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Cover image: St Ives Vicarage, c. 1880. Courtesy of the Norris Museum, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, UK. Cover Design by Anna Ga...
3. Town Life

3.1 Ordination and First Curacy

Hunt explains how, being out of sympathy with Calvinist theology,\(^1\) he was ordained in the Church of England. The details of his ordination are not transparent. He states: ‘The late Bishop Maltby admitted me to Holy Orders’,\(^2\) without distinguishing between deacon’s and priest’s orders. Whether ‘admitted to Holy Orders’ means ‘ordained’ is unclear. The chronology is puzzling, since Maltby retired in 1856, whereas, according to Crockford’s, Hunt was priested in 1857.\(^3\) Moreover, his diaconal ordination in 1855 is recorded as having been performed by the Bishop of Manchester (James Prince Lee) for the Bishop of Durham.

This provides Hunt with an opportunity to assert his academic prowess, by mentioning how well he performed in the examination: ‘His [Maltby] examining Chaplain said that I had passed the best examination of all the Candidates, though there were present men who had stood well at Oxford and Cambridge.’\(^4\) He is proud, it seems, to affirm his Scottish academic credentials over and against those of ‘Oxbridge’ men.

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\(^{1}\) Cf. ‘Difficulties as to some doctrines of the Westminster Confession, which always appeared to me without a foundation in the Holy Scriptures, presented a barrier to my admission to any of the orthodox communities in Scotland. I came to England full of one doctrine, compared with which every other seemed of small importance,—this doctrine was that “Christ had tasted death for every man.” I found the Prayer Book full of this momentous truth, and waiving all other considerations I united myself to the Church of England’, Clergymen Made Scarce, pp. 3f.


\(^{4}\) Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 4.
Hunt obtained his first curacy at a ‘Parish in the suburbs of a large town in the North of England’ with 10,000 parishioners. Mrs Eliza Hunt identifies the place, naming its incumbent, as Deptford St Andrew’s, Bishopwearmouth, Sunderland, some 180 miles south of Perth.\(^5\)

Hunt remained from 1855–1859 in this parish, which he describes as ‘entirely of the working class’\(^6\), and which was usually regarded merely as a stepping-stone to an incumbency. Whether, because of his roots, he empathized with the working-class parishioners, we cannot tell, but he clearly enjoyed, and was fulfilled in, his first curacy, since, on account of the incumbent’s ill health, he was practically in charge of the parish and set about assiduously visiting, organizing lectures and the like, and generally enjoying the freedom that this responsibility afforded him.\(^7\)

The parishioners responded accordingly and wept repeatedly during his farewell sermon. Despite their poverty, they presented him with a leaving present of £20.\(^8\)

### 3.2 First Metropolitan Curacy

At this point in the narrative, Hunt praises the newly appointed (1856) Bishop of London for some of his innovations and declares how his earnest desire was to go to London and be under the Bishop’s jurisdiction so that he could do a considerable ‘amount of good’.\(^9\)

His dream was to ‘have a Church and District’ to himself in a short space of time. His age (thirty-two) would surely have warranted such enthusiasm, but as we have observed, he was to wait another nineteen years for such preferment.

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5. Ibid. In her annotations, Mrs Eliza Hunt writes ‘W H Bulmer. Bishops wearmouth Sunderland’. William Henry Philip Bulmer was appointed in 1843 as incumbent of Deptford St Andrew’s, Bishopwearmouth, Sunderland (Crockford’s 1865, p. 94). Cf. ‘Saint Andrew’s, Deptford. Was built in 1841, at a time when the Ayres Quay area was establishing itself as a centre of industry. Shipyards and glassmakers were thriving and new streets of housing were springing up on land reclaimed from the salt grasses bordering the river. The church cost £2000 [approx. £212,184 in 2020] and was built by subscription. The style and shape of St. Andrews was plain Gothic rectangular, very typical of Anglican architecture of that period. The building did not survive beyond 1980s slum clearance’, Norman Kirtlan, Places of Worship in Old Sunderland (Washington: Stone Boy Studio), pp. 15–16, http://www.sunderland-antiquarians.org/assets/Uploads/OPGM/WAP/PlacesofWorshipinOldSunderland.pdf


7. Ibid.

8. Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 5. £20 was worth about £2,570 in 2020.

