

The Club Smoking Room

By HAVANA

NOTICE," remarked the barrister, "that both Maori and Methodist are protesting against the smallness of clerical stipends, and that the Anglican bishops the world over are bewailing the scarcity of candidates for ordination, and the steady decrease in the number of graduates. The wonder to my mind is that they ever get any men at all. Not only do the clergy get miserable pay, but what they do get is always uncertain. A family or two moving from a parish, a succession of wet Sundays, or a dozen other causes over which they have no control, may reduce almost to vanishing point the beggarly pittance allowed them by their flock. Then, their stipend has often to be raised by appeals to the charity of the congregation, by bazaars, concerts, and socials, or by endeavouring to secure large congregations, and, consequently, increased offertories, by musical attractions introduced into the church services. In my own profession, a man is always assured of his bread and butter, and he has a chance of rising to something good. A parson's chances of obtaining a bare existence are always precarious, and neither genius, ability, nor hard work will ever enable him to be assured of a competency, much less obtain an income at all adequate to his position. The Anglicans, who are supposed to be the wealthiest body, are, I believe, the most niggardly as regards the stipends they pay their clergy."

"I fancy," put in the journalist, "that it would be a revelation to some people if they knew how some of the clergy are paid. I know one man, who is married and has a family, who is paid the princely sum of £50 a year. He has a house, which he built himself, and a small garden, in which he grows vegetables. But he has not a penny beyond his £50, and he has not been able to make any provision for the future. I know another who has £70, and another who has attained to the comparatively large income of £90. And out of this they are expected to subscribe to everything that is going, to keep open house for the whole parish, to help the sick and indigent, to be always well dressed, and maintain a good social position, and to provide for the keep of a horse, and sometimes a buggy. Goodness knows how they do it. Many of them, I believe, are literally starving. I remember once I was sub-editing the country notes for a paper, and we got a paragraph about a social given to the vicar of the parish. It said how highly he was esteemed by everybody, how hard he had worked, and how greatly the whole district had benefited by his labours. The people of the place, it went on to say, were one and all devoted to him, and would do anything for him. The next paragraph vouchsafed the information that the stipend for the preceding twelve months was £45 in arrears, and there was very little prospect of its being paid. I altered the local colouring a bit, and stuck the par in the funny column. I got in a bit of a row over it, but I really couldn't help it. It was the finest piece of unconscious humour I had seen for some time."

"If you really want to see something of the methods of church finance," replied a prominent business man, "you must wait till you are elected Churchwarden. I held that office once in a parish where we had one of the best vicars I have ever met. Everybody had the greatest respect for him, and one and all professed themselves as willing to do anything in the world for him. It happened that just at this time our finances got into low water through two of our best supporters leaving the district, and through an unprecedented spell of wet weather and decreased congregations. My fellow-Churchwarden and I accordingly had to canvas the parish for extra subscriptions towards the stipend fund. We naturally expected generous support. But we were met with either flat refusals or grudging doles. Some who had been loudest in their praise of the vicar began to discover unsuspected faults in his character as soon as they were asked for an extra half-crown or so. I tell you it fairly sickened me, and I determined I would never take the job on again. I would sooner see a son of mine cracking stones on the road, or see him a gumdigger, than see him a parson. The poorest labourer can at least maintain his self-respect, but I'm blown if you can when you have to cadge for your pay like any beggar at the street corner."

"I think," interrupted a well-known member of Synod, "that in the Church, as in other walks of life, we do not sufficiently encourage native talent. When any living which offers anything like reasonable pay falls vacant, a man from Home is selected to fill it. These men only come out for five years, and then they go back again. The New Zealander is relegated to the back-blocks without a hope or prospect of ever getting anything better. Goodness knows, there is little enough in any case that a man can attain to; even the best of what we facetiously call 'livings' are not livings in any real sense of the word. But there are a few parishes that provide a man with enough to keep him in food and raiment, and it is rather hard on men who have been all their life in the colony that these parishes should invariably be given to outsiders. We have nothing to stimulate a man's ambition, and you cannot offer a man any promotion worth having, because financially a curate is probably much better off than a vicar, and it is no surprise to me that our men are leaving the colony for other parts of the world, or that the supply of candidates is diminishing so rapidly. People expect the clergy to be well educated, to be of good social position, to have taken a good degree at Oxford or Cambridge, to be well read in all the latest thought of the day, to be orators, and to be given to an unstinted hospitality. ... the same time, they expect them to live on less than many people would devote to the keep of a horse or a large dog. I fancy they think a parson is like a greyhound—that he can't be properly trained unless all his ribs are showing."

