

Musings by the Way.

(By "Sator")

As I muse and jot down my musings this morning, the sun is streaming in at the window, the rain has ceased, the trees and grass are "as green as green," and it is difficult to believe we are only at the end of winter. The sea is on his very best behaviour just now (it must be "he," you know, because, if you remember, he fell in love with the moon, and still pursues her round our globe), and with all Nature smiling, I am reminded of the cry, "Let us get back to Nature."

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Well, there is no doubt that in many ways our lives are too artificial—less so, fortunately, in New Zealand than in older countries. But the question is—how far are we to "get back to Nature?" Are we to go to bed with the birds and rise with them? Think how awkward that would be, especially in high latitudes! In summer we should get very little sleep, and in winter we should do very little else *but* sleep.

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No! man is an animal, but not of the animals, and our minds were given us by God to control and to go beyond Nature, and to subjugate the powers and forces of Nature to our own well-being; and we are able to accustom and to adjust ourselves to any environment and state of life. This is true of the Church also: whilst holding fast the faith once delivered to the saints (and be sure, my friends, there is no new faith), yet the Church is able to adapt herself to altered conditions, to make use of new ways of presenting the faith, and to welcome research. But both in Church and in Society—beware of "cranks," and beware of having too open a mind.

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There was once—so the story goes—an English gentleman, who possessed, among other things, an "open mind." So "broad-minded" was he that he was always ready to accept any new cult that came along, and the nearer it took him back to nature the more pleased was he. He became in turn a Vegetarian, a Fruitarian, a "Nature-arian," a Socialist, a Theosophist, a Christian Scientist, and I daresay, had time allowed, he would have been many other "arians" and "ists." However, he became seriously ill, and had time to reflect. His skin was blistered with sun-baths; his digestion

was ruined (but his appetite not satisfied) by a course of vegetables and fruit, including apple and orange pips; he founded a "Nature colony" on Socialistic principles which "bust up" in a week or two, and when in the Christian Scientist stage, was only saved from certain death by the timely interposition of his sturdy old friend, the vicar of the parish. Finally, a sadder and wiser man, he returned to the bosom of Mother Church, which he ought never to have left.

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Now, there is a certain amount of truth in all these cults. As a general rule, what Separatists affirm, is true; when they deny, they are wrong. For instance, Christian Scientists affirm that sick persons can be healed by faith: they deny that in any instance are either a doctor or medicine required. The affirmation is true, the negation is wrong. Look in your Prayer Books at the office for the Visitation of the Sick, and note also the "Prayer for All Sorts and Conditions of Men." Our Church teaches the right and proper use of prayer and faith in cases of sickness, and it would be better if we heard that phrase more and more often from the clergyman's lips: "The prayers of the congregation are desired for So-and-so who is grievously sick." But the parish priest cannot ask the prayers of the faithful, unless desired to do so by the sick person.

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I have no room for any more, but must just mention this:—So long as the Church keeps up the un-Christian system of "paid-for" seats in church, so long will Socialists be able to point the finger of scorn at us. And just so long as we emphasise *class*, and selfishly shut our eyes to the idea of Christian Brotherhood; just so long as we neglect our privileges and duties as Churchmen and Churchwomen, and are ignorant of the full, true, Biblical and beautiful heritage we have in our own dear Mother Church, just so long will strange "isms" appeal to us, and, it may be, carry us all or part way with them.

"A declaration of personal trust and allegiance is in reality a high form of worship; to recite a creed is no barren and dry test of orthodoxy; it is a loving outburst of a loyal heart, and a claim to receive the blessing promised to members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of heaven."

Church of England Men's Society.

Watchword: "Prayer and Service."

PROVISIONAL DIOCESAN COUNCIL:

Ven. Archdeacon Ruddock, Canons Mayne and Tuke, Rev. J. Hobbs, Messrs McCarthy, Williamson, R. Williams, Capt. Lake. SECRETARY: Rev. G. Coates.

Branches.

Cathedral Parish; St. Augustine's, Napier; Gisborne; Danevirke; Havelock; Waipawa; Rotorua.

What the C.E.M.S. can do in a Town Parish.

The report of the St. Matthews, Dunedin, Branch, which has been sent to us, shows what a splendid help such a branch can prove in the work of a large Town Parish. The following summary gives a fair idea of the work which the society causes its members to do.

The branch has 40 active members. Of course, some are more active than others, but all are workers. Thirty of the 40 members are working men. As all members have to be communicants and regular church attendants, as well as working for the Church, this fact may be said to bear on the question of the relation of working men to the Church.

GENERAL REPORT.—The branch was formed in July, 1909, with 15 members. The membership now stands at 40. All classes of workers, from the Vestry and the Choir to the Verger, are included in the Society. The branch has met 18 times during the year. The corporate communion was well attended, some members walking one mile and a half to be present. Sub-committees have been formed to attend to special work.

REPAIRS COMMITTEE.—This committee consists of five members, who are mechanics. They meet at various times as needs arise. The work involves a great sacrifice of leisure hours, as much has been done (the list of repairs and work covered two sheets of closely-typed foolscap). The members provide their own tools, nails, etc. The work has ranged from the addition of electric lighting in the tower, to ordinary repairs to forms and shelving. The greater portion of the work has fallen on the convener. The committee has saved the funds a considerable sum, and has much work on hand. A special working bee de-