His desire to move to London soon found fulfilment in 1859, in what he calls his ‘first Metropolitan Curacy […] in the north of London’, which was funded by the Church Pastoral Aid Society. Hunt’s not-so-cryptic pseudonym names the incumbent of the parish as ‘the Rev. Simon Arlington’. His real name was James Rose Sutherland. The church was St Philip the Evangelist’s, Arlington Square, Islington. It had only very recently been opened in 1858, although Sutherland had been appointed Perpetual Curate of St Philip’s in 1856. Prior to coming to St Philip’s, Sutherland had been senior curate of St Mary’s, the parish church of Islington, and Lecturer at St Botolph’s, Aldersgate.

There soon proved to be differences of opinion with the incumbent, whom Hunt calls ‘a man advanced in life’, and who ‘had been a Curate until within a very few years of the time when [Hunt] first knew him’. He refers to him later as having been a ‘non-preaching Curate for nearly twenty years’. This is clearly only approximate. His first curacy was in

10 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 5.
11 Cf. Clergymen Made Scarce, pp. 6f. This evangelical society was founded in 1836. Cf. Chadwick, Victorian Church I, pp. 446, 449–450.
13 It was closed and demolished in 1953. The parish was united with St. James the Apostle. Cf. GENUKI, ‘Genuki: Anglican Churches in Islington, Middlesex in 1890, Middlesex’ (GENUKI), https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/MDX/Islington/churches
14 A perpetual curate was ‘In the C of E the technical name given before 1969 to a clergman who officiated in a parish or district to which he had been nominated by the impropriator and licensed by the bishop …’ See ‘Perpetual Curate’, in Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.
15 ‘One of a class of preachers in the Church of England, usually chosen by the parish and supported by voluntary contributions, whose duty consists mainly in delivering afternoon or evening “lectures”’ (OED).
16 Sutherland’s biography is recorded in Venn and Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses ‘S’, pp. 1–103 (p. 85): ‘SUTHERLAND, JAMES. Adm. pens, at QUEENS’, Oct. 8, 1838. Matric. Lent, 1839; B.A. 1843. Ord. priest (Peterb.) 1843; C. of Fleckney, Leics., 1843-5. C. of Islington and Lecturer of St Botolph’s, Aldersgate, London, 1846-56. V. of St Philip’s, Islington, 1857-71. Died in 1871. (Clergy List; Crockford.)’ The 1851 census records for 17 Park St., Islington: ‘James Sutherland, born in Madras, India, Curate of St Mary’s Islington, Lecturer of St Botolph’s, Aldersgate, aged 41’. Members of the household were: Catherine Sutherland (wife) 40, Emily Sutherland (daughter) 18, Sophia Sutherland (daughter) 10, Jane Bewley (mother-in-law) 70, Louisa Richardson (servant) 25.
17 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 5.
18 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 7. Preaching was regarded as their primary function and a privilege by many of the Victorian clergy, especially those of the Low Church. Cf. E. A. Livingstone, ‘Preaching’, in Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,
1843, so he had been a curate for sixteen years in 1859. Hunt later states that Sutherland ‘displayed the senile vanity of an old man just elevated into position’. In the 1851 census, he is recorded as being forty-one years of age, which would equate to a birth date of 1810. However, the 1861 census records him as being fifty-six, indicating a birth date of 1805. This would appear to be the accurate date. If this is so, he did not matriculate at Cambridge until he was thirty-four, which is curiously late. He was thus about fifty-four in 1859, when Hunt first met him, hardly an age for senility but perhaps old enough to explain Hunt’s reaction at the age of thirty-two. It can be assumed that Hunt’s unsympathetic description referred to his bearing. His ‘elevation’ occurred three years previously, in 1856. He was reported, upon his death in 1871, to have been about twelve years a curate at St Mary’s and about fifteen years at St Philip’s. Hunt declares Sutherland to be ‘about the worst [incumbent] into whose hands [he] could have fallen’. He does not spare his disdain for this ‘man of meagre abilities, but of considerable craft’. Before we investigate the details of this fraught relationship, a word should be said about Sutherland’s family circumstances. He was married to Catharine, who, according to the census, was aged 50 in 1861. She is described as being ‘of delicate health, and requiring constant medical advice’. They had two surviving daughters, aged 28 and 20 in 1861. The younger, Sophia Jane, was in good health and capable of earning her own living, but the elder daughter, Amelia Elizabeth, was disabled. Her health is described as having ‘always been most delicate’, and she was ‘in other respects [...] most grievously afflicted and utterly incapable of working for her living’. Catharine died in 1864. When Sutherland died in 1871, he left