"There is no doubt," said the padre, "that the supply of university graduates for the Church is falling off year by year. For a brilliant man, with intellectual and oratorical gifts, to enter the ministry means a very great sacrifice of worldly prospects. At the Bar, in the Senate, or in almost any walk of life, you will find that intellect, education and eloquence, combined, lead on to fortune, success and fame. In the Church they lie neglected, and their possessor is left to starve. Unless we are to have a celibate clergy, a man must consider his wife and family as well as himself. There never was a time when there was more need for highly-trained and educated men in the Church. The intellectual portion of the laity are being left as sheep without a shepherd, whilst the clergy, for the most part, show a tendency to fall back on dogma and authority, rather than on making an attempt to honestly meet the difficulties so many feel. There will always be men willing to devote their lives and talents to the cause of true religion, whatever worldly sacrifice such devotion may involve, but you cannot expect parents to encourage their sons to think of taking up the work of the ministry, and to spend hundreds, or it may be, thousands, of pounds on their education, when the only prospect is the prospect of starvation. I do feel most strongly that we want to get the pick of our own men, and not rely on men from Home; and that we want to offer them more encouragement than we do. The Presbyterians are doing their utmost to raise the standard of educational requirements for their ministers, and to give them fairly adequate stipends. So are most of the Free Churches. Unless the Church of England makes a similar effort there is a grave danger that she will lose the intellectual pre-eminence that she has so long enjoyed."

The Ideal of Motherhood.

(By Rangatira.)

Perhaps there is no subject a man approaches with greater deference than the subject of motherhood. He understands it only from his own side. He sees it; watches it; draws from it his own sure conclusion—that it is best and brightest thing about him; that by it unsuspecting women wield the world's power. He sees too, and wonders why, that women don't value it as he thinks they should. He looks back to his own mother, and sees what she has done for him, and meant to him, and he again wonders why that, before which he holds his soul in wonderment, and worship, is so lightly valued and neglected by so many women round him. The girls he meets don't seem to give the future a thought, and as he works and pleasures beside them, he comes to the conclusion that the sweet, all-important work which lies beyond their marriages, must all hinge on instinct for its welfare. If he be a parson or a doctor or lawyer, he wonders, until he understands the consequence of girls' delicate indifference, then he blames or pities. Until a man cares for a woman, probably he does not trouble his head—it isn't his business to mind the world's making; let old Nature do that. When

he cares, the woman he chooses, of course, is wise in womanhood. The woman herself possibly is wise, but probably is not so until the possibilities of her existence definitely guide her naturally true instinct in the selection of "values."

Roughly, a man's ideal of woman comprises four essential capacities—wife, another, friend and housekeeper; perhaps treasurer of his possessions, heart and household, would better express his want. And in each character he hopes and hopes, but in his inner soul, believes she will be sweet, faithful, true. Also he wants comeliness of a physical and mental kind, which results in brightness of nature and nicety of surroundings. Given these essentials and their accompanying character, and the normal man finds his ideal.

A man can easily paraphrase in a paragraph his womanly ideal, but he cannot even faintly guess what her ideal for herself is. Judging from the frequency of divorce, and the average marriage, a man is forced to the conclusion that there must be a lack of settled knowledge of what a man needs of woman, and the lack of this knowledge shows up sharply against the background of so many marriages.

Motherhood is the noblest institution of nature, and ethically the earliest, for the evolution of motherhood and ethics took place side by side, the latter finding birth in the former. Long before the birth of conjugal love, motherly was at work making the race human. The instinct of reproduction, maternity, motherhood, is the mainspring in nature's machine; from it all else radiates.

In normal people the bond between mother and child is infinitely stronger than that between husband and wife, and is the soundest surety against any slipping of the marriage knot.

Men read with non-understanding eyes of the number of infants who die yearly, who are abandoned, who are carelessly brought up. They, strong in the one idea of the strength and purity of the mother instinct, do not grasp the fact that something more than instinct is needed for the rearing of a child.

Why do women pretend not to care for children? Why do they flippantly boast that they have modern ideas on the subject of the emancipation of women. One notices generally that young girls and women without children talk this wild, unwise sort of chatter. Of course, deep in the hearts of all straight-minded women the reverent honour of motherhood must lie hid, for only in a small minority of cases does Nature fail to do her work. But it is a pity, a great mistake, that women pretend to be irreverent. Nothing seems so economically foolish and out of joint, as that don't care attitude they seem to take pride in. To outward appearances women take a cheap view of that to which even a grey bachelor takes his hat off.

In all probability the world's social salvation could be compassed in one generation if maternity could be placed on its true and rightful basis. It is the widest and most powerful moral force in the world. Nature gave it first place, and man (and woman, too, of late years) has hampered it by ignorance and non-realisation of its power. Of course, the rightful education and elevation of motherhood is sure to come, but in the meantime the race is suffering. In the future, when science has taught the truths it now possesses, women will be trained from early years in the path that leads to that ideal of nations—good mothers. But, judging by history, this knowledge must be taught to men by women; women only can win for their sex the attention and instruction so urgently wanted.

It is wisdom we want from your women, not love only; wisdom we dream that you have and believe, till you prove it otherwise. You hold our morals for us, you make us, whether we admit it or not. If some of us had our way we would sweep your farce called education into chaos, and begin again to teach a religion, founded on clarity, for then you could not wander into useless blind allies, and would grasp the value of life; teach all that you are here for. You women were meant to keep the world clean, above all to be clear beacons for us to steer by.

What you are we thank you for; you have earned good marks, but we want more—excellent wisdom in your own part of the house—in fact, goodness to which we can absolutely trust.