and to secure for them the notice which from their unpretending form they might have failed to win. The narrative form and the lessons which they convey would render some of them suitable for distribution as tracts.

C.

Short Notices.

The Prophecies of Jeremiah. Expounded by Dr. C. VON ORELLI. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

With this new volume of Messrs. Clark's "Foreign Theological Library" we are much pleased. It is quite as valuable as the learned commentator's work on Isaiah, lately commended in these pages.

A Catechism on the Church Catechism, the Order of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany. With illustrations taken from Holy Scripture. By Rev. John THORNTON, M.A., Vicar of Ewell. Elliot Stock, 1889.

This book, so far as we know, is unique. The questions are printed on one page, and the Scripture illustrations on the other. The questions and answers are simple, and, as a rule, very clear.

The Rectory Children. By Mrs. MOLESWORTH. With illustrations by Walter Crane. Macmillan and Co.

A charming book for children; delightful in every way.