19 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 5.
21 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 5.
22 Mrs Sutherland seems to have preferred the spelling Catharine, e.g., on her marriage register entry in Manchester Parish Church (28 July 1831), though the form Catherine is used elsewhere. Her maiden name was Bewley [details retrieved from Ancestry.com].
23 Islington Gazette, 24 October 1871, p. 1.
24 Ibid.
25 ‘April 28, at 34, Halliford-street, Downham-road, Islington, Catharine, the beloved wife of the Rev. James Sutherland, aged 57’, John Bull, 30 April 1864, p. 16.
the two daughters ‘totally unprovided for’,

26 so the parishioners set up a fund to help especially the elder daughter. A substantial committee oversaw this, and it was advertised eleven times in the Islington Gazette, often on the front page.27 It was stated that ‘his income was always very limited, and precluded the possibility of his saving money’.28 Maybe this was as a result of the long time he had spent as a curate, for whom the annual income was usually about £100.29 The incumbent’s income at St Philip’s, however, was £355 per annum,30 which, compared with Hunt’s annual income at Otford of £210 in 1878,31 was substantial. Looking after his ailing family, together with the cost of living in the metropolis, must also have made considerable demands on Sutherland’s finances. His family circumstances may well have contributed to feelings of dejection and frustration, caused by his lacklustre career.

The first contretemps occurred very soon after Hunt’s arrival in Islington. Sutherland, upon scrutinizing the books that Hunt had purchased with his leaving present from Deptford, works of progressive theologians and writers such as Frederick Denison Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and August Neander, labelled these disparagingly as ‘neology’.32 Hunt had truthfully to deny that he had read any of them in order to placate Sutherland and to be engaged as his curate.

Hunt’s first metropolitan curacy was noteworthy for a variety of negative reasons. His initial enthusiasm was quickly extinguished; his self-esteem soon abased, firstly by an eagerly anticipated meeting with the Bishop. It will be remembered that Hunt had sought a placement in London in order to be under Bishop Tait’s jurisdiction. His hopes of a personal discussion of his work with the Bishop were soon dashed—he was introduced along with six other curates and had no opportunity to impress upon the Bishop the importance of his coming to London. He

26 Islington Gazette, 24 October 1871, p. 1.
27 E.g., ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Approx. £12,045 in 2020. Hunt mentions the figure of £100 as his salary, Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 27. Substantially lower figures were not uncommon. Cf. Hart, The Curate’s Lot, p. 135 and passim. Cases of particular hardship are documented in William George Jervis, Startling Facts Respecting the Poverty and Distress of Four Hundred Clergymen of the Church of England (London: Thompson, 1860).
30 Approx. £42,760 in 2020.
31 Approx. £25,563 in 2020.
32 On the use of this term to disparage modern theology, mainly of German origin, see Chadwick, Victorian Church I, pp. 528–544.
was given a licence in exchange for a sovereign,\textsuperscript{33} and the early adulation that he felt towards the Bishop quickly gave way to resentment—afterwards, he viewed him as the man, the sight of whom had cost him a sovereign out of his meagre resources.\textsuperscript{34}

