pastoral visit of the minister is like the visit of the Christ at the Bethany home; but such cases are growing still more rare, the people and the pulpit are growing away from one another.

The country church, then, needs the return to that simplicity of spirituality and a more complete consecration. This return can only be made possible, first, by the deeper sense of consecration on the part of the pastor. "'Tis by the vicar's skirts that the devil climbs into the belfry," runs the old Spanish proverb, and one of the reasons of this is the desire of self-advancement of the pastor, who is often a young student still in the seminary, or a recent graduate, eager to win his first spurs; so his desires are for numbers and outside show, deceiving himself that this constitutes success in church work.

Upon this matter the city church can bring much influence to bear, for by a judicious system of patronage the weak country church may be enabled to procure and retain a pastor of experience, with whom could then be associated the apprentice fresh from the seminary.

There is hardly a case where a prosperous metropolitan church could not be able to stand as the patron saint of some struggling country church, aiding it by a donation of funds and appreciative recognition of its location as a fit summer home for the city people.

One need of the country church is more breadth to the area of the thought of its members—more readiness to accept the changed conditions of the times and to adjust itself to the conditions. To that end the institutional character should be developed. The average church edifice is closed six days out of the seven, and too often is so planned that it should be closed the odd day. It is an unfortunate condition of affairs that the houses of worship in the country are "meeting houses" solely, and not the proper style to help the church in its ministrations to humanity.

The church should be opened each day during the week and, if possible, some place should be adapted to the conditions of a waiting-room, where the wayfarer could find a cool rest-nook, where were provided books, papers, fans and ice water and comfortable chairs.

In charge of this rest place should be detailed one of the deaconesses, thus giving this ornamental office a dignity that comes from labor and shows the bearer some opportunities of Christian work, for the time spent in charge of such a room would bring her in closer acquaintance with the people and save such a humiliating excuse of a good woman, who avoided speaking to a young man at the time of his expressing himself as being on the side with the Master because she "had never been introduced."

There is need in the country church of people being more friendly one with another.

Too often the summer visitor is kept away from church service because of the lukewarmness of the people toward him, a condition that could be changed by the kindly invitation to the services and a recognition when found there.

The country church is sadly in need of better education of its members in church economics and methods of work. No person is fit to hold church connections who does not during the week have access to the trade journal, so to speak, the religious weekly or the wide-awake, whole-souled, philanthropic publications with which each denomination is well supplied. One of the most fruitful acts of a pastor would be to turn his pastoral visits into canvassing calls in the interest of good reading.

With proper development along any or all the lines of work and change referred to, the needs of the country church may be or begin to be met.

WILD MAG.

III.

BY KATHERINE PEARSON WOODS.

Margaret Minton—Wild Mag, they called her now—was sinking lower and lower every day. Do you scorn and despise her? Do you shrink from reading of such an outcast? Consider a moment. This woman had lost all; not this blessing or that friend, but everything in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth—everything but alcohol. Religiously brought up, though not herself religious, having known innocent pleasure, harmless youthful gayety and the respect of men, she had thrown all these to the winds for the love of Lemuel Dunn; yet even the price of her birthright had been taken from her.

She was drunk, therefore, about all the time. She did not dare be sober; had she dared, she was too weak to resist the mere animal appetite, the craving for the liquor itself apart from its effects. She had given up the rooms in which Lem had left her and had gone as a "boarder" into another so-called family, her roommates being seven in number, three of them men.

Among her new associates she was rather a favorite, for in her cups she was a merry companion, full of quips and jollity. Her other mood was the maudlin, wherein she professed herself the most miserable woman alive, wished she had never been born, was sure she should soon die and go to hell, and only hoped she might for the pure pleasure of seeing Lemuel Dunn grizzling in the hottest part of the fire. How she hated him! Drunk or sober, how she hated the man who had betrayed her to ruin and left her to despair! Yet she took his money, which came regularly, and each time she took it hated him the more.

It was his sister who brought it each week, a good woman according to her lights, who once tried to move the poor soul to penitence.

"You don't never go to the mission, now, Maggie," she said. "I hear the Ferns has come over here to live, so as to help you poor sinners. I'd let 'em if I was you."

Mag's reply was such a torrent of imprecations that the would-be reformer fled from before her, and never again made an effort to "do her good." The effect was to cause her to keep diligently out of the way of the newcomers; yet if she suspected them of looking for her she was wrong. The Ferns did not look up "cases"; they were there ready to help any souls that the Lord should send. And, perhaps on this account, they had few failures, and a little circle of blessedness began to widen out from the tenement in which they had made a home. So it was not long before each became known by a *sobriquet*. A would-be wag, who had known better days, called them collectively "The Three R's," but they were better known as "Little Humpback," "Our Ray" and "Cap'n Praise the Lord."

In the slums *sobriquets* are both common and convenient. Wild Mag had another, bestowed by the police, whose native Hibernian courtesy often leads them thus to respect the native modesty which influences a lady or gentleman to keep his or her own name under a kindly shadow. They called her "The Terror," and, indeed, she was a match for two, not to say three, of them when "fighting drunk." She had, nevertheless, been locked up several times—this girl who had once been the joy of a decent home, the pride of God-fearing parents!

At last Little Humpback, with her crooked body and radiant face, came, late one afternoon, upon Wild Mag, struggling, not unsuccessfully, in the grasp of two guardians of the law. Ruth laid a gentle hand upon the rigid, writhing arm, and with one convulsive quiver the whole form of the woman relaxed; she stood passive in the hands of her captors.

"And have you done wrong, poor child?" asked Ruth, softly. But Mag was thinking that her hour had come, that her last friend, her bottle, would be taken from her, and that she should be obliged to repent. Therefore she did not reply.

"Drunk and disorderly, mum; that's what's the matter," said one of the officers. "'Tain't worth your while troubling your head about her; she's a bad lot, she is."

"'Tis the thirrud toime this month, shure, she's been before the squoire, and a foine long sintince she'll get, bedad," put in the other.

"The third time, and all in one month! Then locking up does not seem to help her, does it, Mr. Mulcahy?" said Ruth.

"Is it help you say, Miss Ruth?" returned the officer, whose countenance as well as his coat bore marks of Wild Mag's powers. "Sorra a help but heaven will help the likes of her, Miss Ruth."

"I believe you are right," said Ruth, "and so suppose I go with you to the squire and persuade him to try what heaven can do for her?"

The squire's office was round a couple of corners only, and the squire had already had experience of what heaven could do in other cases, and so it happened that Margaret Minton—Wild Mag no longer—was led home in triumph, with Little Humpback's hand on her arm.

Ruth took care to lean rather heavily. "I don't walk very well, you see, Maggie," she said, "and the stairs are steep. I wish I had as strong an arm as yours to lean on always."

Margaret looked at her strangely, yet she was indeed strong, having had just enough liquor that day to strengthen and steady her. She helped Ruth up the stairs carefully enough, and accepted the seat in which she was placed.

"And now I must get tea for my brother and sister," said Ruth, cheerfully. "You know my sister Rachel is a seamstress, Maggie, and my brother Royal is a ship's carpenter, and works down at the docks. Many a long voyage has he made, but God brought him safely home from them all, and I think means to keep him at home now. Isn't that nice? Ah! God is *so* good, Maggie; if you only knew Him, you'd love Him dearly."

"Let me do that," said Margaret, as Ruth struggled with the kettle, and in another moment she was running down the steep stairs after water, muttering to herself, "I've *got* to repent; but she needn't preach!"