

S. Oswald's Parish Magazine.

MARCH, 1895.

An exceptionally hard winter followed upon an exceptionally *soft* summer. The great frost, as we write, still continues; yet shows signs of abatement. From the great outer world—in the crowded towns and cities of England—we have heard of great distress; and even here we have not been altogether exempt from it. A season like that through which we have just passed must have been very trying to those who “have got no work to do”; but it will not have been sent in vain if it teaches some a lesson of greater thrift, *i.e.*, of laying up more of the summer earnings, and, like the small animals spoken of in the Book of Proverbs, making better provision for the day of small things. “There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise; the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.”—We are glad to hear the weather-wise amongst us prophesying “a splendid spring and summer.”

LENT.

Ah, here is another hard time! Yet Lent means Spring; at least *once* meant it. To us the word conveys a different idea, and repellent to some. Lent is a season anciently set apart in remembrance of our Lord in His 40 days' fast and fight with the Tempter, and also of His last sufferings; a season of penitence and of special prayer, aided by fasting or self-denial, self-examination and more serious battling with our besetting sins. And is not that hard? Hard it will ever look to those who expect in religion nothing but what is comforting, easy and smooth, and forget what is said of a “narrow way,” and of the necessity of “enduring hardness.” But not hard to those who give their minds to think of its *object*,—to get rid of a worse hardness. Not hard to those who do all things “in love,” as we are taught on the Sunday before Lent; nor to those who are supported by the thought that it is their Master's path they are treading. Even in penitential exercises there will be an undercurrent of joy. The late Dean Church, of S. Paul's, used to speak of “the comfort of penitence.”

We have mentioned *fasting*. How are we to fast? It is a narrow view of it to think of *merely* abstaining from our full complement of food. If it comprehended no more than this, how should poor people fast? Read the divine counsels given in Isaiah lviii. It is to “break the yoke” that is upon us, and put on Christ's. There are a hundred ways of fasting. What would be helpful to one might be harmful to another. We can only give counsels which apply to all alike. Give more time to quiet thought on your state before God; ask for the Holy Spirit to lighten your eyes; be oftener and longer on your knees; oftener in Church, where God is the first thought; twice there, if possible, where you have come only once. Make an effort to attend some week-day Services. (The 40 days of Lent do not include the six Sundays). If you have been indulging in any evil habit, break off the “yoke” now, once for all. If any have offended you, forgive. If *you* have offended anyone, seek forgiveness. Do not merely wish it, but put yourself out of the way to do it. This is fasting; it is fasting from *pride*. Again, do acts of kindness, at the cost of some trouble to yourself; this is to fast from *ease*. Some can double their ordinary offerings in Church (there is need of this); others can give who little think of almsgiving as a part of their worship.

The season preaches to us all, more than ever, from the words:—“If any man will come after Me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” May the end of it find us all grown in grace, a step nearer Him who underwent so much for us; and may it find us all joyfully united to celebrate His triumph, in our Eucharist on Easter Day.

There will be special preachers on some of the Wednesday evening Services—Service at 7 p.m.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES will be held on Wednesday and Friday evenings, at 6, in the Church, as soon as the names have all been given in. There will be fires in Church on those days.

The next monthly TEMPERANCE MEETING will be on Thursday, the 7th, 7-15 p.m. As the cold prevented the last, we expect a double attendance!

LIBRARY.

We hope shortly to revive the usefulness of this. There are three cupboards in the School, containing nearly 1000 volumes, some outworn and out of date, but many which are good and standard works. More of this, however, anon.

THE OLD RECTORY.

Offers and Donations have been received to the amount of £370 9s., in sums varying from £50 to 10/- Will the village not help? The plans and specifications are complete, and only need the sanction of various authorities. But the process of inviting subscriptions is not ended.

HYMNS FOR THE MONTH.

March 3.	Morn., 92, 252, 533 ;	Even., 198, 353.	27.
„ 10.	Morn., 89, 91, 259 ;	Even., 512, 94,	31.
„ 17.	Morn., 251, 229, 180 ;	Even., 225, 184,	95.
„ 24.	Morn., 164, 183, 197 ;	Even., 182, 224,	91.
„ 31.	Morn., 96, 86, 540 ;	Even., 200, 112,	537.

Baptisms.

February 27. Felix Burns, son of James and Sarah Green.
„ Mary Evelyn, daughter of John and Martha Wilson.

RAINFALL FOR FEBRUARY.

Liquified snow chiefly. Mr. Green's figures are 1.35 inches.

An amateur theatrical entertainment, got up chiefly by Mr. Garside's exertions, in aid of *that piano*, was given on the 9th and 11th. All acquitted themselves well, and it was regrettable that after all their trouble they should have to perform on the coldest nights of the great frost. We believe the nett proceeds are on that account small, but thank all sincerely. The pieces were "A Rough Diamond," and "Old Gooseberry."