More disappointment was yet in store for him when it came to the apportioning of his duties. His positive experiences in Deptford had possibly led him to expect to be able to act in a similarly independent way in Islington. However, this was far from being the case. He was allowed to preach only occasionally, this being deemed by his incumbent a ‘privilege’.\textsuperscript{35} Likewise with pastoral visiting, he was severely restricted, being given only poor areas and no resources such as a meeting hall.\textsuperscript{36} A revealing aspect of the Victorian Church emerges in this context. Hunt complains that he could not invite the poor people to church, ‘for even if they had been willing to come, we had not pews for people who could not pay pew rents’.\textsuperscript{37} The topic of pew rents was one that exercised the nineteenth-century Anglican Church, with many people regarding them as an ill that was unchristian and deterred the poor from attending, whereas many churches regarded them as an essential source of income.\textsuperscript{38} A limited number of ‘free’ pews were provided in many churches. But, as Hunt observes, even if he had ‘taken pews for them’ and got them to come in their best clothes, the ‘officers at the Church would have warned them off’.\textsuperscript{39} Here, the arrogant and uncharitable attitude of many middle-class churchgoers especially of the Evangelical party in the nineteenth century manifests itself, whereas the ritualists frequently directed their work at the poor, encouraging them to come to church and receive the consolation of religion.\textsuperscript{40} For many middle-class Victorians, church services, sermons, and lectures were a way of occupying their leisure time, amounting to a form of edifying entertainment.

\textsuperscript{33} Approx. £129 in 2020.
\textsuperscript{34} *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{35} *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{36} ‘A District was assigned to me, which consisted of Misery Lane, Poverty Corner, Starvation Street, and a few similar streets, terraces, and even parades, for so they called them’, *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{37} *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{39} *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{40} Cf. Chadwick, *Victorian Church II*, pp. 311f.
Hunt’s ministrations in Arlington Square were soon to come to a premature end. It appears that he, as curate, was in the incumbent’s way and that the latter devised ways of making him feel unwelcome, such as not allowing him to participate in services, instead leaving him to sit alone in a pew. This culminated in what Sutherland described as a ‘deputation’ of congregants, who had allegedly complained about Hunt’s ‘Scotch accent’ when he read the service. The situation caused some degree of unpleasantness, with people taking sides and Sutherland allowing Hunt to read only the Epistle at the Communion. Hunt, however, refused to sit ‘enthroned’ in church, doing hardly anything. The ‘deputation’ proved to have been highly exaggerated and was most likely little more than gossip. Nevertheless, the ill-feeling caused Hunt to resolve to seek another curacy, so he went to see the Bishop. The following day, it transpired that Sutherland had, in an underhand way, persuaded Bishop Tait to countersign a legal notice, requiring Hunt to quit in six months’ time. This was an unkind, unjust, and hurtful act by Sutherland, as Hunt noted: ‘I was sorry the Bishop had been a party to this, for I had given notice to leave at the end of three months, so that this notice was a studied insult on the part of Mr. Arlington’. Hunt’s first metropolitan curacy had thus lasted but a few months, had included much unpleasantness, and had ended disastrously. He must have felt completely downcast and dejected.

3.3 Search for a New Curacy

Hunt set about searching independently for a curacy, having obtained no help or encouragement from Bishop Tait. As he put it, ‘I had now my first experience in the way of looking out for a Curacy. I advertised in the Record, and had a multitude of answers.’ The Record was an evangelical paper that listed advertisements for curacies, many funded by the Pastoral Aid Society. In response to one answer, he preached a

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41 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 7.
42 Ibid.
43 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 8.
44 Ibid.
well-received trial sermon on St Augustine at another fairly new church in the north-west of London (St Paul’s, Lisson Grove, built in 1836), but, declaring himself in conversation to agree on a point of theology with ‘Mr. [F. D.] Maurice’, a clergyman noted for his liberal views and a strong influence on Hunt, he incurred the incumbent’s disapproval, so that his application came to nought.

