

such work, and so prove that the men of the Church are not unmindful of their younger brethren.

Taradale Branch.

The Vicar asked Rev. R. G. Coates, Diocesan Secretary, to come out to Taradale, and he found a very small but courageous and attentive audience. In his brisk way he put forward the aims of the C.E.M.S., and enlightened us all, as to the power for good, such a band of men would be to a parish. Although the majority were anxious to form a branch at once, it was considered wiser that a second meeting should be held. This took place on the Monday following, when several others attended, and the branch was constituted, the Bishop himself coming out on Thursday, September 8th., when eight members were duly admitted, namely:—Alfred P. Clarke and Gerard W. Davidson, priests; and Oliver McCutcheon, Hiram Harris, William Williams, Harold Kay, John Langley, and Donald Haultain, laymen. The Bishop, after presenting the badges, gave an address, urging all to "Go up Higher" in their daily lives as Christians, and to make much use of the coming Mission in that direction. Already the little band of C.E.M.S. workers, is making good headway, with Mr D. Haultain as secretary.

Hats and Habits.

What possible connection can there be between these two—"Hats and Habits"?—say you.

Much, every way!

Skeat, in his etymological dictionary, tells us that Habit means practice, custom, dress: that it is derived from the Latin *habitus*, perfect participle of *habere*, to have, to keep.

And is not a hat part of one's dress, which it is our custom to have, and to keep? Think of that dear old eccentric friend of yours, who has had, and kept that well-worn hat of his, for so many years, that you can hardly picture him in your mind's eye without it. Truth to tell, that aged hat is somewhat of a grief to the relations and friends of its wearer, who would perhaps be glad to substitute a new, and up-to-date, hat in its place, surreptitiously, on his birthday, let us say.

And what of the ladies and their hats! Truly they love to have a hat of the latest fashion and of the broadest dimensions—and while they have them,

to keep them on. But customs in ladies' hats last not over-long, and there is little danger of our lady friends keeping to any one hat for any great period of time. It is a little cruel for mere men to ask them to take their hats off in any theatre or village hall, when there is so much, so very much, to take off!

Well, now, to turn our attention from hats to habits. You will agree with me at once, that a man's habits are the parts of his character which, through practice, have become custom. "Acts, Habits, Character."

"Practical Habits," we read in Dr. Butler's famous "Analogy," "are formed and strengthened by repeated acts." Lose your temper, we will say, once, twice, a thousand times—repeated acts have formed a habit, a bad one certainly, and now your character is known as a churlish and ill-tempered one, and, like the powder-hulk coming down the river Thames, you should hoist a red flag as a signal of danger, whenever you feel that contact with you will risk an explosion!

And the trouble of it is that, to go back to our old friend's hat, the bad habit is much more difficult to get rid of than the hat, and gives far more grief and unhappiness to relations and friends.

If Acts lead to Habits, and Habits to a stereotyped Character, we need to be uncommonly careful and watchful over our actions.

Let us turn to "Martin Chuzzlewit" for an illustration.

We find Martin and Mark Tapley in that horrible fever-stricken swamp which was described on the land-agent's map as the thriving city of Eden! Martin falls ill, and tenderly and faithfully Mark Tapley nurses him. Later on, when Martin was only convalescent, Mark was taken ill. "Floored for the present, sir, but jolly!" Then, in those long, weary days and nights of nursing, as Martin watched over the patient, he began to ask himself in what they differed; which of them could be the better spared, and why? "Then the curtain slowly rose a very little, and self, self, self was shown below." And as he went on thinking, the curtain slowly rose a little more, and self, self, self dilated on the scene.

Yes,—by repeated acts of selfishness, and self-indulgence, Martin had formed selfish habits, and his character had become summed up in the one word: "self;" while his companion, Mark Tapley, had, by repeated acts of unselfishness and kindly considera-

tion for others, formed habits the opposite to those of Martin's, and his character, well, his character had come out strong, though as he, one of the humblest, as well as one of the jolliest of men, said of himself: "As to coming out as strong as I could wish, sir, that I give up."

And Martin, having learned his lesson—a hard lesson, learned in a hard place—made a solemn resolution that he must look upon it as an established fact, that selfishness was in his breast, and must be rooted out. And a tough task lay before him, for to root out that self which he had built up by so many repeated acts of selfishness, would cost him very much time and trouble.

A friend of mine, some time ago, transferred to her garden a plant of the little yellow oxalis. Alas, how it has spread, and what time it has wasted, and what trouble it has caused! It is so difficult a task to undo, and to set right, whether in my garden or in the garden of my soul!

But there is a little word in the Christian's vocabulary which counts for much, and that is the little word "Grace." "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." And in the power of that promise, Saul, the blasphemer, the persecutor, became Paul, the Apostle and bond-servant of Jesus Christ. "By the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain."

Grace can work wonders; Grace can alter the apparently stereotyped habits of many years; but Grace must be appropriated and made use of; else will it be Grace bestowed in vain.

A poor man in Fife, before eating, asked a blessing in these weighty words, which were found after the Duchess of Gordon's death written on a slip of paper in her hand:—

"Lord, give me grace to feel the need of grace; and give me grace to ask for grace; and give me grace to receive grace; and, O Lord, when grace is given, give me grace to make use of grace."

H. N.

"John the Baptist was not only the voice of a crier, but a burning lamp which might be seen. So all who are crying voices must be burning lamps. Men must not only hear, but see my faith."

"A Christian life is the most powerful eloquence."