Further interest came from a ‘Vicar in the South West’ by whom Hunt was invited to luncheon, together with the vicar’s ‘bevy of daughters’, who behaved vainly and impolitely. He was seeking a curate who would take ‘Temporary Duty […] in a School Room’. The chance to minister to an influx of working people in the parish greatly appealed to Hunt. The incumbent disparagingly labelled them all as ‘infidels’. Once again, Hunt’s progressive thinking and his honesty in declaring his position openly were his undoing: he professed his admiration for the sermons of the social reformer Frederick Robertson, which made it plain that there could be no engagement there.

Hunt remarks ironically: ‘I thought a man who wished to convert working men from infidelity, should teach his family to bridge the distance between the grades of society, especially that between a Clergyman who has a benefice and one who has not’. Yet again his ambitions had been thwarted, partly through his probity, partly through the prejudice of the senior clergyman.

His next application, the third in 1860, was to St John’s, Melmoth Place, Walham Green, in Fulham, in the south west of London. This

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46 *Clergymen Made Scarce*, pp. 8f.
47 Mrs Eliza Hunt notes ‘Lissom [sic] Grove. Name forgotten’. The name of the incumbent of St Paul’s, Lisson Grove, was James Keeling, *Crockford’s* 1865, p. 363.
48 ‘Jenkins Battersea’, Mrs Eliza Hunt. Probably this was John Simon Jenkinson, Vicar of St Mary’s, Battersea (1847–1872), *Crockford’s* 1865, p. 347.
49 *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 9.
51 *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 9.
52 Cf. *Clergymen Made Scarce*, pp. 9f. The church is situated in North End Road/ Vanston Place, Fulham, founded 1828, GENUKI, ‘Genuki: St John, Walham Green,
resulted in an engagement. Hunt’s pseudonym for the incumbent is the ‘Rev. Peter Walham’. Mrs Eliza Hunt’s annotation reads ‘William Garratt Walham Green’. The surname is misspelled. The clergyman in question is William Garratt, who was Perpetual Curate of St John’s, Fulham, a post he had held since 1845. Garratt was a well-educated man. He was about forty-five in 1860. He was succeeded by William Edmund Batty in 1862, after which he appears no longer to have been in active ministry, and died in 1874. Hunt therefore first made his acquaintance almost at the end of his ministry. At first, the two clergymen got on very well with each other. Hunt declares that he ‘greatly liked the man, perhaps because he was such a contrast from Mr. Arlington’.

Garratt showed friendliness and humour and even held out the prospect of some unmarried women from good families belonging to the parish. The incumbent and congregation were ‘well pleased with [Hunt’s] sermon’, and he was offered the curacy. It remained only to gain the approval of the Pastoral Aid Society, which paid the curate’s salary. Notwithstanding this, Garratt was prepared to conclude a ‘temporary engagement for four or five months’, since he wished to ‘leave Town immediately’. Hunt anticipated no difficulties in gaining the approval of the Society, since he had been in its service since his ordination. Thus, he was left in charge of the parish during Garratt’s absence, no references having been required of him.

Matters, however, soon became complicated over the question of references. James Sutherland showed his disgruntlement over the way Hunt had left his parish, having found a substitute, albeit one who was not acceptable to him, thus obviating the need for Hunt to remain a further three months in the parish. Sutherland’s displeasure had been incurred, in Hunt’s opinion, both by Hunt’s obtaining a new curacy so soon and because no reference had been made to him. Hunt was elated at

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54 *Clergymen Made Scarce*, p. 10.

55 *Ibid*.

56 *Ibid*. It later transpires that he went to fashionable Brighton, apparently for the summer season, since Hunt had begun his quest in July 1860. See *Clergymen Made Scarce*, pp. 8, 11.

57 *Ibid*.
the outcome and overjoyed at taking up residence in his new parish. His admiration for Garratt grew: God was in His heaven, and all seemed right with the world. However, his ‘hopes were short lived’; the Pastoral Aid Society required a reference from his previous incumbent and would accept no other. His assertion that unpleasantness had existed between him and his last incumbent and that reference should rather be made to his curacy in the north of England fell on deaf ears. Thus it was that he was vulnerable to a spiteful reference by Sutherland. Under the guise of a generally positive assessment of Hunt’s work, Sutherland was able to intimate Hunt’s unsuitability by underhand means:

He gave me a testimonial which was on the whole satisfactory. He certified among other things that I was an ‘able preacher and a diligent student;’ but the cunning man knew the crotchets of this Society, and added not on his own authority, but that some one had said that my sermons were not thoroughly ‘Evangelical’. Hunt’s new incumbent came to his defence, and, after a succession of correspondence, was able to persuade the Society to appoint him as curate: ‘He [Garratt] had taken the high ground, and fought [Hunt’s] battle manfully’. Hunt’s work blossomed and flourished, and the congregation ‘visibly increased’; his opinion of Garratt ‘was now at its height’. This happy state of affairs continued for about two months; then came the bombshell: a letter from Garratt informed Hunt that his appointment had been confirmed by the Pastoral Aid Society, but ‘only for three months! and that he would give [him] three months’ notice from the date of his letter. Hunt’s former champion now proved to be his humiliation. Quite why this volte-face occurred it is difficult to tell. Perhaps the incumbent had lost the will to do battle with the Society. Maybe the Society had had second thoughts about funding Hunt’s curacy, particularly in view of the ambivalent reference from Sutherland. Perhaps the curate was beginning to outshine the incumbent; perhaps he had outlived his usefulness to Garratt. Maybe Garratt was not willing to contemplate paying a curate out of his own or the parish’s resources. At any rate, Hunt notes that ‘It was a manoeuvre of Mr. Walham’s

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 11.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
never to have licensed Curates.\textsuperscript{63} Hence, Hunt had no recourse to the Bishop in the matter, since he had not been licensed. Anyway, the Bishop hardly knew him, once mistaking him on a visit to the parish for the previous curate. Hunt comments ruefully on this lamentable aspect of the Victorian Church: ‘If with a licence in my former Curacy he [sc. the Bishop] could only help the Incumbent to insult me, what could I expect here without a licence?’\textsuperscript{64} Again, we see how the curate’s lot was far from being a happy one. Furthermore, a conflict between the parishioners’ interests and wishes and those of the incumbent is next seen to develop. Hunt reports how ‘Three different gentlemen called to ask if I would sanction a Petition being got up and presented to Mr. Walham for me to remain.’ His probity and pragmatism came to the fore, however, and Hunt rejected the idea, especially in view of the role of the Society in paying the curate’s salary. The parishioners nevertheless continued to show their support for Hunt by agreeing ‘to raise the salary in the Parish, and dismiss the Society’. Hunt observes: ‘that was an amount of lay interference not to be tolerated.’\textsuperscript{65} By this comment, he lays bare an aspect of the Victorian Church that was pronounced at the time, but which had existed previously and would continue to exist subsequently. Although Garratt had for the most part behaved amicably and properly towards Hunt, it would appear that he felt threatened by these developments and that, like so many clergymen, he regarded his parish as his personal fiefdom, in which he brooked no interference. His reaction was typical in such a situation, as Hunt relates: ‘He not only peremptorily refused [to accept the petition], but immediately accused me of raising a disturbance in his Parish.’\textsuperscript{66} Here we might note the haughtiness of this ‘peremptory’ refusal and the possessive attitude expressed towards ‘his’ parish. The incumbent had been riled and felt the need to reassert his authority. Hunt, as an intellectually able clergyman and an uncompromising personality, must have found it difficult to show humility and charity, which was so often lacking in his superiors. Yet, he managed to emerge from the situation with dignity and even preserved a degree of friendship with Garratt:

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
'No charge could have been more unjust. I vindicated myself, and we remained apparently friends until the close of my time there.'

Hunt’s tally so far was three curacies, one of which had been good and long, one short and disastrous, and one short and unfortunate, but perhaps ‘good in parts’. Added to that were two unsuccessful applications. Thus, he found himself seeking his fourth curacy in late 1860.

His previous incumbent, with whom, as we have seen, he remained on apparently friendly terms, offered to provide him with a reference in his quest for a new curacy. Hunt was grateful, since he had ‘no other to whom [he] could refer’. He ‘happened to see’ one of Garratt’s letters, which confirmed that the latter wrote honestly and fairly. He agreed to omit a reference to ‘Scotch predilections on the part of some’ parishioners in any future references.

Hunt’s stay in Garratt’s parish had been positive to a degree, partly because he ‘had made some genuine friends, whose friendship remains till this hour’. Some parishioners tried to help him obtain a new position, suggesting an Indian chaplaincy or an appointment in the British Army. Both suggestions, however, came to nought: there was a very long waiting list for Army chaplaincies, and nothing was available in India.

Having moved away from traditional curacies, Hunt made further applications to overseas bodies, among which he ‘wrote to the Secretary of the Colonial and Continental Society, asking employment on the Continent of Europe’. This provided him with an opportunity to display the learning of which he was evidently proud:

I mentioned, perhaps inadvisedly, that I had thoroughly studied the Roman Catholic Church, both on its good and its bad sides; that I was well acquainted with German Theology, from the Wolfenbüttel Fragments to

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67 Ibid.
68 His first incumbent, William Bulmer, in Deptford, lived to be ninety-eight, hence he was still alive at the time. Hunt possibly did not wish to refer to him, owing to his poor state of health. Cf. ‘On the 1st of March, the Rev. William Henry Philip Bulmer late rector of Boldon died at Doncaster in the 98th year of his age’, Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend, iv (1890), 188.
69 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 12.
70 The word is underlined by Mrs Eliza Hunt, but without elucidation.
71 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 12.
the latest development; that I knew Kant and all the ramifications from Kant. These I then thought, and still think, are the proper qualifications for an English Clergyman on the Continent...73

Sadly for Hunt, this cut no ice with the Society, and he remarked: ‘I had an immediate answer as pompous (the writer is now an ‘Evangelical’ Bishop) as it was prompt, to the effect that there was no vacancy in their Society that would suit me.’74

The response appears to manifest an anti-intellectual, xenophobic arrogance that frequently affected British men in authority at the time, when the British Empire held sway over much of the world.75 It simultaneously demonstrates how Hunt’s credentials were little valued for their own sake, without wealth or family connections, and that his chances of employment were but slim.

Having been unsuccessful with foreign applications, Hunt next turned his attention to the countryside: ‘About this time I had an unusual adventure in the country, in answer to an advertisement in the Record.’76 The date would appear to have been late 1860 or early 1861.

Although the ‘adventure’ did not lead to an engagement, it is worthy of scrutiny for the light it sheds on the rural Church and its relationship to the ‘squirearchy’. The parish of Burley was located in Rutland, as Mrs Eliza Hunt’s annotation reveals.77 The church’s function was apparently to preserve the established order and especially to do the squire’s

73 Ibid.  
74 Ibid.  
75 Cf. Hunt’s observation: ‘A well known Bishop has said in a book, called “Dangers, and Safeguards,” &c., “A very general impression seems to prevail, that the very fact of a writer’s showing any acquaintance with the Theology of Germany, may be taken as an a priori indication of unsoundness”.’ See A. C. Tait, The Dangers and Safeguards of Modern Theology. Containing “Suggestions Offered to the Theological Student Under Present Difficulties” (a Revised Edition), and Other Discourses, 1861, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=T2BoAAAAcAAJ. The original publication, in which this quotation first appeared, is: Suggestions offered to the Theological Student, under present difficulties. Five Discourses preached before the University of Oxford (London: Murray, 1846), Preface, p. iv.
76 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 12.
77 ‘Rutlandshire John Jones’, Mrs Eliza Hunt. The Christian name would appear to be wrong. The Rev. Joseph Jones was Vicar of Burley-on-the-Hill, alternatively spelled Burleigh, Oakham, Rutland, from 1819 onwards. The living was in the gift of George Finch, Esq., Crockford’s 1860, p. 346; 1865, p. 357. The church of the Holy Cross was adjacent to Finch’s mansion. See ‘Parishes: Burley | British History Online’, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/rutland/vol2/pp112-119
bidding. The squire, George Finch, ‘combined evangelical Christianity with a love of hunting and cricket’. His dominance over the church and village at large can be seen in the earnest advice given by the vicar’s coachman on the ten-mile ride from the railway station to the village: ‘Let me give you a bit of advice—Sir, tomorrow morning you must not begin the service until the squire comes in; some Clergymen as I bring this way go wrong there, and the squire does not like it.’

By the time morning had come and Hunt and the vicar had repaired to church for morning service, the potential new curate had forgotten this piece of advice but by chance had begun to read the service just a few seconds after the entry of the squire. So far, so good. When it came to his sermon, however, he chose a text with a rural theme, which he thought would suit a ‘congregation of simple farmers’. He knew nothing of the squire’s existence when preparing the sermon. His theme, the ‘Rich man that pulled down his barns to build greater’, proved to paint an unflattering, but accurate, picture of the squire, and the three-month engagement that was concluded with the vicar was later annulled by the arrival of the landowner, who did not find the sermon to his liking.

Hunt had stood up for his religious principles against prejudice and arrogance, albeit unwittingly, and had shown how, especially in rural parishes, the Church of England in the form of the country parson was willing to do obeisance to aristocratic wealth and status.

Hunt’s narrative departs from the countryside as abruptly as he himself left the parson and squire to their own devices. His intellectual, forthright attitude was evidently not aligned with rural religion. He comments on the incomprehension that his career called forth: ‘It seemed to my friends that I was doomed to misfortunes. They could not understand how a preacher who had pleased them so well, was not accepted wherever he offered himself.’ Who these friends were and where they were located is not revealed. It may have seemed logical to

79 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 13.
80 Ibid.
81 For details of this affair, see, for the light they cast on the rural Church’s abject subservience to the gentry, Clergymen Made Scarce, pp. 13f.
82 Clergymen Made Scarce, p. 14.
blame the corrupt state of the Church, which is indeed what happened: ‘They were sound Church of England people; but they began to think there must be something wrong in a Church, which made it difficult for such as me to get employment.’\(^{83}\) Apparently, they had not perceived the discrepancies between Hunt’s approach to religion (as manifested in his ministrations and applications) and that which was expected of him by his various potential employers. His friends proposed ‘building a Dissenting Chapel’, but Hunt’s espousal of the Church of England caused him to reject this suggestion. Application was made to the Bishop of London to build a new church in ‘the Parish’.\(^{84}\) The location of this parish is typically not specified: Mrs Eliza Hunt has not supplied the details, nor does the use of the definite article unequivocally link to a previously mentioned location. Most logically, it would appear to be the parish in which Hunt had last been engaged (i.e. St John’s, Melmoth Place, Walham Green). This is implied in the phrasing of his subsequent narrative: ‘Before this scheme of a new Church was matured I had left Mr. Walham, to take charge of a Parish six miles north of London.’\(^{85}\) Alternatively, it could mean All Saints’, Fulham, the mother parish of the area.

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{85}\) Ibid.